

## MATTHEW LAX: *A TIRED DOG IS A GOOD DOG, PART TWO*

November 1–November 17, 2024

Opening: Friday, November 1, 6:00–10:00 pm

Human Resources LA

410 Cottage Home Street

Los Angeles CA 90012

Gallery hours: 12:00–5:00 pm; Thursday through Sunday, and by appointment



*This is a dog show, it is a show about dogs; humans play like dogs and dogs play as humans. The kennel is the house, the whelping box a stage.*

Matthew Lax questions belonging, choice, and freedom in *A TIRED DOG IS A GOOD DOG, PART TWO* (TD2, 2024), the latest chapter in his long-term psychosexual investigation of canine and human behaviors initiated in 2020. A quadruplet himself, Lax's intimate collaborators include the artist's family, who breed Collies; professional dog trainers; and members of the Los Angeles and Paris pup play kink communities, in which humans role-play as dogs.

In this two-channel film, Lax negotiates the interpersonal and interspecies dynamics inherent to pack-building, searching for individual and collective liberation by intertwining animal training with BDSM. Lax learns on all fours, attempting to initiate himself into the pup community while also ingratiating himself to a rescue dog who suffers from severe anxiety and PTSD.

Influenced by the dog writing of Donna Haraway, Cesar Milan, and others, TD2's episodic structure is also guided by excerpts from the 1982 erotic novella *Les Chiens* by Hervé Guibert, as performed by the pups themselves. Translated to English for this film by Dana Lupo, Guibert's tale of a sadistic dom who

chains up two subs in dog masks, provides a historical touchpoint for the BDSM practices which inform contemporary puppy play. The shoot dissolves into a group processing session about consent. Interviews about pack dynamics accompany training sequences which unpack positive reinforcement as it relates to canine trauma responses and decision-making, while domestic scenes on the family farm and elsewhere, depict the bonds of love, care and mourning over the course of several animal life cycles, including that of the artist's own dog.

Probing home and husbandry, *TD2* technically spans 4k video, original GoPro and 16mm footage alongside traditional and 3D animations. Installed within a large dog kennel, viewers must choose where to position themselves within a narrative that both disperses and reinforces a power game in which Lax plays participant, subject, student, director, and editor.

The exhibition is accompanied by other studies and drawings developed over the course of Lax's research, including a motion-capture performance made with artist Caleb Craig, wherein Lax *becomes* an animated Lassie, the rough collie "dog star" of mid-century American film and TV.

An ongoing project, *TD2* falls somewhere within performance and documentary, fantasy and real life. Through Lax's instigations, various familial, sexual, and animal values are activated as the perspectives and needs of humans who "make" dogs, humans who train dogs, and humans who play as dogs commingle and inform a social ethic based on the importance of sharing and sharing alike.

**On Thursday, November 14 at 7:00 pm**, historian, writer and USC professor Andy Campbell will join Lax for a public conversation and the release of *THE HOUNDS OF LOVE HAVE GONE NONVERBAL*, Lax's forthcoming zine-essay which accompanies *TD2*, published by Inga Books (Chicago).

Pup-only event to be held in on **November 9**.

Special thanks to the HR team, Evelia Amores, Automata, Andy Campbell, Caleb Craig, Meghan Gordon, Kieran Hound, Mandi H, Patrick H, Kyle Belluci Johanson, Andre Keichian, Gelare Khoshgozaran, Dana Lupo, Jacob Lindgren, Sean Mankiw, PupStar Orion, Patrick J. Reed, and Christopher Henry Tuzon.

This project is supported in part by an Emergency Grant from the Foundation for Contemporary Arts.

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Matthew Lax is an experimental filmmaker, artist and writer working between Los Angeles and New York. Lax's films and video installations have been screened and exhibited at Viennale (Austria), Rencontres Internationales (Paris), table (Chicago), Los Angeles Contemporary Archive (LACA), and Winnipeg Underground Film Festival, among others. Lax's curatorial projects include those held at Anthology Film Archives, Human Resources, and Fellows of Contemporary Art. Lax's writing has appeared in publications including BOMB Magazine, MARCH Journal, Texte Zur Kunst, and Los Angeles Review of Books (LARB). Lax is a recipient of a 2024 Lightning Fund Grant from Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions (LACE) and the Andy Warhol Foundation.

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**WORKS ON VIEW** (clockwise from left)



**UNDERDOG**



**MAD DOG**

*K9 iDi0MS*, 2022-2024

Animated video, silent

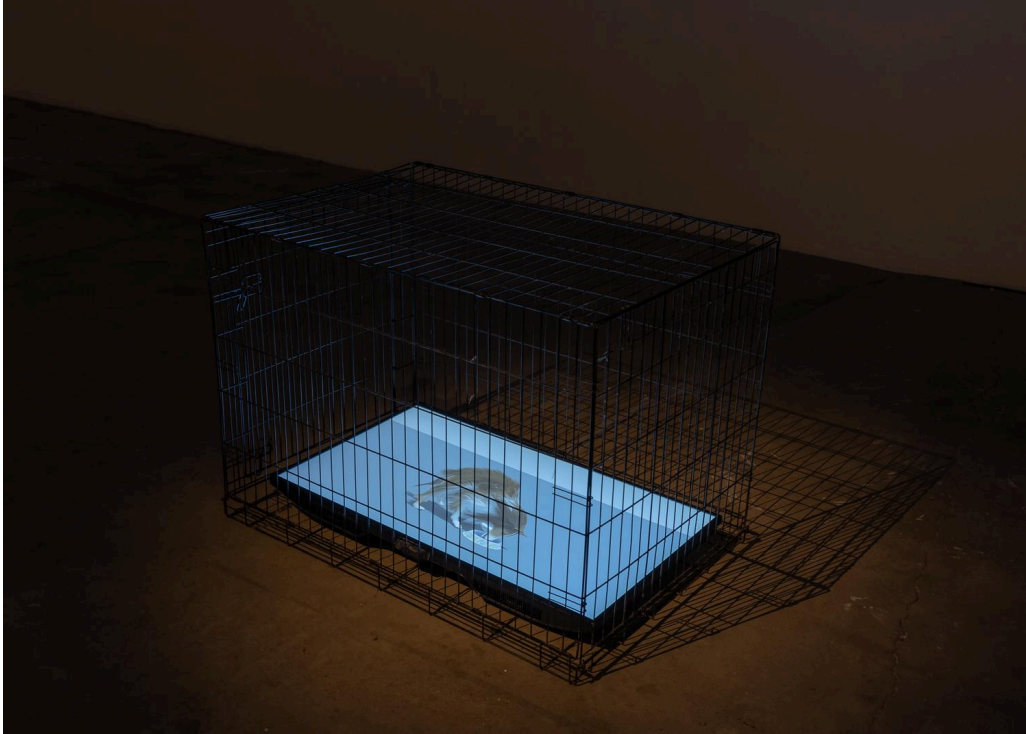
Dims variable

1 min 3 sec loop

video link: <https://vimeo.com/669178002/39d4022841>



*A TIRED DOG IS A GOOD DOG, PART TWO* (installation version), 2024  
two-channel 4k video with sound, modified dog kennel, flatscreens, media player  
72 x 120 x 120 inches  
47 min, 25 sec loop  
Video link: <https://vimeo.com/1028569300/e729af0cb7>



*AN ANIMATED DOG READS BERGER, HARAWAY & KAFKA* (installation version), 2024  
with animation by Caleb Craig  
4k video with sound, flatscreen, dog crate  
48 x 24 x 24 inches  
5 min 49 sec loop  
Video link: <https://vimeo.com/socialanimals/berger>

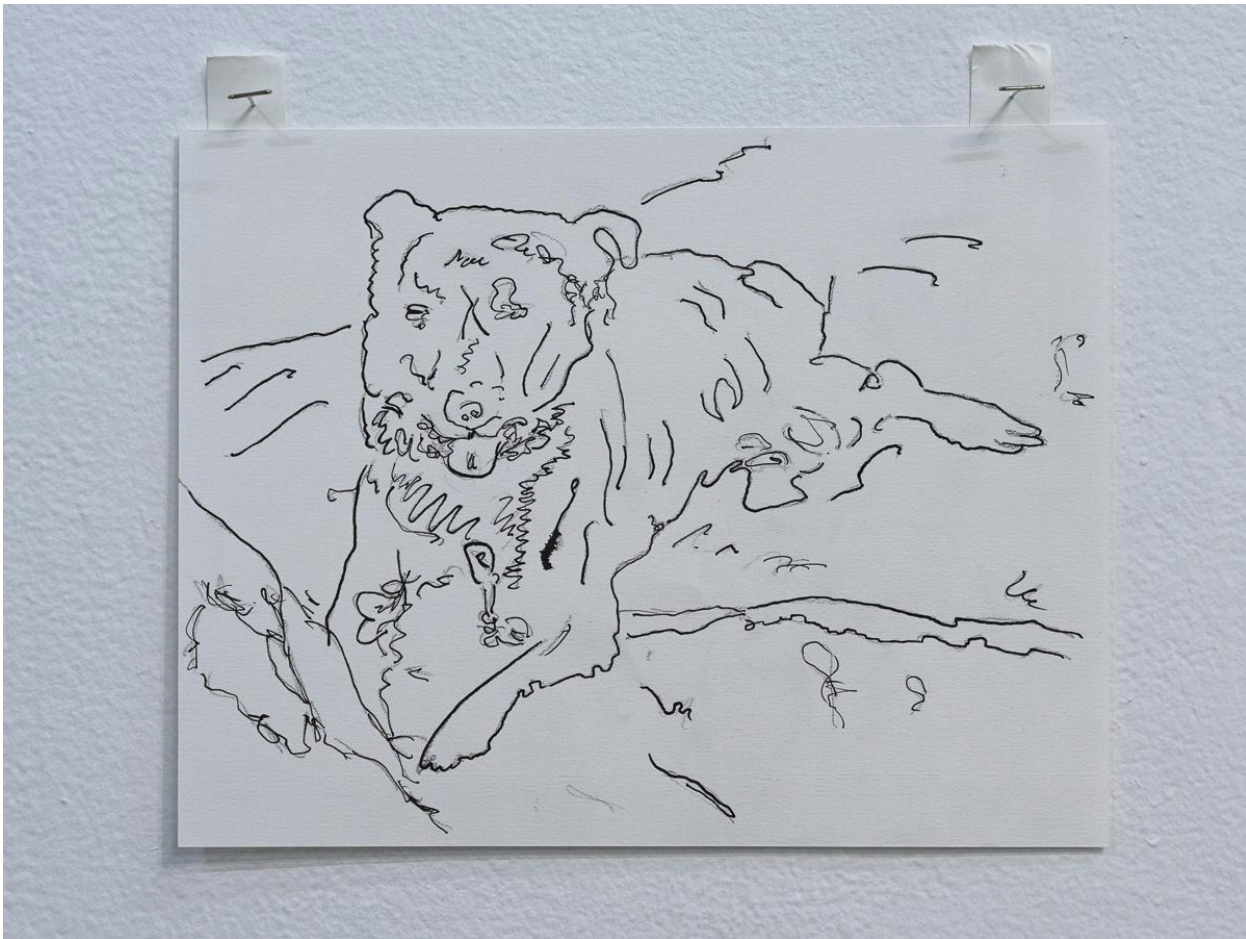
Drawings (left to right, all 2024)



*Lassie jumping the fence*

Ink on paper

30 x 26.5 inches



*Soba in the park*  
Graphite and ink on paper  
8.5 x 11 inches



*Dog phone*

Graphite and ink on paper

8.5 x 11 inches



*Dog fight*

Charcoal and ink on paper

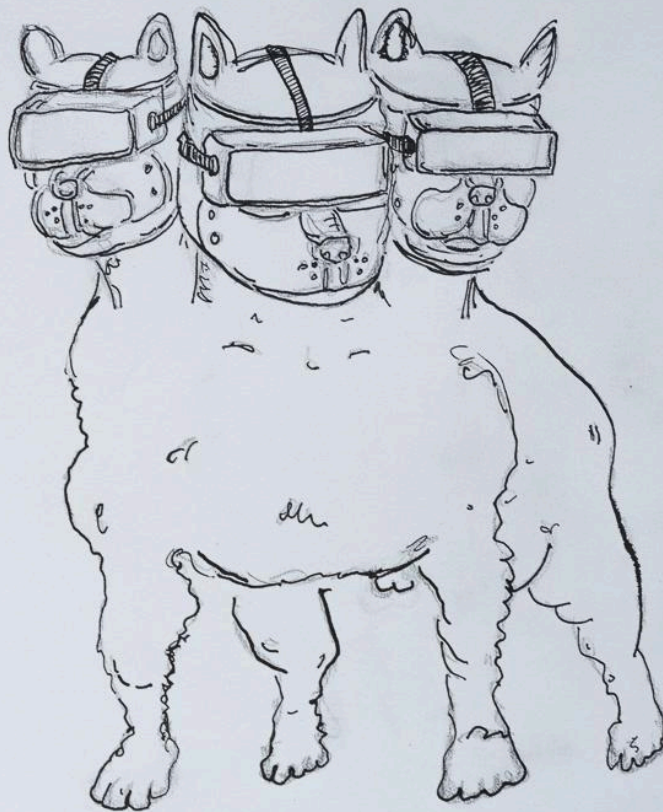
8.5 x 11 inches



*Mark-making*

Graphite and ink on paper

8.5 x 11 inches



THREE HEADED PUP WITH VR GLASSES

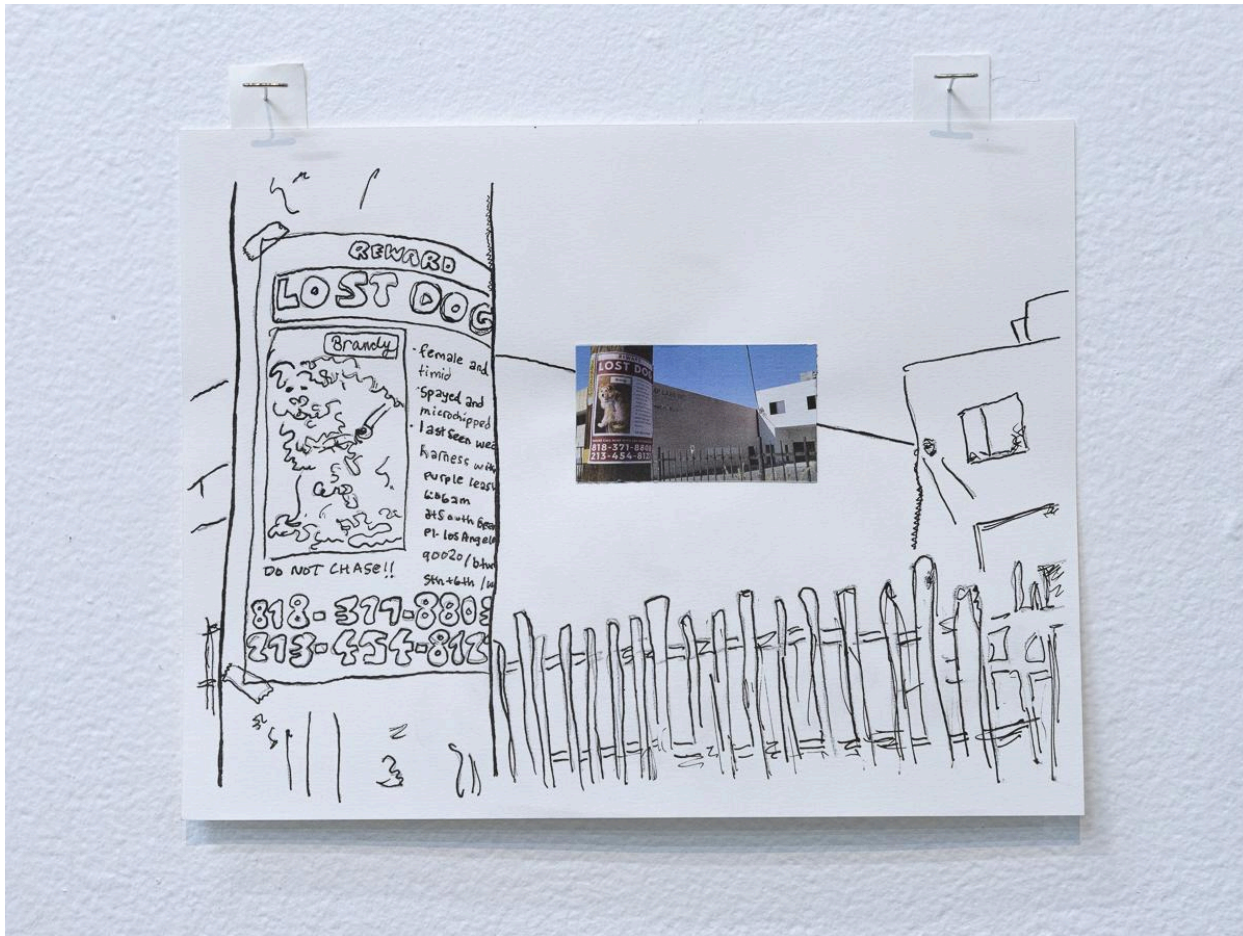
*Three-headed pup (proposition for a VR dog film)*

Graphite and ink on paper

8.5 x 11 inches



*Paw in hand*  
Graphite and ink on paper  
8.5 x 11 inches



*Lost dog outside The Zone Sex Club, Hollywood, September 2021*

Photo collage, graphite and ink on paper

8.5 x 11 inches