<sup>1</sup> Creatures

## 1.b. When Species Meet

2. Humans have long considered our many fellow creatures of the animal kingdom as the subjects of dominion – as entities less than equal, who serve a purpose rather than as peers. In Western society, we have regarded this "untamed" brethren in an historically one-sided arena, across a utilitarian spectrum between ally and enemy. Animals have consequently served as avatars, metaphors, foils, and the fodder for food, clothing, shelter and endless anthropomorphic assignment. In recent years there has, however, been a pronounced push back against this hegemony, and a reconsideration of what equality means within the global ecosystem. Whether such sentiment arose from power or pity, the voice for animal rights has grown increasingly prominent for those who cannot speak for themselves – amplifying the value of intelligence, emotions and lives that many have systematically regarded as secondary. Accordingly, there have been numerous artworks that position animals and insects as content, but considerably fewer that enlist these creatures as collaborators. A slew of recent exhibitions have also sparked controversy for perpetuating a discourse where exploitation, abuse, and inhumane treatment are the prevailing norm. This show offers a counterpoint, asking what it means when an animal has agency within the creative act. Creatures brings together an international coterie of artists that enlist the "wild" other as partners in the production of art. And, while such an exchange can never truly be equal, and the human species endures as the initiator of such endeavors, this collection of works points to a place where shared efforts grow ever closer, and more complex.

**2.b.** Creatures: When Species Meet runs through August 18, 2019 and was curated by former CAC Curator Steven Matijcio, in association with Installations Director Joe Civitello, Exhibition Coordinator David Dillon, and Registrar and Curatorial Assistant Rebecca Roman. Curatorial Fellow of Lens-based Arts Valentine Umansky also provided special consultation, and has co-organized an associated film program in partnership with C. Jacqueline Wood and the Mini Micro-Cinema.

This exhibition is generously supported by Formica Corporation, David and Gale Beckett, and Arts Wave Partner, Jacob G. Schmidlapp Trusts, Fifth Third Bank, Trustee. Special thanks go to Maria Miller and Mike Retzlaff of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) Cincinnati, as well as the League for Animal Welfare and Llewelynn Fletcher for serving on an advisory council for this project, as well as CAC staff and board. The 2008 book When Species Meet by Professor Donna 7. Haraway is a key reference, and is gratefully acknowledged within the title of this show.

No animals or insects were harmed in the making of this exhibition.