

GIANNI MANHATTAN

THE LIVING WORLD OF ANIMALS

SEBASTIAN JEFFORD

giannimanhattan.com
WASSERGASSE 14
1030 VIENNA. AUSTRIA

Opening
June 2, 2023
6-9pm

Exhibition
June 3-July 8, 2023
Wed-Fri 12-6pm
Sat 12-3pm

The Living World of Animals
Publisher : Readers Digest; First Edition (January 1, 1978)
ISBN-10 : 0909486689
ISBN-13 : 978-0909486686
Item Weight : 4.85 pounds

Originally published in 1978 by Reader's Digest, *The Living World of Animals* is a small anthology about animals, covering everything from their behaviour to their ecosystems. The book is filled with diagrams, photographs and microscopic imagery that presents a very human perspective and top down view of the animal kingdom.

For his second solo exhibition at the gallery, Jefford interrogates and dismantles the authority of the visual language contained within this publication. The book, which the artist inherited from his father, is abundant with a simplified visual language that transforms the complexities of the natural world into simple and classified bitesized units. Easier to swallow, easier to digest, easier to excrete.

In his new series of works Jefford proposes that visual or object languages are like bricks and he undergoes a process of reducing these building blocks back into clay. But will this new clay always have an ineradicable genetic memory of its time as a brick? And if so, what can this new clay do? Can it stay plastic, formless and amorphous, and remain rigid at the same time? Jefford corrupts the once schematic and educational imagery into a series of malignant and consumed propositions for how we internalise and inherit information.

A recurring motif in the exhibition, visually and metaphorically, is that of the outline. An outline, in its simplest expression could be said to encapsulate something by defining its outermost

reach, its extremities. The silhouettes depicted within Jefford's work probe at their outermost limits and muddy their perimeters. They ask, where does my outline begin and end? The tips of my fingers to the tips of my toes? My shopping lists or my laugh? My paper trail or my data trail? Where does my outline overlap with that of another? How does the shape of my outline change over time? Perhaps as the decades and centuries pass our shape will become less detailed, less defined and recede into something more general. Will we merge into a collective outline, a generation or a population? Or will all the mundane facts hang around, clear as day, in horrendously crisp resolution?