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ANIMAL EXPRESSIONISM

By

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A thesis submitted to the faculty of the Graduate
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Master of Fine Arts

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My painted animals stare, gaze, intrude upon the viewer's space capturing moods; perhaps fear, terror, curiosity, humor. Their expressions, anthropomorphic in nature, arrest our attention. An untamed "animal" side to our own natures is evoked.

Varied species co-exist within common boundaries, creating an ambiguity as to whether each creature experiences dominance or intimacy.

The colors are bright, primary, unblended, arbitrarily selected, and atypical to the natural colors of each object. Their selection involves an intuitive, interpretative process. Strokes are quickly rendered. Immediacy is a key property. Within the picture frame are uncharted movements and secret dialogues, as a comic strip clipped of its last section with the message left unresolved. The nature of that uncertainty lingers, suggesting renewal, as every new stroke and every new color breaks against the completion cycle and erupts into a wholly new space.

In my paintings I am testing an extreme of human vulnerability by placing a mirror between us and the rest of the animal kingdom. Are we aware of the human/animal interdependence on this planet? Are their expressions our own and vice versa? The focus of each painting is the animal faces, and these are placed on the most

frontal plane of the painting to force confrontation and to create identification and/or empathy between the art audience and these creatures.

Pattern and decoration suffuse the work, so that no distinction exists between foreground and background elements. Shapes may be flatly rendered and there is a primitive, untutored quality overall which intensifies the sense of raw, untamed emotion emanating from these creatures.



