

MFAD2 Graduate Research Seminar

Draft Project Proposal

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Draft:

I would like to make a short film that focuses on the theme *Anthropomorphism*. The next question could be: what genre of the film? Well.. I'm actually finding that out. I hope it's going to be a crossover piece, where you can ask yourself: is this a documentary or a short film? I'm really looking forward to approaching this project as a documentary, but I'm happy to throw things in it that are fictional and make people question. Apart from the genre, I feel like it's more important to explore where the idea comes from. In this case, that will be a lot of questions, and maybe even personal frustrations about Humans relationship towards animals. I've been wrestling with this subject for a little while now. Since I'm not sure if I would be a good activist, I don't think so actually, film would be the medium to get the feeling that I can contribute a little to the discussion about our relationship with Others, in this case: Animals. Though it's going to be an easy process, it's going to be a challenge to find the right tone.

I've played around with found footage and archive material before, so I can imagine that I would start from there again. What's out there on the internet? What does it tell me? Can I use it? Can I use it directly or do I have to reconstruct what I'll find? So there's always the choice of shooting material myself. I hope to find that out by December, so I can have lots of time for the editing.

For now I'm planning to focus mainly on the research. So I'll go and do interviews with people in the field, concerning the subject of Anthropomorphism, and also read books and essays about this theme. Writer Amitav Ghosh recently wrote an essay: *The Earth was never what it seemed*, in a Dutch magazine called Groene Amsterdammer. In this essay he refers to the book called: *Images of Animals: Anthropomorphism and Animal Mind* from Eleen Crist. Amitav says that Eleen Crist is convinced of the fact that strictly avoiding anthropomorphism is causing us to fall into the same trap as before: thinking of animals as some kind of machinery creatures that have no mind, or soul, or ability to interpret things.

I feel like the research is a big part of the film, and it can bring me to places I didn't hear or think of before, but I also want to keep in mind that it's important for me to process all these different outputs to get to the core of things. So spending time in nature, daydreaming, being bored, those would be great solutions to the challenge of being too busy with text instead of intuition. Which I feel has to be in balance, if you want to make a good film.

Eventually the ideal scenario would be that the film is shown at a festival, but another challenge would be to think of this film in maybe a totally different context. For example: what would happen if the film could have some attention on the internet, on social media? That's a totally different area, and worth thinking about.