

We Animals:
Examining the Human Relationship with Animals
Photography by Jo-Anne McArthur

We Animals is a project that focuses on how animals are used in the human environment for food, clothing, research, experimentation, work, entertainment, and companionship. It uses photography to document human interactions with animals in an attempt to change the perspective of how humans view animals from simple objects or items of property into sentient beings worthy of moral significance. The *We Animals* project has contributed to over 100 campaigns worldwide aimed at ending animal suffering and has spawned a book (*We Animals*) and a documentary (*The Ghosts in Our Machine*).

It is the goal of this exhibition to expose viewers to the hidden animals being bred and used by global industries, the so-called ghosts in the machine of industrialization. Humans often value and protect companion animals and wildlife while neglecting to consider the worth of these hidden animals. The exhibition seeks to expose these animals as sentient individuals who feel the myriad emotions that result from human usage. The images focus on these emotional displays by the animals in an attempt to get viewers to empathize with the animals. What the exhibition **does not** do is attempt to manipulate the feelings of viewers through the use of in-your-face graphic imagery often commonly used by some advocates to bring attention to the plight of these animals, which too often results in apathy and misplaced disgust. Her photography beautifully captures the lives of her animal subjects in a way that endears them and the cause to viewers.

The project spans over a decade's worth of work from award-winning Canadian photojournalist Jo-Anne McArthur. She has traveled around

the world capturing these images, from developing nations to allegedly civilized societies. Her work includes visits to various types of farms and zoos, being embedded in both cruelty investigations and rescue attempts by animal welfare organizations and agencies, and capturing the “after” lives of animals who have been saved from cruelty, use, and abuse. Jo-Anne has been profiled and interviewed in numerous well-read publications and her photography has been displayed in exhibits worldwide, from Australia to Amsterdam to America.

In addition to this exhibition of Jo-Anne’s work, the Student Animal Legal Defense Fund will be hosting a screening of *The Ghosts in Our Machine* on April 2, 2015, at 6:00pm, featuring special guest Jo-Anne McArthur. Registration for the event can be done here: <http://msusaldfghostsscreening.eventbrite.com/>.

The MSU-COL chapter of SALDF would like to thank the following organizations for helping to sponsor the *We Animals* exhibit and the screening of *The Ghosts in Our Machine*:

