

Focus on Allison Hunter by Stefanie Adamczyk for *Frankfurter Rundschau Magazin*
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Stefanie Adamczyk: How did the idea come to you for “New Animals”? What was your intention?

Allison Hunter: ... I found the zoo to be the ideal setting for this new body of work that would relate to humans and non-human animals, and their complex relationship of dependency.

SA: Where did you take the pictures? Are they from your Zoo Series?

AH: The pictures are taken from two zoos, one in the Catskills (the one that was used for the Zoo Animal series) and the Houston Zoo.

SA: Did you use digital photography?

AH: I only used film photography because I couldn't afford the equivalent camera in digital format.

SA: Where does the backlight come from? Why did you use it?

AH: The backlight comes from my manipulation and from my original photograph. The question of why I use it is indeed more interesting. I am not sure about a conscious answer. Perhaps to some degree, it's formal. The light defines the edges, the location. On another level, it's symbolic and problematic. I grew up with sentimental images of animals in Catholic parables (think lamb of Christ, lamb of God, shepherd, etc.). That may influence my composition. But, consciously, I see sunlight as illuminating and warming living beings. I see it as a formal quality.

SA: How did you decide on which background color you'd take?

AH: I decide on the color by sampling the colors from the original background in the original photograph. The color that is the most like that from the original setting is sampled and used to create a background palette that keeps within the same palette as the foreground.

SA: Why is the horse picture still showing other elements?

AH: The horse was rented for a child's birthday, rented the way one might rent a clown. Thus, it was one animal that had the trappings of man self-consciously left on it. I decided to leave its red saddle as a sign of that situation.

SA: Where's the sheep's fourth leg?

AH: It's there! Look closer, to the left, you'll see it!

SA: Why are the photos untitled?

AH: Because titles are names we humans give things when we own them. We don't own these animals [in these photographs]. [Because of the composition I've constructed], they own us.