

Matthew Brower, *Developing Animals: Wildlife and Early American Photography*. Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2011, 244 pp., 42 black-and-white illus., \$25 U.S. paper, ISBN: 9780816654796

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both mass media and vernacular photography, they have fleshed out the narrative using formal analysis. Along with a pieced-together itinerary and the remnants of both reading lists and lecture topics covered in NDC courses, keen scrutiny of the photographs serves as the narrative spine of the book. The authors have relied on this analysis of the photographic evidence, rather than their father's voice, and there are few indications of either the commentary that may have accompanied the family slide show, or the audience response. The passage of time and difficulty recalling words spoken more than forty years ago no doubt prevented this inclusion, but the narrator's voice is nonetheless missed.

The analysis might also have benefited from greater attention to the place of economic development within a larger military and geo-political context. The touring itinerary in Africa suggests that the possibility of establishing trade relationships, in addition to diplomatic and military alliances, was an important consideration for course planners. As the authors acknowledge, economic initiatives and foreign aid were important elements of Western Cold War strategy, used to guard against the spread of communism in developing countries. The inclusion of Warren Langford, a career civil servant working for Customs and Excise of the Department of National Revenue, was perhaps linked to this policy. The authors acknowledge that their father's profile did not fit the model of the other participants from military or diplomatic career paths, but are uncertain as to why his participation was approved.

In other ways, the book is a brave look at the attitudes and prejudices of the post-war generation of Anglo-Canadians. The worst that might be said, perhaps, was that Langford was an intrepid traveler, a devoted father and "the right sort of chap." The all-male, white, exclusivity of the study group was characteristic of the era, an aspect of the past that the authors acknowledge without hesitation.

The obvious camaraderie among the group of all-male participants extended to their Iron Curtain counterparts, the Cold War binary between good and evil breaking down, ironically,

during the group's visit to segregated Berlin. Among the photographs the authors have included are those showing makeshift memorials to East Berliners who died trying to escape to the West. These photographs stand in contrast to images of uniformed Soviet military personnel, smiling and posing informally for the group's cameras. In this section of the book, photographs of check-points and barriers at various points along the Berlin Wall are offset by images of the group's visits to Soviet war memorials in both East and West Berlin. These pilgrimages honoured the sacrifices of the former World War II ally, even as they afforded members of the group a glimpse of life on the other side of the Wall. The authors have interpreted these final photographs as examples of dark tourism, a term drawn from theoretical studies of tourism and used to explain the popularity of sites of disaster and death. Within this analysis, former battlefields and monuments hold a particular fascination for tourists, this fascination also extending to the desire to photograph such sites as part of the touristic experience.

Although it is very much an exploration of the perspective of one individual, interpreted by members of his family, the book serves as a useful entry point into the experience and mentality of the Cold War period in Canada. The Canadian focus is particularly welcome because, too often, the experience of the Cold War is somehow associated with the United States and only peripherally with Canada. The selection of reprinted archival photographs is an additional resource, not only for their historical interest but also for ongoing interest in vernacular photography, or photography of the everyday. The book is in many ways a unique type of family photo album and personal archive, one that might easily have remained hidden from public view. It has instead been fruitfully exposed and thoughtfully examined by two scholars who have added to our knowledge of, not only the Cold War era, but the role of photography within this history.

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Matthew Brower, *Developing Animals: Wildlife and Early American Photography*. Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2011, 244 pp., 42 black-and-white illus., \$25 U.S. paper, ISBN: 9780816654796.

In the preface to *Developing Animals: Wildlife and Early American Photography*, curator and art historian Matthew Brower sketches out his early influences and the personal background from which his research interests originated. Beginning in Rochester in the late 1990s, where he did the graduate work that

led to this book, Brower encountered resistance towards his choice of animals as his research subject. He notes how significantly the terrain has shifted now that "animal studies" is a reputable, interdisciplinary field of academic inquiry, as opposed to a mere curiosity within the humanities. His own questions "around animals, display, and looking" (p. xi) contribute considerably to a field still in the relatively early days of its more widespread academic legitimacy, and *Developing Animals* will certainly be of particular interest to historians of photography and of animal representation.

The preface neatly sketches out the early days not only of Brower's project but also of his own life. He details his youthful work as a tree-planter and his growing sensitivity to animals, his well-honed sense of ethics and political outrage, and his very keen awareness of the intricacies of the nature/culture divide that played out in the world around him. He traces the origins of his project to a footnote in a paper he wrote on Robert Bateman and the way Bateman's close-up images of animals suggested an impossible proximity of viewer to creature. He took up the issue of Bateman's supposed vulgarity (Bateman was regarded in Brower's undergraduate education as the pinnacle of philistinism) as a kind of fuel to fire his own work in the maligned and "unserious" field of academic animal studies. I *liked* this Brower—hands ruddy from planting all those saplings and with an academic axe to grind—who turned to the undeniable "strangeness" of nineteenth-century photographs of animals as his primary subject of inquiry in his graduate studies, eventually coming to argue in these pages that "photography has shaped the way we see and think animals" (p. 96). Here in the short preface we get a sense of the author's unique voice, which seems lacking from the remainder of the book, where his prose becomes flatter and depersonalized. The book could have used more of this moxy and idiosyncrasy to make his research come alive to all, rather than just to those already invested in the subject.

Developing Animals positions late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century American photography of animals in nature as a pivotal "social practice within visual culture" (p. xvii) that shaped human attitudes about non-human animals and nature. The core of Brower's study argues for the importance of three specific practices in the field's early history: "camera hunting, the development of the photographic blind, and Abbott Thayer's attempts to photograph animal camouflage" (p. xix). Throughout, Brower establishes a distinction between photographs of animals in nature and the genre of wildlife photography, with its attendant discourse of an ahistorical, eternal "deep nature," which has monopolized our interpretation of these kinds of photographs. The rhetoric of wildlife photography leaves humans absent from the equation, and Brower seeks to reinsert us into view so that we can reimagine the human-animal relationship in more equitable ways. Brower is writing against photography's construction of humans as outside of nature, and argues that the real-world ramifications of believing ourselves to be separate from nature are evident in the damage we do to it.

To a general audience, these antiquated photographic practices might seem like novelties—odd blips in the forward march of the medium's progress—but Brower effectively redresses the lack of attention paid to this animal photography by historians and demonstrates its importance not only for the development of nature or wildlife photography but also for determining the

very dynamic between humans and animals in the world. He ultimately seeks to trouble "the separation of the human and the animal that photographic technologies have helped to enable" (p. xxx).

The visual regime Brower interrogates is based on a separation between the photographer and the photographed, a divide between human and nature that the realm of photography, due to its discourse of access through distance, cemented. He argues that nature photographs hide their own making, and the examples that he analyzes in his three primary chapters trace this trope. In examining the theoretical background in this field of studies, he sees the pioneering work in looking at animals by John Berger and Akira Lippit as trapped in a kind of Catch-22: If figuring the animal in representation is always corrupting, as their research appears to conclude, then how can an ethical relationship between human and non-human animals be cultivated? Brower is not willing to give up this goal as easily as they are: he always returns to the fact that the animals, and the relationships of photographers to them, are *real*. Instead, Brower places his work in the lineage of Jonathan Burt, author of *Animals in Film* (2002), who believes as Brower does that a more equitable relationship could develop from the dynamic between humans and animals at play in acts of indexical representation, particularly considering the ethical and affective impact that these images have on viewers. If Berger asked, "Why Look at Animals?," Brower (following Burt) is more interested in *how* we look at animals, and specifically how animal imagery "structures the understanding of animals" (p. xviii). Another key reference for Brower's work is Geoffrey Batchen's concept of "photopower" and his arguments about how photographs actually exercise power in the world; they enable and constrain new possibilities and have material impacts on institutions and frameworks, in short, "there are things that photographs do" (p. xxiv). Brower's studies of camera hunting, the photographic blind, and Thayer's animal camouflage photography represent "separate modalities of photopower" (p. xxvii).

While nature photographs may obscure their own production, all of Brower's examples point to how invasive and constructed they are. His project serves to demonstrate that they have a history that is of discursive value today. In the chapter "A Red Herring: The Animal Body, Representation, and Historicity," he draws our attention to the very earliest example of nature photography, which saw photographers inserting taxidermied animals into natural settings for their shots. Using as examples two photographs—of a heron and of a deer—that John Dillwyn Llewelyn took in Wales in the 1850s, Brower argues that this practice of using taxidermied animals was not a primitive step in the evolution of wildlife photography but was instead a distinct genre with its own motives. While acknowledging that the long exposure times of the era were one factor

in choosing immobile, stuffed animal figures for these tableaux, Brower also explains that in the Victorian era there was a different discourse around the authenticity of nature. Because Victorians lacked a concept of wildlife, photographs of these dead animals did not strike audiences as false, the way they do now: “In 1856, photographing a stuffed bird was a perfectly reasonable solution to the problem of getting a heron to pose for twenty minutes” (p. 7). The heron is present primarily “as a vehicle for the apprehension of the picturesque” (p. 8), the most desirable quality for Victorian images of nature. The chapter lays a methodological groundwork for the rest of the book by showing how “the analysis of early animal photography has to grapple with the conditions of human-animals relations extant at the time *and* with the role of animal photography in shaping those relations” (p. xxviii). Following Burt, Brower argues that animals were active agents in “driving the technological development of film and photography” (p. 21).

The second chapter, “Camera Hunting in America,” describes the popular 1890s practice of camera hunting, where amateur photographers adapted various hunting techniques to produce photographs of live animals in nature. Brower discusses the complexities of the circulation of these images as trophies of the photographer/hunter’s power. This chapter places great emphasis on the historical context of hunting in America at the time, as well as the emerging conservation movement, and how the practice of camera hunting fit into prevailing discourses around nationalism and gender. Brower cites, for example, Theodore Roosevelt’s spirited advocacy for hunting as a valuable means of cultivating male virility. While he explains how camera hunting was enabled by technical developments in shutter speed and new dry-plate processes, he is more interested in the social context in which the practice flourished, and how the hunters developed their own distinctive “discursive space.” He goes into engrossing detail about such intrusive techniques as blind-hunting, set-gun hunting, jacklighting, and dog-hunting, which tended to produce images of “startled, frightened, and angry animals” (p. 38). He discusses trophy photographs of hunters with their kill, and contextualizes them in terms of debates around sportsmanship and masculinity. With the advent of the telephoto lens and flash photography, taking photographs of animals became less a test of mettle, and a hitherto unknown distance between photographer and animal was introduced. The chapter ultimately suggests that any ruminations on the relationship between cameras and guns, death and the snapshot, must be carefully historicized. While this relationship is rhetorically deployed by numerous academics, Brower reminds us that “the metaphor [of camera as gun] was once taken literally” (p. 82).

The third chapter, “The Photographic Blind,” analyzes the emergence in 1890–1910 of the key technology for photo-

graphing animals in nature: the photographic blind, essentially any enclosure that hides the photographer from the object. Brower positions the blind as a “paradigm for human-animal relations and mode of spectatorship” (p. xxix), whose development signaled a shift in the discourse of camera hunting (from which it emerged) “from asserting the presence of the photographer to denying it” (p. 85). It is not just the photographer who disappears, but the viewer of the photograph is cloaked by a position of invisibility as well. Only if the human is absent could the animal in nature supposedly behave authentically: the animal-human divide ensured objectivity. Brower is fascinated by the moment of contact between photographer and animal, and finds most salient the interplay of human invisibility and animal visibility—with a new radical separation that promises not just authenticity but the evidentiary value that comes with it. He describes the photographic blind as an inversion of Bentham’s panopticon, an “abstract machine” that “produces a regime of animal truth” (p. 130). He posits, “What we see is what we would see if we were not there. The photographic blind presents these photographs to us as photographs taken as if we did not exist” (p. 122). For Brower, this erasure of humanity is a key structuring element of wildlife photography as a discipline, and it obscures the deep implications and often disastrous incursions of humans into nature.

In his final chapter, “The Appearance of Animals: Abbott Thayer, Theodore Roosevelt, and Concealing-Coloration,” Brower looks at Abbott Thayer’s 1890s photographs of taxidermied animals, which were intended to prove this photographer’s controversial theories that counter-shading in animal coloration is an “adaptive camouflage protecting its bearer” (p. xxx). When succeeding as evidence of Thayer’s theses, the animals in his photographs are in fact imperceptible. Since, for Thayer, animals are predisposed to invisibility as a defensive device, their photographic imperceptibility is more authentic than if they were visible to us. Brower asks what it could mean to photograph invisibility and how this complicates photography’s “bias toward visibility” (p. 136). Thayer’s photographs act as a kind of rupture in the ontology of photography as a visual medium: “[Thayer] felt that any representation that highlighted the animal’s visibility misrepresented their visibility” (p. 141). Thayer’s was a road not taken, as current representations of animals strive for greater and more spectacular visibility. Brower expands his analysis to discuss Roger Caillois’s concept of mimicry and his rejection of utility as an explanation for biological traits, favouring instead the idea that living creatures desire disguise, as they are drawn to the Other. Finally, addressing Kaja Silverman’s work on the gaze as “Otherness’ within the field of vision” (p. 185), Brower concludes that animal and human are mutually immersed in a shared visual field.

Throughout his study, Brower's research focuses on the circulation of the images, how they operated socially, rather than on their technical production or formal aesthetics. However, he expends excessive energy on description and interpretation, which seems unnecessary to argue his case when his research work with primary sources and recent theory and scholarship is so thorough. For example, in chapter one, describing Llewelyn's photograph *Piscator No. 2*, he writes,

The right side of the photograph is a lighter band of gray composed of two separate elements. In the upper right corner the light illuminates a bulge in the rock wall. In the right foreground the light illuminates a grassy bank topped by a mound of stones. The bank in the foreground situates the viewer and provides an entry point to the image by giving a sense of scale and distance with which to read the image. By contrast, the overgrowth along the back wall suggests a space of human absence. The heron falls on the nonhuman side of this divide. ... The structure of the image announces that the heron is its center (subject); this *is* a photograph of a heron (p. 3).

Brower's analysis here and elsewhere reads as overly subjective, which becomes a problem when his argument relies heavily

on his own interpretations of what is happening in a photograph. For example, Brower insists that the stuffed deer in Llewelyn's photograph *Deer Parking* presents a markedly more "botched" and artificially mannered pose than that in his photograph of the heron—a conclusion that is not as obvious as he presumes.

As I have suggested, Brower's writing is not dynamic, particularly as opportunities for humour or anecdote are largely neglected in favour of an occasionally plodding sobriety. The end result is that readers must endure some extra effort to appreciate the value of Brower's scholarship. Despite this, Brower's subject matter is unmistakably intriguing and his research is meticulous and expansive, bringing together a range of historical and contemporary material, including, vitally, his contextualizing scholarship on the media channels through which these photographs circulated. His book remains a cogent and compelling examination of the decisive impact that the practitioners of early animal photography has had on human-animal relations.

JON DAVIES

The Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery

Anne Bénichou (éd.), *Ouvrir le document. Enjeux et pratiques de la documentation dans les arts visuels contemporains*. France, Les Presses du réel, domaine *Pensée*, coll. *Perceptions*, 2010, 448 p., 32 ill. coul., 22 €, ISBN : 9782840663508.

Depuis l'art conceptuel jusqu'aux pratiques relationnelles, la question de la documentation de l'art est devenue un enjeu important des théories artistiques. Entre archive et œuvre, la documentation fait souvent office de courroie de transmission entre les artistes, les historiens et le public. Elle permet autant de fixer l'intégrité des œuvres que de saisir et diffuser les intentions de l'artiste de telle sorte qu'aujourd'hui, la documentation participe de la réévaluation de la notion d'œuvre. En effet, le document bénéficie en art d'une présence accrue par les propositions contemporaines qui l'exploitent non seulement pour ses propriétés factuelles, mais aussi esthétiques. Dès lors, s'introduisent les enjeux et les pratiques que l'ouvrage *Ouvrir le document*, édité par Anne Bénichou, suggère de couvrir et d'interroger. Rassemblés autour de la notion de document et de son incidence dans le champ des arts contemporains, Bénichou et les douze auteurs d'*Ouvrir le document* proposent un ensemble de quatorze essais et entretiens organisés en quatre parties déclinant les problématiques de la documentation. Ces auteurs pensent donc le document selon son usage artistique, son rôle de médiation, ses fonctions historiographiques et, enfin, sa valeur de script institutionnel.

La première partie, « Entre documentation et création », s'intéresse à la transformation de la relation entre l'œuvre et sa documentation, soit leur étonnante collaboration depuis la modernité. Parallèlement au renouvellement des modalités de la notion d'œuvre d'art, le document s'est émancipé de sa valeur strictement factuelle pour devenir partie intégrante de l'œuvre. Ainsi, cette partie examine la reconfiguration de l'opposition traditionnelle entre l'œuvre et sa documentation en s'appuyant sur des cas précis où le document fait littéralement œuvre. Si les livres d'artistes étudiés par Anne Mœglin-Delcroix illustrent précisément ce transfert d'art à la documentation entourant la démarche d'un artiste, Bénichou, avec le texte « Ces documents qui sont aussi des œuvres... », parvient quant à elle à fixer une définition claire de cette esthétique de la documentation. À partir de l'analyse de la mouvance des statuts d'œuvre et de document, Bénichou identifie deux modèles de perméabilité des statuts artistique et documentaire. Entre les œuvres éphémères et celles issues de l'imprimé, l'auteure fait état des possibilités de la documentation. Celle-ci interviendrait autant aux suites de l'œuvre, en participant à sa médiation et sa cohérence esthétique dans le temps, qu'en parallèle à l'œuvre, en se faisant autant objet d'archive qu'acte performatif. D'ailleurs, le texte de Judith Rodenbeck, « Presque-peinture, quasi-rituel, placage—Allan Kaprow et la photographie », par son analyse de l'évolution du rôle de la photographie au cœur des *happenings* de