

## **Roxanne Jackson: We Believe in Something**

August 28 through November 1, 2009

### **MINNEAPOLIS, AUGUST 20, 2009**

The Minnesota Artists Exhibition Program (MAEP) at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts presents "We Believe in Something," an ambitious solo exhibition featuring the work of Minnesota artist Roxanne Jackson. Through ceramic sculptures, wall installations, and video, Jackson critiques the complex presumptions that mark the differences between animals and humankind.

Working with a variety of concepts and mediums, Jackson explores a range of contemporary cultures for examples of human and animal hybridity and asks, "Are we more alike than different?" Before making her carefully molded sculptures, she has extensively researched Native American folklore, gleaned images from newspaper articles and nature magazines, and watched hours of film. Within all of this material, she is particularly attentive to specific instances of transformation in which humans take on animal traits and vice-versa.

For instance, Jackson's *White Diamond* (2009) is a buffalo head rendered in ceramic, white glaze, and flock whose origin is based on an important Native American symbol. Drawing on a Lakota story of a woman who appeared as a white buffalo, naturally born albino



- Opening Reception, Thursday, August 27, at 7 p.m.
- Artist's Talk, Thursday, September 17, at 7 p.m.
- Critics' Triologue with Dr. John Troyer, research fellow at the Center for Death & Society, University of Bath, Thursday, October 15, at 7 p.m.

Roxanne Jackson, *White Diamond*, 2009, ceramic, white paint, and flock



Roxanne Jackson, *Untitled*, 2009, synthetic hair, ceramic, glaze, and flock, variable dimensions

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buffaloes are viewed as good omens that mark an era of salvation. In contrast, some sub-Saharan African cultures profess a superstition against albino animals, believing them to be bad luck and a threat to social conventions. Although these perceptions of natural mutations are seemingly contradictory, they show how human-animal interaction can convey capacities and powers.

In addition to folklore and superstition, Jackson is equally interested in the horror film genre as a realm where human and animal tensions are visualized. Often movie monsters represent human-animal hybridity, aberrations of nature, and dangerous combinations of strength and extra-human powers. Werewolves, vampires, and zombies are just some of the movie monsters that combine human traits with animal senses as well as predatory instincts.

Recognizing how these creatures from literature and film are pushed to the fringes of society, Jackson makes her sculptural heads emphasize the monstrous as the boundary between instinctual nature and culture. In *The Devouring Mother* (2008), a wolf's bared teeth and snarling muzzle emerge from the mouth of a human head. Jackson's precisely molded and glistening glazed forms are both beautiful and grotesque, as they ask the viewer to consider how animal instincts remain part of human nature.

This exhibition is presented by the Minnesota Artists Exhibition Program, an artist-run curatorial department of the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, which is made possible by generous support from the Jerome Foundation. For more about MAEP, visit [www.artsmia.org/maep](http://www.artsmia.org/maep)

## ABOUT THE MINNEAPOLIS INSTITUTE OF ARTS

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