The Nature of the Beast: 
Meditations on Life, Death, and the Art of Collecting 
Curated by JD Powe and Morbid Anatomy 
Opening: September 9, 2021 
On view: Sept. 10 - Oct. 23, 2021, Tues.-Sat. 11am-6pm 
Location: 3D Online and at 291 Church Street, NYC 

From intricate Victorian dioramas featuring squirrels and frogs engaged in whimsical human pursuits, to a stunning array of taxidermy pets frozen in time, to hundreds of ashtrays and inkwells made from the preserved hooves of horses, this exhibition explores the curious human drive to possess, preserve and memorialize other members of the animal kingdom via the astounding taxidermy collection of J.D. Powe. The exhibit strives to entertain and enlighten as it explores the tenuous modus vivendi of oscillating between joy and madness that is known only to the most dedicated of collectors, while bridging the gap between past and present cultural norms. It will also offer a tantalizing glimpse into the unique mind-space of an antique taxidermy collector’s attempt to strike the precarious balance between benign pastime and outright obsession. The Nature of the Beast is an apexart Invited Curator Exhibition. For the latest information on the exhibition and related events, visit apexart.org/powe.php or contact elizabeth.larison@apexart.org. apexart is pet friendly.

* Special thanks to Zach Ishmael, photographer, for images from Best Friends Forever: The World's Greatest Collection of Taxidermy Dogs, by J.D. Powe (Cernunnos/Abrams 2021).


Morbid Anatomy is a project dedicated to the interstices of art and medicine, death and culture. Founded by multidisciplinary artist Joanna Ebenstein, today it is run by Ebenstein and Laetitia Barbier.

press release

#TheNatureoftheBeast