

ZOEPOLIS. NON-ANTHROPOCENTRIC DESIGN AS AN EXPERIMENT IN MULTI-SPECIES CARE

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ABSTRACT

The paper provides an introductory discussion and a curatorial case study on design practice that contributes to a constitution of a human and non-human community as well as challenges and expands the notion of care to other species. It starts with an examination of existing approaches to design that take into consideration relations between humans and non-humans. Departing from a critique of discussed perspectives we then introduce a concept of zoepolis based on theories of Will Kymlicka and Sue Donaldson, Donna Haraway, Joanna Bednarek and Bruno Latour. In the second part of the article we discuss the exhibition “Zoepolis. Design for Plants and Animals” we have curated as an experiment in creating a multi-species community in which material environment and objects were seen as mediators between species and facilitators of cohabitation.

INTRODUCTION

The human has been a point of reference, an object and a model for Western architecture and design for ages. The concept of a hierarchy of beings where a human is placed above other animals and plants has been prevalent in Western modernity. It's rooted both in the Judeo-Christian tradition and the philosophy of Aristotle who claimed that everything nature has created serves for the purpose of a man (Klekot, 2019). The Greek philosopher has constructed the hierarchy of beings from plants to humans according to their possession of a soul or its lack and a type of soul the being owns. The

“Man”, other Greek philosopher Protagoras claimed, is “the measure of all things” (Braidotti, 2013: 13). This universal model has been renewed in the Renaissance. Leonardo da Vinci's drawing of a Vitruvian Man illustrates the idea that a human body and its proportions is a natural, perfect and invariable source of architectural and design system based on geometry. The drawing illustrates one of the volumes of *De architectura tractate* by Roman architect and engineer Vitruvius. The work has thus designated anthropocentric conceptual frames for philosophy, theory and practice of architecture. The Vitruvian Man is obviously white and male. The congruent white, male model appeared again in the 20th century. He's been used in a system of proportions elaborated by Le Corbusier in his work *Le Modulor* from 1951. This athletic man of a future whose height was 183 cm has served to create a universal system for specifying proportions and space relations in architecture. It's been used by the architect in his design for Unité d'Habitation in Marseilles among others.

This model has been questioned primarily from the critical theories stances. Within postcolonial studies it's been noticed that the man is predominantly white and his customs refer only to the European tradition. A design manual published in India — probably one of many of this kind — shows drawings and schemes which relate to an “Indian body” with its distinct proportions and typically Indian bodily instructions, such as sitting on a floor (Kumar Vyas, 2000: 58-59). The question of a relation between identity politics and design is of course relevant here, but at the moment it can be put aside. Feminists have addressed sex and gender of the dominant model and has called for design, architecture and urbanism made from a women's perspective. Thus a number of consumer products such as a car, Volvo YCC, designed by and for women (Sparke, 2010: xii). More thorough ideas appear when it comes to designing women-oriented cities. Gender mainstreaming in urban design can result in, among other solutions, widening footpaths which makes them more accessible for people with strollers or adding extra lighting which improves safety on streets (Chalaby: 2017). What remains is questioning anthropocentrism as such. The attempt to challenge the human-centred paradigm in design is the purpose of this paper.

THE APPROACHES TO HUMAN AND NON-HUMAN RELATIONS

The reflection concerning design for plants and animals (or design with animals) is on the occasion undertaken by urbanists and architects as well as by critical animal studies theoreticians. Jennifer Wolch (2010), an urban planner who is working on sustainable development and the problem of non-human residents in urban space is suggesting to consider „multi-species theory of the city” which is situated in the framework of “eco-socialist, feminist and anti-racist urban planning practice” (Wolch, 2010: 226-227). This is an approach which can be situated in the framework of wildlife protection. Wolch explores the ways capitalism, globalisation and urbanisation influence animals and what the implications of these processes are; how the urban practices and people’s attitudes define the possibility of assisting non-human lives by urban ecologies as well as how the violence against animals can be prevented by means of law, urban planning and design practice. Wolch simply proposes the reintegration of humans and nature, which would result in situated knowledge humans would gain about the lives of animals and their ways of being in the world. In theory such a knowledge would stimulate re-thinking of practices of everyday life in a way that it would take into account the needs and well-being of non-human inhabitants. The main weakness of this perspective is unarticulated belief that the primal, uninfected natural world that was destroyed by humans because of processes of urbanisation somewhere out there still exists. This is where the postulate of “re-naturalization” and the idea of re-inviting nature to the cities come from, just as if the initial crime against nature was getting rid of it from urban spaces at the beginning. According to Donna Haraway (In: Bakke, 2010: 60) dividing nature and culture from each other is a legacy of inherited violence and the only way to act against it, is to accept there is no going back to nature. Wolch does not explore the contemporary, existing and often complex relations between humans and non-humans that are based on co-evolution where we live as companion species (Haraway, 2003) or remain in a conflict. Haraway writes (2003: 62): “The task is to become coherent enough in an incoherent world to engage in a joint dance of being that breeds respect and response in the flesh, in the run, on the course. And then to remember how to live like that at every scale, with all the partners”.

The question of how to include animals into the design process that would result in creation of non-anthropocentric spaces was also raised by Edward M. Dodington, an architecture graduate who discussed the subject in his thesis *How To Design with the Animal. Constructing Posthumanist Environments* (2009). Dodington’s reflection inspired by the work of Donna Haraway, Jacques Derrida and Cary Wolfe is based on the premise to build pro-animal spaces and such architectural environment that takes into account the species’ multi-voice. *Designing with* and not only *designing for* non-human actors is a perspective and simultaneously a method of changing conditions of

architecture production. Acknowledging the anthropocentric dimension of architecture is a starting point to include into the process of designing the perspective of the Other and experiment with building radical examples of trans-species habitats.

In that way the architecture becomes a tool that allows to give a *response-able* answer to different species and include their specificity, i. e. consider what senses dominate among particular species and what their performed schemes of tacit knowledge are (Dodington, 2009: 42). It also enables using it as a tool that attracts different forms of life, in order to create trans-species communities. Therefore, according to Dodington the posthumanistic perspective could be introduced to the architectural practice by firstly, diminishing the interspecies distance and entering into a multi-species dialogue (spacial, corporeal) aimed at preventing humans from consolidating the belief that they represent the unique species. Secondly, by treating architecture both as a tool and a process and by creating experimental spaces in unobvious and often extreme natural contexts where it is possible to design for a life and not for the human lives only. The architecture is thus seen here as a creation of utilitarian „structures” that extend and materialise already existing processes and is oriented towards the revival of trans-species relations.

One of the most popular approaches when it comes to designing for non-humans in the city is the discourse of wildlife preservation. Its main attempt is to integrate animals and plants into an urban space in a way that ensures them comfort and conditions for safe reproduction as well as to counteract negative influence of urban infrastructure on their lives. The problem with this perspective is mainly that although it takes into account the needs of animals (not that often of plants, however) these are defined by human experts and therefore do not challenge the very relations between humans and non-humans. In other words, this approach reproduces the relations of inequality which are based on the selective care towards species humans consider valuable or useful and — in the discourse of wildlife preservation — situates them on a position of weakness, care-required and dependent on the human infrastructure only. However, we do not think this approach is harmful or unnecessary. It is more than obvious many species require protection and care. But this strategy strengthens *status quo* and that is why does not offer political alternative which would help to transform relations between humans and non-humans by the means of material objects. As Monika Bakke stated, theoreticians such as Donna Haraway or Bruno Latour highlight that the case is to not save the nature but to socialise it. The nature preservation discourse also enhances the division on nature and culture, which the latter one represented by human beings tends to execute the possessed power over other species, protecting one and eliminating other.

This last remark indicates a second problem with this approach, that is speciesism that divides animals into useful and attractive and pests (in case of plants:

weeds). Under protection are only those animals we humans find valuable. Jennifer Wolch (2010: 230) remarks that people make cities more or less attractive for animals (birth control, feeding, providing water for wild animals etc.) but these activities are based on culturally-acquired attitudes towards animals and are grounded in beliefs concerning them but also on the very behaviour of non-humans: their charm or lack thereof, tendency to destroy city infrastructure or less so on ecological benefits. The material representation of these inequalities are objects particularly designed for birds in the city. Birds that we have sympathy for, regarded as harmless and full of charm, such as tomtit receive nesting boxes. However, these that are held in disrepute and suspected of gems carriage such as pigeons can encounter spikes that are supposed to prevent them from seating themselves on buildings and city infrastructure. The similar hierarchy can be recognised in relation to plants. One of the obvious examples is the cultural difference between a meadow and a lawn. The meadow is coming into existence spontaneously, the lawn is carefully taken care of by gardeners and therefore a part of subjugated, civilised, aesthetically attractive and harmless flora. This way institutionalised protection concerns only the flora that was planted and maintained by humans (“keep off the grass”). The flora that is classified as weeds is eliminated. So when it comes to urban greenery the division is completely arbitrary.

The hierarchy between humans and non-humans is also defined by the very act of indicating the interspecies difference. The human belief in its uniqueness as species is reproduced even in the recent and popular publications that are aimed at introducing non-human perspective (Wohlleben 2016, 2017). So often the main criteria which remains as valuable is likeness to humans. These animals who just as we have consciousness, emotions, fall in love, create social structure etc. are considered as more valuable than those who biologically and culturally differ from humans to a large extent. Arbitrariness of creating such an interspecies difference is explored by many artists and designers who by using the tools of their practice try to empathise with non-human lives. Often by the means of visual tools they try to challenge the fact of upright human posture (see projects such as *The Refusal* by Jo Longhurst and *Waiting for High Water* by Jana Strebak) as well as to employ technology for *becoming* an animal and fight the limitations of human body (see *In the eyes of the animal* by Marshmallow Laser Feast studio, *I wanna deliver a dolphin* by Ai Hasegawa and *Cattle* by Monika Zawadzki).

One of the interesting approaches aimed at empathising with non-human perspective is the politics of radical care. Kathy High, an artist who suffers from autoimmune disease decided to take care of three retired laboratory rats representing HLA-B27 model that was genetically modified. The rats’ immune system was impaired due to implanted human DNA into their own. These rodents who share with us the DNA, Matilda, Tara and Star took up residence in a special estate that resembled the structure of a city and the artist took great

care of them: she provided homeopathic therapy, healthy diet and leisure time. High’s project is a touching and subtle expression of transgenic bonds as well as a study on the complex human and non-human relations and possibility to notice the shared trans-species suffering due to the illness. In the *Rat Love Manifesto* (2005) an artist claimed: „I receive messages from them, articulated by trans-species translator who recently told me that rats have no much to say but what they say is meaningful. They speak to me as a group. That they are very happy because you give them love and take good care of them. They like people and they do their own research on them”.

Relations between humans and other species are not only complex but also — as in the Kathy High’s project — unapparent. Anthropologist Anna Tsing (2012) claims that human nature is defined by the relations with other species. So acknowledging mutual dependency between humans and non-humans is key to understand the hybrid and indistinct nature of these connections. However, challenging human perspective as an attempt to empathise and understand the way non-humans experience the world might be problematic because of the two reasons. Firstly, in many cases the main premise of artists and designers is not the very attempt to put oneself in the shoes of particular animals. We do not claim that i.e. Kathy High’s project is based on false motifs or that her genuine connection with rats is untrue. Contrary, we think they are based on sincere intentions. However, we also think that attempts to empathise with the lives of non-humans do not overcome the anthropocentric perspective and therefore instrumentalise every undertaken effort of this kind. We think that introducing non-human perspective is important just as long as it enables to initiate some emotional processes and response in human beings.

ZOEPOLIS

The discussed approaches of design for plants and animals are in many ways insufficient since they do not take on the problem of interspecies relations directly, both these already existing and those possible to be established. The discourse of wildlife preservation, animal rights laws, the artistic attempts to empathise with non-human perspective or the critical approaches aiming at re-thinking our connections with plants and animals do not challenge the basis of anthropocentric perspective in which the man remains the only valuable point of reference. What we are interested in is the radical perspective in which material objects would serve as mediators in creating egalitarian multi-species community based on manifold connections. In other words, we are interested in design for plants and animals in a political dimension.

We find the community important on both levels: genetic and biological, as well as political. Manuela Rossini (2006: 15), a theoretician of posthumanism highlights: “human and non-human bodies are in constant exchange with each other and with their environment; they constitute each other through relationality and dynamic interactions”. The key point here is the reflection of Donna Haraway who introduced

the notion of “companion species” that is much wider and diverse category than “companion animals” embracing beings such as rise, tulips or intestinal bacteria. The philosopher also notices that these species constitute what human life is and *vice versa* (Haraway, 2012: 251). She highlights the reciprocity and multidimensionality of relations giving an example of co-evolution of a dog and a man. Both these species became what they are because of mutual influences (the category of deep time inscribed into the DNA) as well as due to the contemporary relations and exchanges, which Haraway illustrates at the beginning of “The Companion Species Manifesto” with a poetic story about symbiogenesis between the author and her female dog Cayenne Pepper who with her saliva passes microorganism that penetrate human cells (Haraway 2012: 241). The idea of trans-species relations explored by Haraway is a radical gesture towards the “implosion of nature and culture in the relentlessly historically specific, joint lives of dogs and people who are bonded in significant otherness” (Haraway, 2003: 16).

In this context also the thoughts of Joanna Bednarek (2017) are inspiring in terms of the structure of a modern political community of humans and non-humans. Bednarek builds her arguments on quite an apparent and common sensical perspective of a political subject, understood as an entity having ability to speak and resulting from it its right to equality. However, further she argues that the case here is not the thoughtless attempt of linking the ability to speak with rationality and politics (Bednarek, 2017: 115-118). The theoretician highlights the role of semiotic activity (iconic signs and index signs are not reserved for humans only) concerning the whole nature. Bednarek claims it is possible to find it even among simplest organisms. Moreover, the semiotic activity does not mean effective transmission of information between entities, it rather refers to a political gesture because it interacts with the entire context of a life of the organism. Living organisms by shaping their surroundings are producing signs: “every organism produces signs because it is interrelated with other organisms and inanimate surroundings (Bednarek, 2017: 138). So the key concept here is the locality of performed politics in the human and non-human community. “It is about searching — each time locally within specific configurations — points that will allow to establish a connection, create a bond and embrace other entities with empathy, even if they are completely dissimilar” (Ibidem: 140). In this perspective the key notion for us is *zoe* understood as “life as such”, including all beings and deprived of borders between species. It is not an individual life but life in relations, seen as a network of connections of beings that are not isolated from one another.

That is why excerpted from Sue Donaldson and Will Kymlicka (2011) as well as from the article of Wolch the notion zoopolis we transform into much wider one, that is *zoopolis* that inherently encompasses the issues of relations and multi-species community. Zoopolis refers both to the idea of human and non-human community and to its material dimension in a form of a city and

objects that would mediate and stimulate coming into existence of such a community. The point of reference for Donaldson’s and Kymlicka’s concept is a negative assessment of activities performed by the animals right movement (Donaldson & Kymlicka, 2011: 2), which in the authors’ opinion in the global scale is an example of a great failure, taking into consideration forecasts concerning the significant growth in meat production to 2050. According to the authors the lack of significant transformations in human and non-human relations is connected to the inappropriate language and discourse the contemporary debates on the condition and welfare of animals are held. The authors of the concept of zoopolis distinguish three moral approaches towards animals that instead of introducing change, paradoxically help to reproduce *status quo*. These are: the discourse of the welfare of animals (we can use animals provided that we ensure them decent lives and death conditions), ecological (putting whole ecosystems above the individual lives of species and beings) and animals basic rights movement (concentrating on negative rights: the right for not suffering, for not being owned, for not being tortured etc., and neglecting the positive ones: duties we as humans have towards animals, i.e. the right for free settling, the right to be included in the processes of designing cities, districts, buildings and so on).

Donaldson and Kymlicka are calling for the necessity to develop a new moral frame which would allow to discuss effectively and would offer the real change when it comes to relations between humans and non-humans. The concept of zoopolis is based primarily on politicising the laws of animals resulting in granting them different degrees of citizenship. *Wild animals* should be able to constitute sovereign communities living in great distances from humans and having infeasible right to the occupied territory. Other, *liminal animals* (such as pigeons, raccoons, squirrels; neither wild nor domesticated, the ones which presence people accept but also who are often treated by them as pests in the city) should have the status of residents, immigrants whose participation in the political community should not be excluded. *Domesticated animals* should be granted with full rights citizenship due to the fact of ours and theirs centuries-old mutual co-dependence. All these relations are characterised by a moral burden and complexity, from which our human duties occur with regard to animals. Zoopolis, the community of humans and non-humans must be thus based on a respect towards their individual existence and effective protection of their interests. Donaldson and Kymlicka refer to the meaning of respect (in a broader sense of: holding something in high regard, to constitute polis where different species meet) and relational duties such as: accommodation, care or hospitality.

But how can we transfer these concepts to the realm of specific politically-driven design practices? French philosopher Bruno Latour (Latour, 2004: 8-10) notices that division on allegedly one nature and dispersed cultures is ineffective politically because it does not lead to any sensible decisions concerning humans and non-

humans. Therefore, he highlights the need for establishing “The Parliament of Things”. The community which would constitute the Parliament could not be formed by simple adding elements of nature and culture. The political procedure should be built on the premise that human and non-human beings are not treated as separate entities.

The concept of zoepolis challenges the traditional practice of design and invites the perspective of non-anthropocentric design. We decided to use a medium of an exhibition as a training ground to see how this concept could be applied to design practices.

ZOEPOLIS: A CURATORIAL CASE STUDY

The exhibition *Zoepolis. Design for Plants and Animals* was organized as a part of an interdisciplinary scientific grant *Cartographies of strangeness, otherness, and (ex) inclusion. The perspective of contemporary philosophy and art* operated the Faculty of Philosophy and Sociology, University of Warsaw. It took place in Dizajn BWA Wrocław gallery from 17th November 2017 to 14th January 2018. The purpose of the exhibition was to consider the possibility of creating a human-non-human community that would be mediated through material objects. The projects shown were completed in cooperation with invited designers and artists who were asked to challenge the dominant notion of human-centred design. As curators we worked individually with the participants in order to find a common ground between their individual interests and expertise and the subject of the exhibition. Each project represented one of the following approaches: either speculative or critical (Malpass, 2017). The former referred to solutions which attempted to answer the question of design for multi-species community. They were however not ready consumer items, rather — following ideas formulated by Fiona Raby and Anthony Dunne — “tools to better understand the present and to discuss the kind of future people want” (Dunne & Raby, 2013: 2). Design was here a means of speculating how things could be, a trigger for discussion and inspiration for imagination as well as a specific testing ground for ideas and their embodiments in tangible objects. The latter were more of a critique of existing relationships between humans and non-humans. They were less future-oriented, more focused on a present reality.

Dogs were a subject of the *Leash*, proposed by fashion designer Nenukko. It departs from the notion of dogs and humans as companion species formulated by Donna Haraway (Haraway, 2003). This connection imposes obligations on both species and the *Leash* is a metaphor of this relationships. It is designed to question the elements of violence inherent in the traditional form of a leash and its use. This common object gives a possibility of putting it on the dog's neck while the other end of it is being held in a human hand, which serves to control the animal. In the *Leash* the dog and the man form an organic whole thanks to a soft, wrapping cloth. The form of clothing prevents the use of force against the dog. At the same time, the other end of the ‘leash’ is fastened to the diaphragm area, the human gravity point, which also gives the dog enough power to pull the

owner, and yet the responsibility for the human who becomes susceptible to loss of balance. This specific form symbolises both care and unity as well as a potential to overuse of power against the other: either a dog or a man. While reflecting on a problem of power relations and abuse inherent in human-non-human relations, the *Leash* goes one step further in trying to balance the possibility of violence while at the same time merging it with notions of care and mutual responsibility between a dog and his human. Following the idea of companion species (Haraway, 2003), the *Leash* highlights the observation that there are no separate species: *homo sapiens* and *canis lupus familiaris*. On the contrary, both species have co-evolved and are interdependent in a deep time perspective. *The Leash* is therefore not only a metaphor of this interconnection, but also a tool for exercising mutual care and a possibility of violence. It therefore challenges the prevalent idea of a human who is a ‘master’ of a dog and a *homo sapiens* who has domesticated a wild wolf. At the same time the work, by granting an agency to a dog, grants him the citizenship as proposed by Kymlicka and Donaldson (2011). If a *domesticated animal* is supposed to be a citizen, it is given not only the rights, but also some responsibilities. Taking care of his human can be one of them.

Three works were devoted to the very concept of *zoe*, the vital life of fluxes, flows of energy and constant movement. In Greek there's been two words which refer to life but each one means a different thing. While *bios* refers to a specific life of an individual with given qualities, *zoe* means “life as such” with no borders, hierarchy, contours. It's the theme of a series of collages by graphic design studio Fontarte that explain the different types of coexistence of living organisms: non-human animals, plants, bacteria, humans, and artificial intelligence. The work and its interpretation of the term *zoe* allow to blur the differences between different types of beings and focus on what's common: a vital matter in multilateral relations and constant flux (Bennett, 2010). From the perspective of *zoe* there is no such thing as death, only a transformation of one matter into another. In other words, a decay of one's body is the beginning of another life. Alicja Patanowska's installation *Composter* offers a literal illustration of this concept. In the middle of the gallery's space the designer installed a big container with translucent walls. She filled it with some organic leftovers from grocery shops nearby. As time passed by, the visitors could observe the work of fungi and bacteria, the natural decomposers which feed with dead organic matter. The container was supplemented with some bottles of biohumus, a natural nutrient for plants. Visitors of the gallery could take a bottle home and see how a decayed organic matter actually helps to fertilise the soil. The composter was accompanied by a series of satellite photographs depicting old burial places. The intensity and vitality of the greenery seen on the photos indicated that the most fertile places were those where humans had been buried. We don't like to think of ourselves as elements of the circulation of matter. The work highlighted though that human body is no worse nourishment for decomposers

than any other dead organic matter. It can also be easily transformed into another life by making the soil fertile. In her work Alicja Patanowska speculated on the idea of a democratic trans-species relationship, within which circulation, decomposition and recycling of living and inanimate matter take place. What happens when a human corpse, just like any other animal or plant body, is subjected to composting? Instead of a ritual burial, can such body be re-enacted into the natural cycle, where everything is connected, things pervade, intertwine and draw from one another, and eventually nothing is wasted? In the *Composter* the boundaries between human and non-human as well as between nature and culture have been blurred. Following Bruno Latour's idea of the "The Parliament of Things" (Latour, 2004), the elements in the subterranean laboratory of transforming one matter into another are not simply a sum of components. They form a constant flux of vibrant matter (Bennett, 2010) where a separate, consistent subject doesn't exist anymore.

Micro-world was a subject of Małgorzata Gurowska's work *Alphabet*. The author was also responsible for the visual identity of the exhibition which seamlessly entered into the gallery space and "invaded" it with the myriad of abstract signs-microbes. The work was composed of forms which could be interpreted as microorganisms, viruses, cells, organic or inorganic molecules. No precisely defined meaning was intended. The aim was to draw attention to the fact that from a biochemical point of view, differences between different living organisms don't play a role. Moreover, from a perspective of vital matter, whether a molecule is organic or not, is not really a point. Anthropologist Tim Ingold argues that "once we abandon the conceit that form is simply imposed upon the stuff of the material world – either from within, by a genetic template, or from without, by an architectural one – the conventional division between growing and making no longer seems so hard and fast as we are inclined to think" (Ingold, 2013). Indeed, all life on our planet is derived from one living cell which had been made up of inanimate components somewhere in the ocean billions of years ago. The work commented also on recent findings on human microbiome. We are formed and interact with millions of microscopic beings: bacteria and viruses which inhabit our bodies. They allow us to live while also transforming us by constantly altering our DNA. The abstract *Alphabet* became a metaphor for these relationships and flows, a resilient, complex structure that infects, modifies, but also animates. The elements of the installation interacted with the objects on display and its architecture, by expanding and mutating during exposure, as well as constantly staying subjected to interference.

Human-non-human coexistence in cities was a subject of a work *New Technical Terms* by architect Maciej Siuda. The author printed out a comprehensive document, the government's law on the technical conditions to be met by residential buildings and their location and made a significant intervention to its contents. He adjusted the law with the principles which take into account the presence and welfare of animal

and plant species. The content of the document introduced concepts such as multi-species housing (instead of 'multi-family housing'), complemented the room lighting rules with guidelines for plant species, and even in addition to the regulations for water containers it set guidelines for the design of bird feeders. Thus this speculative normative act went beyond the manifesto – it proposed a hypothetical reality in which the consideration of solutions for non-humans has become a standard. The document was supplemented with a drawing which depicted the proposed "multi-species housing" in architectural practice. *New Technical Terms* is a practical attempt to make a step towards the introduction of the full citizenship rights of and some rights of residents to the animals (and also plants) as proposed by Donaldson and Kymlicka (2011). Having in mind different relationships between humans and domesticated and non-domesticated animals, the architect's contribution was to write a normative act in which the non-humans would be treated as subjects in the sphere which has traditionally served humans while possibly diminishing harm made to other species (wild nature preservation paradigm). The act of re-writing the law introduces non-humans not as subjects of preservation, but as citizens which inhabit the same spaces as humans do.

CONCLUSION

In our opinion questioning the Vitruvan model from a perspective of other species is still a challenge for designers and design theoreticians. The question is: how can we involve non-humans in design processes in a way which is neither an exploitation nor adjusting other species to human lifestyles and places we have designated for the others? The first approach doesn't necessarily mean breeding or cultivation for human purposes. Recent explorations into bio design where other species take part in creation of objects and solutions don't have to bring any suffering to the organisms. Moreover, their objectives usually refer to ideas of sustainability and seek to minimise environmental damage. Nevertheless these experiments are still conducted from anthropocentric perspective where other species serve to answer the needs of a human. The second approach is the one which relates to our friendly relations with animals and plants we accept and tolerate and is funded on the above mentioned concept of speciesism.

The question is how can we think of design practices which would include other species on an equal basis and which would contribute to a creation of a radical multi-species community? Following Bruno Latour's anti-essentialist critique of nature and the idea of impossibility of keeping nature and culture, human and the Other separate (Latour, 2004) we find perfectly valid to introduce *the political* into the relationships between humans and non-human actors. This could translate into design practice that would be fueled first and foremost by empathy as we tried to present the approach in the works gathered in the exhibition. Each of the designs expresses the desire to challenge the interspecies relations and is an exercise in radical empathy towards

the Other as well as brings into the light a new political vision of multi-species community. The concept of zoopolis does not solve the problems of contemporary human-oriented design practices, neither it is free of fallacies of introducing the non-anthropocentric perspective to design. However, we claim it is a useful starting point for rethinking what it means to be human and it is necessary if we want to practice design which cares also for other species.

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