

HIDDEN

POWERFUL IMAGES TO INSPIRE CHANGE

BY JENNY MONTGOMERY

Jo-Anne McArthur and Keith Wilson have accomplished quite the feat with *HIDDEN: Animals in the Anthropocene*. Collaborating as editors, they've brought together the work of 40 top animal photojournalists from around the world who are dedicated to exposing the conditions that so many animals are subjected to because of humans.

It's a beautiful book that you'll probably need to pick up with both hands (12.6" x 9.5" x 1.5"). And, yes, its stunning photographs are disturbing and will make you reflect on your own lifestyle and consumer habits...and that's the point. These images are intended to stick with you.

Divided into 13 sections according to theme—for example, Industrial Farming, Markets, Entertainment and Fashion—the editors focus on exposing what happens “behind the scenes” in various industries or situations involving the use or consumption of animals. As McArthur says, “Animal industries should be transparent because they serve the public, but they are just the opposite, with multi-million dollar lobbying efforts keeping their exploits concealed. Incredibly, they have legislated this. Such is the threat of documentarians and whistleblowers. Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations and other industries that use animals do not want cameras around. The reason for that is simple: when there are cameras, there is documentation of systemic cruelty that many consumers would oppose. Evidence documented inside CAFOs shows cruelty, confinement, abuse, and incredibly rough working conditions for labourers too. The paranoia of the industry is so strong that animal photojournalists who trespass can be charged as terrorists under the U.S. Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act. It's absurd! And all the more reason to uncover what, and who, is hidden.”

These photojournalists have chosen to face the risks and emotional weight of witnessing such difficult conditions in order to tell these important stories and advocate for animals. Amy Jones, one of the photographers featured in *HIDDEN*, probably echos what drives many animal photojournalists when she says, “There is a powerful urgency to this work, and an unsettling but compelling force urges us to continue it: if we investigators don't document this suffering, then it remains hidden and untold.” Aaron Gekoski, another photographer

involved in the project, says, “You see the best and worst of humanity. There are few tools as powerful as photography for evoking change.” Aitor Garmendia, whose work is also featured in *HIDDEN*, emphasizes the effectiveness of visual imagery as well: “Graphic journalism has enormous communication potential and is perhaps the tool with the greatest impact in the animal rights movement.” Continued on page 28



Hidden: Animals in the Anthropocene
 Edited by Jo-Anne McArthur and Keith Wilson
 We Animals Media, \$95, 320 pages, hardcover.



SPAIN. TIMA THE BROWN BEAR OF THE GRAN CIRCO HOLIDAY CIRCUS POSES FOR A PHOTO WITH CHILDREN. © AITOR GARMENDIA



INDONESIA. A MACAQUE PERFORMS IN A POPULAR STREET SHOW IN JAKARTA, KNOWN LOCALLY AS TOPENG MONYET (MASK MONDA). © JOAN DE LA MALLA



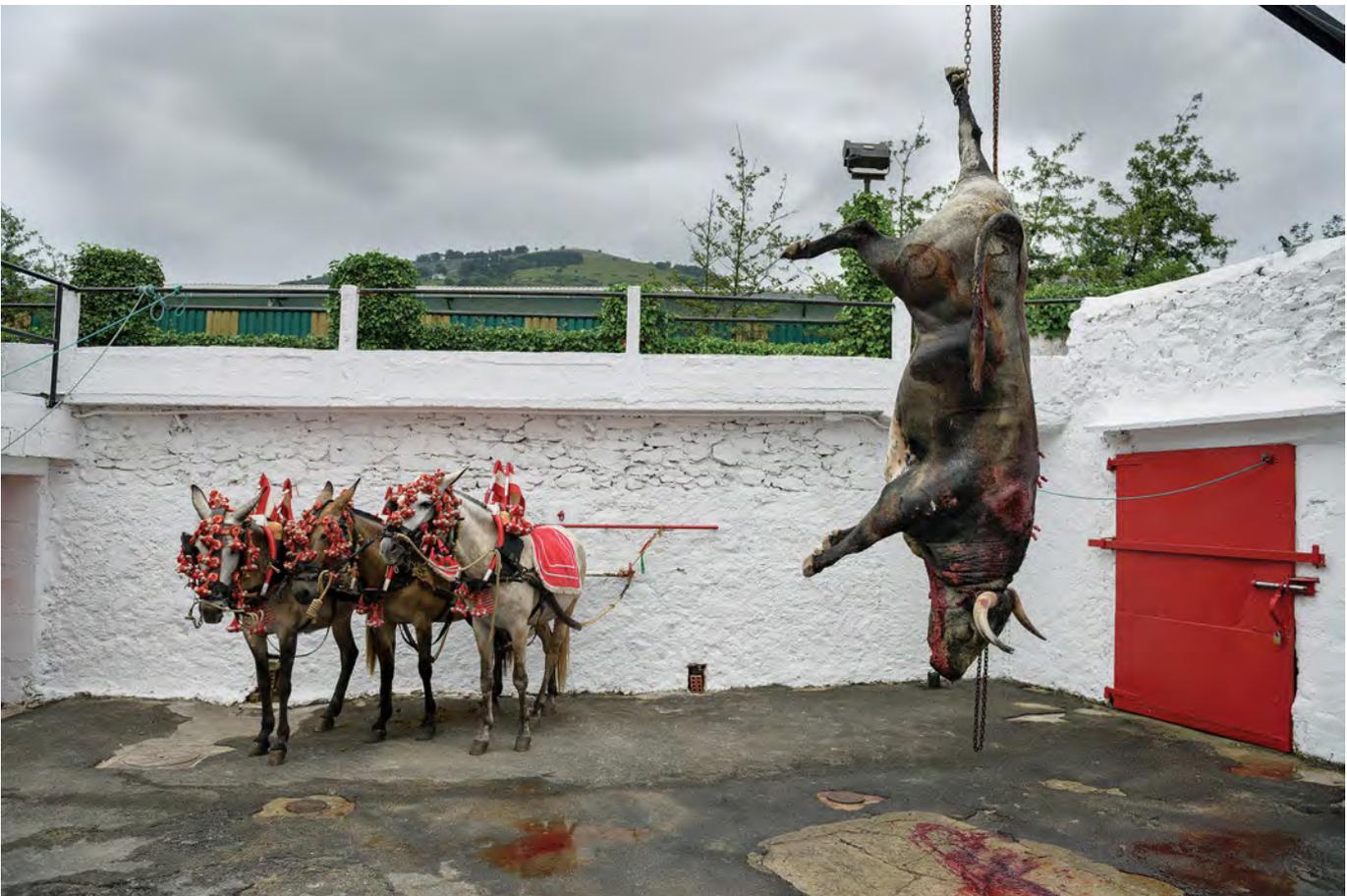
POLAND. A SILVER FOX IN A FUR FARM IN POLAND DURING AN INVESTIGATION BY OTWARTE KLATKI AND EKOSTRAZ. THE PROPERTY HELD 60 CAGED AND NEGLECTED FOXES AND DOGS. ALL WERE RESCUED AND THE FARM WAS CLOSED DOWN. THE OWNER FACES CHARGES OF ANIMAL CRUELTY. © ANDREW SKOWRON



CHINA. WHO'S NEXT? AT THIS DOG SLAUGHTERHOUSE, A BUTCHER CHOOSES THE DOG HE WILL BEAT TO DEATH WITH AN IRON BAR WHILE THE OTHER DOGS LOOK ON. © JOSE VALLÉ



SPAIN. TO PRODUCE THE LUXURY FOOD ITEM FOIE GRAS, DUCKS AND GEESSE ARE FORCE-FED TO FATTEN THEIR LIVERS UP TO TEN TIMES THEIR NATURAL SIZE. © LUIS TATO



SPAIN. INGLOURIOUS DEATH. IN THE HORSE YARD OF THE BULLRING IN AZPEITIA, A BULL IS HUNG BY HIS HIND LEG TO BLEED OUT BEFORE BEING BUTCHERED AT THE LOCAL MEAT WORKS. © AI TOR GARMENDIA

AN EMERGING GENRE

JO-ANNE MCARTHUR ON ANIMAL PHOTOJOURNALISM

Animal Photojournalism (APJ) is an emerging genre of photography that captures, memorializes and exposes the experiences of animals who live amongst us but who we fail to see. At its core, the images in this pioneering field document the broader human–animal conflict and its resultant ecosystems of suffering. As global societies collectively awaken to the realities of our unjust exploitation of animals, APJ is of increasing interest.

From public and environmental health crises to zoonotic viruses, animals are inextricably linked to many areas of current global concern, and rightfully so. Our existence is intertwined, and the ethics of how we treat the other sentient beings with whom we share this planet are being called into question. Animal photojournalism aims to encourage swift and necessary change on behalf of the beings in the frame. APJ emphasizes the inclusion of all animals, particularly those historically underrepresented, like those kept within industrialized systems.

APJ is groundbreaking for two reasons. First, images in this genre demand radical empathy and self-awareness. Viewers must decentre themselves and consider the world through the eyes of a different species, while holding the truth of humanity’s undeniable role in the story. Additionally, it poses a fundamental threat to deeply embedded societal systems that continue, largely unchallenged. The act of seeking out these visual stories is itself an act of resistance.



NEPAL. ANIMAL SACRIFICES ARE STILL MADE TO KALI, THE GODDESS OF TIME, POWER, CREATION AND DESTRUCTION, AT THIS NEPALESE TEMPLE.
© JO-ANNE MCARTHUR

HIDDEN's compelling images, supporting texts and statistics reveal the dark side of everything from zoos to the food sold at our grocery stores. If you're the type to prioritize buying environmentally friendly and sustainable products and endeavour to understand a product's full life cycle, this book seems like a logical extension of that thoughtfulness. You might be challenged or troubled by what's in it, but this part of the story has been missing from the public discourse and messaging from these industries. What you'll learn in these pages will enable you to make your choices from an informed position.

The editors have done a remarkable job of presenting information without coming across as criticizing individuals. Before sitting down with *HIDDEN*, I thought I had a good idea of what to expect. But it blew me away: I completely underestimated how much of an impact this book would have on me. Reading it was like finally taking my fingers out of my ears after I'd been plugging them and saying "la la la" for years. Though it's tough to see and read about so much cruelty to animals, at least I'm out of the grey zone of half-suspecting it but staying willfully ignorant. *HIDDEN* has given me the information I needed so that I can make choices that align better with my values and ethics. ●



THAILAND. IN SOME SMALL ASIAN SLAUGHTERHOUSES, CLUBBING IS USED TO STUN PIGS. THIS OFTEN FAILS TO RENDER THE ANIMALS FULLY UNCONSCIOUS BEFORE THEIR THROATS ARE SLIT. © JO-ANNE MCARTHUR