

## **Animals, Cameras, Humans – A Technological Love Triangle?**

Nowadays, there appears to be a visual and technological love triangle between humans, cameras and other animals, widely broadcasted through internet and its social networks. Depending on the occasion, the distances and relationships between the elements of this triangle change, as the three of them try either to approach, chase or flee from one another. On the human side, the prevalent attitude seems to be to get as close as possible to certain other animals. At times, in a physical sense; at times in a conceptual or metaphorical one. This would be the initial prevailing attitude, because many videos show how some wild or unfamiliar animals then proceed to chase scared-to-death humans who, apparently, didn't see it coming.

On the other hand, through their small size, innovations and availability, even mobility and autonomy, cameras act as novel proxies between humans and other animals. Currently, cameras can be mounted on drones and fly or swim towards animals, be attached to them and follow their movements as critter-cams (the ones criticised by Donna Haraway), be disguised or act as traps to offer intimate perspectives. Regarding this, I will try to explore two related ideas. The first one is how we tend to turn to certain technologies, like cameras, in order to cushion and “meander” our encounters with other animals. The second one is how the encounter between animals, humans and their cameras can be understood as an encounter between two human ways of conceptualising the world surrounding us, an encounter between landscapes (or perspectival windows) and little planets, like the sensory soap bubbles described by Jakob von Uexküll.

As well, the technological mediation in human-animal relationships is not always smooth. Animals exhibit a wide range of behaviours towards cameras, some of which expose the absurd assumptions humans hold about animals, or cameras. Like when a chimpanzee knocks down a drone, or seagulls steal cameras, somewhat rupturing the assumption that the human stance about filming cameras is shared across the animal realm (“act ‘natural’, as if the camera is not there!”). Focusing on some examples of this animal-camera-human triangle (like critter-cams, animal POV shots, photobombs or stolen cameras, I will explore how the respective agencies of these three elements affect the conceptual and/or physical distances between them, and also how they bring about certain visibilities and closeness together with a few other invisibilities and disconnections. All framed by an immersive aspiration on the side of humans that may be related to Louis Bec's technozoosemiotics, or to the book *Animal Internet*, by Alexander Pschera. An aspiration through which humans seem to look forward to virtually dive into other animals, into their worlds, movements and perceptions.