



La Biennale di Venezia

60. Esposizione  
Internazionale  
d'Arte

Eventi Collaterali

PRESS KIT

# BESTIARI

CATALONIA IN VENICE

CARLOS CASAS

Curated by FILIPA RAMOS   Evento Collaterale de la Biennale Arte 2024   [bestiari.llull.cat](http://bestiari.llull.cat)  
April 20 - November 24, 2024   Docks Cantieri Cucchini, S. Pietro di Castello 40A, Venice

## KEY THEMES

*Disputa de l'ase*  
[The Dispute of the Donkey],  
1417, Anselm Turmeda

**Carlos Casas'** *Bestiari* sees as a point of departure the text *Disputa de l'ase* [The Dispute of the Donkey], written in 1417 by **Anselm Turmeda**, considered, alongside Ramon Llull, one of the **founders of Catalan literature**. The text tells the story of a man who, after falling asleep in an idyllic forest, wakes up with the ability to understand the language of animals. At this point, the animals put him on trial **questioning humanity's superiority over other beings**. The process evolves through 19 arguments, in which the animals' spokesperson, a long-tailed donkey, challenges anthropocentrism. Through this extraordinary narrative, Turmeda reveals a pioneering environmental consciousness that places him at the forefront of the advocacy for the rights of nature. Featuring sounds and images of elephants, bats, dolphins, snakes, donkeys, parakeets and bees, *Bestiari* pays tribute to the speaking animals of the text, which demand interspecies justice.

The Naturalscapes  
of Catalonia

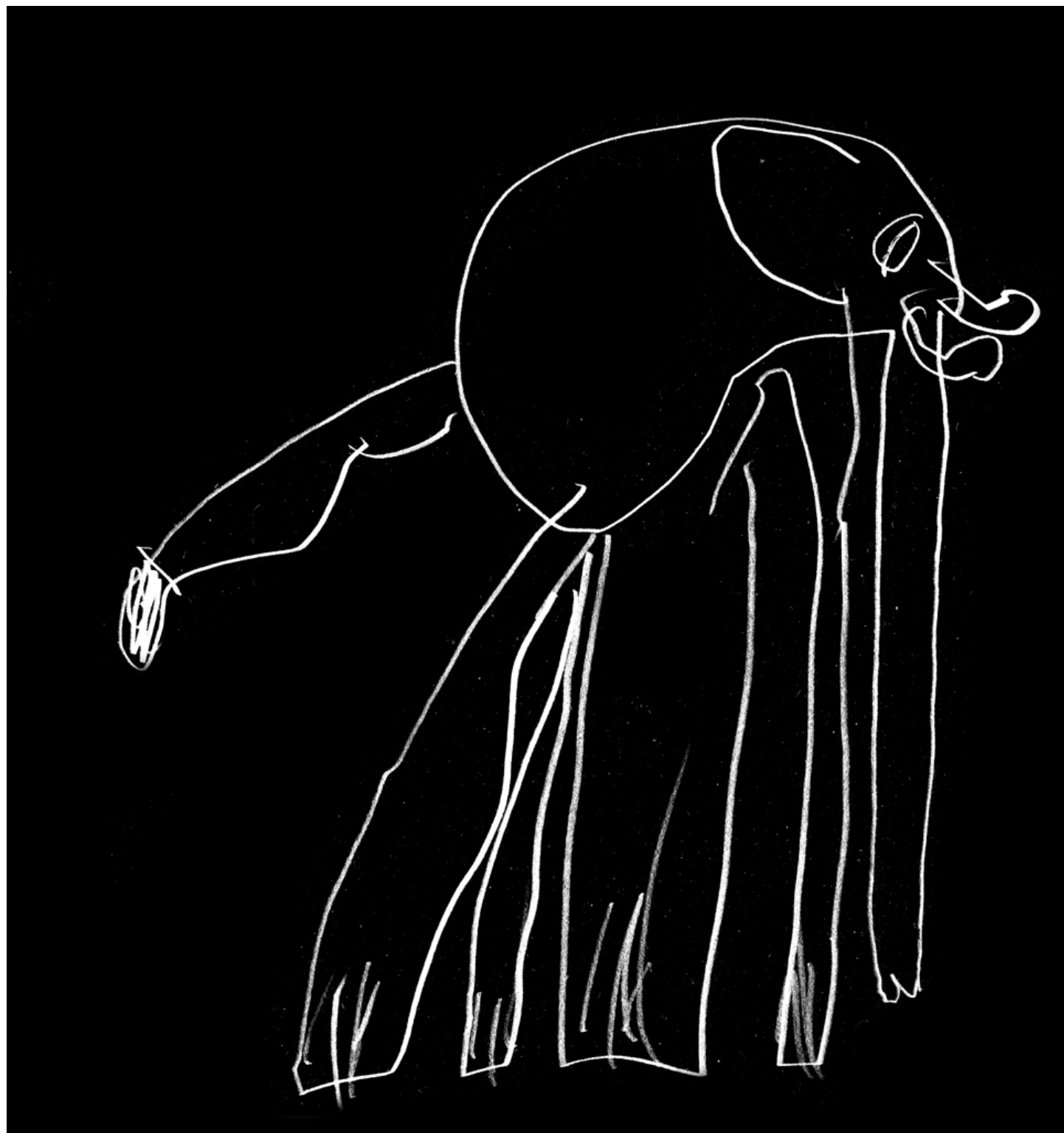
While attempting to expand and transform modes of perception, Carlos Casas explores the mythological ability of human beings to metamorphose into other creatures. With recordings captured in different nature parks in Catalonia, **from the southern limits of the Ebre Delta to the Cap de Creus in the north**, celebrates the naturalscapes of Catalonia, bringing these to Venice, while also posing questions about life and memory, interspecies relationships, conservation, and creation within a space of immersion and discovery that aims to be at once both positive and transformative.

For more than 20 years, Carlos Casas has been making films, installations and sound environments which pay attention to places and communities that exist in symbiotic modes. His work engages with the artistic traditions of documentary cinema and field recordings, creating multilayered sound pieces and aural environments that trigger new listening experiences for known expressions while generating forms of cross-cultural encounters.

*Stranieri Ovunque —*  
Foreigners Everywhere

**Filipa Ramos'** curatorial proposal reverberates with the theme of the Biennale Arte 2024, *Foreigners Everywhere*, by **expanding the notion of the foreigner beyond an anthropocentric vision** to the recognition of the entanglement between humans and other beings, which have often been displaced and made foreigners of their own lands by human-led action. *Bestiari* speaks to the present, touching on **ecology and the intelligence of nature**: imagining ways of living in harmony with the world around us and enhancing the importance of multiple perspectives.

The project proposed Catalonia as a territory where a conciliatory, non-anthropocentric engagement with the world is possible, one that allows us to imagine a different future for the relationships with other species through sound and imagery.



L'Institut Ramon Llull presents *Bestiari*, an audiovisual project by **Carlos Casas**, curated by **Filipa Ramos**, Collateral Event of the **60th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia**. The exhibition will be on view at Catalonia in Venice from April 20th to November 24th, 2024. *Bestiari* is Inspired by the medieval text ***Disputa de l'ase*** [*The Dispute of the Donkey*], written in 1417 by **Anselm Turmeda, a founder of Catalan literature**. This text tells the story of a man put on trial by a group of animals who question him on **humankind's superiority over other beings**. Its title refers to the first natural history compendium ever made, the bestiary, in which animals of all sorts were described, often accompanied by lessons of life and conduct. Carlos Casas's immersive audiovisual installation creates a hypnagogic environment populated by the sounds and images of the creatures from **natural and imagined Catalan landscapes**. Featuring Ambisonics 3D infrasound spatialization, *Bestiari* presents **frequencies beyond the human sensory realm**. A large projection, derived from each species' vision, creates hypnotic encounters, further blurring the lines between reality and dream.

CURATOR'S  
QUOTE

*A silver lining of these deranged times we are living is that they are also times of radical questioning. If it was possible for some stories to pave the way for the current state of unecological life, it is possible to write new narratives that revise what was imposed and generate new ways of being in and with the world. Disputa de l'ase, the mediaeval story that inspired Carlos Casas to develop Bestiari, coincides with the inception of western modernity and its western-dominant, anthropocentric worldview. Lending the text and its author an environmental sensibility while attempting to expand and transform our human modes of perception, Carlos Casas' monumental project Bestiari becomes an invitation to embrace the otherness within ourselves: to become other, not by mimicking otherness but by internally experiencing what it means to exist as someone else through a profound sensorial transformation. Bestiari invites viewers to experience the momentary transformation of their minds and bodies, and in doing so serves a purpose both poetic and political. It proposes Catalonia as a territory where a conciliatory, non-anthropocentric engagement with the world is possible and where a different future for the relationship with other species may be desired, imagined and realised.*

– Filipa Ramos

PROJECT  
Experience

A large projection derived from each species' vision creates hypnagogic encounters, dissolving the relationship between reality and dream. With Ambisonics 3D infrasound spatialisation, Carlos Casas' installation *Bestiari* presents **frequencies beyond the human sensory realm, offering poetic, politic and sensorial experiences of becoming other** by considering the transformations that this process may generate in our bodies, in our minds and in our cognitive, emotional and perceptive systems.

Visitors will enter an environment that works like a portal to a world that, being familiar, is also different. In it, all speakers will emit different sonic textures into space: some sounds will be listened with the stomach, some pitches will be strange and originate from unexpected places, other sound textures will be as pleasurable as aliens.

The known sound of flocks of parakeets flying above us in urban areas will encounter the whistles and clicks that dolphins in the Catalan coast use to perceive space and communicate, the echolocation chirps of bats, which have been slowed down to allow for a distinct tonal progression and the binaural tonalities and low-frequency rumbles of elephants.

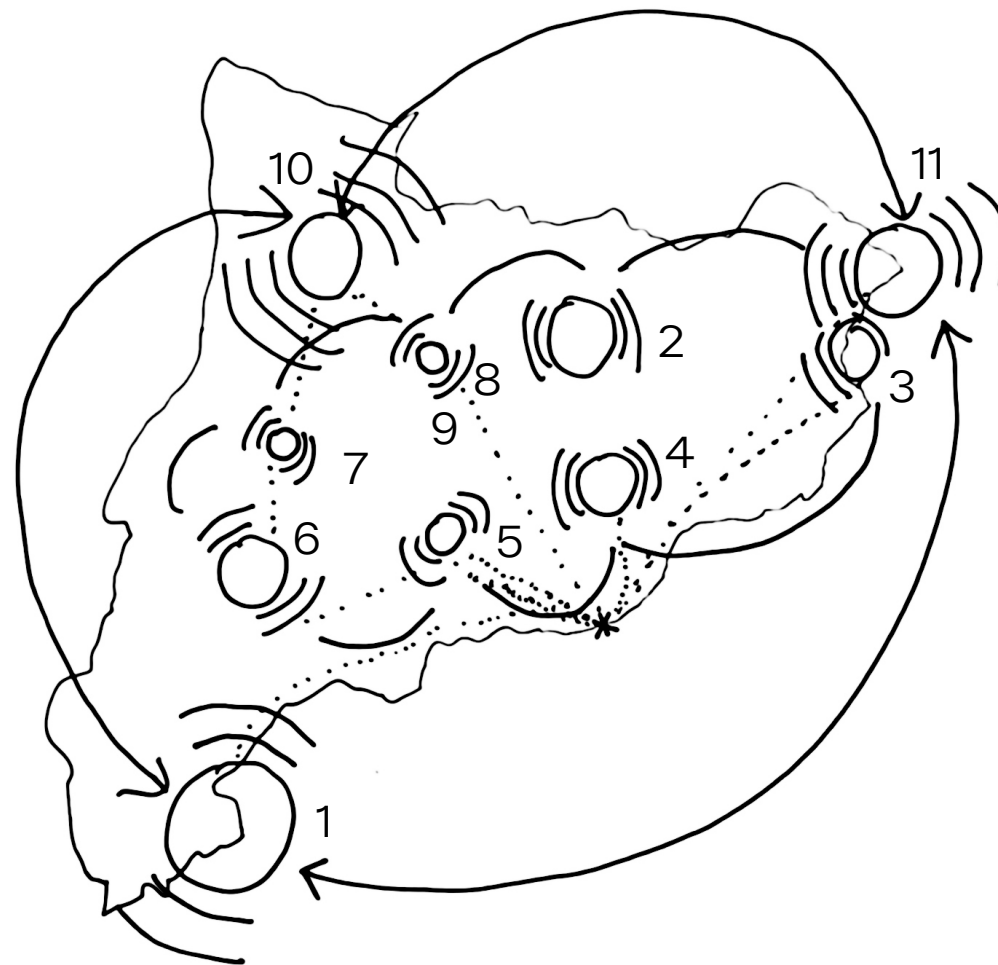
They will resonate with one another and with visitors' bodies, creating moments of wonder, surprise, strangeness, and curiosity. In the large LED screen, visitors will gaze at colours that adhere to bodily temperatures and visions that distort and alter the conventional way in which things are perceived. Some move slowly, some very fast as layers of time are condensed and expanded. It is difficult to know if it is day or night, but these distinctions matter little here, as time itself has been altered to match other species' relationship to it, beyond our human-centric circadian rhythms. *Bestiari* is an individual but first and foremost a shared experience of cinematic and aural attunement. In the former shipping warehouse hosting Catalonia in Venice, a phantasmagoria that merges mediaeval literary traditions and the future of Earth is desired, imagined and enacted.

## Natural Parks of Catalonia

Relying on a crucial element of sonic ecology, the production of the project is conceived as a close dialogue and collaboration with the Natural Parks of de Catalonia system. Through this collaboration, it aims to collaborate with experts and who advised and accompanied us in the precise selection of the environments documented and recorded and in the individualization of the areas that host the animal species got close to as to record with sound and images in a non-invasive, considerate and relevant way.

The sounds and images of *Bestiari* were mostly recorded in the following locations:

1. Parc Natural del Delta de l'Ebre
2. Parc Natural del Cadí-Moixeró
3. Parc Natural del Montgrí, les Illes Medes i el Baix Ter
4. Parc Natural i Reserva de la Biosfera del Montseny
5. Parc Natural de Sant Llorenç del Munt i l'Obac
6. Reserva Natural de Mas de Melons i Secans de Lleida
7. Espai Natural Protegit de la Serra del Montsec
8. Espai Natural Protegit de la Serra de Boumort
9. Reserva Nacional de Caça de Boumort
10. Parc Natural de l'Alt Pirineu
11. Parc Natural del Cap de Creus





Film

Composed of five parts, each being visually different, composing one film, inspired from different influences, from classic adventure films to experimental abstract film to animal and landscape films. It is a work about the representation of disappearing worlds in which humans and non-humans coexist, look at each other and transform. One finds oneself discovering voices, sounds and echoes of different spaces and beings in order to closely understand the non-human origins of music, the diversity, complexity and beauty of animal sound worlds.

First part: *Locus amoenus*

A spatial ambient composite recording of seven different natural parks in Catalonia from the southern limits of the Delta de l'Ebre to the Cap de Creus in the north. Real time recordings of the parks' different environments

Second part: Animal Celebration

Introduction of the animals, a celebration of animal sounds, a cacophony and explosion of sounds.

Third part: The Trial and the 18 Arguments

The seven animals share their eighteen arguments by means of sound and images that render their visual, sonic and perceptual unique modalities and capabilities, their entanglement with the landscapes they inhabit. At times, each animal assumes the main feature and establishes a dialogue with visitors.

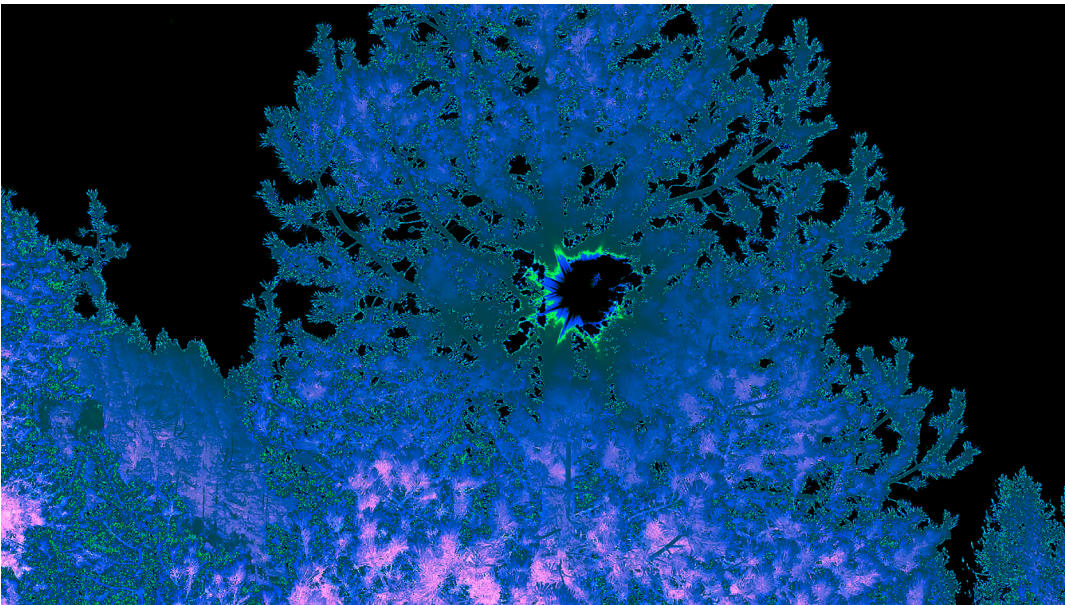
Fourth part: The Donkey's Prophecy

The musical part of composition, where the donkey imagines what nature will be confronted with in the future. A spatial sound composition.

Fifth part: The Voice

As a conclusion, a human voice, musician **Marina Herlop**, speaks and concludes with animal language the 19th and last argument and conclusion of the trial. Visitors are left to shape their own outcome of the argument.

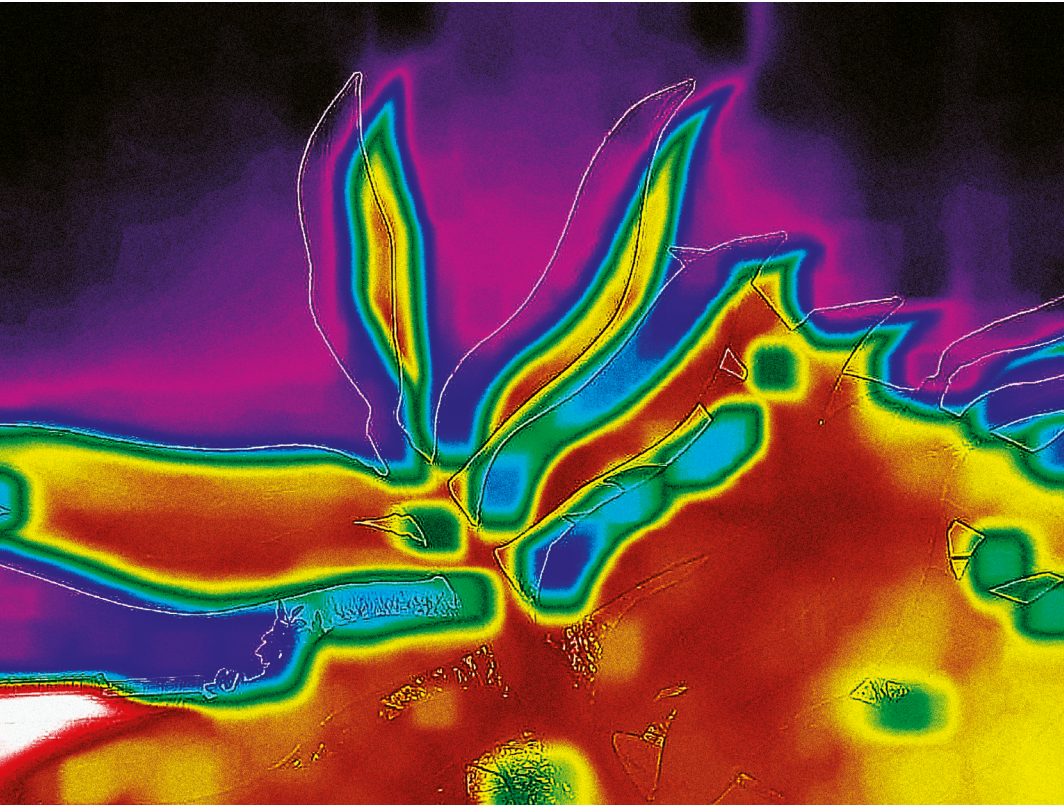
*Bestiari*, 2024 (Batvision)  
Still. Courtesy of the Artist  
© Carlos Casas



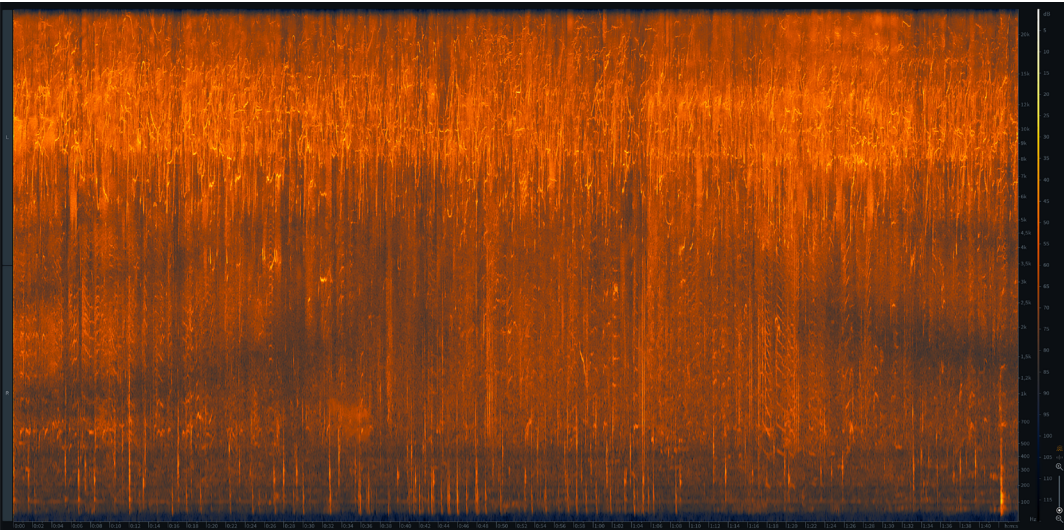
Elephants, Bats, Dolphins,  
Snakes, Donkeys,  
Parakeets, Bees

*Bestiari* includes audio and visual material of seven animals, in which species from Catalonia resonate with others from around the world: elephants, bats, dolphins, snakes, donkeys, parakeets and bees. Each animal is present in the exhibition with a dedicated Ambisonic loudspeaker, specially designed to reproduce their specific range of sound frequencies. Thanks to the relevant sculptural presence within the exhibition route, the loudspeakers create specific areas for immersive listening.

*Bestiari*, 2024 (Snakevision)  
Still. Courtesy of the Artist  
© Carlos Casas



*Bestiari*, 2024 (Dolphin Spectrogram)  
Still. Courtesy of the Artist  
© Carlos Casas





## PUBLIC PROGRAM

**Pol Capdevila**, professor in the Department of Humanities at Pompeu Fabra University, is the curator of *Animalesc*, *Bestiari*'s public program, which includes seminars and debates centred around three thematic lines: the condition of animals and the relationships established with human beings, research into animal languages and methods of recording them, and sound as a privileged new ecumenical language in contemporary art. In November 2023, the seminar "Bestiaries. Now and before" was held at Pompeu Fabra University in Barcelona. Based on the text *Disputa de l'ase* d'Anselm Turmeda, it addressed the historical relationship between human beings and animals. The seminar also explored the importance of fantasy in the iconology of animals and how human culture has used it to express knowledge, cultural values and existential longings. Participants included Lúcia Martín (Catalan for mediaeval Catalan literature), Albert Mestres (writer and playwright, translator of *Disputa de l'ase*), Rafael Doctor (art historian and painter) and Eze Páez (animalist philosopher).

In the coming months, *Animalesc* plans to present "The wild sounds of Catalonia", an event focusing on the language of certain animal species in Catalonia, and "Sound as a tool for preservation and aesthetic experience". This event will gather experts in animal language, bioacoustics, sound artists and art theorists to reflect on how sound can help us reconnect with the primal forces of nature and express its languages.

## PUBLICATION

*Bestiari* is accompanied by a publication edited by Filipa Ramos. This publication brings together a series of newly commissioned texts that accompany visitors through the references, facts and narratives that emerge from *Bestiari*. Functioning like a Field Guide, it presents the research topics and motivations of the project, contextualises source materials and introduces the various animals that feature in the installation through a short story, written by a key author working across art, ecology and literature in Catalonia and abroad. Each author wrote about an animal: **Eva Baltasar** (elephant), **Emanuele Coccia** (bee), **Pilar Codony** (donkey), **Yayo Herrero** (parakeets), **Lucia Pietroiusti** (snakes), **Chus Martínez** (dolphins) and **Helena Vilalta** (bats). Other authors in the book are: **Pol Capdevila**, **Carlos Casas**, **Lúcia Martín**, **Albert Mestres**, **Filipa Ramos** and **Chris Watson**.

The publication has been published in Catalan, English and Italian, and is available in this virtual folder (under embargo until April 18):



## TEAM



**Carlos Casas** is a filmmaker and artist whose practice encompasses film, sound and the visual arts. His works have been presented in international exhibitions like La Biennale di Venezia, Shanghai Biennale, Bangkok Biennale, and Istanbul Biennial. His films have been screened and awarded in festivals around the world, like the Venice Film Festival, International Film Festival Rotterdam, Buenos Aires International Film Festival, Mexico International Film Festival, CPH DOX Copenhagen and FID Marseille. Retrospectives of his films have been presented at international festivals and cinematheques and his work has been exhibited and performed in international art institutions and galleries such as Tate Modern in London, Fondation Cartier, Palais de Tokyo, Centre Pompidou in Paris, NTU CCA Singapore, Hangar Biccoca, and La Triennale in Milan, among others.

**Filipa Ramos**, PhD, is curator whose research focuses on how culture addresses ecology, attending to how contemporary art fosters relationships between humans and other creatures. Ramos is curator of Art Basel Film and Lecturer at the Master Programme of the Arts Institute of the Fachhochschule Nordwestschweiz, Basel, where she leads the Art & Nature seminars. With Lucia Pietroiusti, she co-curated Songs for the Changing Seasons, the First Vienna Climate Biennial (2024), Persons Persones, 8th Gherdëina Biennial (2022) and Bodies of Water, 13th Shanghai Biennial (2021).

## COMMISSION AND ORGANISATION

**Institut Ramon Llull** is a public institution dedicated to the international promotion of the Catalan language and culture, the Institut Ramon Llull has been promoting, producing and organising Catalan culture's participation in the Collateral Events at the Biennale di Venezia since 2009. The project presented by the Institut Ramon Llull at La Biennale is chosen by an expert committee that changes every year. For La Biennale Arte 2024, the jury chaired by **Elvira Dyangani Ose**, director of the Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona (MACBA), included **Marko Daniel**, director of the Fundació Joan Miró (Barcelona); **Ruth Estévez**, Co-Director of Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture; **Oriol Fontdevila**, researcher and professor, curator of the Collateral Event "Catalonia in Venice" at the Biennale Arte 2022 (Venice);- Venice at the La Biennale Arte 2022 (Venice); **Ingrid Guardiola**, director of the Bòlit – Centre d'Art Contemporani de Girona; and **Andrea Lissoni**, artistic director of Haus der Kunst (Munich). The Institut Ramon Llull is a consortium formed by the Government of Catalonia, the Government of the Balearic Islands, Barcelona City Council and Palma City Council.

CREDITS

ORGANIZATION AND  
PRODUCTION:  
Institut Ramon Llull

ARTIST:  
Carlos Casas

CURATOR:  
Filipa Ramos

CURATOR OF PUBLIC  
PROGRAMS:  
Pol Capdevila

IMAGES & EXHIBITION  
DESIGN:  
Carlos Casas

SOUND RECORDINGS:  
Chris Watson

COMPOSITION:  
Chris Watson i Carlos Casas

VOICE:  
Marina Herlop

AUDIO ENGINEERING &  
SPATIALITZATION:  
Tony Myatt

SOUND MIX:  
Armand Leseq

ADDITIONAL SOUND  
RECORDING:  
Marc Parazon

IMAGES OF TRAP CAMERA:  
Parc Natural del Cadí-Moixeró  
(Jordi Garcia, Toni Giró, Elena  
Julià Alsina, Raul Olivares);  
Projecte “Gat Fer Catllaràs”  
(David Fitó, Ramon Flores,  
Arnau Campanera, Albert Peris,  
Joan Aguilar, Toni Mampel);  
Grup FELIS (ICHN, Institució  
Catalana d’Història Natural);  
Blanca Martí de Ahumada.

VISUAL IDENTITY:  
Phantasia

COMMUNICATION & PR:  
Institut Ramon Llull, Pickles PR

TRANSLATION:  
Mireia Alegre, Tiziana Camerani

HEAD OF PRODUCTION:  
Marta Millet Agustí

VENICE COORDINATORS:  
Tamara Andruszkiewicz, Favio  
Monza

TRANSPORT:  
Feltreiro División Arte

INSTALL:  
GROP, Sono, Tour Serveis

NATURALIST:  
Blanca Martí de Ahumada

DRONE PILOTS:  
Raül Acuña Rubio (Delabrave),  
Guido Manuilo (Dronelab)

COLOR AND IMAGE  
POSTPRODUCTION:  
Yannig Willman

TECHNOLOGY AND  
SPEAKERS:  
Ralf Baumgartner, sonible;  
Osvaldas Putkis, Focusonics;  
Giorgio de Vecchi and Giulia  
di Lenarda, Futura Research;  
Professor Philip Jackson and  
Dr. Craig Cieciora, CVSSP,  
University of Surrey, Wave  
field synthesis research was  
supported by UKRI EPSRC and  
BBC Prosperity Partnership  
AI4ME: Future Personalised  
Object-Based Media  
Experiences Delivered at Scale  
Anywhere EP/V038087.

RENDERS:  
Stefano Zeni / OUTofRAM

WITH THE COLLABORATION  
OF:  
àngels barcelona; Batalha  
Centro de Cinema, Porto;  
Departament d’Acció  
Climàtica, Alimentació i Agenda  
Rural, Generalitat de Catalunya;  
Diputació de Barcelona,  
Àrea d’Espais Naturals i  
Infraestructura Verda; Fundació  
Catalunya La Pedrera; Institute  
Art Gender Nature – HGK  
FHNW, Basel; IUAV Arti Visive,  
Venezia; MACRO, Roma;  
SSH! Sound Studies Hub,  
Venezia; University of Surrey  
Centre for Vision, Speech and  
Signal Processing (CVSSP);  
Università Ca’ Foscari  
Venezia, Dipartimento di  
Studi Linguistici e Culturali  
Comparati; Universitat Pompeu  
Fabra, Barcelona.

TECHNOLOGICAL PARTNERS:  
sonible; Focusonics, developed  
by Neurotechnology; Futura  
Research

CATALONIA  
IN VENICE

Docks Cantieri Cucchini. San Pietro di Castello 40A, 30122 Venezia  
April 20 – November 24, 2024

From April 20 to September 30: 11 am – 7 pm  
From October 1 to November 24: 10 am – 6 pm

Closed on Mondays except April 22, June 17, July 22, September 2, September 30,  
November 18.

Free entry

www.bestiari.llull.cat  
@CataloniaInVenice  
#BestiariBiennale  
#CataloniaInVenice

Institut Ramon Llull  
Cristina Estrada: [cestrada@llull.cat](mailto:cestrada@llull.cat) +34 677 26 04 97  
[Pickles PR](#)  
Enrichetta Cardinale: [enrichetta@picklespr.com](mailto:enrichetta@picklespr.com) +34 656 95 66 72

Download press materials [here](#):





