

Sally Moore

human/nature

When I explore a subject that intrigues me, I always do so from the inside out. Art that tries to shock by its message or is too didactic, often fails to engage me.

Gauguin's questioning title, *Where do we come From? What are we? Where Are We Going?* crossed my mind as I worked. Perhaps *Tower* is a postmodern version of this. I like to play around with the titles, sometimes with humor. This can draw one in for a deeper, more difficult, message. This tension between humor and bleakness, beauty and rawness, captivates our human nature.

Our feet rarely touch soil anymore. We eat parts of creatures wrapped in cellophane, disguised, without even remembering that what we are eating once breathed and felt pain. We adjust the temperature to our liking. When we venture out into nature, we tend to do so in small manicured doses. All the while, we still have our limbic system that puts us on the same level as a lizard in one regard. We squelch the urge to fight or flee and instead, hold deep anxieties within our bodies. Our consumptive needs and desires push our majestic fellow beings to the edge of existence.

This body of work began with a dream image from many years ago. In the dream, I was walking through a barn. Each stall of the barn contained an enormous animal, and, instead of a door, there was a frail piece of wood nailed across each threshold. I specifically remember a rhinoceros and a hippopotamus. I crept through, staring in awe at them, very fearful of their escape (Would they trample me? wreak havoc in the town?) On the other hand, they evoked a strong sense of wonder and power, a foreshadowing of change and deep transformation. I've had many animal dreams since then; I've swum with whales and been saved from death by tiny colorful birds. They have also warned against things not right; I've taken a swipe from a bear, woken up beneath a napping lion, and been treed by an angry bull. They have been teachers and companions. I feel a personal connection, as well as the social responsibility for their continuation and welfare that we all do (or should) feel.

Throughout human history, animals have served as metaphors for the extremes of fear, mystery, power, joy, and awe in mythology and religion. However, we have anthropomorphized the life out of them as we have become more and more distant from them. In childhood, they are cuddly, talkative friends in books with pious moral values and come in all colors of polyester fur. They have become yard ornaments, trophies and sources of entertainment. We may watch Nature while consuming a burger, remaining completely unconscious of the atrocities of factory farming - not only to the sentient beings it tortures, but of the bad effects to our own health, as well as the devastation to the environment

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