

# EDITORIAL

ANTENNAE ISSUE 19

One of the most defining aspects of *Antennae's* status as a multidisciplinary journal has simply been the determination to relentlessly present a variety of perspectives, always delivered by a diverse range of voices. Some have misinterpreted this ambition as a lack of concern for certain subjects in the human-animal discourse. However, as it was envisioned since its inception, *Antennae's* main purpose is not that of taking sides, nor that of telling readers what is right or wrong, in the assumption that that the work of the reader may indeed entail the tasks of deciphering and deciding. For this reason, more than in other previous issue, this present one is consistently shaped by the perspectives and voices of some of the most influential and challenging contemporary thinkers.

*Antennae* is nearing its 5<sup>th</sup> birthday – the first issue was released in March 2006. Back then it was impossible to imagine that in 2011, we'd be able to gather exclusive interviews from the likes of Peter Singer, Tom and Nancy Regan, Roger Scruton and John Simons all in one issue dedicated to the subject of animal advocacy and the arts. And most importantly, it would have been even harder to imagine that these names would have been interviewed by some of the most exciting scholars who over the past twenty years have consistently shaped the field of human-animal studies itself: Carol Gigliotti, Garry Marvin and Rod Bennison, just to name a few, have all greatly contributed to the shaping of new perspectives through their discussions and questioning. Those familiar with the work of these scholars will instantly understand what this issue is about and what it will attempt to do.

It is rather hard to identify a more controversial and divisive subject of debate in the field of human-animal studies than the one of animal advocacy; a subject that seems to acquire even more complexity when discussion is brought in the arena of the arts. I personally wanted "Animal rights and wrongs" to deliberately be dense with writing in opposition to the lavishly illustrated formula which has become *Antennae's* trademark. I wanted this issue to be about questions – I wanted to ask and wanted this issue's contributors to ask even more than I could have.

How far have we gone since the publishing of Peter Singer's *Animal Liberation* from 1973, where are we finding ourselves and where are we going? But most importantly, who are we going there with? This issue attempts to answer these key questions and it does so by looking at a range of different media, geographical locations and contexts in the attempt of finding more questions.

As per usual, I would like to take the opportunity to thank all those involved in the making of this issue for dedicating their time and care to this project. Ultimately, many thanks to Sue Coe for allowing us to publish a portfolio of old and never before seen images in this issue of *Antennae*.

*Giovanni Aloï*  
Editor in Chief of Antennae Project

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# JONATHAN HOROWITZ'S RECLAMATION OF A MEAT PLANT

Associate Professor of Art History Mysoon Rizk discusses the work of controversial artist Jonathan Horowitz.  
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**W** *f slaughterhouses had glass walls, everyone would be vegetarian.” – Linda and Paul McCartney*

## I. “American Gothic”

In her video documentary about the 2010 *Go Vegan!* relaunch by American artist Jonathan Horowitz (b.1966, New York City), at the spacious new annex of Gavin Brown’s enterprise (GBE), Jasmin Singer concentrates attention on the residue of the previously shuttered meat-processing plant. Owned by GBE’s landlords, Pat La Frieda Wholesale Purveyors of Meat had recently vacated the premises of what had been an active butchery next door. The camera lens lingers on still visible exterior indicators of the former business, reading “Pat La Frieda & Son Prime Choice Meats,” “Pat La Frieda Wholesale Meats,” “Meat Distributors,” and “Pat LaFrieda Lane” – also known as Leroy Street.

Singer also captures company slogans. “The first name in veal and lamb,” for example, appears in lower case cursive on a delivery truck (recently captured on Flickr with an ironic post noting that “the first name” is a last name). In addition, in a sign on one face of the building, a full-bodied cartoon rooster pronounces, “PAT LA FRIEDA SAYS EAT MY MEAT.” The video camera also captures an emblematic icon of the company: an idealized cow’s head, as stately bust, suspended over a field

of healthy green stalks. On yet another wall, a promotional sign endorses Pennsylvania-based organic poultry suppliers Bell & Evans, signified by a colorful farm scene of barn, silo, fields, fence, and a rooster, crowing as day breaks and the sun emerges.

Turning to Horowitz’s solo exhibition, the camera lingers on the billboards he designed for the exterior of La Frieda’s former Leroy Street storefront to announce the exhibition, as well as the transformation and reclamation of the meat plant. On the left side of an entryway, an enormous photographic close-up displays some ten hairless, nearly unrecognizable carcasses hung from steel pulleys. On what one imagines being a bloody slaughterhouse floor, sprawl at least three more bodies – not yet rendered into optimum meat processing conditions. Obscuring the lower edge of the ghastly situation runs a green ribbon below white block letters that read, “IF YOU WOULDN’T EAT A DOG.” The words help ascertain the identity of the species, toward which the heads of Singer’s camera zooms, further securing classification; while the graphic evidence of a market for eating dogs presumably shocks the typical Western viewer.

For many animal rights activists, raising awareness continues to be a primary goal, given that most people persist in ignorance of the abusive conditions by which commodities arrive at the



**Jonathan Horowitz**

Installation view of *Go Vegan!*, featuring Jonathan Horowitz, *American Gothic*, 2002; 64 framed inkjet prints; each 8 3/4 x 11 1/4; 70 x 90 inches overall; and Jonathan Horowitz, *Tofu on Pedestal in Gallery*, 2002; tofu, water, glass dish, formica pedestal; 46 x 15 x 15 inches; edition of 3 plus 1 artist's proof (JH 065). Courtesy of the artist and Gavin Brown's enterprise. Copyright The Artist.

marketplace, and given that corporations go out of their way to cloak or obfuscate the realities of such procedures. As Georges Bataille once observed, and as Nikil Saval explains more recently, in the context of reviewing Tristram Stuart's history on vegetarianism:

Packaged meat is a supreme example of the 'process' disappearing in the 'product.' Increasingly urbanized and alienated from a life lived in nature, among animals, we have no daily experience of the means (reportedly terrible) by which an animal is converted into meat. The idea is that, given a keen and full vision of such a place, sheer mass revulsion would either make us all vegetarians, or would cause us to rise in unified revolt against our own murderous industries. Similar arguments have been made regarding other mass-produced items: clothes, illicit drugs, pornographic films.

Argues Saval, in his review "Show a Man What He

Eats," however, advocates on behalf of engineering transparency – e.g., "If slaughterhouses had glass walls..." – may not be effective. For one thing, he argues, "[e]thical vegetarianism has trouble succeeding as a material argument; it works better as an imaginative answer to an irrational system." Saval's "own turn toward vegetarianism," he claims, came from reading *Elizabeth Costello*, a novel by South African literary Nobelist J.M. Coetzee (b.1945, Cape Town). In place of such an "imaginative answer," the "transparency as inspiration argument," with the goal of exposing "what daily life conceals," results in an abundance of misinformation, or in the words of Saval: "The insidious media campaign of special interests, telling us that meat-eating is necessary for the health of our civilization, for dominating masculinity, for mastery and sovereignty—that catastrophic mastery over the earth which offers up daily evidence of its diminishing returns."

To the right of the meat plant's doorway, and directly below the main "Pat La Frieda & Son Prime Choice Meats" sign, Horowitz's white on green proposition continues: "THEN WHY WOULD YOU EAT A CHICKEN? THEY'RE JUST AS INTELLIGENT." This appears





**Jonathan Horowitz**

Billboards, installation view of *Go Vegan!*, Gavin Brown's enterprise, 2010

at the foot of a second gargantuan billboard, featuring a green pasture and blue henhouse, from which at least eight such curious birds, heads cocked to one or another side, inch toward viewers, intently returning the gaze. For anyone needing it, an explanatory quotation appears below the green band in much smaller text: "It is now clear that chickens have cognitive capacities equivalent to those of mammals, even primates." – Dr. Lesley Rogers, *The Development of Brain and Behavior in the Chicken.*" In addition, in the upper right-hand corner of the billboard, immediately above the heads of the birds and directly below La Frieda's "MEATS," runs the slogan – and title of the exhibition – in large white block letters: "GO VEGAN!"

*Go Vegan!* was restaged with an eye toward preserving indications of the building's prior activities. Although no longer physically manifest, the overt violence of the industry nevertheless retains a presence, if only by the strong, pervasive, and rank odors that most commentators mention as inescapably palpable. Smells of handled, butchered, and processed animal corpses have seeped into every crevice and corner, despite the cleanable surfaces of ceramic tile with built-in drains and stainless steel tables or walls, as well as stainless steel hooks – not to mention fluorescent lighting,

rack-and-pulley systems, a butcher's white coat, chopping blocks, ceramic tubs for dipping corpses, and cold storage rooms. Also left untouched, photographs of former employees show them together, enjoying meals, even hunting in the country – in one image, four male participants pose in tight formation on the front end of an off-road vehicle, with rifles at the ready – making clear that La Frieda's owners and workers exhibit no qualms about killing animals or consuming meat, despite constant exposure to the violence of doing so (a capacity sought out, yet remaining elusive to David Lurie, yet another Coetzee protagonist, in *Disgrace*).

In one of La Frieda's former cold rooms, for a work entitled *American Gothic* (2002), Horowitz selects, zooms in on, and digitally reproduces Norman Rockwell's *Freedom from Want*. This 1943 oil painting, from the "Four Essential Human Freedoms" series, depicts an idyllic American Thanksgiving dinner. In Horowitz's version, roasted turkey takes center stage, with but a few eager faces of children to either side. In keeping with the dynamic of eliciting conflicted responses throughout *Go Vegan!* – and perhaps quoting the graphics of horror film publicity – he brands the Rockwell detail with the phrase "AMERICAN GOTHIC" in bloody red dripping letters, one word per row. Horowitz renders the



**Jonathan Horowitz**

*If Slaughterhouses Had Glass Walls*, 2002; video installation, 2 DVDs, 2 27" TVs, 2 DVD players, synch box, gray metal stand, vinyl wall text; 3 1/2 minutes each; edition of 5 plus 2 artist's proofs (JH 062). Courtesy of the artist and Gavin Brown's enterprise. Copyright The Artist.

national holiday macabre, its young participants even murderous, or at least as suspicious as the original eponymous creepy couple (potentially father and daughter), as concocted by American Regionalist Grant Wood in 1930.

As if to disperse this terrifying scenario, in the adjacent room, the New York conceptualist fittingly installs *Tofu on Pedestal in Gallery* (2002), a widely exhibited post-minimalist work that has lent itself easily to display in "white cube" exhibition spaces. In the context of a former meat plant, however, this alien jiggling soybean block acquires an even greater aura, that of "imaginative answer." At GBE, *Tofu* operates amidst a seemingly inflexible sets of relations, whether capitalist or human-animal. Submerged in water, inside luminescent glass, on a rectangular white pedestal, the work reflects some of the same hard lines of its space, while nevertheless symbolizing a source of light and hope, a theme Horowitz repeats elsewhere in the GBE annex. To one side of an array of celebrity vegetarian portraits, for instance, a larger-than-life head shot of Albert Einstein appears with the physicist's own words, that "[n]othing will increase the chances for survival of life on earth as the evolution to a vegetarian diet."

**II. Less Is More**

Explaining himself in an interview, Jonathan Horowitz once remarked, "I try to make work that's intelligible and about things" (Quoted in Bollen). Dedication to this purpose courses through the American artist's career, perhaps most remarkably in *Obama '08* (2008), which has solidified his importance to contemporary art making, e.g., as a form of relational aesthetics lately privileged by the art world (See Bourriaud). Opening on the night of the legendary election, the installation prepared for the possibility of a win by the other side (See Bovier et al.).

Acknowledging his own hopes by way of title, the artist generated a dynamic nonpartisan public space for New York West Village gallery Gavin Brown's enterprise, in which all were welcome and supported in balanced two-party fashion – Democrats and Republicans alike – with equal distributions of blue and red throughout the main gallery. Each half of the room was carpeted in blue or red, respectively joined by hundreds of blue and red folding chairs lining the perimeter. Just above the chairs, in a continuous row around the room, distinguished portraits depicting the lineage of former American presidents hung at eye level. Most



of the floor was also respectively given over to blue and red pillows, allowing guests to mingle and lounge. At the center were suspended two flat televisions: back to back, facing each side, and screening ongoing live coverage of the United States presidency's election returns.

Granted, the evenly spaced and framed images depicting forty-three presidents happen to not only commence with founding father George Washington but also taper off at presidential incumbent George W. Bush – while in the blue zone. Yet, Horowitz pointed out that this was strictly a matter of logistics, given the location of the space's entrance (Email exchange). Immediately after Bush – and just before the exit – appeared presidential hopeful Barack Obama, whose portrait nevertheless remained on the floor, leaning against the wall in anticipation of results. It was to be hung only if the occasion proved historic, which it did, by electing the country's forty-fourth, but first African-American president, and triggering the release of a deluge over the crowd of red, white, and blue balloons – which otherwise would have remained trapped against the ceiling by means of taut plastic sheeting.

Horowitz admitted to banking on an Obama victory several weeks before the November elections. Later, when asked if art could serve as a political tool, say, a vehicle for advocacy, Horowitz demurred: "I don't know – maybe not in a direct, immediate sense. But art documents culture – *it writes history*" (Emphasis author). Interviewer Steven Cairns instructively remarked: "If Obama's portrait had remained on the floor – instead of a celebration you would have put parenthesis [sic] around a [national] sense of hopelessness." In discussing the piece with contemporary artist Elizabeth Peyton, Horowitz got excited about "life imitating art" (Qtd. in Bevier and Taylor 173). Reminding readers that "life imitating art" was "Oscar Wilde's formula" (103), Bourriaud also proposed that, for contemporary aesthetic practice, "[i]magination seems like a prosthesis affixed to the real so as to produce more intercourse between interlocutors" (80).

Interviews with the articulate and reflective Horowitz – who earned a BA in Philosophy from Wesleyan University – are welcome and refreshing, in part by how much they reveal of the contemplative, if possibly taciturn artist who, although increasingly familiar and well regarded, remains under-discussed in the art literature. In fact, very little critical scholarship exists, aside from a profusion of short reviews in newspapers, magazines, and blog posts, not to mention his notable appearances in celebrity pages, or on

Flickr, as when participating in the 2011 Venice Biennale art festivities (e.g., one of twelve international artists contributing to "Flags for Venice"); or for being part of a "power couple," with partner and fellow artist Rob Pruitt. Even the comprehensive, full-color catalog *Jonathan Horowitz: And/Or*, published in conjunction with a nearly nine-month long 2009 retrospective exhibition at P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center – an alternative art space founded in 1976 in Long Island City (Queens, New York) and, since 2000, affiliated with the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) – offers minimal textual commentary.

Because of the dearth of analysis on Horowitz, and given the focus of this essay on the site-specific and fluid installation entitled *Go Vegan!*, I have found it useful to consider the artist's work in relation to the ample, significant, and compelling discussion of that of J.M. Coetzee: of three animal-inflected novels that somehow seem kindred (*Disgrace*, *The Lives of the Animals*, and *Elizabeth Costello*), I will focus, here, on the later two. After all, both Horowitz and Coetzee can be affiliated with the premise that, in the words of one scholar (quoting *Elizabeth Costello*), "we no longer have 'faith in the artist and his truth'" (Kochin 82).

Both Horowitz and Coetzee seem candidly disposed toward ironic detachment, keen ambivalence, and persistent mistrust of the means and motives of expressing oneself. Both wilfully occupy zones of uncertainty, equivocation, neutrality, and impassiveness – even as they showcase strong points of view, such as a strident opposition to animal exploitation. Intriguingly, an anonymous post, while commenting on a blog's review, maintains about the summer 2010 restaging of *Go Vegan!* at GBE, that it "[s]eems to me like a Peta parody" – as if the blog's subscriber could somehow discern Horowitz's neutral, sometimes tongue-in-cheek, inclinations (Qtd. in Russeth). Both literary and visual artists are writing histories that catalog spectrums of preferences in existence. Coetzee's tales engage in logical disputations, however mired in reason's limits, meanwhile courting intuitive associations, sentimental engagements, and emotional attachments. Horowitz's work, including *Go Vegan!*, likewise embraces opposites and entertains contradictions, ultimately increasing tolerances for coexisting differences. Never claiming to know, he operates as if he values putting tools for deciding before viewers, allowing viewers to get to know their own opinions and those of others.

While both men are sympathetic with the struggle for animal rights, as well as share a personal renunciation of meat, they nevertheless maintain modest goals in conversation about their craft and

ideologies. In one interview, for example, Coetzee reveals: "Anyhow, I am far too bookish, far too ignorant about real people, to set myself up as interpreter, much less a judge, of the lives they live" (Qtd. in Kochin 83). Conversing with Singer in the *Go Vegan!* video documentary, Horowitz strikes similarly genial or diffident goals: "It doesn't have to be an all-or-nothing thing.... Eating less meat is better than eating more meat." Yet perhaps as a result of their work being indirect or oblique, as well as imaginary in origin and output, they successfully shift people's thoughts about carnivorous attitudes and practices.

### III. "No One Knows What War Looks Like Anymore"

Drawn to "reckless personalities" (not to mention "vegetarianism, the Holocaust, and how art writes history"), as interviewer Cairns has observed, Jonathan Horowitz remains unapologetic about his preoccupation with entertainment culture and the act of bearing witness to celebrity hype and vilification of, e.g., Britney Spears, Mel Gibson, and Paris Hilton. Featuring the latter "celebutante" in *Vietnam, Paris, Iraq* (2007), for instance, the artist pairs two photographs by the same photographer (more or less), instructively underscoring radical shifts in present from past practices, of photojournalism and media coverage.

Shown in the *People Like War Movies* exhibition, this work juxtaposed Associated Press photographer Nick Ut's Pulitzer-Prize winner of terrified napalm victims, including naked nine-year old Kim Phuc, taken on June 8, 1972, during the Vietnam War, beside documentation of sobbing Hilton in the back of a patrol car, returning to prison "for repeatedly violating probation on a reckless driving conviction," taken on June 8, 2007, in Los Angeles, and (wrongfully) credited to the same photographer (by ABC's program *20/20*: Ut was present on the scene, as one of many working paparazzi, and standing near Karl Larsen who himself captured the highly publicized image, later suing ABC for crediting the wrong photographer) (See Ryan). Horowitz sub-captions the Hilton photograph with the notation, "Iraq war, day 1541," reasoning:

With all that was going on in the world, what were we doing imprisoning Paris Hilton for driving without a valid license? But I don't think it was an accident that stories like that were on the front pages when the Iraq War had become practically forgotten (Bovier et al. 172).

Examining such disjuncture in contemporary tabloid society, he makes full use of the Internet as a

principal vehicle and infinite resource for downloading source imagery, especially portraits, which are printed and framed. Horowitz, for example, assembled "Republican celebrities," as well as "celebrity activists," like AIDS activist Elizabeth Taylor, in addition to his fluid set of "200 Celebrity Vegetarians" (2002/2008), created in conjunction with *Go Vegan!*

Additionally designed for the *Go Vegan!* collection were such handsome sets of animals as "32 Portraits of Cows" (2002), an effort of assembly Horowitz also repeated on behalf of chickens, pigs, and sheep. In the case of humans, the artist likewise selected visually seductive representations, as if to make more persuasive the project's invitation to "go vegan." To convey their own "go vegan" agenda, the nonprofit organization People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) has similarly made use of magnetic celebrities, whose attractiveness make choosing such a path look desirable and popular. Despite their independently controversial choices – including producing imagery with pornographic references – both Horowitz and PETA deserve credit for helping cultivate more enlightened public opinions about, to the point of adopting, vegan or vegetarian positions.

By combining human celebrities with grids of countless cows, sheep, pigs, and chickens, *Go Vegan!* rendered all the individual faces into a rich sea of being, however varied the breeds and species, and no matter how particular each one's preferences, hang-ups, and personal contexts. At the same time, the portrait grids on view distinguished between sets of human celebrities and those of the other animals, especially given that Horowitz reminded viewers how the public generally label non-human subjects, namely, as types of packaged meat: i.e., "BEEF," "POULTRY," "PORK," and "LAMB." These very categorizations appeared just above the bottom row of each thirty-two member non-human animal grid: in white block letters with black contours against a red backdrop, and spanning four framed prints that might otherwise have been occupied by four more individual animal portraits.

Unlike the labeled animal portraits, partial sets of celebrities posed without such constraining language; indeed, one wall depicted a full complement of thirty-six such subjects – without their being relegated to any taxonomic order, for the purpose of industrial processing and commodification. Yet Horowitz would be the first to acknowledge that celebrities are just as typecast, packaged, and consumed – even their professional headshots indicating a greater degree of sell-out than any non-human animal Horowitz ever





**Jonathan Horowitz**

*If Slaughterhouses Had Glass Walls*, 2002; video installation, 2 DVDs, 2 27" TVs, 2 DVD players, synch box, gray metal stand, vinyl wall text; 3 1/2 minutes each; edition of 5 plus 2 artist's proofs (JH 062). Courtesy of the artist and Gavin Brown's enterprise. Copyright The Artist.

portrayed. Side by side with "beef," "poultry," or "pork," moreover, especially given their comparable formats, celebrities themselves seemed like forms of "meat," if yet to be specified. Objectified, packaged, advertised, and consumed, celebrity-hood continues saturating contemporary culture and elusive reality. Meanwhile, by dignifying cows, chickens, pigs, and sheep with individual personas, Horowitz suggested animals might be as photogenic and/or capable of as much fame as that of celebrities.

**IV. A Sense of Knowledge**

Clarifying to Cairns what compelled him to restage *Go Vegan!*, on the occasion of GBE's expansion, Horowitz explains, "It was about the site" (Qtd. in Cairns). The installation had debuted in 2002 at Green Naftali, another New York gallery. In 2003, the project traveled to BüroFriedrich in Berlin, as well as, in 2002, the Hamburg Kunstverein – also making *Go Vegan!* "about the site," though differently than at GBE. In Germany, oblique references to the Holocaust necessarily emerged and would have registered for certain viewers, all the while reinforcing an animal-focused agenda – as if channeling the sentiments of Coetzee's Elizabeth Costello –

meanwhile potentially facilitating the artist's ability to get "over the idea that the Holocaust is inextricably linked to all things German:"

I think eating meat can be seen as a broad metaphor for cruelty and senseless violence.... The Holocaust demonstrated that humans are capable of the most horrific, violent behavior imaginable. Animals are different from people, but they're intelligent, sentient creatures, and I think their industrial slaughter is in some way analogous (Qtd. in Cairns).

Such references preoccupy both Coetzee and Costello. In the case of the latter, an elderly literary professor, rather than avoid acknowledging intolerable conditions, keeps broaching what many perceive as offensive, inappropriate, parallels – in both *The Lives of the Animals* and the eponymous novel tracking her academic itinerancy. The New York artist has himself sustained a similar hostility, one critic asserting "a real danger that Horowitz may cause lasting offence," particularly on account of the thoughtful objects in his first United Kingdom

show, entitled “Minimalist Works from the Holocaust Museum,” which opened in late 2010 at Dundee Contemporary Arts, in Dundee, Scotland (See Sutherland). In terms of well-reasoned argumentation, moreover, despite general sympathy toward Coetzee’s Costello, scholarly consensus affirms the stronger arguments made by her opponents (In addition to Coetzee et al., see, e.g., Cavell et al.). However indirectly, Coetzee and Horowitz both willingly enter the murky experience of occupying apparently oppositional positions simultaneously.

For Coetzee’s protagonist Costello, this manifests as extreme alienation from and unfamiliarity with her known reality, as she confides before leaving town to an adult son, himself a university professor: “It’s that I no longer know where I am. I seem to move around perfectly easily among people, to have perfectly normal relations with them. Is it possible, I ask myself, that all of them are participants in a crime of stupefying proportions” (EC 114). In an earlier passage, in the midst of delivering a public guest lecture, Costello also observes:

I was taken on a drive around Waltham this morning. It seems a pleasant enough town. I saw no horrors, no drug-testing laboratories, no factory farms, no abattoirs. Yet I am sure they are here. They must be. They simply do not advertise themselves. They are all around us as I speak, only we do not, in a certain sense, know about them (65).

Ostensibly, *Go Vegan!* sets out to make these very issues apparent and the nature of the slaughterhouse more transparent and less camouflaged. After all, Horowitz asserts, in Singer’s video documentary, “[m]ost people just simply don’t know.” Were people more knowledgeable about their choices, he indicates, they would be more inclined to choose wisely.

Welcoming, as well as enticing, viewers into one of the former plant’s cold rooms – featuring ceramic tile draining floors, walls lined in stainless steel, and lots of metal hooks – the music of Paul McCartney and Wings plays periodically in the work *If Slaughterhouses Had Glass Walls* (2002). The artist installed two DVDs, two DVD players, and two TVs side by side, facing opposite directions, forward and backward, on an industrial stainless steel table that once served as a surface for cutting bodies. On the TV facing the gallery’s entrance, Linda and Paul McCartney, married and vegan, as well as fellow Wings band members, ride horseback through the

Scottish countryside to the light, warm, and plaintive tune of “Heart of the Country.”

Taking turns, one of the two TVs would pause intermittently while the other played, such that Linda, Paul, and the horses – along with their song about searching for a rural farm house to call home, smelling “the grass in the meadow,” and owning horse and sheep – would periodically freeze. At that point, the TV facing the room’s back wall would screen graphic footage of industrial slaughter, excerpts Horowitz assembled from PETA video documentation. *Go Vegan!* already preserved traces of what occurred on site in the former La Frieda meatpacking plant. For viewers unable to visualize such horrors, however, the artist provided powerful, if minimal, examples documenting animal killing: from the dogs hung outside, to the PETA footage in the back room of *If Slaughterhouses Had Glass Walls*. Yet the success of *Go Vegan!* may ultimately hinge on the artist’s combination of techniques of persuasion.

Like PETA, Horowitz employs celebrities to help him advocate, however indirectly, for political change and reform, even as his vehicles of advocacy are themselves implicated in and complicit with a mass-production society that thrives on, as one reviewer put it, “the not-so-secret connection between the peachy skin of pop and the rotting flesh of war” (See Heiser). Horowitz has repeatedly reported the impression:

That vegetarianism is perceived as sort of like a soft political issue. And as such, it does sort of have the ability to stand in for other things, which interested me. But then, of course, the more you learn and think about all the issues involved, it seems, you know, not so soft at all (See Singer).

By restaging *Go Vegan!* in a former meat processing plant, with periodic graphic examples, Horowitz makes nauseatingly transparent the harsh realities of industrial animal harvest. Simultaneously softening the experience with the charismatic faces of cows, chickens, pigs, sheep, and celebrities, not to mention tofu, with its own pedestal and gallery, and the vegan fare served to guests at the opening, Horowitz underscores the pleasures of choosing to “go vegan.”

### **Selected Bibliography**

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**Jonathan Horowitz** is a New York based artist working in video, sculpture, sound installation, and photography. Horowitz critically examines the cultures of politics, celebrity, cinema, war, and consumerism. From found footage, Horowitz visually and spatially juxtaposes elements from film, television, and the media to reveal connections and breakdowns between these overlapping modes of communication. He is a 1987 graduate of Wesleyan University.

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