Jan Harrison is an American painter and sculptor whose work, which primarily features animal imagery, centers on the animal nature as it relates to human existence and the collective psyche. Her art is informed by the philosophy of deep ecology. A monograph detailing her work describes it as “excavat(ing) the arcane kingdom of the human psyche, so long tyrannized by the repressive and oppressive forces of socialization." She has exhibited widely in the United States and abroad. Harrison speaks and sings in a language, Animal Tongues, which she has performed with her visual art.

She was born in West Palm Beach, Florida, and has lived in Georgia, California, Ohio, and New York. In 1989 she moved from Cincinnati to New York's Hudson Valley. Her art has been in over one hundred and seventy solo and group exhibitions throughout the United States and internationally, including ANIMULA - big little soul, solo exhibition at 11 Jane St. Art Center, Saugerties, NY, and Animal.Anima.Animus, c: Linda Weintraub and Marketta Seppälä, which opened in Finland and was exhibited in Holland, Canada, and at MoMA PS1 in New York.

Arcana Mundi, a monograph, was published in 2001 by Station Hill Press. In 2003, a chapter on her art was published in the book, *In The Making: Creative Options for Contemporary Art,* Linda Weintraub, d.a.p., New York, NY, with essay, *Soul-Genus Fusion, Internal Sources of Inspiration.* In 2010 an article and interview about her work was published in *PAJ: A Journal of Performance and Art,* New York, NY. Her work has been the subject of numerous reviews, interviews, and essays, including *Jan Harrison's Dream Animals,* 2020, Carter Ratcliff, Hyperallergic, and *Crossing Over to Jan Harrison,* 2001, George Quasha. In 2018 a feature article and interview, *Life or Death*, by Brainard Carey, about Jan Harrison's 1993-2018 series of paintings, "*Animals in the Anthropocene*," was published in Praxis Center for Aesthetics, Yale.

Jan Harrison is the recipient of six fellowships and grants. The most recent award is the Inaugural Recharge Foundation Fellowship for New Surrealist Art, New York Foundation for the Arts, NYFA, 2019.

Excerpts from ESSAYS and REVIEWS:

"When humans appear in Harrison’s earlier works, they are usually female and nude, and they resemble the artist. She calls several of these images self-portraits, yet they are not likenesses — or, rather, not likenesses of her as the social being she is in her daily life. They return our gazes with a wary intensity untouched by the decorum we usually bring to interactions with one another. These self-portraits show Harrison not as a member of society but as an indigenous inhabitant of a place beyond the boundaries of life as we routinely live it. This place is her imagination, the world where her art originates."

"Harrison’s three-dimensional animals float in imperturbable repose and those in her paintings mostly regard us with utter calm. A few, with teeth bared, may well be poised for ferocious leaps. Still, her world is not an

arena of Darwinian conflict. It is an ecosystem of intuitable meanings, of empathies intertwined. The paintings belong to a series the artist launched in 1993, which she calls *Animals in the Anthropocene* — animals in the time of human dominion, a title that could be understood as an indictment, given all that the human race has done to harm animals through environmental and other kinds of disruption.

However, the mood of Harrison's art is not prosecutorial. Rather than send us messages about the damage we have inflicted on our world and its inhabitants, including ourselves, she confronts us with images and effigies of creatures whose beings are as complex as our own, and thus as valuable. She does this in the faith that, in coming alive to all that is vital in these figures, we will realize that the vitality of an individual creature is not enclosed within itself.

An empathetic connection to a single being withers unless we weave it into a network of further connections with myriad beings. To respond to an animal in Harrison's imagined world is to grasp how closely its existence is linked with that of all the others. Thus, she refreshes our insight into the interdependence of living things — and our understanding of life's dependence on the real world, which, in the Anthropocene period, needs every insightful action we can take."

Carter Ratcliff, excerpts from review, *Jan Harrison's Dream Animals,* October 3, 2020, Hyperallergic.

"Jan Harrison beckons viewers to embark on a voyage. But instead of leaving home to explore exotic sites and sounds, we are guided into equally foreign territory — our innermost selves. We journey downward, circumventing our personalities and our individual life stories, passing our accumulated recollections and our acquired attitudes, crossing beyond spoken and written histories and even beyond human ancestry. Ultimately we disembark in the wondrous galaxy we carry within each gene. Its constellations are measured in units of shudders, murmurs, gasps, and shivers.

On this primal level, we discover our common animal ancestry, a vestigial remnant here awakened and made observable as pastel drawings, porcelain sculptures, and recorded voices."

Linda Weintraub, excerpts from essay, *Genus Fusion,* In The Making, Creative Options for Contemporary Art, and Animal.Anima.Animus

“The stuff of dreams… slithering reptilian creatures, soulful dogs, enigmatic cats, poignant and terrifying primates, all reflecting and sharing our deepest imaginings and cravings, our primal fears and pain. These are the images and emotions we keep hidden, but they steal into our dreams unannounced, emerging at our most vulnerable moments—the anima/animus—our shadow figure, our soul. These archetypes are deeply rooted in the indelible beauty of the paintings and sculpture of Jan Harrison.

Harrison’s pastels, encaustic paintings and animal sculptures explore the essence of being both animal and human. She delves into the obscure depths of our collective psyche and melds the two worlds with a searing intensity. Her work has a strangely exquisite, eerie charm as it stuns us with its beauty.

There is a powerful purity, an intimate authenticity in the primacy of her work. This is the natural world, our inner truth, a world that captivates us and elucidates the duality of existence. Startling us, we descend into a primeval plain–a hidden place that still exists somewhere deeply buried in our sensibility. The effect is profoundly personal, a mysterious journey into the self.”

Donatella de Rosa, excerpts from essay, *Anima / Animus; the strange and beautiful world of Jan Harrison,* Roll Magazine

"The pastel-and-ink paintings and porcelain-and-clay sculptures of Kingston-based artist Jan Harrison defy stylistic pigeonholes, but their otherworldliness and dreamlike logic relate to Surrealism, the 1920s Paris-based movement that celebrated the unconscious as the root of the creative impulse and exulted in the element of surprise.

Unlike the classic European-based style, which is characterized by jarring disjunctions and infused with a sense of alienation, Harrison’s work posits a world view in which animal and human natures are fused; the mystery that pevades her luminous, spectral primates, cats, birds and other creatures from her Animals in the Anthropocene and Corridor series stems from their sense of deep knowing and immersion in a primeval cosmos in which the wholeness of nature is restored.

This nature is not hostile, but rather a realm to be discovered, an intrinsic, if buried, part of the human psyche; the viewer identifies vulnerability, innocence, and grace in Harrison’s animals. New Surrealism, as Harrison defines it, is concerned with reconciling ourselves with the other and centering the human experience within the context of deep ecology, a profoundly healing exercise with a feminist bent that contrasts dramatically with the rationalist, fallen-world strategies of the (mostly) male Surrealists. In its subtle patterning and brilliant, atmospheric color, her formal language bears affinities with non-Western traditions. The delicacy of line in her paintings and tiny scale of her recent sculptures heightens the sense of tender connection and tactile warmth."

Lynn Woods, excerpts from article, *Jan Harrison's thoroughly modern surrealism,* HV1, Kingston, NY

“Harrison’s work explores origins. Her large primate heads, part of the “Corridor” series — a term that relates both to the eco-passageways into which much of the world’s wildlife is being squeezed as well as a cloistered psychological space — seem to be seeing more of us than we do of them. They gaze at us out of a velvety darkness, the details of their fine, bristling fur and rounded faces barely visible, creatures of ancient memory tangibly, palpably present, whose eyes seem to follow us as we move

past. The frontal composition and fine scrolls of whiskers drawn in gold ink suggest a Byzantine icon, while the soft atmosphere suggested by the smudged veils of color is naturalistic: it’s the combination of the two that perhaps imbues the creatures with their uncanny presence.”

Lynn Woods, excerpts from article, *Beauty of the Beast,* Kingston Times

"Occasionally an artist embodies the full manifold, a many-folding mind field, a replete and monstrous sheath turning out an underside of mind and, as Blake said, “the infinite which was hid.”

This is liminal being with highwire intensity — and no more human vs. animal, and especially no more diminution of the animal as something sub-human, rather than the essential reality of any other in the natural mystery of its primacy.

Somehow its magic is to release us from our dying images, to set us out on our journey of the precariously beautiful, with its unlimiting energy and self-secret identity, and we are, to transpose Yeats, changed utterly: A terrible beauty is born."

George Quasha, excerpts from essay, *Crossing Over to Jan Harrison*

"Harrison combines elements from animals we all know and love in a way that honors their innate otherness while also speaking to the non-human and intuitive inside everyone ….. all quite beautiful and bewitching …. Her pieces tend to emerge, with a resulting sense of mysterious origins, otherworldliness, to all she does. …. .Deeply personal and pioneering work."

Paul Smart, excerpts from articles: Painting in the Language of Animals,and Fine Furred Friends, Ulster Publishing’s Almanac

"Childhood memories of drawing huge mermaids and animals on the sidewalk, surrounded by the swaying and shimmering of plant life and ocean of south Florida where she grew up, she created art, even as a child, out of an intense feeling of deep connection to life…..”

Lorna Tychostup, excerpt from article, *Speaking in Tongues,* Chronogram

"In talking about her work, the artist states a desire to ‘live and see clearly, in a world that is brutal and uncaring, yet nurturing and joyous.’ Harrison’s paintings, self-portraits of her own interiority, her own animal nature, depict a world filled with chaotic struggle between what the sociobiologists have termed our basic ‘altruism’ and what Darwin identified as our ‘reptilian brain.’ Harrison is able to depict her struggle, her obsession, with artistic power and an unflinching self-referential style……we find a center of personal calm and cosmic balance in the aesthetic maelstrom provoked by Harrison’s desire to communicate and her awesome technical facility. “

Steven Kolpan, excerpt from article, *Beast of Eden,* Woodstock Times

"Sometimes exuberant with joy, but almost always eerie in their psychic allusion to mankind’s archaic affinity with nature, Harrison’s canvases seldom leave the viewer without some lingering impact like a half-remembered dream. In Harrison’s pictoral allusions to our archaic past we see, also, modern man’s new interpretation as he wrestles with his ancient, dormant instincts.”

Ann Pollak, excerpt from essay, *Myths for Our Time,* Dialogue Magazine