INTRODUCION | The Multispecies Metropolis

Animals dwell among us. Some, like the dogs and cats we call pets, live in our homes. They may even sleep in our beds. Other animals—cows, pigs, horses, and mice—spend their days in separate enclosures, nearby yet out of sight. Livestock, beasts of burden, and model organisms, these animals reside in pens, stables, and cages, tethered to our needs. Still others hop, crawl, and soar throughout our concrete jungles—urban wildlife untamed, but not unbound, by the environments we have built. Cougars cross our freeways; racoons roam our alleyways; and beetles bore their way into the walls of our buildings.

The Multispecies Metropolis interrogates how we make and govern space for the animals that dwell among us. Whether domesticated or wild, or perhaps somewhere-in-between, many animals inhabit spaces made *by* humans and *for* human use, or at least to satisfy human desires (read: zoos). Implicit in the design of these spaces, their forms and their functions, are cultural norms about *which* species abide in them, and *how*. Animals that overstep the boundaries we imagine, perhaps a spider in your kitchen or a dog off-leash, become threats to us: pests to be managed and even vermin to be exterminated. Architecture manifests these boundaries. It is a material designation of the moral place of animals in human worlds of power.

The projects on display here are provocations to think past the dominant paradigm of human-centered design. Informed by ethnographic fieldwork around the Philadelphia metropolitan area, these projects represent speculative interventions into local sites where humans encounter animals face-to-face, or in traces of one another, from ants in public parks and rabbits in private communities, to neighborhood cats and Philly's populations of possums, squirrels, pigeons, and sparrows. Across such varied sites, species meet in artificial habitats founded on logics of human exceptionalism. Their spatial interactions were conditioned by fences and locks, banal technologies of separation enchained in broader structures of race, class, and ability.

In contrast, the projects beyond this wall invite alternative forms of life with nonhuman lifeforms. No singular vision defines the futures that these designers project. Projects that hold a greater proximity to animals as an intrinsic good sit next to those that call for a respectful distance. There is also no consensus about species diversity or composition, the kinds of animals that people these projected spaces, nor about the roles they should play, both ecologically and in the process of design. Clients, users, collaborators, informants, and co-designers, "the animal" figures widely across these projects. What *does* unite their disparate conceptions of more-than-human design is a concern for the animals that dwell among us, subjects long-marginalized in our discourses about architecture. In these projects, humans are not the sole arbiters of space. Animal experience, autonomy, and well-being are paramount.

By exhibiting these projects, we hope to spark dialogue about animal justice in the built environment: Whom do we build space for? How does architecture impact animals? Can designers realize better relations with nonhumans? These are urgent questions. As climate change continues to dispossess animals of their lands, animal presence in our cities will only become more prevalent over the next century. *The Multispecies Metropolis* is thus a description of the here-and-now and a glimpse at futures-to-come. In the spirit of dialogue, we welcome you to engage with us about our projects, our plans for dwelling *with* animals. Not unlike those beings that slip between civilization and wilderness, the organization of this exhibition encourages a "feral" circulation along our corridor of life wild and domesticated. In so doing, a practice or art of noticing might begin to emerge, seeding the ground of an architecture for animals—an architecture otherwise.

-Richard Fadok, Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow in the Humanities