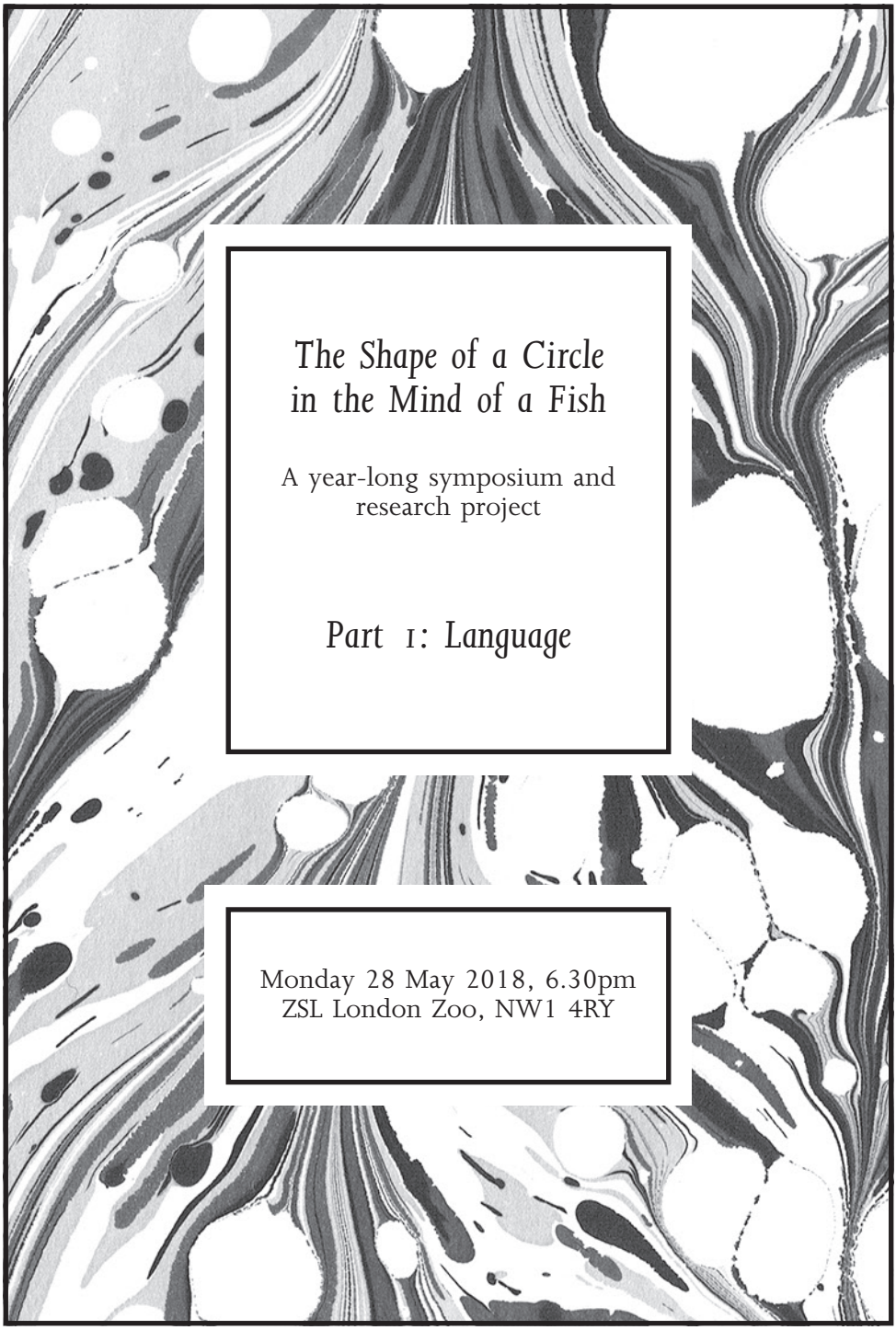

The Shape of a Circle in the Mind of a Fish

A year-long symposium and research project

Part 1: Language

Monday 28 May 2018, 6.30pm
ZSL London Zoo, NW1 4RY

At the bottom of the sea, a small pufferfish performs a labour of love, drawing with its body an elaborate sand circle, precise in its geometry, astounding in its aesthetics. What shape does that circle take before it is made? How to understand the movement that constitutes it as a kind of language and what is at stake when considering consciousness and communication in an interspecies landscape?

Inspired by Ian Cheng's exhibitions, *BOB and Emissaries* (6 March - 28 May 2018), the Serpentine launches a series of symposia that will take place over a year. Titled *The Shape of a Circle in the Mind of a Fish*, the gatherings bring together a wide range of thinkers and practitioners from various disciplinary ambits across art, literature, environmental studies, science and technology to explore the porous boundaries between human, animal and artificial consciousness and intelligence.

The Shape of a Circle in the Mind of a Fish, Part 1 gathers together choreographers, scientists, artists and writers at the ZSL London Zoo to reflect on cognition and language their relation to affect, agency and sensibility across species and beings. The second symposium will take place in late 2018 and will address inner multitude, digestion, neural images and endosymbiosis. It will be conceived in collaboration with artist Pierre Huyghe on the occasion of his exhibition at the Serpentine this autumn. This series inaugurates GENERAL ECOLOGY, a long-term, multi-disciplinary project addressing the environment, posthumanisms, complex systems and organisation through ecological principles.

PROGRAMME

6:30pm ZSL London Zoo: Reptile House

Dancer Claire Filmon performs Simone Forti's choreography, *Sleep Walkers/Zoo Mantras*.

Please note: views may be restricted. The performance, which lasts approximately 10 minutes, begins promptly at 6:35pm.

7pm ZSL London Zoo: Huxley Auditorium

James Wren (ZSL London Zoo), Lucia Pietroiusti (Serpentine), Filipa Ramos: Introduction

Michela de Mattei, *Estée Lauder: Adapting* (2016, 4'03''), performed by Lora Juodkaité.
For the short film sequence *Estée Lauder*, artist Michela de Mattei recorded and edited a series of Skype conversations with a talking myna bird named Estée Lauder. The encounters reflect on embodiment and exchange across species, marking a deepening relationship between the artist and her interlocutor.

Rasmus Nielsen, from collective Superflex, discusses how pufferfish circles, biomimicry and translation inform the group's current interest in agency and aesthetics beyond the human and the project they are developing in an island in the South Pacific.

Allora & Calzadilla, *The Great Silence* (2016, 16'53''), in collaboration with Ted Chiang
The silent, subtitled, inner monologue of a parrot, whose species is on the brink of extinction, reflecting on voice, silence, extraterrestrial life and human folly. The film is focused around the Arecibo Observatory, which captures and transmits radio waves from and into outer space – and whose site is also home to the critically endangered Puerto Rican parrots.

Author Ted Chiang discusses the making of *The Great Silence* as well as other works addressing interspecies communication, including "Story of Your Life", the novella which was adapted into the 2016 feature film, *Arrival*.

Michela de Mattei, *Estée Lauder: The Fear of Mistakes* (2016, 3'57")

Diana Reiss, Professor of Psychology at Hunter College, NYC, is joined by humanitarian and musician Peter Gabriel to present experiences from her research in dolphin communication, the function of technology within this research, as well as the horizon of an 'Interspecies Internet', a project by Vint Cerf, Peter Gabriel and Diana Reiss.

Vint Cerf, Vice President and Chief Internet Evangelist at Google: recorded message on the Interspecies Internet.

Michela de Mattei, *Estée Lauder – Hypnosis session* (2018, 8'08"), music & sound design by Emanuele de Raymondi.

Panel, moderated by Filipa Ramos and Lucia Pietroiusti and joined by Phoebe Tickell and Ben Vickers.

VINTON CERF was born in New Haven, Connecticut, in 1943. He is Vice President and Chief Internet Evangelist at Google. He received his B.A. in mathematics from Stanford University (1965) and his M.S. (1970) and Ph.D. (1972) from UCLA. After graduation, Cerf became an assistant professor at Stanford University, where he co-developed the TCP/IP protocol suite with colleague Bob Kahn. This set of communication standards for data would become the backbone of the Internet. Cerf has been awarded the U.S. National Medal of Technology (1997) and the ACM Turing Award (2004) among many others. Among many current projects, Cerf is working with NASA on the Interplanetary Internet, a new standard to communicate from planet to planet.

TED CHIANG is the author of the collection *Stories of Your Life and Others* (2002). His fiction has won the Hugo, Nebula, Sturgeon, and Locus awards and been translated into a dozen languages. His novella "Story of Your Life" was adapted into the 2016 Oscar-nominated motion picture *Arrival*, starring Amy Adams and directed by Denis Villeneuve.

CLAIRE FILMON is a dancer and improvisation artist based in Paris. Filmon has been collaborating with Simone Forti since 1999, participating in performances at the Bastille Theater in Paris, the Sophiensaele in Berlin, the Judson Church in New York and MOCA in Los Angeles. She has participated in improvisation performances with Barre Phillips, Julyen Hamilton, Nancy Stark Smith and Lisa Nelson among others. Filmon is regularly invited to share her work in Europe as well as in Korea, Japan, Brazil and the USA.

PETER GABRIEL is a musician with a passion for technology and human rights. While at school, Gabriel co-founded the group Genesis with whom he made 7 albums. He left in 1975, but returned to music a year later. Since then, he has made 11 solo albums. He started the WOMAD festival in 1982 and continues to promote world music through his Real World Records label. Gabriel's work in human rights started in 1980, when he released the anti-apartheid single, "Biko". He has performed in and organised many benefit concerts, including Amnesty International's *Human Rights Now!* worldwide tour in 1988, and

co-founded the Witness.org human rights organisation in 1992. Gabriel created theElders.org with Richard Branson and Nelson Mandela, which was launched by Mandela in 2007. In 2006, in recognition of his human rights work, he received the Man of Peace award from the Nobel Peace Prize laureates.

RASMUS NIELSEN founded Superflex in 1993 together with Jakob Fenger and Bjørnstjerne Christiansen. With a diverse and complex practice, Superflex challenges the role of the artist in contemporary society and explores the nature of globalisation and systems of power. They are known for art works with wit and subversive humour that address serious social and cultural concerns. Working in and outside the physical location of the exhibition space, Superflex has been engaged in major public space projects since their award-winning urban park Superkilen opened in 2011. In October of 2017 Superflex undertook a half-yearly commission at Tate Modern. Superflex's practice is, as the name suggest, not bound to any form or context.

MICHELA DE MATTEI studied Philosophy at Università di Roma La Sapienza and worked with the artist Giuseppe Gallo. De Mattei runs Limone, an artist-run space in East London. Recent solo exhibitions include *Allevamento di Tiranni*, Una Vetrina, Rome (2017), *Vogliatemi perdonare quel poco di disturbo che reco*, Ex Elettrofonica, Rome (2014); *Innesto #6, Orientamento* | Michela de Mattei, Sala Santa Rita, Rome (2013). Group exhibitions include *La Vita Della Mente*, Istituto Svizzero di Roma, Rome; *Bodikon*, Belmacz, London (2017); *There is no place like home 4°*, Riverside dock, Rome; *InterKontinental*, Belmacz, London; *La Pelle*, Project by FONDACO, Officina, Brussels; *Rétrospective I : Fail Compilation*, Détail, Paris (2016); *Feets, Don't Fail Me Now*, Belmacz, London (2015); *Incidents of phenomena*, Spazio Cerere, Rome (2014).
De Mattei lives and works in London.

Lisbon-born FILIPA RAMOS is a writer and editor based in London, where she works as Editor in Chief of art-agenda. She is a Lecturer in the Experimental Film MA programme of Kingston University and in the MRes Art:Moving Image of Central Saint Martins, both in London, and works with the Master Programme of the Institut Kunst, Basel. Ramos is co-curator of Vdrome, a programme of screenings of films by visual artists and filmmakers. She was Associate Editor of Manifesta Journal and contributed to documenta 13 (2012) and 14 (2017). She recently edited *Animals* (Whitechapel Gallery/ MIT Press, 2016).

DIANA REISS is a Professor of Psychology at Hunter College and in the graduate program of Animal Behavior and Comparative Psychology at the City University of New York. Diana earned her Ph.D. in Speech and Communication Science from Temple University and is an internationally recognised researcher in animal cognition and communication. Her research focuses on marine mammal cognition and communication, comparative animal cognition, and the evolution of intelligence. Her past work includes cognitive studies with interactive keyboards with dolphins to investigate their learning and communicative abilities, research in mirror self-recognition in marine mammals, marine mammal vocal repertoires and vocal and behavioral development in dolphins. Diana's work has been published in numerous international scientific journals and book chapters and has been featured in many television science programs, including *Nature*, *National Geographic*, *Wild Kingdom*, *The Today Show* and several BBC nature shows.

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IN THE MIND OF A FISH
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Curated by
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Filipa Ramos

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Ben Vickers

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Tamar Clarke-Brown

Production Manager
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SERPENTINE
GALLERIES