

---

## THE BOX

August 1–August 31, 2009

### Sam Easterson

*Animal-Cams*, 2008

---



Image courtesy of Video Data Bank

How does the world look through the eyes of a wolf? A falcon? A tortoise? A tumbleweed? For Sam Easterson, the fascination with perspective began not with an animal or a plant. It began with machines. Easterson's earliest videos involved putting cameras inside dryers, popcorn poppers, and washing machines. Chance dictated every aspect of the resulting works—both the images captured and their duration.

In 1998, however, Easterson made his first video using animals as actors...and directors...and camera persons...and tripods. The work, *A Sheep in Wolf's Clothing*, presents the perspective of a single sheep (who wears a helmet-mounted camera) among his flock. The video not only showed a day in the life of this sheep, it revealed a social experiment of sorts as the other sheep in the flock notice and react to the camera on their comrade's head.

Since then, Easterson has gone on to record the unique perspectives of over 70 animals and plants—from wolves to scorpions to tumbleweed. These works offer a glimpse of another world, one that is often focused on the ground and on the challenges of daily survival, where it's clear who's the hunter and who is being hunted. We get a sense of the daily rhythms of insects and mammals and birds and fish and their relationships with other animals and with the land. And every now and then, as with that first video of sheep, we sense an awareness of the camera.

*Animal-Cams* is a collection of twenty of these videos made over the years and loosely grouped by type. As in Easterson's early experiments with household appliances, chance still dictates everything. Animals are unpredictable, and though developments in technology have allowed Easterson to create cameras for almost any animal, including one as small as a millipede, he's never quite sure what the results will be or even how long the camera will stay mounted. The videos are sometimes funny, sometimes tense, and sometimes touching, but they all offer an unusual and captivating view of our world.

Easterson's ambitions are to amass the largest collection of videos from a "first-animal" perspective. A web project titled *The Museum of Animal Perspectives (MAP)* collects videos from around the world that have been captured in the wild using remote sensing cameras. The animals and their locations are mapped and catalogued and the videos are available to view online. One of the goals of this project is "to expand the public's capacity to empathize with animals and plants." (See more at [sameasterson.com](http://sameasterson.com))

Sam Easterson is originally from Hartford, Connecticut. He received a BFA from the Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art in New York and an MS in landscape architecture from the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis. His work has been exhibited at the Whitney Biennial, New York; the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; the International Center of Photography, New York; and MassMoCA, North Adams; among other exhibitions and locales. He was awarded a Creative Capital Foundation grant in 2001 and the Louis Comfort Tiffany Prize in 1999.

Jennifer Lange  
Associate Curator of Media Arts

---

*Animal-Cams* is shown courtesy of Video Data Bank, Chicago.

WORKS INCLUDED IN *ANIMAL-CAMS*:

*Farm-Cams* (Cow, Pig, Lamb, Goat), *Bird-Cams* (Duck, Falcon, Turkey, Pheasant, Chick), *Insect, Reptile, & Amphibian-Cams* (Scorpion, Alligator, Tortoise, Fly, Frog, Cricket), *Mammal-Cams* (Bison, Caribou, Wolf), and *Plant-Cams* (Tumbleweed, Pitcher Plant)

---

**Sam Easterson**

*Animal-Cams*, 2008  
35 mins., 30 secs., video

---

**Wexner Center for the Arts**

The Ohio State University

---

WWW.WEXARTS.ORG | (614) 292-3535