

AMANDA NEDHAM

I'LL DRAW YOU A FLY

Solo show #57

Opening Reception : Thursday Feb 28th, 6-8pm

Dates: Feb 28-April 13, 2019

Events: Love letter workshop 4:00pm,
Saturday March 23

Hours: 12:00am-6:00pm

“When you realize the value of all life, you dwell less on what is past and concentrate more on the preservation of the future.”

- Dian Fossey's last diary entry



Dian Fossey transplanted herself into a life of long-term, solitary research, camping on a muddy mountainside to live with gorillas in Rwanda where ultimately, she was murdered for her radical methodology. One of her own research fellows was even accused early on in this unsolved crime.¹

Travis Walton disappeared for five days while working in the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests near Snowflake, Arizona. He later described how he had been killed by a beam of light and subsequently revived by aliens; he then endured mass criticism for revealing his story to the public.

In *I'll Draw You a Fly*, Amanda Nedham weaves a cocoon of desire between Fossey and Walton who each traveled far from home, and whose experiences resulted in shifted moral landscapes. Seeing themselves as privy to the extraordinary, each became the center of their own expanded universe and acted in ordinance with the world that they wanted to live in. This show asks if longing can cross a veil; parting time and death, Dian reaching across from the other side to find assurance from another lonely traveler that her path—one that intersected with complex political realities and sometimes violence—was worth the sacrifice.

¹ Travis Walton wrote *Fire in the Sky* following his encounter, while Dian Fossey was unable to complete her manuscript *Gorillas in the Mist* before her murder.

Positioned in the liminal space between offerings, a bronzed chair summons the absent spirits to commune with us. It is a center of gravity, a central point of votive accretion which simultaneously evokes the ghost of the primatologist.

Nedham has created meticulously observed drawings that acknowledge the medium's association with utility and evidence. Fossey and Walton each used drawing as a means of legitimizing their experience and research, with Dian famously creating "noseprints" to identify her gorilla family. These drawings exist within a chaos of images and reflect that in their carefully selected yet vastly divergent subjects and combinations. They are impressions, offerings, suggestions for Dian, hopeful promptings of love, wonder, and adventure.

Presented in a grid, Amanda Nedham's drawings become relational indulgences to Dian Fossey, folding in the potential companionship of Travis Walton, observational art, and romantic science. Drawing connotes evidence, it lives with histories of cartography, darwinian exploration, anatomical figuration; it is a hard edge, a defining line, a sense of clarity. Drawing has historically been employed as a conjuring medium because of its association with precision, borders, and observable truths. Pencils placed in planchettes of talking boards, rune stones, and automatic drawing are a few of the practices linking the drafted line with transportation to another realm.

Nedham is the conjurer of Travis Walton's conduction. She has created a series of triggers, sparking the connection between Walton and Fossey, initiating their immaterial relationship through tactile offerings. *I'll Draw You a Fly* is an interrogation of, and dedication to, Dian Fossey, offering Travis Walton up to her as an anchor to life, an embodiment of the strange, a medium through which to transcend her murder.

Travis,

I want to see the aurora borealis through your eyes. To be reassured that I didn't miss out by always looking down. Where it was wet. Where it was muddy. Where it was brown. Where it was green. Sometimes flecked with little red spots. And so dark at night. Tell me what it means to see the night sky filled with unnatural colours reminiscent of some archaic painting, the background hues swarming the figures with their elongated fingers situated beside searching opposable thumbs. Describe the shades of violet, a colour that doesn't seek out a body. Then tell me about escaped plasma and polar winds until my mind wanders and I start to trace the contours of invisible noses. Things that our species agree are beautiful don't always matter. When I was alive I was hard to impress, I once had my appendix removed to get a job.

I shared my space for love once, with two juveniles. When they left, having been sold to a zoo in Cologne, I attempted to erase all signs of our cohabitation. Between the damp wooden floor slats I found a small tooth. Shiny, it was less cool than it looked, that niche having preserved an ideal climate. I did not know what to do with it so in the meantime I put it in my mouth, pushing it to the back fold of my cheek and upper right molar. I kept the tooth there for some time. I don't recall what happened to it.

I think that I could be convinced to cohabit again.

Tell me that the northern lights smell like oranges.