

QUIN & AXTENS CHOICE M

# A Zebra Crosses Brixton

by  
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## A proposal by Rafael Pérez Evans for an event and 16mm film installation.

My latest research thread focuses on euroguilt appeasement and the United Kingdom and its historical and contemporary relations with its colonies. This project will hone in on one specific historical narrative triggered by the archive photograph seen on the cover page of this pdf, a moment in the early 20th century where a Brixton resident attempted to elicit zebras, brought back from African colonies as 'specimens', to pull his horse-drawn carriage. This action exemplified a continuous paradigm in philosophical and political ideals of the time, which sought to create order and master nature through empirical study. The part of this story that I find crucial for my research was its failure. The zebra, although resembling the horse in form, refused to perform in the manner desired and was labelled **ungovernable**. This project focuses on that understanding and wishes to resuscitate the photograph from the archive by bringing a living zebra back to Brixton, this time free of its carriage for one night only to various areas of Brixton, in which whoever is walking around will 'bump' into the unannounced event of the zebra walking as well as the artist talking to the zebra in the walk.

In my recent practice, I have been working with a number of animals with the intention of constructing a long term contemporary 'bestiary', in which various narratives I excavate in Europe and in some of its 'ex-colonies' contain animals that help us to gaze into certain **fractures and failures** within the colonial matrix. In the past this has included working with a story of the death of an albino peacock from Rio de Janeiro: <http://rafaelperezevans.com/pavo-realengo/> a project presented in Nogueras Blanchard Gallery in Barcelona, as well as working with chameleons that become highly visible and a story in which they were rescued from a historical slave – witches market in Marrakech, project made possible by Matadero Madrid: <http://rafaelperezevans.com/the-curse/>.

I have now in London to develop this project which commenced in 2016, I am currently looking for funding support to produce and experience the return of a live Zebra to the metropolis through a 16mm film to be presented as a film installation. Financially the central figure of the project, a living zebra, requires £3400 for its hiring, protection and transportation, which can be brought in to be filmed by the reputable and ethical company:

[www.amazinganimals.co.uk](http://www.amazinganimals.co.uk) adding to that figure another £1500 will be necessary for a 16mm camera rental, film stock, dolly rental and cinematographer. These are amounts I am looking into raising with the support of one or more institutions or private funding bodies, if by any chance you were aware of any funding present within the museum or any other institution or private company sponsor which you collaborate with, I will be very happy to continue the conversation in regards of funding.

To produce and shoot the film I will be continuing on my practice around "guilty ethnographic tactics" and shoot the work with a 16mm camera and film stock, 16mm has the aura, feel and quality of many problematic ethnographic films which I wish to point towards. A part of the film will contain a cinematic dolly zoom technique: <https://theplaylist.net/magic-dolly-zoom-20170922/> This specific filmic technique can create a special sense of disorientation in the moving image, which I will be using as a formal device to abruptly shift and warp the historical passing event of the zebra in perspective. The 16mm filming and the dolly zoom technique will be explored, filmed and expanded upon by working with the award-winning cinematographer Raquel Fernandez: <http://www.raquelfernandeznunez.com/>

The project also explores and follows on a research I am doing around Hito Steyerl's essay 'In free fall' (2011), where following her work I am drawing parallels between colonial equivocation and liberalism, looking at how the **erasure** of land, community and biography through constant **equivocation** acts as a force that produces groundlessness, disorientation, confusion and a loss of axis in many colonised human and non human bodies. This disorientation and animal will be presented as a film in an installation, where we view a white human talking to a 'resurrected' ungovernable animal as a way to navigate into the sticky territory of euroguilt appeasement and colonial failure.

1. Hito Steyerl. 2011. Flux Magazine: "Many contemporary philosophers have pointed out that the present moment is distinguished by a prevailing condition of groundlessness."

<<https://www.e-flux.com/journal/24/67860/in-free-fall-a-thought-experiment-on-vertical-perspective/>>

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