

Animals in art.

Ever since I was a child I have been drawing animals. Studies of living animals, from books with animal illustrations and animals from my own imagination and memory.

Everything from noble Arabic horses to Bugs Bunny and ferocious sharks with bloody teeth. The animals have accompanied me ever since.

The animals are rarely the main characters of my works but are often 'mood builders' – that is, subordinate figures setting the tone for the often ominous and alarming atmosphere in my drawings.

I am deeply fascinated by the different ways people especially in the western civilisation regard animals. Children's literature and movies are filled with rabbits in overalls, teddy bears in cars and squirrels with social problems...in other words, animals that play out actions and emotions from the human world.

To me the personified animals represent something safe and childhood associated but also something grotesque and perverse in their total derailment and lack of understanding and respect for nature.

Culture/nature:

The overall theme in my works is the breaking of habitual thinking and the common perception of reality. That's why it's obvious to draw these silly animals, which are fundamental part of our storytelling (from the fables by La Fontaine to Disney and Manga).

In my drawings the cute creatures are often twisted, though, and the cute is dangerously close to the perverted: the foolish rabbits with flutes, sparrows with big eyes and patterned scarves, fennecs with princes' crowns and weeping armadillos with jewels. The animals are often placed in vignette-like formations on the very edge of the drawing or in direct interaction with the characters (the girls) in the picture.

I often mix the genres in my drawings in such a way that different animals within the same drawing both can be inspired by old English illustrations like for instance Beatrix Potter – and by Disney or Pokemon. The exaggerated and synthetic animals are, moreover, often placed together with more naturalistic animals – sometimes directly copied from handbooks like *Birds in colours* or animal encyclopaedias in which the precision in the reproduction of, for instance, the plumage and the fur drawings is particular great. The juxtaposition of animals from cartoons and children's literature and real species of animals makes it difficult to place the scenery.

The supernatural:

Another aspect of the animals in my works is the supernatural or ESP (Ekstra Sensoric Perception). There's often an atmosphere of something unknown and ill-fated lurking in my works. The animals contribute to this feeling with their often uneasy expression – as if they scent something or someone approaching. Characteristics that have no direct proof but which humans always have attributed to animals:

from the dog who senses wanted or un-wanted visitors long before the door bell rings – to the cuckoo whose song predicts how long a human being will live.

Hybrids:

Girls with bunny ears, armadillos and Dalmatians with girls' faces, swallows with telephone poles growing out of their heads, foxes with antlers, Little Red Riding Hood with a wolf's body.

Hybrids between animals, objects and human beings often appear in my works – both as main characters and in secondary roles. Yet again I deal with the unexpected combinations in order to play with the concepts and the well known – and in this way question what's up and down, adult and childish, high culture and lowbrow culture.