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January 10, 2008

## ***According To Their Kind @ Flashpoint***



In *According To Their Kind*, Arizona-based artist Julie Comnick explores issues of selective breeding and its relationship to man's influence on the evolution of animal species. The exhibit of twenty large-scale charcoal drawings will be at Flashpoint until February 9.

*According to Their Kind* juxtaposes five groups of work to aid the narrative. Images of animals in forced breeding situations are seen alongside medical text describing modern human fertilization techniques and Biblical passages describing Noah's Ark. This work is contrasted with small, framed images of in vitro fertilization as well as large drawings of various boats.

Upon entering the gallery, one is greeted by three charcoal drawings — the two largest suspended by black wooden dowels. On the left wall is charcoal-rendered Biblical text, an excerpt reading "two of every sort shall come into you, to keep them alive," clearly referencing Noah's Ark. On the front wall is a carefully drawn image of two pandas, bound by leashes. The charcoal in *Untitled (pandas)* varies from thick, black and textured to light dustings to solid lines. The remainder of the paper is stark — an empty white against the gallery's similarly white walls. The third, and smaller, image shows a magnified view of a Petri dish.

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Continuing into the gallery, the left and right walls are filled with more juxtaposition of text and animal imagery, with each set including one or two small, framed magnified fertilization images. Interspersed throughout the gallery are four “ark” images, including sailboats, fishing boats, and rafts. The back wall frames a zebra family tree, mapping one fragile infant zebra’s ancestry to its great-grandparents.

*Untitled (zebras)* (pictured) contains the same airy charcoal treatment of *Untitled (pandas)*, with much of the zebras’ bodies, and all of the background, left white. This lightness of application gives the drawings a dream-like quality which contrasts with the harsh reality of the situations depicted.

At first glance, the exhibit communicates the idea of human capture and torture of wild animals — elephants, macaques, flamingos, and others. However, after viewing several of these images, one notices that many of the animals are on top of one another, ready for a leashed love romp. The juxtaposition of these images with the text describing both Noah’s Ark and human fertilization techniques is thought-provoking. By including text on human fertilization, the artist brings into question not only the breeding and control of animals, but the selective breeding processes undergone by man, thus also raising questions about the effect of man’s interference with evolution.

Images of Julie Comnick’s *Untitled (zebras)* courtesy of the Gallery at Flashpoint.

Julie Comnick: *According To Their Kind will be at the Gallery at Flashpoint through February 9. The gallery is located at 916 G Street, NW and is open Tuesday through Saturday 12 to 6 p.m.*

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i SOOO want to go see this... but can't manage to do so within the few hours they are open.

flashpoint, take it from a fellow gallerina, OPEN YOUR DOORS!

has anyone in the commentariat seen this yet??



By [XtenaXtena](#)

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Flashpoint is open from 12-6pm, Tuesday through Saturday. We're also open by appointment and I'm always happy to be here early or stay late so that visitors have the opportunity to see one of our shows.

Karyn Miller  
Manager, Visual Arts Communications  
Cultural Development Corporation / Flashpoint



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