



> Collage drawings by Mary Beth Edelson in **Animalesque** Rob Harris

“

It's bringing back the incomprehensibility of the animals, so we don't understand any more what they're saying

Filipa Ramos

less appealing.

A noticeable feature of the exhibition is the number of women artists whose work, over many decades in some cases, has looked at the ways human and animal behaviour overlaps.

"This isn't a show about feminism but I thought it was interesting to bring these artists together," explains Filipa. She points out the beauty and intricacy of Britta Marakatt-Labba's embroidery. The artist, born in 1951 into a Sami reindeer herding family in the north of Sweden, blends landscape, animals and mythology in her work, along with a subtle dash of politics.

The BALTIC pieces would grace anyone's living room wall, particularly in this chilly season, but Filipa says Britta also spent a few years creating an epic, 60-foot work showing the history of the Sami people (more frequently referred to in this country as Laplanders).

Then there's the extraordinary frieze of collage drawings created between 1972 and 2011 by American artist Mary Beth Edelson. More than 100 of them are arranged on the gallery's far wall.

Beautiful from afar, they merit a range of responses when examined up close. The artist, we learn, pays

tribute to women across history, their achievements and their various struggles.

Among famous faces you might see here, incorporated into strange creatures which are either goddess-like or more like creepy crawlies, are the singer Grace Jones, the actors Elizabeth Taylor and Sigourney Weaver and the artists Louise Bourgeois and Yoko Ono.

"Women-animal-spirits" they are called in the BALTIC programme. Filipa and a couple of gallery technicians spent a very long time assigning them a place on the wall and pinning them up.

Visitors intrigued by these female artists who maybe haven't enjoyed the profile of their male counterparts, will also want to see the other new exhibition at BALTIC, the first major UK survey of the work of American artist Judy Chicago who turned 80 this year. Both the Judy Chicago exhibition and **Animalesque: Art Across Species and Beings** run until April 19 next year.

An **Animalesque** event at BALTIC on January 25 will feature artists Amalia Pica and Marcus Coates and Volker Sommer, professor of evolutionary anthropology at University College London.

■ **Find details at Baltic.art**



> **The Jungle Book Project** by Pierre Bismuth

Don't allow our tech revolution to be destroyed

Paul **Benneworth**



I AM back in the North East for a conference on enterprise and business. We are in Newcastle's Stephenson Quarter, and I am highly impressed at the transformation of this dilapidated railway district into a dynamic and attractive location.

Our opening lecture was delivered in a theatre that once housed Robert Stephenson's railway company, the builder of the famous Rocket. It is a beautifully preserved monument to a time when Newcastle led the world in delivering complex innovation.

The conference has been fascinating, exploring the role of small business in economic growth. I presented my own work on the rise of microbreweries in Netherlands and took the opportunity for some local fieldwork, retiring to the nearby Box Social for some well-deserved refreshment.

I get a real kick hearing about successful small businesses in the North East, because it's where my Ph.D. began. In 1995, I was sick of hearing the North East would be saved by inward investment, so I tracked down entrepreneurs building a new knowledge economy in the region.

I found high-technology businesses in the most unexpected places, in Consett, Tanfield Lea, Ashington and Bishop Auckland. All of them small, all of them incredibly innovative, all of them incredibly globalised.

Flying back to Newcastle this week I was sitting next to someone who worked for a familiar company from my Ph.D. Their office file logo is familiar to a generation of administrative workers, but they recently reinvented themselves as an innovative packaging company.

She was telling me how they'd become this innovative, knowledge intensive company creating exactly the kind of jobs we need in the North East to ensure our future prosperity. They've labs in Cramlington and a test site at Blyth port where they expose their packaging materials to one of the harshest world's harshest environments.

When I did my Ph.D., it was unthinkable that Blyth would host a high technology

lab. But there's a host of world-leading work being done there, taking advantage of the North Sea and our detailed operational maritime engineering knowledge.

Just recently, a blade for the world's largest wind energy turbine arrived at Blyth to be tested at the provocatively entitled Renewable Energy Catapult.

The renewable energy centre is the culmination of decades of effort to transform our onetime expertise in shipbuilding into other areas of marine engineering.

This process of rebirth and reinvention has been slow, and relies on stability allowing businesses to grow. We face the challenge here that our region is the first to suffer closures in a recession.

When there's a downturn, factories that have been there for a quarter century or more may close. Highly skilled staff leave the region, rarely to return.

Regional revival requires long-term economic stability to allow companies to make a profit, grow and build their enterprise. And now we are about to visit the most insane disruption and destabilisation on our region's economy.

All our Brexit options will unleash a torrent of destruction that will destabilise and destroy the North East's innovative companies. There's no gains from trade deals if you don't make anything, and no regional engineering business will with an economy collapsing around them.

We stand today at a critical point; continuing this slow and steady progress, or a rerun of Thatcherite devastation. Our last economic hope as a region is to cancel Brexit, and that requires a change of government so I fervently hope that we cast our votes smartly next month.

We need a coalition of the moderates to stand up for the UK's and the North East's real interests in stability and certainty.

Only that can guarantee our unlikely technology revival into the future.

■ Paul Benneworth is a Professor at Western Norway University of Applied Sciences occasionally based in Whitley Bay.

Greek, a wolf speaks Czech and the chimps chatter in Korean. The English speaker is Shere Khan, the tiger, voiced here - as in the original film - by British actor George Sanders.

An array of the artist's own cartoon versions of the characters with their allotted language is also on display. Filipa says: "He looked at all the different versions of *The Jungle Book* and decided to create a Tower of Babel version so only if you can speak 19 languages will you be able to understand the film.

"It's bringing back the incomprehensibility of the animals, so we don't understand any more what they're saying."

Will children mind or even notice? With their comfort in mind, an array of coloured cushions has been laid in front of the screen.

Marcus Coates, an artist who has worked a lot in the North East and is inspired by wildlife, collaborated with primatologist Volker Sommer to produce a piece with a very long title.

Degreecoordinates, *Shared Traits of the Hominini* (Humans, Bonobos and Chimpanzees) is a list of questions to which all the related creatures mentioned in that title could feasibly answer yes.

Some are nice or at least OK - Do you hug? Can you wade in water? Do you climb trees? Others - Do you throw rocks? Do you eat soil? Do you eat your own vomit? - are