



Robert Wilson: *Animals*

July 24th - September 13th, 2025

Opening reception: July 24th, 2025 from 6 - 8pm



Ivory (Black Panther), 2006

Winston Wächter Fine Art, New York is pleased to present *Robert Wilson: Animals*, an exhibition of video portraits by renowned theater director and visual artist Robert Wilson. This solo exhibition presents Wilson's captivating series of animal portraits—featuring snow owls, a black panther, skunk, an elk, and more. These portraits showcase Wilson's acclaimed mastery of light and color and reflect his fascination with animals, which he describes as having “a way of listening interiorly.”

Wilson first debuted his video portraiture at Paula Cooper Gallery in his 2007 exhibition, where he staged a series of high-definition video portraits featuring artists, musicians, actors, animals, and other notable figures. *Animals* is the first exhibition devoted exclusively to his animal portraits, created over the years since that initial presentation, including video works from his 2016 collaboration with Hermès.

The Hermès installation at Cedar Lake in New York City, titled *Here Elsewhere*, brought together Robert Wilson's avant-garde vision with Hermès' renowned commitment to craftsmanship and material excellence. Animal portraits were interwoven with pieces from the Hermès collection, alongside sound and performance, to create a fully immersive, 360-degree environment. Works such as *Quincy (Red fox) from the series Hermès by Nature* demonstrate how Wilson's scenographic sensibility amplified the narrative power of both the portraits and the surrounding elements.



Within these portraits, Robert Wilson explores numerous references to mythology, art history, and popular culture. His *Snowy Owls* references the owl in Greek mythology which was often associated with Athena, goddess of wisdom, arts, and skill. Similarly, in his portrait of an Elk, the animal stands almost motionless within a stark setting as subtle movements such as the flick of an ear or the rise and fall of the elk's breath, slowly reveal themselves. In Wilson's *Panther* piece, the artist's signature use of theatrical lighting enhances the sense of quiet drama. The backdrop is spare, recalling the atmosphere of a stage set or a dream.

By incorporating a multitude of creative elements; lighting, gesture, text, voice, set design, and narrative – the video portraits act as a synthesis of all the media in the realm of Wilson's art making. The medium is video but the form blurs time-based cinematography with the frozen moment of still photography. The final result on the screen resembles a photograph, but on closer inspection reveals Wilson's highly developed theatrical language in a striking visual experience that is both meditative and deeply expressive.

Born in Waco, Texas, Robert Wilson is among the world's foremost theater and visual artists. His works for the stage unconventionally integrate a wide variety of artistic media, including dance, movement, lighting, sculpture, music and text. His images are aesthetically striking and emotionally charged, and his productions have earned the acclaim of audiences and critics worldwide. After being educated at the University of Texas and Brooklyn's Pratt Institute, Wilson founded the New York-based performance collective "The Byrd Hoffman School of Byrds" in the mid-1960s, and developed his first signature works. With Philip Glass he wrote the seminal opera *Einstein on the Beach* (1976). Wilson's artistic collaborators include many writers and musicians such as Heiner Müller, Tom Waits, Susan Sontag, Laurie Anderson, William Burroughs, Lou Reed, Jessye Norman and Anna Calvi. He has also left his imprint on masterworks such as Beckett's *Krapp's Last Tape*, Brecht/Weill's *Threepenny Opera*, Debussy's *Pelléas et Melisande*, Puccini's *Madama Butterfly*, Verdi's *La Traviata* and several of Shakespeare's works. Wilson's drawings, paintings and sculptures have been presented around the world in hundreds of solo and group showings, and his works are held in private collections and museums throughout the world. Wilson has been honored with numerous awards for excellence, including a Pulitzer Prize nomination, two Premio Ubu awards, the Golden Lion of the Venice Biennale, and an Olivier Award. He was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Letters, as well as the German Academy of the Arts, and holds 8 Honorary Doctorate degrees. He is a Commander of the Order of Arts and Letters and Officer of the Legion of Honor in France, bearer of the German Officer's Cross of the Order of Merit, and laureate of the 2023 Praemium Imperiale. Wilson is the founder and Artistic Director of The Watermill Center, a laboratory for the Arts in Water Mill, New York.