

## THE CHOIR OF ISAAC VAN AMBURG AND HIS ANIMALS

I am the centre of special but sadistic attention, my fur is cleaned, combed and kept in the purest of colours.

HUGE DEVOURING BRILLIANCY!

I am beaten into submission with a crow bar to act out biblical fairy tales.

I am part of an orchestrated congregation of lions, tigers and leopards commanded by our shared master. Together we are performing the tamed but still furious predators while he performs the protector of the innocent: caressing the lamb, inviting the child.

Every week thousands of humans come to see us perform this spectacle, eagerly waiting for me to fight back.

LASHED CROUCHING SUBMISSION!

The pistol shots, the whip and the crow bar have marked my skin and my soul. The marks are traces of the combination of violence and kindness that brought me here and turned me into amusement.

I am trained to lick the boots of my prisoner. I am trained to kneel before the man.

MAGICAL! EXCITING! NOVELTY!

There have been several just like me. I am the one who never gets old. I am the one who is held in front of the mouth of the lion, a woolly invitation to break the thin layer of civilized manor. Sometimes I am killed. Sometimes I get bitten. I am a silent body. I am the sacrifice.

ALL LIVING ALIVE! ALIVE! ALIVE!

By starving us we are pushed into ferocity and we are not disappointing the audience. We wait for the trembling silence when he enters the cage dressed in costumes of thickest animal skin and metal plates, tools in hand.

He who fights me, and force his arm and head into my mouth, dissected lions as a child. He is not satisfied with only pushing and pressing. He also wants to cut, tear and pry.

We are a group of travellers in death.

ROYAL ILLUSTRIOUS ENTHUSIASM!

The Queen orders. The tamer forces. The artist documents. One hundred and seventy-eight years after this series of events the artist documents again. I am an involuntary illustrator of your crafted gorge between culture and nature, an example of brute wilderness. I am here for you to adore, fear and oppress.

I am a grotesque curiosity.