

## **Artist Statement**

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My current work, a series called, "Dominance and Affection" revolves around the exploration of this duality as it can be seen in the relationship that exists between humans and the rest of the natural world. In today's increasingly nature deprived society our most intimate connection tends to be with plants and animals that we ourselves have drastically altered through the process of domestication. For the majority of us, our most consistent relationship with nature is with the animals we have singled out and chosen to become our companions. We have turned wild animals into docile and sweet natured pets as we have selected for tameness, directing the animals evolution in a manner that is most beneficial to us. We have removed these creatures from the wild to give us unconditional love and eliminate our loneliness, to amuse us, and to assist us in our day to day activities at the expense of their own freedom to exist in their natural environment. Cats in today's society, more often then not, live entire lives with their feet never once touching grass as they chase catnip infused fabric mice and sleep in sunlit windowsills while the birds chattering outside remain just beyond their grasp. Dogs, a species which exhibits amazing variety, have been shaped by humans to custom fit our specific needs, whether it be herding cattle or sniffing out bombs in a crowded airport. It's amazing to think that the drastic visual disparity between the Chihuahua and the Great Dane is due entirely to human intervention and selective breeding. Monkeys are taken from their mothers, diapered and given a surrogate which is usually a stuffed animal to cling to for maternal comfort in the terrifying transition from jungle to cage. Fighting crickets in Chinese society have been so revered that, upon their deaths, have had elaborate and lavish funeral ceremonies in there honor. However, they are fought in much the same ways that cocks have been fought in other societies, often to the death of the loser. It is this reverence existing side by side with inconsiderate control that I am interested in illustrating in my work. For there can be no amount of love and affection lavished upon these creatures that will erase the fact that the success of the relationship lies in our complete domination over all aspects of their existence.