



V U L P U S the fox finds his name from the person who winds wool (volupis), for he is a creature with circuitous pug marks who never runs straight but goes on his way with tortuous windings. He is a fraudulent and ingenious animal. When hungry and nothing turns up for him to devour, the fox rolls himself in red mud so as to appear bloodied. Then he throws himself on his back, draws in his breath, and thoroughly bloats himself up as if he were long dead. The birds, upon seeing the fox covered with blood and with his tongue hanging out, all descend on him in order to devour him. But he stretches out and seizes them and the birds die a miserable

D E A T H



*Vulpus*, from the suite *Bestiarum Excerptum*  
Photogravure, etching, letterpress, 23K gold leaf. 35 x 17cm

## DAVID MORRISH

Latin texts of 13th and 14th century Medieval Bestiaries describing common, exotic and mythical creatures with allegorical and sometimes humorous overtones were the source for the text within these prints. These strange tales and misinterpretations can surprise us in their naïveté while often alluding to actual fact, albeit using a completely accidental or misguiding methodology. It is this human tendency of making the world serve or reflect our philosophies and beliefs that I find intriguing, especially in the context of a natural history bestiary.

The foundation of each print is the head and shoulder portrait of a ratty or amateur taxidermist's mount. These puzzled, angry, quizzical, funny creatures verge on the comic rather than the macabre. I have combined techniques such as photogravure and letterpress with an intaglio, all of which reference illuminated manuscripts and Celtic design. In the resulting portfolio, craft and technique play as strong a role as the content, as in their medieval predecessors.

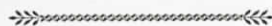


❧ P E R D I X the partridge gets its name because it makes that sort of noise. It is a cunning, disgusting bird. Frequent intercourse tires them out. The males fight each other for their mate, and it is believed that the conquered male submits to venery like a female. Desire torments the females so much that even if a wind blows toward them from the males they become pregnant by the smell. Moreover, it is such a perverted creature that the

female will go and steal the eggs of another female. Yes, and in spite of the cheat she does not get any good of it. For, when the young are hatched and hear the call of their real mother, they instinctively run away from the one who is brooding them and return to the one who laid them.



*Perdix*, from the suite *Bestiarum Excerptum*  
Photogravure, etching, letterpress,  
23K gold leaf. 29.5 x 17.5cm





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