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[Review: Our Origins/Museum of Contemporary Photography](#)

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Alison Ruttan, "Evered Is Interested (detail from Dean Sequence)," 2009

RECOMMENDED

Taking on the time-honored conundrum of the meaning of human life, curator Allison Grant brings together sixteen photo-artists, each of whom approaches the question from a different angle and distinctive strategy. Some of the contributors are smitten with contemporary science, others with their fantasies about it; some are straight documentarians of the survivals of primeval ages in our world, others set their fancies free in constructions and scenarios. For all the wit, wisdom and insight here, Alison Ruttan steals the show with her epic scenario series featuring human subjects re-enacting a long and bloody war among a group of chimpanzees that, according to social biologist Jane Goodall, had split into antagonistic factions. Presenting her cross-species simulation in clusters of color shots that depict moments of the conflict, Ruttan may not have revealed the mysteries of being; she has effectively portrayed us as too close to other primates for comfort, evoking a mixture of humor, absurdity, depression, truth and self-recognition. (Michael Weinstein)

New City, August 30, 2011

Through October 16 at the Museum of Contemporary Photography, 600 South Michigan.