

EPIC FORM  
part one



stories about horses



In reality, a horse is an epic form, how absurd. Quite a postulate, yes. The following will contain several of those and an non-chronological line of references to everything going from horses, friends and to long-gone German philosophers. To put it another way, this will be a little trip around the manège – a small compilation of hors d'oeuvres. We may probably end up at the same point as we started. Or perhaps you will resign or fall off the horse before we have even returned. Or maybe I will. A million questions, very few answers - and why all this talk about horses?

So, horse horse horse, ehm, 'Dada' is the French word for hobbyhorse. An important member of the Dada movement was Hans Arp. He also had a hobby – or, more precisely, way more than a hobby – he was seeking form perfection. But as he said 'we attempted perfection. We wanted an object to be without a flaw, so we cut the papers with a razor, pasted them down meticulously, but it buckled and was ruined. That is why we decided to tear pre-wrinkled paper, so that in the finished work of art, imperfection would be an integral part, as if birth death were build in'.<sup>1</sup>

It would be like exchanging your nearflawless horse with a 3-legged one, setting a new standard whereby only 3-legged horses are allowed; the less legs the better. To put it another way, it would be tantamount to committing suicide to avoid death.

Death is the most natural thing in the world. Kasimir Malevich admired nature – something to be treated with a great respect, although he denounced the naturalists as ‘savages’, because they took everything alive and tried to pin it on a canvas. It died there, according to Malevich, because it was repetition and not depriving forms and meaning – ‘In intending to transmit the living form, they transmitted its corpse in the picture. The living was turned into a motionless, dead state’.<sup>2</sup>

It is akin to the axiom ‘you can lead a horse to water, but you cannot make it drink’.  
Actually there are a lot of great horse idioms out there like ‘no matter how big an ass you have, you can only ride one horse’.

Martin Heidegger describes it a bit more diplomatic, even though he was not a diplomat at all, with the

‘Dasein’ which is, in a simplified version ‘the experience of being that is peculiar to human beings thus it is a form of being that is aware of and must confront issues as personhood, mortality and the dilemma or paradox of living in relationship with other humans while ultimately alone with oneself’.<sup>3</sup> In the sense that you do not share a horse, but you are one equipage among a lot of other equipages. And yes, only other equipages. Guy Debord can explain this correlation: ‘people can see nothing around them that is not their own image; everything speaks to them of themselves. Their very landscape is animated’.<sup>4</sup>

That sounds very claustrophobic.

An interesting house furnishing object, is the bidet. Bidet, the thing you will find in old restrooms for genital washing purposes, is French for ‘small riding horse’.

Marcel Duchamp dealt with this claustrophobia and toilet installations, by always contradicting himself in order not to conform to his own taste – according to himself but some might call him a one trick pony. Furthermore he claimed to take the position, as he

said 'I don't want to be pinned to any position. My position is lack of position'.<sup>5</sup>

Horses are sometimes pinned to something, but it makes them often more mobile, as opposed to Duchamp. I mean – horses can wear shoes. They are nailed on with a hammer.

Maybe the same hammer as the one Bertolt Brecht saw as the function of art. A hammer that is not only mirroring but actually shaping reality.<sup>6</sup>

Jean Baudrillard posits 'The moment a thing is named, the moment representation and concepts take hold of it, is the moment when it begins to lose its energy – with risk that it will become a truth or impose itself as ideology'.<sup>7</sup>

The nails are going through the hoof itself. Actually the nails are going through nail. Because hooves are actually just like nails. Nail nail.

Shaping with a hammer sounds a bit destructive, but seen in the light of Joan Kelly's idea of 'creativity not stopping at critical deconstruction, but moves

on to the active production of alternatives' then it might not be such a bad thing, destruction. Right down Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's path: 'I despise everything which merely instructs me without increasing or immediately enlivening my activity.'<sup>8</sup>

In 2000 Marijn van der Poll created the 'do hit' chair. 'do hit' is a cube of stainless steel accompanied by a sledgehammer. You buy the cube and do the finishing customization by smashing it yourself. If you for some reason are not capable of handling the sledgehammer, you can pay the artist to do it.

The vocalist of At the Drive-in, Cedric Bixler-Zavala, which was not a big hit in the beginning, is basing his song writing on the following 'I love to take common sayings and, pervert them, mutate them a little, so you think I am singing one thing, but when you read it, it is different'. To be fair Bixler-Zavala was also the vocalist of the recognized progressive rock band The Mars Volta, and At the Drive In became cult. <sup>9</sup>

Okay, back to the horse. When shoe-wearing horses walk, they make a sound. A Charlie Chaplin sound.

Click, click, click, click, click.

A Charlie Chaplin press conference was once disrupted by the left wing of the Letterist. The founder of Letterism, Isidore Isou, got really upset. Upset cause his own attitude was that Chaplin deserved respect as one of the great creators of the cinematic act. The left wing Letterist believed that ‘the most urgent expression of freedom is the destruction of idols, especially when they claim to represent freedom’.<sup>10</sup> So they split up.

The beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was the glory days of the legendary racehorse, Man O’War. Man O’War was undefeated throughout his whole career – with only one exception. In 1919 Man O’War was defeated by the unknown horse ‘Upset’ – and then ‘upset’ became more than only a horse name, but also a verb.<sup>11</sup> It was quite a defining moment for Upset, and the exception that proved the rule for Man O’War.

Slavoj Žižek is also preoccupied with defining moments – for him that implies war ‘the ultimate and defining moment of the twentieth century was the direct experience of the Real as opposed to everyday social reality – the Real in its extreme violence as the price to be paid for peeling of the deceptive layers of reality’.<sup>12</sup>

This is actually coming from Jacques Lacan and the same with the notion that ‘while animals can deceive by presenting what is false as true, only humans (entities inhabiting the symbolic space) can deceive by presenting what is true as false’.<sup>13</sup>

Talking about war, deceiving and horses, it is natural to refer to the more exotic type of horse, the zebra. The camouflage developed during First World War is comparable to a big herd of zebras – lots of stripes leading to optical diffusions, which makes it hard for the enemy to judge the target and attacking becomes therefore more difficult.

The Futurist were pro-war ‘We wish to glorify war – the sole cleanser of the world – militarism, patriotism, the destructive act of the libertarian,

beautiful ideas worth dying for, and scorn for woman'.<sup>14</sup>

Stallions, male-horses, never really fight over territory but only over mares, female-horses. Horses prefer to live in herds, and a mare almost always controls the herd.

War smells deadly, which takes us to a new place, heaven. Heaven is never illustrated in bright colors – it is always a pale palette of angels, clouds and other heavenly bits and pieces.

Horses have a chromatic color vision in contrast to the human trichromatic color vision. This means they only see pale yellow, pale blue and a whole lot of grey tones – it must be like looking at Donald Judd's work in his private desert in Marfa. The pale yellow sand, the dull blue sky and the grey concrete. 'It isn't necessary for a work to have a lot of things to look at, to compare, to analyse one by one, to contemplate. The thing as a whole, its quality as a whole, is what is interesting. The main things are alone and are more intense, clear and powerful. They are not diluted by an inherited format,

variations of a form, mild contrasts and connecting parts and areas.’<sup>15</sup>

But when you remove all context, it becomes an illusion, a phantom? Or do you by removing all context, really create a context?

Stallions are being tricked in a pervert way when collecting their semen for breeding purposes. They are presented with a mare-like object, which they jump and then the stallion does his thing. The object they jump is called a phantom - which is actually a bit misleading. A phantom is commonly described as ‘an appearance or illusion without material substance, as a dream image, mirage, or optical illusion.’<sup>16</sup>

The plastic LEGO bricks, which are still produced today, were patented in right around the end of modernism. LEGO is short for play well, and LEGO also produces horses. LEGO horses are more than just the plastic ones. At the Olympic Games and other prominent horse competitions often horses with names including ‘Blue Hors’ participate – names given to them by the LEGO family –

because they bred them all.

Salvador Dali and others declared in The Yellow Manifesto ‘that sportsmen are way nearer the spirit of Greece than our intellectuals’.<sup>17</sup>

Horses became part of the Olympic Games already in 684 B.C. They competed in hippodomes.<sup>18</sup>

Modernism as the intellectuals and the horse as the sportsman?

Later Nicolas Bourriaud wrote ‘The role of the art work is no longer to form imaginary and utopian realities but actually be ways of living and models of actions within the existing real’.<sup>19</sup>

Actions within in the existing real? Which actions – my actions, your actions, hopefully not the actions the Futurist were encouraging?

Horses live in stables – or to be precise, cages. John Cage’s actions? John Cage said ‘art should not be different than life but action within life. Like all life; with its accidents and chances and variety and

disorder and only momentary beauties'.<sup>20</sup>

But how to live this kind of life? And is it desirable.

It is a Friedrich thing - both Schiller and Nietzsche wrote about the role of 'playing'.

Schiller in the sense that you are only fully a man – I guess he meant fully a human – when you play, because playing is where sensuous and formal drives meet 'in reciprocal combination'.<sup>21</sup>

Second Friedrich saw this playing as a problem – because he related it to playing a role. That is why he was jealous of the beast. The beast as in animals. Animals including horses? Beasts live unhistorical, simply cause they cannot remember what happened – or maybe they do not care. Humans carry the burden of the past as opposed to beasts: 'it does not know how to play a part, hides nothing, and appears in each moment exactly and entirely what it is. Thus a beast can be nothing other than honest'.<sup>22</sup>

So horses are honest beings.

But horses are actually noble, so therefore not a beast? Cause beasts are not noble.

So maybe horses are not honest. Tricky.

Remember that Daniel Kahneman said: ‘When faced with a difficult question we often answer an easier one instead, usually without noticing the substitution’.<sup>23</sup>

Okay besides the maybe honest noble beast, being fully a human is centered around ‘play’.

Play as in theatre? Probably not entirely, but ... Bertolt Brecht employed the use of techniques that remind the spectator that the play is a representation of reality and not reality itself. By highlighting the constructed nature of the theatrical event, Brecht hoped to communicate that the audience’s reality was equally constructed and, such was, changeable.<sup>24</sup>

Exploding Cinema took another approach and encouraged the audience to interfere and make a better work them selves – if they found the work, the theatre, boring.<sup>25</sup>

Horses compete in many different disciplines, hence

the before-mentioned sportsman. But they do not do so by choice. Horses are under the influence of a human. One of the disciplines is called dressage. Dressage is also kind of a theatre play with music, costume and choreography. It happens sometimes that the horse gets scared, fed up with the whole hubbub or simply has to take a dump – and in a perfect Brecht manner breaks the horsey theatre play and awakens the audience.

Which leads us to Sigmund Freud whose notion of the ego was resembled by an equiptage; horse and rider. The horse as the Id and the rider as the ego. Meaning the Id, the horse, is real – or perceived as being ‘out there’. Reality is always the subject that is tamed by the rider, the ego.<sup>26</sup>

The contemporary Princess, Märtha Louise, is a really good dressage rider. She gave up the horses and started The School of Angels instead. The name ‘The School of Angels’ speaks for itself. Märtha Louise went spiritual – like Wassily Kandinsky.<sup>27</sup> Anyway, how does the audience know that they are stepping out of the construction and into ‘reality’?

Dick Shawn did the ultimate stepping put by dying on stage. He did not do it on purpose though. The audience did not even believe it. They kept on laughing until they realized that it was not a part of his routine.<sup>28</sup>

Horses never laugh. Maybe because they do not on daily basis face such existential loneliness and mortality that humans do. At least Nietzsche saw laughter as a reaction to that.<sup>29</sup>

We should not feel bad for the horses, the sportsmen, they are not depressed – at least if there is any truth in Woody Allen’s observation ‘the soul embraces the nobler aspirations, like poetry and philosophy, while the body has all the fun.’<sup>30</sup> But again, are horses noble?

Horses neigh – or depending on nationality they ...  
runnik, hiiiihiii, njihaa, íi-hahá, vrinsk, niiii-hiiii,  
ii-ha-haa, ii-ha-haa, hiii hiii, wiehiehie, hii hii, יה-יה,  
hin-hina, nyihaha, yihaa, hi-ing, hinni, ī-ā, yhaha,  
ygaga, šthe, iiii-haaa, hi hi, ni-ha-ha, i-go-go и-го-го,  
jì jì, gnägg, hihihí haha, ih-hi-i-i or hí hí hí.<sup>31</sup>

Sounds like laughter – or it looks like written laughter, a little bit suspicious. But do they talk? The echo of a living voice has hollow form ... hollowness at the end leading to death. This is coming from the pro-horse organization number one, Der Blaue Reiter.<sup>32</sup>

Nietzsche also tried to have a conversation with a 'beast'. Beast, let us assume it is a horse? Still an unanswered question.

Anyway, here is the conversation: 'one day the man demands of the beast: 'Why don't you talk to me about your happiness and only gaze at me?' The beast wants to answer, too, and say: 'That comes about because I always immediately forget what I wanted to say.' But by then the beast has already forgotten this reply and remains silent'.<sup>33</sup>

The Houyhnhnms' name, the horses appearing in Gulliver's Travels, already sounds like neighing, but the name actually signify 'the perfection of nature' and describes as rational beings. Actually so rational that fertile Houyhnhnms give away foals to infertile Houyhnhnms without blinking and eye – like they were shuffling around commodities.<sup>34</sup>

Francesco Bonami was the first curator to include Maurizio Cattelan in the Venice Biennale – which he is very proud of because he sees Cattelan like this: ‘Most artist are like donkeys. They bray. They make suffering, and complaining sounds. Great artist are like horses. A neigh is more heroic. Maurizio kills horses because it is the dream of all donkeys’.<sup>35</sup> So Nietzsche mistook a donkey for a horse?

Horses are cultured because humans domesticated them. Wild horses are probably beasts? If humans are even cultured.

Jean Baudrillard writes in ‘Why Hasn’t Everything Already Disappeared?’: ‘That murder is being perpetrated continually by all the images that accumulate in series. In the ‘thematic’ sequence, which illustrate the same event ad nauseam, which think they are accumulating, but in fact, cancelling each other out, till they reach the zero degree of information’.<sup>36</sup> Like beating a dead horse.

Bjørn Nørgaard, an artist of the seventies committed

a horse-murder and cut the dead horse in several pieces and conserved the parts in big jars. A series of jars. The public was not pleased. The public was horrified. The most recent and famous work by Bjørn Nørgaard is a tapestry made for a queen, Queen Margrethe.

Like the modernists, reaching for the new and not looking back, horses are one-way streets. Horses cannot puke – not even if they are exposed to postmodern, nauseating series of murder. This is actually quite a big problem for horses – a lot of them die from stomachache. They are probably not aware of this deadly digestive situation – is a horse then a living corpse hence Malevich and Baudrillard? And then is a naturalist painting of a horse a double corpse?

Sleipner is the horse of Nordic Mythology, and he can cross the border between the land of the living and the land of the dead, as he pleases. So maybe he can vomit after all? He has 8 legs. Are the extra four merely ornamentation? Loos concluded, not on Sleipner though, that “No ornament can any longer be made today by anyone who lives on our

cultural level ... Freedom from ornament is a sign of spiritual strength”.<sup>37</sup> So they must be practical. Because Sleipner is spiritual – at least mythical. But Sleipner is not real.

It is easier to say what is not real than real. And are dreams something real?

Horses can sleep standing up, but I wonder if they dream – or are they only in touch with dreams, the phantom under human influence?

René Magritte in *Key to Dreams*: ‘It is a union that suggests the essential mystery of the world. Art for me is not an end in itself, but a means of evoking that mystery’.<sup>38</sup>

A union is a combination of things or something undivided<sup>39</sup>. Sounds like a series, like a Baudrillard murder?

Gaston Bachelard saw the house as a protecting shelter. A place for daydreaming – the greatest integrator of the thoughts, memories and dreams of mankind. ‘It maintains him through storms of the

heavens and through those of life. It is a body and soul. It is human beings' first world.<sup>40</sup>

Is a horse cage a house? Must be, but it is still build in the image of the human; horses are domesticated hence we give them houses just as we live in houses too. How do we know whether wild horses daydream since they have no house to do so in?

'It's a mystery to me ...' Eddie Vedder is singing and continues 'There's those thinking more or less, less is more, but if less is more how're keeping score? Means for every point you make your level drops, kinda like you're starting from the top'.<sup>41</sup>

Horses can actually keep score up to a quantity of four. Scientist tested several horses by putting two buckets in front of them. The scientist dropped three apples in one bucket and one apple in the other bucket – and the horses always chose the bucket containing three apples.<sup>42</sup>

So Clement Greenberg said: 'Aesthetic value or quality is effect; it moves, touches, stirs you ... it does that in being value and in compelling you to like it more or less ... Aesthetic value,

aesthetic quality can be said to elicit satisfaction, or dissatisfaction is ‘verdict of taste’<sup>43</sup>.

The apple counting will not help the horses as art critics, but on the other hand, again, they are prey animals, which means they are highly sensitive when it comes to external actions like sound, movement and volumes, so if the horse reacts....it is a great piece of art?

Back to reality and mystery – as Amir Baradan said ‘reality calls upon paradoxes’. This inevitable concept, reality... Robert Ryman who claims to be a realist, sees it this way: ‘with realism there is no picture, there is no story, there is no myth and there is no illusion above all. So lines are real, space is real, the surface is real and there is an interaction between the painting and the wall plane, unlike the abstraction and representation.’<sup>44</sup>

That sounds incredibly boring. Like George Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel’s ‘the real is rational; the rational is real’. Søren Kierkegaard was a fan of the mystery at least in relation to Hegel and he liked bit more fun ‘life is meant to be lived not to be solved’

– perhaps he liked horsing around.

Nicolas Bourriaud describes ‘relational aesthetics’ as ‘a set of artistic practices which take their theoretical and practical point of departure the whole of human relations and their social context, rather than independent and private space’.<sup>45</sup> So not in Bachelard’s daydreaming-house, but on the field with the wild, uncultivated horses?

Social context can be a tough one to face. In combination with that and a horsetail it once became deathly.

In front of the National Library in Vienna there are two statues of two important people. They are both on a rearing horse. They were made at the same time – by two different sculptors. When a horse is rearing all the weight is on the back legs of the horse, which might mess with the horses balance. This is commonly solved by using the tail as a support. BUT one of the sculptors managed to make his horse sculpture without tale support. Which was a big and very confronting (for face-to-face sculptures, this is meant in the most literal of ways)

defeat for the other sculptor. So he killed himself.

Something, we are all confronted with, is that we are going to die – and the only way to escape it, as mentioned earlier, is to die. You can survive being shot, but you can also die from it. Chris Burden shot himself as a work of art. 'I had an intuitive sense that being shot is as American as an apple pie. We see people being shot on TV, we read about it in the newspapers. Everybody has wondered what it is like. So I did it'.<sup>46</sup> Der Blaue Reiter would have been proud of how Burden replaced hollow talk with action. So in a Blaue Reiter sense, Burden avoided death by shooting himself.

Der Blaue Reiter was formed in München 1911, hence the German name, by Russian emigrants. Some of them had great influence on the name – Franz Marc loved horses, Wassily Kandinsky loved riders and both of them loved the colour blue. Kandinsky associated blue with awakening human desire towards the eternal.<sup>47</sup> Not a heavenly, pale blue though. It is a little Lucky Luke'ish – always ending the stories by riding towards the horizon. Lucky Luke's horse is named Jolly Jumper. Lucky

Luke once asked Jolly Jumper: ‘I wonder how you manage to read everything that is going on?’ The horse replied: ‘by turning the page like everyone else’.<sup>48</sup>

A quite banal conversation at first glance, but it is actually quite essential.

Jolly Jumper speaks, the horse speaks, and the human becomes the donkey.

A male donkey can also go under the name ass, and like it is common to call horses misty, the standard male donkey name is ‘Jack’ – and the female ass name is ‘Jenny’. Yes, men become the Jack-ass, and women the Jenny-ass. If horses and donkeys share the same social structure, the Jack-ass’ fight over the ass and Jenny leads the herd.<sup>49</sup>

Banalities are in general not to be underestimated for instance taking Asger Jorn’s ‘Intimate Banalities’ into account, where he writes: ‘the great work of art is the perfect banality, and the failing of most banalities is that they are not banal enough. That, which we call ‘natural’, is liberated banality’.<sup>50</sup>

After typing ‘horse’ so many times it is inevitable to make the ‘hore’ typo mistake more than a few times – which with bad English spelling means prostitute and in regular Danish it means prostitute. So whores.. Jeff Koons is often referred to as a whore – for several reasons though, but he is also interested in the banal: ‘people respond to banal things – they don’t accept their own history’.<sup>51</sup>

Banality banal banana. Monkey see monkey do.

Horses do not eat bananas, but they are vegetarians though. This is why the eyes on a horse are placed on the side of the head and not in front. This leaves them with something around a 320 degree vision, but they cannot see what is directly in front of their head. They have a triangular blind spot right in front of them.

The Quran explains this about horse eyes: ‘All the wisdom of the universe can be found between the eyes of the horse.’<sup>52</sup>

So the horse is wise in all its blindness? Wiser than humans?

Okay back to the horse-influence. Father John

Misty's real name is Joshua Tillman. Father John Misty was asked in an interview why he calls himself 'Misty' to which, he replied 'Misty evokes either a beloved childhood horse or a stripper'.<sup>53</sup> Here is the song 'Holy Shit' after a little Dada cut and paste – not random though.

'New regimes, old ideas  
That's now myth, that's now real  
It's important to stay informed  
The commentary to comment on  
Eunuch sluts, consumer slaves  
Planet cancer, sweet revenge  
Isolation, online friends  
What's your paradise gotta do with Adam and Eve?  
A rose by any other name'<sup>54</sup>

Father John Misty's rose is also Shakespeare's rose: 'A rose by any other name would smell as sweet'.<sup>55</sup> A horse by any other name would smell as sweet. Shakespeare was very fond of horses like others authors of his time. Edward Topsell wrote 'The history of the four-footed beasts' and the introduction is a further elaboration of the earlier issue 'whether the horse is noble, a beast or a noble

beast?’ in question.

‘We must needs account it the most noble and necessary creature of all four-footed Beasts, before whom no one for multitude and generality of good qualities is to be preferred, compared or equalled.’<sup>56</sup>

In the time of Modernism Gertrude Stein again used the rose: Rose is a rose is a rose is a rose. In line with Cubism – the composition of elements creates a whole. Every rose contains associations and opens up a new imaginary world.<sup>57</sup>

Horse is a horse is a horse is a horse  
Horse is a horse is a beast is a corpse?

Later Umberto Eco picked up the rose again – not because he was a fan of the Modernists. Eco concluded in his publication ‘The Name of the Rose’ that ‘because the rose is a symbolic figure so rich in meanings that by now it hardly has any meaning left’.<sup>58</sup>

We have given so many names to some horses that at the end only the name remains. Like Upset. Horses are no longer a necessity for humans. Only

a few of them are still helping lumberjacks pulling timber places that are not accessible for machines.

Meat and machines are the muscles of life according to Malevich. ‘Both are the bodies that give life. It is here that two worlds have come together. The world of meat and the world of iron’.<sup>59</sup>

There is in fact a lot of hidden horse in our surroundings, hence the common saying that dead horses are being sent to the glue factory – the gelatine factory is probably more correct. So horses are also sticky. And gelatinous.

Another horse product is oestrogen isolated from a pregnant mare’s urine, which is being used to treat women’s menopausal issues.<sup>60</sup>

Father John Misty is doing some further namedropping - also in relation to liquid substances, singing things like ‘Heidegger and Sartre drinking poppy tea’.<sup>61</sup>

Poppies produce opium as a protection against predators. A little tip for horses – they are prey

animals. A way to get around this would be for the horses to become religious in a Karl Marx way - hence 'Religion is opium for the people'.

The Queen of England's racehorse, Estimate, was in 2013 tested positive for use of morphine – supposedly because the feed, Estimate had been eating, was produced near a poppy field and therefore contaminated.<sup>62</sup> Maybe Upset also lived close to a poppy field.

Horseracing for a horse must be 'purposiveness without purpose'. The notion is Kant's and related to humans perception of beauty.<sup>63</sup> Racehorses can be beautiful, and I wonder if they find racing fun? If yes, they are fully a man, cause they are able to play, hence Schiller.

Anyways, it is common for artists, or people in general, to use pseudonyms. Søren Kierkegaard was afraid of getting killed, harassed – maybe he was a prey animal?

So he used more than one pseudonym to hide his own inner subjectivity. Instead of inventing a hero and himself functioning as the author, Kierkegaard invented the authors who describe him as the hero.

All these pseudonymous authors treated his life story from different perspectives and gave his subject different interpretations.<sup>64</sup> The pseudonyms were Kierkegaard's opium – and there is no original Kierkegaard because his pseudonyms are copies without originals.

Rosalind Krauss described Cindy Sherman's early work as 'copies without originals' Thirty years later Sherman's characters position the artist herself as the original.

'I have never been interested in revealing any of my fantasies, personality traits, desires, or disappointments' she said.<sup>65</sup>

This approach is comparable to the phenomena 'dualities' used in theoretical physics. Dualities describe the same physical system in different forms. Thus what we call different, in nature it does not always have to be different. Dualities are found in different ways. Sometimes the behavior of two systems that we call by different names is so similar, that it is suspected that they might be different manifestations of the same system. In other cases, dualities are found not because

of similar behavior, but in spite of incompatible behavior.<sup>66</sup>

Theoretical physics is for many, myself included, often nonsense, but when it comes to the theory of duality and nonsense in general Mark van de Walle builds an understandable bridge ‘so that sense and nonsense bump up against one and another, become almost interchangeable’. He is not elaborating on dualities though, but the work of Jessica Stockholder.<sup>67</sup>

Another way, of not leaving direct traces of your own hand, is to employ other people to do the physical work. Eugenio Dittborn paid the local gas station guy to write the address on the envelopes carrying his artworks. Dittborn asked the amateur calligrapher to imitate the writing style of ‘a nun or a polite, well-educated, Catholic woman’.<sup>68</sup> A lot of horses also get stamped – branded by a hot iron or freeze marked. The branding reduces the horse to only a number and the number becomes their identification.

When Ai Weiwei was in need of 100 millions

porcelain sunflower seeds, he employed 1600 people to do the handwork – maybe also due to practicalities.<sup>69</sup>

In 1939 Sweden also produced a huge amount of the same small thing. In this case, Dala Horses – and almost a ton of them. There were to be sold at the souvenir shops at the World Expo in New York. Furthermore the Swedes decided to bring a 3 meter high version of the Dala Horse to expose at the exhibition. This made the Dala Horse the unofficial, national symbol of Sweden.<sup>70</sup>

Get off your high horse Sweden - they certainly did before. Or Gustav did.

Okay, let us stay in Sweden for some more horsing around.

At the Royal Palace in Sweden they have a Royal Armour collection. Here the horse Streiff is to be found – the horse Gustav II Adolf died on during the Battle of Lützen in 1632. The horse is apparently such an important part of the Swedish history that they decided to stuff Streiff.<sup>71</sup>

Streiff has a female counterpart, Sandy. Sandy was

stuffed after the First World War. She was also the only horse who returned to Australia after the war ended.

Undergoing the taxidermy of both Streiff and Sandy they both became almost immortal. Immortality is a universal theme – but no one has avoided death yet. Or are you immortal when you never grow up?

Like Pippi Longstocking.

Pippi Longstocking is very strong. She is able to carry her horse, named Horse, over her head with outstretched arms.

Horse is a horse.

Horse is white with brown dots.

John Baldessari placed dots on photographs covering people's faces. Why? 'I just got so tired of looking at these faces' Baldesarri explained in an interview.

Before Baldesarri got tired, even earlier in his career, he had this perspective: 'I always had

this idea that doing art was just a masturbatory activity, and didn't really help anybody'. Maybe he only jumped the phantom - but he figured it out. Obviously. <sup>72</sup>

As we are already below the belt, why not mention the Finnish way of telling a person that he forgot to close his zipper: 'your horses are running away'. <sup>73</sup>

It is the same with the future - also running away.

Boris Groys with reference to Heidegger explains: 'It is not the spectator who now judges the work of art, but rather work of art that judges the spectator, by showing the spectator the future which they will maybe no longer be present'. <sup>74</sup>

One morning after a long night out I turned on the TV and The Moomins was on. The Moomins are these, white, fat, horselike cartoon figures. And they are Finnish. They are a dear childhood memory, but seeing it again, a bit tipsy and without childhood naivety, it was some scary shit. In general, the Moomin stories are quite dark and evil.

It must be okay. ‘Unless suffering is the direct and immediate object of life, our existence must entirely fail of its aim.’ which is the first statement in Schopenhauer’s essay ‘On the Sufferings of the World’.<sup>75</sup>

The horses, the Houyhnhnms, in Gullivers travels do not know of evil, their only word for evil, is the name of the creatures resembling humans.<sup>76</sup> A little compilation of inscriptions from animal war memorials sums it up:

‘Most obediently and often most painfully they died – faithful unto death. They had no choice. From the pigeon to the elephant, they all played a vital role in every region of the world in the cause of human freedom.’<sup>77</sup> Knowing nothing of the cause – looking forward to no final victory.<sup>78</sup>

Who is the beast, the jack-donkey now?  
Horses are really better humans than humans.

...

Now the plate is empty, the horse is tired – the only thing left to do is to leave the manège:

‘I ordered my horse to be brought from the stables. The servant did not understand my orders. So I went to the stables myself, saddled my horse, and mounted. In the distance I heard the sound of a trumpet, and I asked the servant what it meant. He knew nothing and had heard nothing. At the gate he stopped me and asked:

“Where is the master going?”

“I don’t know,” I said, “just out of here, just out of here. Out of here, nothing else, it’s the only way I can reach my goal.”

“So you know your goal?” he asked.

“Yes,” I replied, “I’ve just told you. Out of here - that’s my goal.””

Franz Kafka ‘The Departure’.<sup>79</sup>



## NOTES

- 1 The History of Dada  
< <https://cherieclare.wordpress.com/2015/03/24/history-of-dada/>>
- 2 Aleksandr Rodchenko, Manifesto of the Constructivist Group, 1922  
(100 Manifestos, Penguin Classics, 2011, page 222)
- 3 Gyldendal, Dasein  
<[http://denstoredanske.dk/Sprog,\\_religion\\_og\\_filosofi/Filosofi/Filosofi\\_og\\_filosoffer\\_-\\_1900-t./Dasein](http://denstoredanske.dk/Sprog,_religion_og_filosofi/Filosofi/Filosofi_og_filosoffer_-_1900-t./Dasein)>
- 4 Rawlslyn Francis, Understanding Derive/Psychogeography  
<[http://www.slideshare.net/Prof\\_Rawlslyn/understandinderivepsychogeography](http://www.slideshare.net/Prof_Rawlslyn/understandinderivepsychogeography)>
- 5 Millard Mulch, The History of Art And The Curious Lives of Famous Artists  
<<http://www.historyofpainters.com/duchamp.htm>>
- 6 National Theatre, Brecht  
<<http://www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/backstage/brecht>>
- 7 Jean Baudrillard, Why Hasn't Everything Already Disappeared?, 2009  
(Seagull Books, 2009, page 12)
- 8 Friedrich Nietzsche, On the Use and Abuse of History for Life, 1874  
(<<http://la.utexas.edu/users/hcleaver/330T/350kPEENietzscheAbuseTabLeAll.pdf>>, page 1)
- 9 Artist Trove, Cedric Bixler Zavala  
< <http://www.artisttrove.com/artist/110068725680067/Cedric+Bixler+Zavala>>
- 10 Position of the Situationist International, 1952  
<<http://www.cdcc.vt.edu/sionline/presitu/position.html>>
- 11 Origin of 'Upset'  
<<http://www.wordorigins.org/index.php/upset>>
- 12 Slavoj Žižek, Welcome to the Desert of the Real, 2012  
(Verso Books, 2012, page 5)
- 13 Slavoj Žižek, Welcome to the Desert of the Real, 2012  
(Verso Books, 2012, page 23)

- 14 F. T. Marinetti, *The Foundation and Manifesto of Futurism*, 1909 (100 Manifestos, Penguin Classics, 2011, page 5)
- 15 Donald Judd, *Specific Objects*, 1965 (<<http://atc.berkeley.edu/201/readings/judd-so.pdf>>, page 4)
- 16 Definition of 'Phantom'  
<<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/phantom>>
- 17 Salvador Dali and others, *Yellow Manifesto*, 1928 (100 Manifestos, Penguin Classics, 2011, page 258)
- 18 The American Museum of Natural History, *Chariot Race*  
<<http://www.amnh.org/exhibitions/horse/how-we-shaped-horses-how-horses-shaped-us/sport/the-chariot-race>>
- 19 Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, 1998,  
<[http://www.kim-cohen.com/seth\\_texts/artmusictheorytexts/Bourriaud%20Relational%20Aesthetics.pdf](http://www.kim-cohen.com/seth_texts/artmusictheorytexts/Bourriaud%20Relational%20Aesthetics.pdf)>
- 20 DADA TO DIY: The Rise of Alternative Cultures in the Twentieth Century  
<<http://fluxusfoundation.com/essays/dada-to-diy-the-rise-of-alternative-cultures-in-the-twentieth-century/>>
- 21 J. C. Friedrich Schiller, *Letters Upon the Aesthetic Education of Man*, 1794 (Literary and Philosophical Essays, The Harvard Classics, letter 8)
- 22 Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Use and Abuse of History for Life*, 1874 (<<http://la.utexas.edu/users/hcleaver/330T/350kPEENietzscheAbuseTableAll.pdf>>, page 2)
- 23 Daniel Kahneman, *Thinking Fast and Slow*, 2011  
<[https://vk.com/doc23267904\\_175119602](https://vk.com/doc23267904_175119602)>
- 24 Encyclopaedia of Britannica, *Epic Theatre of Brecht*, 1995  
<[http://www.cs.brandeis.edu/~jamesf/goodwoman/brecht\\_epic\\_theater.html](http://www.cs.brandeis.edu/~jamesf/goodwoman/brecht_epic_theater.html)>
- 25 *Exploding Cinema, Constitution*  
<<http://www.explodingcinema.org>>
- 26 Dr. Dewey, *The Ego*  
<[http://www.intropsych.com/ch11\\_personality/ego.html](http://www.intropsych.com/ch11_personality/ego.html)>

- 27 Spiegel, Norwegian Princess Märtha's New Course Offering: Communicating with Angels 101  
<<http://www.spiegel.de/international/zeitgeist/norwegian-princess-maertha-s-new-course-offering-communicating-with-angels-101-a-499873.html>>
- 28 Charles Saatchi, Dead, 2015  
(Booth Clibbon Editions, 2015, page 100)
- 29 Charles Saatchi, Dead, 2015  
(Booth Clibbon Editions, 2015, page 54)
- 30 Thomas Cathcart & Daniel Klein, Heidegger and a hippo walk through those pearly gates, 2009  
(Viking, 2009, page 92)
- 31 Cross-linguistic onomatopoeias  
<[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cross-linguistic\\_onomatopoeias#Horse\\_whinnying](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cross-linguistic_onomatopoeias#Horse_whinnying)>
- 32 Wassily Kandinsky & Franz Marc, Preface to Der Blaue Reiter Almanac, 1912  
(100 Manifestos, Penguin Classics, 2011, page 37)
- 33 Friedrich Nietzsche, On the Use and Abuse of History for Life, 1874  
(<<http://la.utexas.edu/users/hcleaver/330T/350kPEENietzscheAbuseTableAll.pdf>>, page 2)
- 34 Jonathan Swift, Gullivers Travels, 1726  
(Signet Classics, 2008, page 244)
- 35 Sarah Thornton, 33 Artists in 3 acts, 2014  
(W. W. Norton & Company, 2015, page 191)
- 36 Jean Baudrillard, Why Hasn't Everything Already Disappeared?, 2009  
(Seagull Books, 2009, page 55)
- 37 Adolf Loos, Ornament and Crime, 1908  
<[http://www.mariabuszek.com/kcai/Design%20History/Design\\_readings/LoosOrnamentCrime.pdf](http://www.mariabuszek.com/kcai/Design%20History/Design_readings/LoosOrnamentCrime.pdf)>
- 38 The Art Gallery Online, What is Surrealism?  
<<http://theartonlinegallery.com/art-movements/surrealism/>>
- 39 Union definition  
<<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/union>>

- 40 Gaston Bachelard, *Poetics of Space*, 1994  
<[http://monoskop.org/images/1/18/Bachelard\\_Gaston\\_The\\_Poetics\\_of\\_Space\\_1994.pdf](http://monoskop.org/images/1/18/Bachelard_Gaston_The_Poetics_of_Space_1994.pdf)>
- 41 Eddie Vedder, *Society*, 2007  
<<http://www.songteksten.nl/songteksten/89807/eddie-vedder/society.htm>>
- 42 Nic Fleming, *Horses can count*, 2008,  
<<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/science/science-news/3338537/Horses-can-count-new-study-says.html>>
- 43 Thierry de Duve, *Kant after Duchamp*, 1996  
(October, 1996, s. 213)
- 44 Eleanor Heartney, *Art & Today*, 2008  
(Phaidon, 2013, page 77)
- 45 Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, 1998,  
<[http://www.kim-cohen.com/seth\\_texts/artmusictheorytexts/Bourriaud%20Relational%20Aesthetics.pdf](http://www.kim-cohen.com/seth_texts/artmusictheorytexts/Bourriaud%20Relational%20Aesthetics.pdf)>
- 46 Fred Hoffmann, *Chris Burden*  
(Gagosian Gallery, 2007, page 23)
- 47 Wassily Kandinsky & Franz Marc, *Preface to Der Blaue Reiter Almanac*, 1912  
(100 Manifestos, Penguin Classics, 2011, page 35)
- 48 K. O. Jewel, *Comic Book Heroes*  
<<http://www.kojewel.com/main/comic-book-heroes.htm>>
- 49 TBN Ranch, *Donkey, Ass, Burro, Mule, What They All Mean*  
<<http://tbnranch.com/2012/01/13/donkey-ass-burro-mule-hinny-what-they-all-mean/>>
- 50 Asger Jorn, *Intimate Banalities*, 1941  
(HÉLHESTEN, 1941, page 33-38)
- 51 *The Guardian*, *People respond to banal things*, 2015,  
<<http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2015/jul/05/jeff-koons-people-respond-to-banal-things-they-dont-accept-their-own-history>>
- 52 Patti Smith, *Horses*  
<[http://aln3.albumlinenotes.com/Horses\\_\\_\\_Horses.html](http://aln3.albumlinenotes.com/Horses___Horses.html)>

- 53 The Guardian, Interview with Father John Misty, 2015  
<<http://www.theguardian.com/music/2015/jan/31/father-john-misty-josh-tillman-fleet-foxes>>
- 54 Joshua Tillman, Holy Shit, 2015  
<<http://www.songlyrics.com/father-john-misty/holy-shit-lyrics/>>
- 55 William Shakespeare, Romeo and Juliet, 1597  
<<http://www.bartleby.com/70/3822.html>>
- 56 The Shakespeare Blog, Shakespeare's Horses  
<<http://theshakespeareblog.com/2012/04/shakespeares-horses-nags-jades-and-steeds-or-wonders-of-nature/>>
- 57 Carly Sitrin, Decoding Gertrude Stein  
<<http://www.bu.edu/writingprogram/journal/past-issues/issue-6/sitrin/>>
- 58 HyunJoo Yoo, The Neo-Baroque of Our Time: A Reading of Umberto Eco's 'The Name of the Rose'  
<[http://www.openaccesslibrary.org/images/LVG265\\_HyunJoo\\_Yoo.pdf](http://www.openaccesslibrary.org/images/LVG265_HyunJoo_Yoo.pdf)>
- 59 Kasimir Malevich, Suprematist Manifesto, 1916  
(100 Manifestos, Penguin Classics, 2011, page 114)
- 60 Premarin  
<<http://www.premarin.org>>
- 61 Father John Misty, I'm writing a Novel, 2012  
<<http://genius.com/Father-john-misty-im-writing-a-novel-lyrics>>
- 62 Express, Were poppy seeds to blame for doping the Queen's horse?, 2014  
<<http://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/491157/Poppy-seeds-could-have-doped-the-Queen-s-horse>>
- 63 Cynthia Freeland, Art theory, 2001,  
(Oxford, 2003, page 8)
- 64 Boris Groys, Antiphilosophy, 2009  
(Verso, 2012, page 26)
- 65 Sarah Thornton, 33 Artists in 3 acts, 2014  
(W. W. Norton & Company, 2015, page 174)
- 66 Duijfe van Egmont,  $SL(2, Z)$  duality and massive deformations in  $AdS_4/CFT_3$ ,  
(Universiteit van Amsterdam, MSc Physics, page 8)

- 67 Eleanor Heartney, *Art & Today*, 2014  
(Phaidon, 2014, page 46)
- 68 Sarah Thornton, *33 Artists in 3 acts*, 2014  
(W. W. Norton & Company, 2015, page 38)
- 69 Sarah Thornton, *33 Artists in 3 acts*, 2014  
(W. W. Norton & Company, 2015, page 38)
- 70 Swedish Design, Dala Horses  
<<http://www.swedishdesign.org/Classic/From-FORM-Magazine/The-Swedish-Dala-horse/>>
- 71 A view on cities, Livrustkammaren  
<<http://www.aviewoncities.com/stockholm/livrustkammaren.htm>>
- 72 Nicole Davis, Interview with John Baldessari, 2004  
<<http://www.artnet.com/magazine/features/davis/davis12-7-04.asp>>
- 73 Miro Aleksei Hämäläinen,  
Finnish person
- 74 Boris Groys, *Antiphilosophy*, 2009  
(Verso, 2012, page 59)
- 75 Arthur Schopenhauer, *On the Sufferings of the World*, 1851  
<<http://www.spiritual-minds.com/philosophy/assorted/Philosophy%20-%20Arthur%20Schopenhauer%20-%20Studies%20In%20Pessimism.pdf>, page 2>
- 76 Jonathan Swift, *Gullivers Travels*, 1726  
(Signet Classics, 2008, page 250)
- 77 Animals in war  
<[http://www.animalsinwar.org.uk/index.cfm?asset\\_id=1385](http://www.animalsinwar.org.uk/index.cfm?asset_id=1385)>
- 78 Animal memorials  
<[http://www.edinburghs-war.ed.ac.uk/sites/default/files/pdf\\_Memorials.pdf](http://www.edinburghs-war.ed.ac.uk/sites/default/files/pdf_Memorials.pdf)>
- 79 Franz Kafka, *The Departure*, 1920-21  
(Documents of Contemporary art – Situations, White Chapel Gallery, 2009, page 62)





## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A big “Thank You” to Cecilie Odgaard for several proof readings and helping me regain my sometimes-lost overview. Thank you, Pim van der Heijden, for several hours of horse-philosophizing, and thank you, Ben Christo, for helping me smoothen out my Denglish - while being on tour rocking the guitar for Sisters of Mercy. Jeroen Kramer, Head of designLAB at Gerrit Rietveld Academie, thank you for all our discussions about horses and existence in general – and for always getting back to me. Last but not least I would like to thank my thesis guide Xandra de Jongh.

Gerrit Rietveld Academie  
thesis 2016  
Kristine Bech Sørensen





