



Horse stories Geeske Harting / Tribute to the last horse of Venice

More than fifty years ago the last horse of Venice died, as stated by an English writer, Jan Morris: "... one old horse still spends the summer months in the gardens of Venice, pulling a rake and a lawnmower: and I am told that when, each autumn, he was floated away in a scow to Mestre, the children jeered him on his way, the gondoliers reviled him, and even the passengers on the passing ferries threw their catcalls and cigar-butts in his wake. Today there is not a single live horse left in the city of Venice". Along with this quote, the strange similarity I found between images of old maps of Venice and images of horses inspired me to perform a tribute to this last horse of Venice, something between a crime-scene and a monument. Hippocampus:
 > Mythological creature, a horse with a fish-like hindquarter.
 > The location of the memory in the human brain.
 Humankind's impact on the nature world is alarming, by using the sea and the oceans as one big garbage container. My seahorse, placed at the beach, reflects this situation; it's hindquarter is made of plastic waste, left by the ongoing tides, thus leaving us a deadly reminder of ourselves.



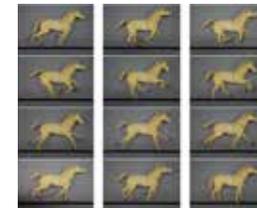
Horse stories Jessy Rahman / Jaran Keping

From the very beginning of the colonization of the East-Indian archipelago (now Indonesia), the Dutch army deployed horses during times of war. Similarly, in the Javanese War from 1825 until 1830, the Dutch eventually won the battle against the indigenous resistance led by prince Diponegoro, partly thanks to their use of horses. To keep the memory of this act of resistance alive Javanese dancers re-enact scenes from history on prepared flat horses, this traditional dance is called Jaran Keping or Kuda Lumping. Gamelan music causes a rush of invincibility, it happens often that the spirit of a horse takes possession of the dancer. Only the leader of the pack is able to bring back the dancers to consciousness. Jaran Keping is also familiar with the Surinamese Javanese community in the Netherlands with which Rahman is connected. Images of this dance will be presented at a 'Jaran Keping' workshop for schoolchildren on Pellestrina island in the Venice Lagoon. This workshop will result in a dance demonstration on the village square of Pellestrina and in the courtyard of Palazzo Loredan.

Capriole Bien Banale / Spontaneous jumping performance with the horse in the courtyard of Palazzo Loredan
 Photo by Marlies Adriaanse

Horse stories Pietertje van Splunter / Horse and master

San Giovanni Square is known for the famous equestrian statue (ca.1480) by Andrea Verrocchio, master of Leonardo da Vinci. Inspired by the horses of the Basilica of San Marco, he made the first bronze equestrian statue since antiquity in which one of the horse's legs does not touch the ground. The horse is pushed over the square, by a person in full equestrian costume. An action, that makes you wonder why this rider does not sit on the horse preferring, rather, to push it, seemingly unwilling and motionless through town. A story about the inadequacy of an artist in breathing life into an image. The action also plays with the relationship between "master and servant" and gives an unexpected, absurd image to the streets of Venice.



Locomotion, sketch for stop motion based on photo of E. Muybridge in 1887

Horse stories Thom Vink / Names

In folk legends the horses often give good advice to their riders, warning them in a human voice. When Luther wanted to explain that man is inherently bad, he used the image of a lame horse that God, his rider, is still able to hang on to. Freud used the image of the horse in a metaphor to indicate that man has to keep in check his urges, as a rider keeps the horse in check. The reason for making the video animation for this project is the ambiguous function that the horse has in symbolism and mythology, and its relationship with life and death. These various symbols connected with the horse bring to my mind the image of a skeleton of a dead racehorse. This image could be projected on both a 1:1 scale model of a horse as well as on a bare wall. The projection of the video animation also shows the cryptic names of deceased racehorses. These names slowly flow into each other and slowly change from a positive to a negative image. In this way, it is an ode to the 'symbol' of the horse. To the strength and vitality, but also to the lust and pride of life, and the fear, corruption and inertia of death.



Action: video animation projection