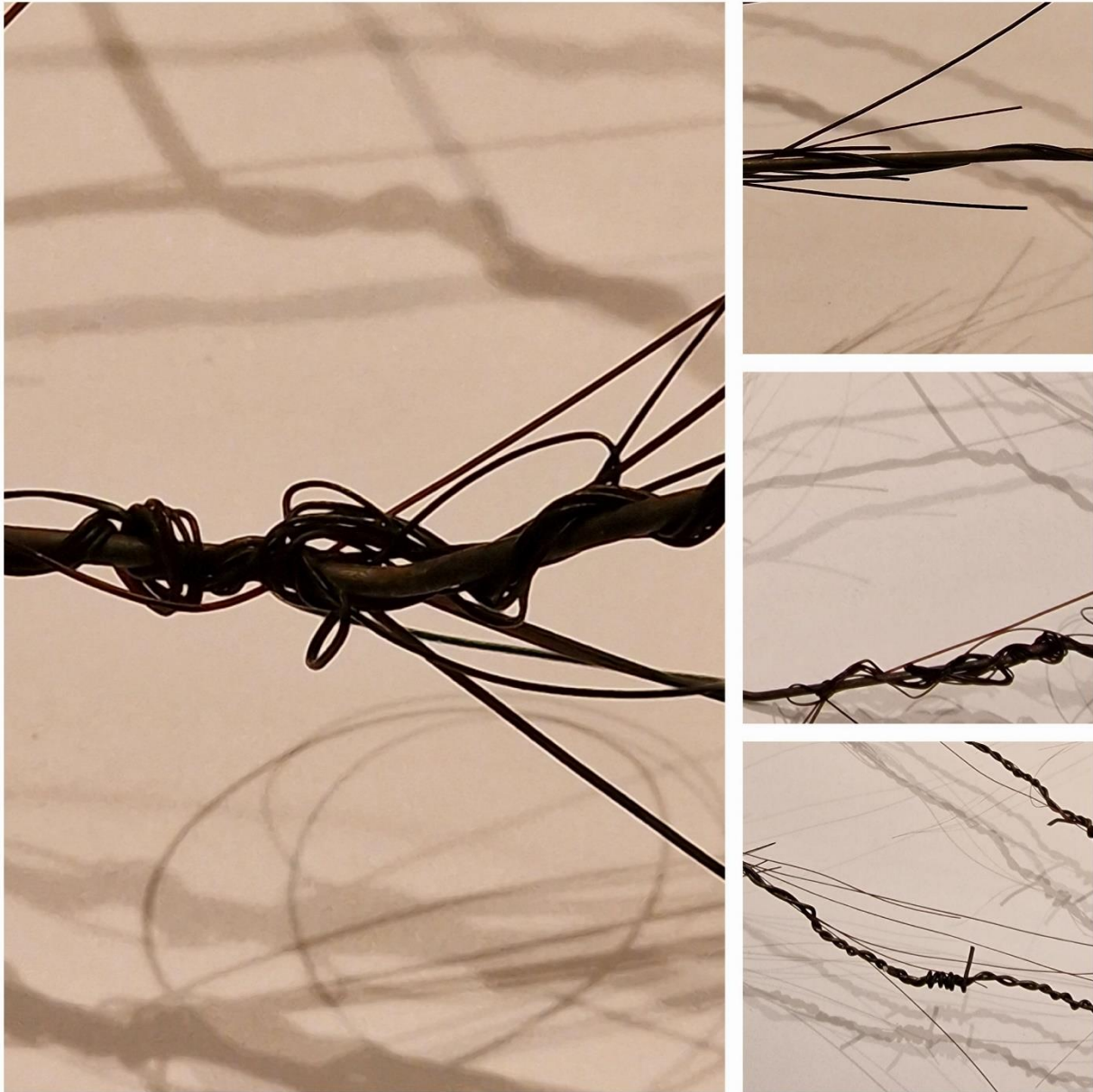


‘TRACES’



CONFIRMATIVE PRAXIS REPORT

M7X02024/C

11/5/23

JANINE HADLEY

CONTENTS

Title Page	1
Contents	2
Introduction	3-5
Rationale	6
Creative Visualisation	7-8
Animals in Art	10-12

“It is the image of Man as a rational animal endowed with language” (Braidotti:143).

“Art is continually haunted by the animal” (Deleuze and Guattari, 2000)

“The Animal looks at us, and we are naked before it. Thinking perhaps begins there”

(Derrida, 2002:397)

“A becoming is always a becoming with” (Haraway, 2008:24).

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The word ‘horse’ carries a fixed identity alongside a vast vocabulary of metaphor and meaning acquired during the entangled history of horse with man. Dismantling the notion of ‘horse’ without representation of form, hoof or hide, its (un)becoming forms part of the praxis, allowing a return to the landscape, released from objectification and control. Is the Anthropocene as apocalyptic as implied or can we balance the macro and micro challenges of man and nature? Such standpoints need a form of cartography to locate themselves as navigational tools, where we find ourselves coming from and find ourselves going to, both compiled and embellished in history and future. Rosa Braidotti (2013:164) refers to cartography as a “theoretically based and politically informed reading of the present” and an awareness of one’s place within a system of power (Shaw,2015). As such, a situatedness that is a relay point between different moments in space and time (Braidotti, 2013). Additionally, memory is the fluid context, not inherently tethered to any objective reality (Shaw, 2015). Additionally, memory is the fluid context, not inherently tethered to any objective reality (Shaw, 2015). Memory brings ‘to the world the possibility of an unfolding, a narrative, a hesitation’ (Grosz, 2004: 186);

The notions of fixed or fluid are navigated through selected lines of enquiry within this report, alongside our understanding of what is and what was, and its potential for ‘becoming’. The use of materials chosen within my praxis are intended to fix, stitch together, undo and transform through the sensory nature of the chosen materials both what we know of them through memory and what they may have moved to visually. The intention being to portray ‘language’ via feelings and emotions, not always available in ‘words’ (Aloi, 2010) generating an affect pertinent to the viewer and what they bring with them. Affects can be described as extra-discursive and extra-textual, not from knowledge or meaning but a register on another level (O’Sullivan, 2001). As such, a capacity to be acted and acted upon that arises in the midst of in-between-ness (Seigworth and Gregg, 2010). The use of sensory and imaginative practices within art as part of research, engages with ‘experience as it is lived, felt, reconstructed, reinterpreted, and understood’ (Sullivan, 2005: 96). Further, Ron Broglio (2011) argues that art, with its particular investment with surfaces, has an ability to unhinge philosophical concepts and move them in new directions. This is supported by Cary Wolfe’s (2021:3) idea of how art can undertake “non-propositional conceptualisation”. Having written extensively on posthumanism, Wolfe (2021) sees animal studies as a subset and subproblem of the larger domain of posthumanist thought. Both movements sharing the notion of anti-anthropocentric thought, that the human is not the centre of the universe. Tying this to the artist, Wolfe identifies how conceptualizing these questions, art can resonate on a social, theoretical and affective register. Through artists immersed involvement in their chosen media, human ways of perceiving and experiencing light, smell, sound, taste and touch can draw out the potential for a much broader non-human animal sensorium (Wolfe, 2021).

“There is a way in which art – even the most traditional, humanist art – is always already ‘animal’ in this sense” (Wolfe, 2021:3).

Drawing together posthumanism, Anthropocene and human/animal studies, contemporary art has emerged as a privileged terrain for exploring interspecies relationships and these current issues (Ramos, 2016).

Observations of empathy among nonhumans prompt reconsiderations of the human. The nonverbal communication of animals has been compared with poetic expansion of the boundaries of language. And the freedom of animal life in the wild from capitalist subordination is seen as a potential model for reconfiguring society and our relationship to the wider environment. Artists' engagement with animals also opens new perspectives on the dynamics of dominance, oppression, and exclusion, with parallels in human society. Animal nature is at the heart of debates on the Anthropocene era and the ecological concerns of scientists, thinkers, and artists alike (Ramos, 2016).

To explore this thinking, the contemporary dialogues of posthumanism, the animal turn, materiality and social anthropology will be used. Woven through this autoethnographic and reflective account, a selection of contemporary writers and theorists are referenced, as I 'to and fro' from historical actions to future accountability via stitch, textile and pen. To explore these areas extensively is beyond the scope of this report. The intention is to reflect on personal experiences and ways of thinking around the horse-human entanglement, how I can communicate ideas and questions through my chosen media and underpin through new and relevant contemporary dialogues.

The title 'Traces' (Mirriam Webster, 2023); is defined as from the microscopic and barely detectable, a line left by something that has passed, a path one follows to trace something historically or moving forwards and the lines of harness attaching a draft animal to a vehicle to be drawn along. Through writing and weaving, lines of different kinds, traces and threads (Ingold, 2016) meander back and forth, reflecting on past journeys and absorbing new ways of thinking. The intention is for the writing to enmesh with the textile work in a shared language and affect to perpetuate the (un)fixing and rethinking of the subject and what it may become. 'Every movement leaves its traces in mind, matter or memory, every trace poses new questions' (Goett, 2010:94).

Emerging from an autoethnographic viewpoint, my writing explores the materiality and fluidity of textile and its transformative nature. In this text, the richness of textile (language) and metaphor is threaded through this reflection intuitively. Catherine Dormer, Janis Jeffries, Jacques Derrida, and Solvi Goett support layers of meaning and affective account in which my work emerges and evolves as a response to such enquiries.

Through linking theory and practice, the contested theories of Materiality, Anthropocene, Posthumanism and The Animal Turn and Social Anthropology are considered through Rosa Braidotti, Giovanni Aloï, Deleuze and Guattari, Donna Haraway, Cary Wolfe, Steve Baker, Ron Broglio, Tim Ingold among others.

Additionally, reference is made to a small selection of artists to contextualise the subject matter and materials chosen for my praxis. Where the text leads outwards into a network of intellectual inquiries, the artwork leads inwards into a web of mingling memories and affective responses (Goett, 2015: 16).

The resultant assemblage embodies my reflective thoughts and experiences, inter and intra-connectedness of materials, matter and making over a framework of contested, contemporary theory. The intention being to entangle text and textiles in a visual interpretation of the emerging dialogue in an attempt, as Georgina Downey (2018) puts it, to articulate a posthuman and creaturely way of thinking. In a broader sense, to embrace ‘becoming animal’ both internally and philosophically with acknowledgement of the quantity of losses in renegotiating the relationship with our animal others (Downey, 2018).

As Braidotti posits, “[t]he epistemic and the ethical walk hand in hand into the complicated landscapes of the third millennium” (Braidotti.178, 2013).

Textile material and making underpins this praxis whilst informing my research methodology as an inquisitive meandering, guided by curiosity, subject to serendipity, open to unpicking and alteration (Goett, 2010). An exploration and shift to textiles from more ‘fixed’ sculptural materials I have previously used, has opened a flexible and richly tangible means to expression, affect and sensory language. The intention is to work expansively and openly with a selection of relevant materials to enable me to recontextualize man’s relationship to horse.

Deleuze and Guattari (1980) speak of thresholds and operations where there is a transformation of matter and form. Referring to it as matter in movement, in flux, in variation a conveyor of singularities and traits of expression. For Aloi (2018) in the Anthropocene, materials are no longer inert conduits for meaning but substances-in-becoming (Ingold, 2010) inviting us to follow and retrieve histories and agential engagements between human and non-human networks (Ingold, 2010).

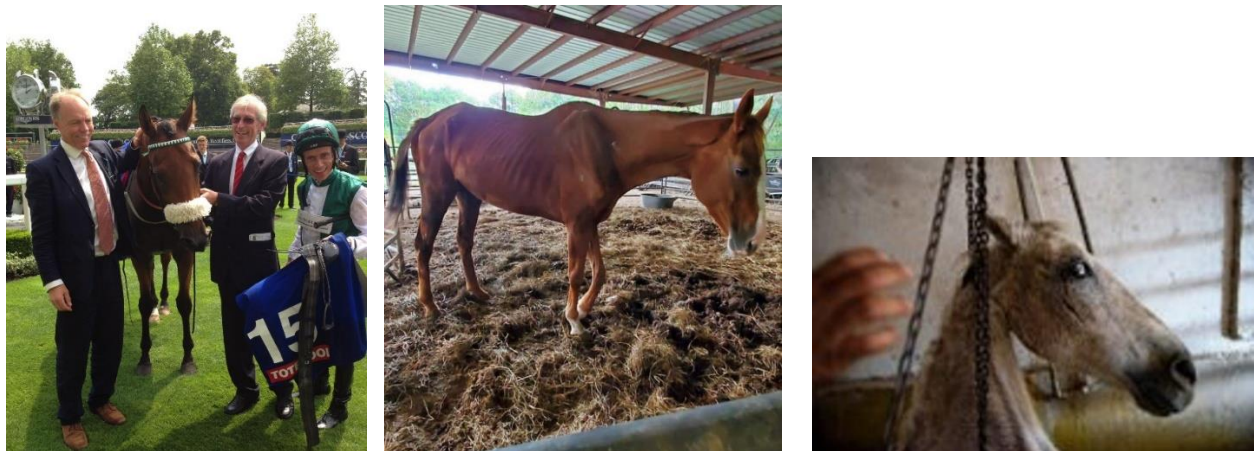
For Bruno Latour, materiality is common to its ‘actants’, the object itself and the effects on its viewer, and the maker who has effects on the artwork, are both engaged in a relationship that produces meaning (Luckhurst, 2006). Art/ the Artist has an ability to conceptualise questions we are interested in and to resonate innate senses. Aloi (2012) asks, can art then contribute to a defining of new and multifocal perspectives of nature and the animal, in order to move us beyond ourselves, to find new perspectives to radically change who we are. In essence, using creative visualisation to trigger responses to human behaviors often embedded in history and culture and to consider undoing/becoming other than what we are and what we are doing.

(Un) becoming horse is my point of reference and their connection to nature and man; as a way to examine how we are disconnected from our senses and surroundings. Cultural theorist John Berger (1980) states, human understanding of animals is largely shaped by representation rather than direct experience with them, and it is with this in mind that I am to disentangle ‘horse’. The foundation for my focus on the horse stems from many years of observation and living amongst a small herd of native Welsh ponies alongside work and family. Through these connections we have witnessed and shared birth, death, illness, pride and success and many hours spent outside observing and absorbing the surroundings. Shared passions with other breeders and owners have highlighted marked differences in this connectedness. I have witnessed adoration, cruelty and objectification of these spirited but generous animals. With their immense strength and strong instincts, they offer a connection to nature but also a fine line of control and uncontrollable. In turn, a human response is often rigid rather than softer, more understanding and flexible, lacking an ability to give as well as to take.

Through reference to the horse, a signifier in man’s artistic endeavors since the time of mark-making began and braided within human culture globally; through this dialogue, I examine the traditional representation of animals in art. Is there space for them in the new and challenging panorama outlined by human-animal studies? For Giovanni Aloï the answer is yes, but the presence of the animal as addressed by more traditional media requires new levels of inventiveness to avoid falling into the already explored tropes which see the animal fully and simply objectified (Aloï, 2015). Aloï’s perspective underpins my difficulty when embarking on this exploration. From the start, the stereotypical notion of the horse creates a barrier to its undoing with its fixed form endemic in human culture. My intention is to explore beneath the surface, removing the applied layers of ownership and objectification this beast of burden has carried through millennia. Ron Broglio (2011) terms “living on the surface” the form of totalization imposed on animals. In opposition to the cultural depth of man, according to humanist conceptions, animals do not engage in critical reflection and therefore lack the depth required by self-reflexivity- as such they live on the surface.

With size, strength and speed, the horse stands apart from other companion animals. Through a connectedness with them and in a revelatory way, we bridge the divide between animal-human, nature-culture (Downey, 2018). It is not a wholly reliable relationship; we cannot guarantee not to be harmed when they revert back to nature but this innate ‘wildness’ makes them more desirable.

Revered as a status symbol, over 8 million horses died in WW1 and this dichotomous relationship with man continues. The Industrial Revolution brought about the demise of traditional horsepower of draught animals working the fields and transport. The role of the horse became one of sport and status. “a man on a horse is spiritually as well as physically bigger than a man on foot” (Steinbeck, 1937). Horse racing, known as the sport of kings, brought about a focus on selective breeding, encouraging a fetishistic way of looking at what once was simply a working animal (Highland and Roberts, 2010). The horseracing industry has developed into a vast commodification of the animal on an industrial scale and is self-regulating regards its welfare issues. It is a global industry with a significant economic role and political support (Bergmann, 2019).



The winners enclosure (Ascot) (stock image) Racehorse Industry welfare issue (Mail online, 2011) Garmendia (2019) The Horrific Brutality of the meat industry.

Historically the horse was used within art as a symbol of status and power and a representational subject for both painters and sculptors. Wealthy racehorse owners commissioned portraits and the form of the horse has been referenced extensively by many artists.



Statue of Marcus Aurelius, 175AD, Rome, Italy



Whistlejacket, Stubbs (1762) oil on canvas

In a contemporary context, the animal can be seen to literally inhabit the gallery space, both in life and in death. As Aloï (2012) says the animal we see now is an animal body, not merely the man-made depiction of one. The presentation of real animal bodies in art is a newer occurrence and as such does not entirely function within the paradigmatic set in which painted versions normally occupy. The visibility of the animal body in the gallery space attracts much attention and criticism, challenging belief systems, value systems and ethical parameters (Aloï, 2015).

There has been a significant increase in the visibility of horses in recent art (Downey, 2018) despite their decline in our everyday lives. Berger (1977) warns of the phantasmagorical return of what is absent or extinct in our lives. Many animals have disappeared, and we live without them, consigned to word or flattened image. No fur, no flesh, no sound, no colour, no sense. Derrida (2006) asked who is it that will respond in the name of the animal.



Kounellis (2015) Untitled (12 horses)

A re-creation of Jannis Kounellis's 1969 artwork in Rome of live horses in a gallery space took place at Gavin Browns West Village Gallery as a final exhibition. It saw vast queues of people waiting to walk into the space. When asked what he thought it meant to bring live animals into the gallery space as art, Brown replied he didn't think it was about anything. It's "more through the coverage than the art" that the piece takes on a meaning more than what it is. Press reactions were part of what drove the crowds lined outside the building. Many complaints were lodged regarding the horse's welfare as they were tethered and could not move freely. In contrast, comparisons were drawn to the way many horses are kept and often stalled with little room to turn around. The rare close encounter with a horse drew the crowds who were asked to keep quiet and stay at a distance. The experience was reported as calm, beautiful but absurd (Meier, 2015). Little exists of Kounellis's original work apart from one photograph. The gallery was an underground converted garage space where the horses were tethered. The space was clean and well lit, there was no hay or bedding. There was an element of the 'shock factor' (Aloi, 2010). Set in the background of Italy's Arte Provera, the Industrial boom saw mass migration empty the countryside to look for work in the businesses of the North. Little is documented of the horses who were just led away. Kounellis was known for his emphasis on the physicality of material (Chiver and Glaves-Smith, 2015).

New York Times ran a two-page feature with the headline 'Animals have taken over art, and art wonders why'. Despite such familiar precursors as Kounellis's horses and Beuys's coyote, the sheer amount of recent art to feature living animals certainly did seem to be a new phenomenon (Baker, 2001).

The novelty of an encounter with 'other' in the exhibiting space wore off relatively quickly and some artists turned to further explore the dynamics of the confrontation by introducing the element of death (Aloi, 2010).

Berlinde de Bruyckere, *The Black Horse* (2003)

Berlinde de Bruyckere (Untitled, 2007)

Berlinde De Bruyckere's work deals with death and transfiguration and looks to stories and art of the past to address anxieties that remain current. Her sculptures accomplish an almost alchemical transformation of wax into flesh, and out of this fantastical realism she creates intolerably mutated bodies: figures lack heads, borrow and reconfigure anatomies, become amorphous, vegetal and abstract. Their distortions emphasise our own fragile existence. 'I want to show how helpless a body can be,' De Bruyckere has said. 'Which is nothing you have to be afraid of — it can be something beautiful (Hauser and Wirth, 2010).'

Iron is a new material chosen by De Bruyckere to convey 'the heaviness of death'. The horse's unyielding weight and emptied body hung or slumped on tables and platforms, using materials and motifs to create an increasingly complex language of empathy and suffering. The sculptures are both macabre and transfixing, capturing the moment in which life is about to leave the body, a dialogue between life and death. They resemble the by-products of a morgue, a slaughterhouse or a taxidermists table, death on an industrial scale. Each body produces a visceral sense of fear and repulsion that quickly collapses into tenderness and compassion (Evans, 2017). De Bruyckere first started using horse bodies in her work during a residency in Flanders, working from documentary photographs from WW1 of the empty streets littered with the bodies of dead horses. The memories of death, terror, displacement and human cruelty show suffering as a form of sacrifice in their hung crucifixion manner (Downey, 2018). Her horse installations can be described as truly Deleuzian bodies without organs. Additionally, de Bruyckere chooses her horse bodies with care as she has to feel a connection and find beauty in them, as such, the concept of 'becoming horse'. Returning to John Berger's question of who speaks for the animal, do de Bruyckere's sculptures speak about a broad range of human affairs rather than animality itself (Aloi, 2010).



Exploring materiality and meaning through the medium of textiles enables this examination of man's objectification of nature and the non-human in a tangible way. Animals have become an integral part of our everyday lives from the very beginning. As such, we end up taking them for granted and have treated them as accessories to the human condition (Aloi, 2012). The interconnectedness of man, fibre and animal traces back to prehistoric animal pelts (Goett, 2010; Jeffries, 2015). In a world heavily laden with textiles, they are at the core of human experience. The horse has carried, conformed and participated in this journey; the fibres of their being are often embedded within this.

The dictionary defines animal; in ordinary use of the word, animal means all living things except humans (Cambridge Dictionary, 2023) as such deeply embedding man at the centre and emphasising the idea of 'other'.

The Animal Turn is an academic focus on animals in new terms and under new premises, through an increasing scholarly interest in animals, in the relationships between humans and other animals, and in the role and status of animals in (human) society. The concept of otherness has become central to the contemporary debate (Aloi, 2012) and requires a process of unlearning and reconfiguring; reflected within my praxis, as an 'unpicking and alteration' process, which takes on metaphorical and material significance in my practice. The animal, another subject of power relations, the ultimate 'otherness' is a greater challenge. Unlearning the animal effectively means to suspend and deconstruct the certainties offered, in order to acquire a critical awareness of our relational modes to animal and nature and the courage to find a connectedness and new vision (Aloi, 2012; Haraway, 2013).

Braidotti points out that this positioning of *Man* at the centre is unfairly anthropocentric, and as such, serves to fuel Europe's self-centered pursuit of its own interests, potentially to the detriment of those it deems to be "others" (Shaw, 2015). Braidotti further disputes the idea of Anthropocene, referring to the scientific standpoint of whether man has made changes to the earth system to a point that it is reflected in the rock strata (National Geographic, 2022) and moved us beyond the Holocene. Braidotti's preference is to refer to this period as Climate Change Science. This

contested nature of Anthropocene perhaps gives hope that a deconstruction of our current path could shift the pattern of our existing impact and experiences and find a balance between the macro and micro challenges of man and nature.

“Intra-action, as Barad highlights, gives us new ways of thinking about relationships with each other as well as with matter, material, nature, and discourses” (Adele Bardazzi, p2:2022)

Karen Barad (2007) agential realism is a broad theory based in the quantum physics and ontology. The idea that intra-actions create all matter and entities from within foundational phenomena that expresses the continuous entanglement of humans and world together/apart.

By encompassing this, the language of textiles, the notion of becoming/(un)becoming, the focus on the horse and the dialogue of interconnectedness and release via an artistic visualisation; how much of the ‘animal’ can I reference without objectification and truly allow the ‘voice of the horse’ to be heard?

As the animal in the gallery space is seldom (if ever) there of its own choosing, it is hardly surprising that the ethical issues raised by its treatment by the artist have now come to the fore. When those issues have been addressed by artists, they have emanated from two broadly related positions: the first concerned with the animal’s place in debates around environmentalism, and the second more specifically addressing animal rights (Baker, 2001

Steve Baker (2001) implies for some artists; animals are just another form of materials.

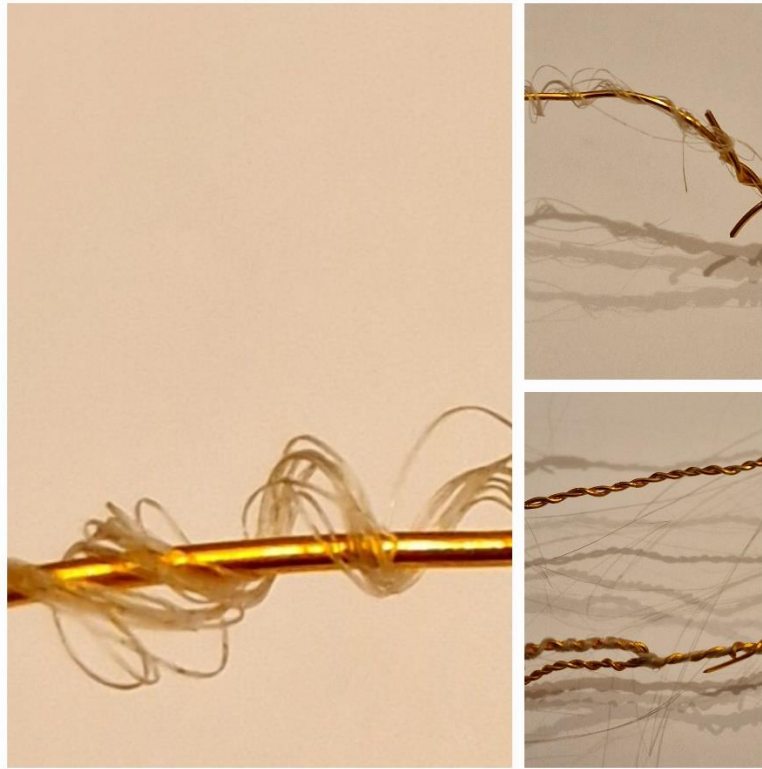
## FROM TEXT TO TEXTILE



A Fine Line (2023) Janine Hadley, wire/horsehair

Observing the environment around me, at home, where I live, where my ponies live. We both have boundaries, lines on a map delineate what I own and anything the other side is ‘out of bounds’ both within my grasp and out of reach. These lines are invisible unless I create a boundary, a fence line, usually wire, tense and taut to restrain and contain. Like contour lines, the fence line runs and curves, rises and falls with the landscape, but jarring and unnatural.

It is not the imposition of linearity on a non-linear world, but the imposition of one kind of line on another. It proceeds by first converting the paths along which life is lived into boundaries in which it is contained (Ingold, 2016).



A Fine Line (2023) Janine Hadley, wire/horsehair

I will often find mane or tail hair from the ponies caught in the wire where they attempted to reach the grass on the other side. They are kept in a ‘natural’ environment with access to all they may need, they are however contained, restricted and the environment is managed. Even when they have left the fields their traces will remain. Their hair is resilient, waterproof, it will remain twisted and tethered to the fence long after they have gone. The hair alludes to what was present and what is now absent. These boundaries represent notional boundaries between human and animal (Haraway, 1984). With our often-unconscious modern propensity for hubris, we are adamant we are in charge of what happens on this planet. Such terms as land management, natural resource management includes our wild species and wild places reflecting the assumption of superiority and control (Adams, 2017). The small herd I keep express their natural behaviors of friendships, battles, hierarchy, and playfulness. They seek human company but are not free. Wild horses in both Australia and North America are tangled in the embedded idiosyncrasies and contradictions of ranging over the wild parks. These wildernesses are often the original areas of habitation for the indigenous people of these countries. There was a respectful interaction between humans and animals, with horse spirits as part of their beliefs and spirituality (Adams, 2017). Haraway (2007)

discusses the need to explore a greater connectedness within the human-animal relationship. Yet we choose to remove and relocate both animal and human from a long-inhabited environment despite years of natural cohabitation with the surrounding nature. Can man truly practice Haraway's interconnectedness with non-human and other or does a power and hierarchical line remain to serve what man deems as environmental management? Without a shared language such judgment remains from one perspective (2013).

## SWEAT RUG



Sweat Rug (2023) Janine Hadley. Horse rug/tin/thread/textile/leather/wire

(Close up)

A sweat rug is an item of clothing for the horse consisting of a cotton/synthetic open weave mesh rug to enable controlled and supported cooling of the horse after an intensive period of ‘work’ where the animal is sweating profusely and needs to cool down but not get a chill. Such items warrant their use, after all, we have worked the horse to that position. Horses have a natural ability to thermoregulate, developed through evolution. However, our manipulation of breed, type and function and the way humans anthropomorphise, we layer our interpretations of feelings and

conditions, and if we feel cold, our horse feels cold.

The weave of the sweat rug is both open and closed simultaneously. The holes allow you to view within, beneath, the woven cotton creates a veil, a duality of a transparency and a boundary at the same time. The rug drapes and hugs the rolling curves, the curves rise and fall rapidly with the heaving chest of the horse pulling in gasps of air to both help cool and recover. The nostrils flare, the eyes bulge, the coat glistens with sweat running over tired muscles.

Much like bells on a sleigh, galloping shod hooves or the jingle of cutlery in a drawer, the tin lids clatter and chatter, shimmer and glisten. They hang by fine gold thread, hammered and pitted, they decorate like medals or farmhouse bronzes, overlaying, overlapping forming an armour plating. The rug slumps and hangs heavy from its taut lines with no form to hug. It drapes empty, bedraggled with tangled and bound threads, hair and leather, fraying. From deification to the dinner plate, a horse's value is reflected through our consumption of it, whether for pleasure and glory or hooked and dragged to the dinner plates of Europe, the tins of pet food or the 'wild' lions of our leisure parks and enclosures.

Textile has the capacity to occupy space, sometimes in terms of mass, but also through implication, allusion and even illusion. This occupation of space extends textile's inherent possibilities: the lines of fibre, but it also offers a way for thinking about textile through its behaviour in such occupation (Dormer, 2020).

There is a vast commercialisation of horse couture and as in the fashion world, mounds of discarded horse garments. Horse-human culture is enmeshed and through domestication, the horse rarely exists in safety, in nature, in the wild. The horse exists if it has a use, even the natural herds of Welsh Mountain ponies in Wales, UK are on the rare breeds list (Beacons-mpa.gov.uk, 2023, WPCS.org, 2023) with only a handful of dedicated breeders. They are an invaluable resource with their ability to eat rougher grasses than sheep, maintaining the integrity of the National Park but their commercial value is low, they are not currently 'in fashion'.

Alongside the dog, a horse could be considered more of a companion species. As such, the idea of 'becoming with', reciprocity, inter and intra-connectedness are ideas discussed by Donna Haraway (2008) in an effort to develop better understanding and long-lasting relationships with

all non-human. This would require the objectification of the horse to cease, an incredible unbecoming when they remain clothed and burdened in pomp and ceremony, racing and glory.

Haraway (2008) explores similar concerns via her concept of ‘companion species’, which knots together humans, landscapes, technologies and animals. These ideas have been influential within sociology and beyond but are only just gaining ground within discussions about sustainability (as cited in Wadham, 2020).

The bedraggled and shredded rug both glistens and hangs mournfully suspended. The frayed edges break the surface, broken and tentative, a transitional space of attachment and undoing (Dormer, 2020). The jagged edges hover in space, balancing between the tangible and elusive (Dormer, 2020).

## FELTED MAT(TRESS)



Felted Mat (2023) Janine Hadley. Horsehair/wool/thread

Felting uses the naturally striated, abrasive, scaled or otherwise textured surfaces of vegetable, but especially animal, fibre to form a structure of entanglement. Further manipulated with chemical or body liquids, such as sweat and urine, to abrade the fibre surfaces and act as mordant for pigmentation, the natural structures of entanglement are further enfolded into a dense but supple matting (Jeffries, 2015: 83)

The animal fibres are pulled and teased, layered crisscross over each other. The coarse horsehair was randomly laid across the fine wool fibres. The horsehair resisted the entanglement. After wetting, the fibres are rolled and compressed, twisted, rung-out, mimicking chores of old. The wool fibres matted together; the horsehair lay between the layers but not bound to them. Random lengths of horsehair lay outside the boundary of the felted mat, writhing and animate. They remained coarse and resistant, the felted mat lay soft and dormant. There are spaces between

bridged only by a random weave of strands of hair. A walking red thread attempts to close the spaces.

As a joining mechanism the stitch could be thought of as operating as a form of translation within a realm of symbolic meaning. This is not translation in terms of swapping or exchanging like-for like, but in terms of the drawing together of cultures and cultural understandings (Dormer, 2014).

Notions of the feminine, domestic matters, the bed can be taken from this piece into which is woven the history of the horse's fibre through its servitude. As such, concepts of both nurture and rupture (Dormer, 2014). Felt is made from matted animal hair and thought to be one of the oldest fabrics made by humans. No tools are required, just a primitive, physical process of beating, rolling, rubbing and throwing much as doing the laundry, compared to the orderly process of weaving, stitching and knitting (Goett, 2010).

Felt does not fray and cannot be unraveled. Made without intermediary between animal and human in alchemical transformation, it is an untamed fabric with residues of animalistic and shamanic qualities in its fibres. Of all fabrics it most closely bonds nature and culture. Felted into loose weaves or lace the woolen fibres insert themselves into the fabric's open spaces, contracting the cloth into folds and puckers as the threads become trapped in the process of shrinkage (Goett, 2010)

The felted pieces are each unique, there is no control or placement and the elements roll and mesh at random. They form part of a larger assemblage of like and disparate textile pieces. The pieces are loosely tacked together, some with seams, some with open threads. Dormer (2014) speaks of the stitch as an unbroken thread passing to and fro, back and forth much as this dialogue reflects and explores what was and what is to come.

## BOUNDARIES



Boundaries (2023) Janine Hadley. Electric Fence Tape/thread

As light passes through the holes, casting shadows, so holes and threads overlap each other and the surfaces onto which the light falls, shimmering between. Lace offers glimpses through that oscillate between presence and absence, operating as a kind of veiled mode for perceiving (Dormer, 2020:27).

As the light dances through the tape, the lacey ruffles disguise the tape's origins. Snaking through the tape, fine strands of wire link potentially miles of white lines. Held high and visible the tape

glows both day and night, highlighting the boundary. Should this boundary be challenged, electrodes, connected to a battery at one end, lie in wait for the inquisitive to contact, who in return feel the crack of electrifying energy shoot through from nose to tail. A quick retreat, a snort, and the confines are established.

Horses exist within complex matrices of interaction with humans, serving various subjectified and objectified roles simultaneously or consecutively during their lifespans. By situating the human-horse interface as relational, we decenter the human. Yet the goal is not to exclude examination of the ways in which humans construct understandings of horses within various contexts. This is because the human-horse dynamic is fraught with complex issues of privilege, power and responsibility involving the unequal requisition of bodies and the ability to exercise choice. Within this captivity it is difficult, if not impossible, to consider horses acting with anything but degrees of suppressed autonomy (Birke, 2017).

The folds of the tape bend towards, roll backwards and encloses. The idea of the fold leads to an unfolding (Dormer, 2020) a release, an undoing revealing a hidden space. Folding, unlike cutting or seaming is an impermanent act. In the interplay between theory and practice, folding becomes a continual movement, a process of exchange and change. The lacy tape creates a fluid and changing rolling landscape of becoming and unbecoming. Folds of space, movement and time with the world as body of infinite folds that weave through compressed time and space. The inside is nothing more than a fold of the outside (Deleuze, 1988).

## LEADROPE

A leadrope is clipped to a bridle or halter on a horse as a means of leading, training and control. It is often brightly coloured to match the rest of the horse's 'outfit'.

Tightly bound, woven, twist upon twist, the leadrope is stiff and unyielding, weighted one end by a shiny metallic clip, the means of attachment. Approximately an inch thick in circumference, the rope is hard, dense, looped and coiled round and back into itself like a writhing snake. As I uncoil it, it softens, it sits within my hand passing through from clip to rounded end. It retains its weight, it retains its form, it retains its strength and purpose. Cut from the brass fastener, the rope frays and unravels. The coloured threads are twisted upon themselves and twisted within each other. At the point of release, becoming animate, pulling away from each other. With encouragement, pulling and teasing the cluster of threads unravel and release themselves from the coil. They soften and relax, each thread becoming more visible. The colour remains vibrant, the single threads reveal themselves, the memory of their entanglement remains. Still grouped, they retain their strength but have lengthened, hanging tousled like a tail. I tease out some lengths of individual threads, cut them from the coil and take them elsewhere to bind and wrap another object. As Tim Ingold (2016) says, for the living world, in truth, is not connected like a net, but a writhing mesh of lines. Knotted in the midst, their loose ends never cease to root for other lines to tangle with.

## OLD BRASS DRIVING BIT

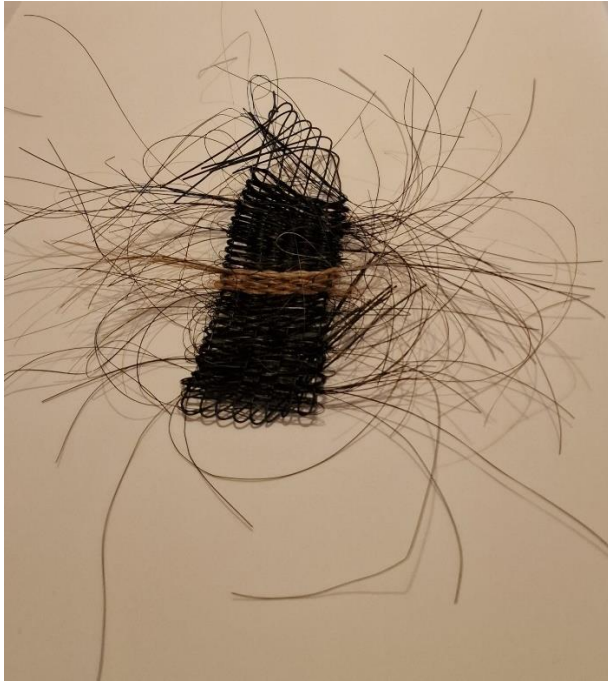


Made to sit within the horse's mouth as a means of control and direction, the brass bit is weighty and will sit on the soft bars (gums) of the horse mouth. Brass rings sit either side of the mouthpiece to prevent it slipping through. Brass bars run through the rings with slots in them to increase the strength and leverage applied by the driver via the leather reins.

The old brass bit sits weighty in my hand. It has lost its glow and shine, now dull and tarnished with age. This change sits purely on the surface, the form and function remain rigid and aggressive, the design to hold and control. It is hung in the soft mouth and lips of man's servant, as part of a leather and brass buckled bridle, at one time shiny, polished and presented for admiration.

Many ridden horses present with behavioral problems. Studies of domesticated and wild horse skulls have shown damage and boney growths from poor fitting bits in the jaws of domesticated horses and no signs of damage in wild horses. A riders first response to poor ridden behaviors is to try a bit with more control. Despite bitless bridles being an option to locate issues, these are rarely the first choice over measures for greater control.

## 'Hairlooms'



'Hairlooms' Steel wire and woven horsehair (2023)



Detail

There are many qualities to horsehair and as a result many uses applied since horses were domesticated. From textile weaving to mattress stuffing, from couture to violin bows, horsehair's lustre and resilience has been used for centuries. Braided tail hair served as memento mori of lost animal companion and now can be seen in the artists repertoire and more extreme fashion statements of 'becoming horse'.





## REFLECTIVE CONCLUSION, FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

The duality of a fluid standpoint lies woven through many of the perspectives and theories that form part of this assemblage. The back and forth of both stitch and text became an entanglement of ideas, memories, research and responses. The notion of becoming other or the horses (un)becoming both folded and unfolded in a complex landscape of current theoretical dialogues and embedded cultures and practices. There is a drive for the Animal Turn and both live and dead animal flesh can be seen in the gallery space. However, both the gallery space and access to nature are exclusive ideals and while theory and artistic practice attempt to find ways to envision a greater connectedness

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Solveigh Goett University of East London, UK  
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