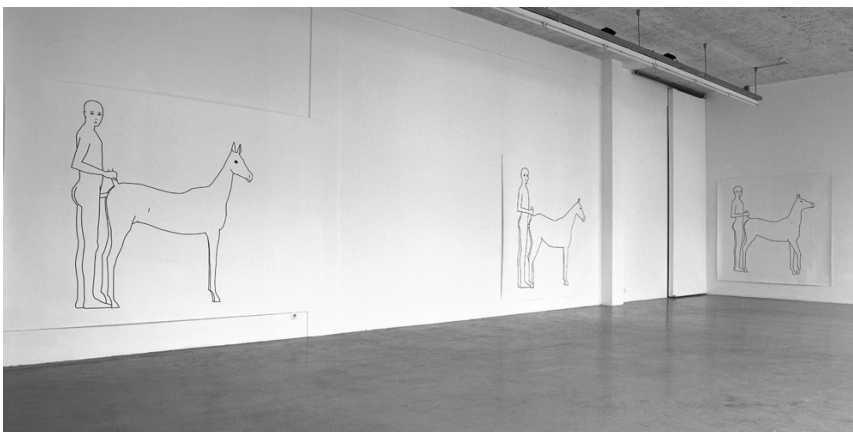




Four Horses

By Caroline de Bie

Four large drawings are hanging at the wall of MK Expositieruimte. With feltpen they are represented, mainly in contour, a man and a horse; the man penetrates the horse. The natural proportion horse / man is here simplified to 1:1 and this makes the drawings symbols, just as the tant lines do and the frozen attitude of the man. Only the horse changes perceptible, from left to right, from graceful into flat, from horse into deer, dog, beast. Robert Estermann points out the man who also slightly changes, he turns somewhat. With the little streaks on the animal's body one can suspect a turn also there. The man turns a little towards profile (although the face stays almost frontal) while the drawing itself seems to get thinner. There is a videorecorder in front of his drawings. A normal TV-set, not a monitor; that what everybody recognises as TV-set and therefore won't pay special attention, Estermann hopes. The picture shows him in two poses, straight frontal and, from some distance, en trois quarts. That's all: These pictures changes unceasing. Estermann is seated in the midst of personal computers, he could be the technician or the technical freak or one lost in the desert. The four drawings are like four cut-out pictures from a film. Film often goes too fast for Estermann, is not ready to hand and often the dialogue of the images escapes his vision.



These images (at MK) are his language, his sequences. In their quietness they have their own space between the two other exposants who also use sexuality as their theme. Siri Hermansen shows mutilated female bodies as casted sex-dolls; with Alberto Sorbelli we hear the sound of the sexual act (and by that I do not refer to the moaning) on the rhythm of classical music. Between all the violence in image and

sound the four men with horses hang imperturbable. Mating with horses, a lonely trade. Sailors had their little dogs and with the cavalry they stood on buckets (to be able) to get in their horses. But Estermann's image is equally tall as the horse and his deed is as easy as self-evident. It seems. Nothing is wrong, no tormented body, no marginal plodding, it is all incredible obvious. What misses though is Estermann's hand. From his portfolio "Wichtige Zeichnungen", the striping on a drawing is not merely a striping but the motion of his hand, left behind, a trace. Even the tall horses have their preparatory studies, are not that firm and directly put onto paper. To Estermann the little stripes are important, as important as the fact that one line bears various meanings, as important as the minimal streaks on large bodys that indicate turning, change. The pictures are the language of Robert Estermann, for this occasion spoken with the necessary politeness.

HTV De Ijsberg, Caroline de Bie, „Four Horses“, 1/97
on the occasion of Robert Estermann's exhibition at MK Gallery (former MK
Expositieruimte), Rotterdam 1996