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Four Horses, Four Boys and the Techne of Line Drawing or Sex, Smell, Touch, Light, Air & Speed (the great western internet) [after Turner]
About the drawings from the series 'Four Boys / Four Horses' by Robert Estermann

1. BEAUTY AND THE BEAST. Once upon a time there was a youngster named Judgment, sown from the laurels of good taste and strict community-standards. The birth was heralded in newspapers, emails, phone conversations; the child's sweet image could be spotted everywhere, smiling from milk cartons and t.v. commercials, from billboards, and holiday spas, and even, after a few years, from church docketts, law boards, and a few well-placed art galleries. Thus in this way, Judgment learned to feel, applaud, (and, later, require) a certain kind of certainty; a certain kind of sureness; a certain kind of self-certainty – one derived, as it were, from a kind of Cartesian co-agitare – a certain kind of synthesis which glued (what was perceived to be) an 'outside' object of reality to an 'interior' assuredness of self. Ego cogito [ergo] sum. And so began the first love affair with the 'deep-cut' or, as it was wont to be called: the line.

2. RECURSIVE MATHEMATICS (AND A SMALL WORD ON THE EXCLUDED MIDDLE). Different logics grew like grass fields on rich top soil. Three species, to be precise, took hold: the telos, the dialectic and the rhizomatic. Telos had, as its special trick, the ability to unfold from seed what it was to become, and then, projecting its 'what is was to become' back upon itself, it could leisurely (or otherwise) become what it was always meant to be, albeit, given the right conditions, determination and a few well-placed guidelines along the way. Judgment was quite fond of Telos, as the latter never strayed from what it was meant to be. This gave them both a seductive sense of calm, a kind of knowledge in advance (and despite a turbulent, greedy and mean-spirited world) of their own goals/purposes/ends. In this sense, Telos was the ultimate sense of security and forecasting; and, albeit a bit dull, made Judgment feel inspired, powerful, safe, and even neutral (or at least, what might be called 'natural'). The Dialectic, on the hand, had a different kind of magic, for it held out the promise – a very big promise – that it could not only do everything Telos could do, but it could also do everything Telos could not do (and would not be caught dead doing). But more than that! Our little Dialectic was also able to do these things (and not-things) at the same time! In the same space! And was able to do this by a form of reasoning that took as its core value: nothingness, and out of the nothingness was able to create the something – whatever that something might be or later change into becoming: say, the 'what ought to be' of morality, philosophy, art and life. True, it required a certain form of mysticism, transcendence or even quasi transcendence in order to secure the absolute attraction of the one side to its absolute other (side), whilst at the same time excluding this very divide; but as this exclusion of the line/middle/boundary/horizon was drawn in sand or wind or abstract reasoning, and yet could synthesize the either/or's of life into some kind of (moral/aesthetic/cultural) whole greater than the sum of its parts; as it could do all this and more! promising also to

dance across the dirt, grime, and ugliness of reality (at least half of the time), whilst remaining perfectly clean, smooth, and more cleverly, still, being able to do so with 'change' at its core and a dynamic stability as its outcome – well, all this and more, made the Dialectic a very, very attractive proposition indeed. A kind of three-ringed circus, with glitter and promises and outfits to match -- that once its exposure was immanent (and its exposure was always immanent), our Judgement could scarcely have stayed away, even if you had personally intervened to crush it at its root! A kind of addictive and sweet tasting purgatory, surrounded by mirrors and movements of all that could be, but never were – though quite reassuredly would always and forever be just around that proverbial corner, a kind of democracy, art, politics, pleasure, (fill in the gap) 'to come'. And then there was the rhizome, neither here nor there, neither fast nor slow; filled with events of appropriation, and weightless and more. Telling all, revealing nothing; Revealing all, telling nothing; going everywhere and nowhere all time, for none of the time: irritating, and cruel and lovely, and revolting, sadistic, voyeuristic, masochistic and bored, a discursive whoring, fuelled only by the economy of its surface circuitry curves, papers, dots, waves, and yes, lines.

3. PREDICTIVE TEXT (MESSAGING). One is thus forced to ask: when might the medium be the message? I'd like to say: when it is willing and able to make present the next step on the path or the journey or sentence or thought, and guesses that next step: correctly. (Communicative line-grammars at their most secure). Go to the top of the class; receive the status-quo's status. On the other hand, when might the medium not be the message? I'd like to say: when it is able and willing to make present the next step on the path or the journey but guesses that next step (or gesture or sound or touch, skin, smell): wrong. (Communicative line-grammars at their most insecure). Fall off the ladder and be eaten by, say, snakes, insects, rats, toads, liberal fundamentalists. On the third hand, could there ever be a time, when the medium has nothing at all to do with the message and yet, despite this (or even because of it) can overtly, covertly, and all things in between, be, at precisely the same time, its message? I'd like to say: yes, when Judgment is without its roots, speaks and moves with speed and light and air, but remains mute, transfixed, unstable media over and over again. A kind of thieving of the siren's song, calling out to its navigators, to all that might be mediocre, sacred and profane, and doing so in the resplendent mathematical gestures of the information age: with its fake dimensions, and the singularities of its voice. And so began the temptation of Judgment; clearly, it was just a matter of timing (acoustic calling, aura, beat, movement, slice of life).

4. FOUR HORSES / FOUR BOYS AND THE TECHNE OF DRAWING. Perhaps what we are groping toward, blindly or otherwise, is a kind of poetic whose ability to grasp 'the there', to appropriate it and make it 'mine', whatever its condition resembles more closely a kind of recipe: of the literal, the elemental, the periodic chemical, the gene pool, the mimetic, shot through with a 'something else' (say the folds of its smell, taste, voice, touch). A different sense of time -- perhaps a 'cooking time'; even a toxic time (for cooking need not produce something healthy for it to 'work'). Maybe it just boils down to a question of seeing with one's ears, hearing with one's nose, smelling with one's eyes and etc. Or maybe it is just a plea to take seriously habeas corpus, 'there shall be the body' for any and all forms of rhizomatic drawing to occur.

5. THE REDICALLY A-RADICAL EVENT OF (THIS) DRAWING. We might wish to call that projected 'cooking time', something more akin to an installation; ie, a matter of installing into a stretched-zap-instant: a memory, a signature – including one's own signature – into a kind of seductive surface, a libidinal surface, granting (indeed requiring) all the grammatical improprieties of the improper noun, gesture, narrative which is nothing other than what it is: the sensuous multiple criss-crossed dimensions of curved space-time (one could say 'duration') which becomes 'recognisable' in the economy of its 'being there/being here/being with.' Perhaps we could call this a kind of 'vision' (as in goal, mission, telos), though devoid of its Nicomachean Ethics, overarching 'masters' and other Aristotelian moorings. We might wish to call this a kind of synthetic surface poetic; that libidinal economy of the beat-beat beating, replete with 'acoustic' vibration and teetering on, with, amongst and around what Estermann alone is able to condense in his line drawings: ie, a rhizomatic tension; powerful, whimsical and quite beyond (because quite within and amongst) the banalities of good and evil. Thus at last, as Lucius Apuleius, remarked all those many centuries long gone by, 'Psyche became united to Cupid, and in due time they had a daughter born to them whose name was Pleasure.'
