

Steed alchemy

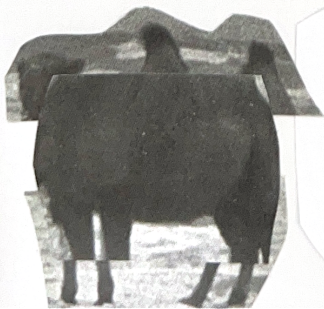
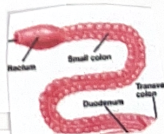
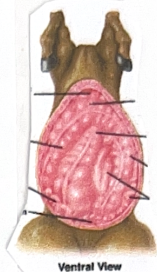
**A zine about the
research process behind
the installation
Steed alchemy
(2024)**

When the curator Sabine Sablon invited me to the residency program she founded, I immediately knew on what I wanted to focus my resources and energy.

It's a public art project I have been thinking about for a long time, probably since I was still taking dressage course when I was twelve. My teacher would often tell me that there is a certain horse breed that has the most efficient metabolism of all herbivores; they apparently need to eat only once every 5 days and were specially bred to be able to withstand long periods without access to food. The details are quite hazy in my mind, and I always wondered how accurate these confused memories were. Can horses be that resilient?

It sounded absurd so I felt like I needed to consult with an expert and gather information from someone who knows the ins and outs of horses. The most logical first lead would be a vet-

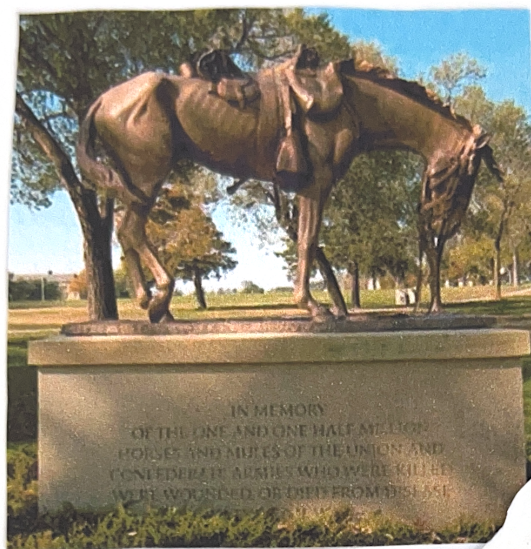
-eran. Michel Moneize was a soldier who fought during the war for the ownership of the Akua island, a remote archipelago contended by two European countries at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Moneize left us a journal in which he would recount his days in these contended lands. Many of its pages are dedicated to the long journeys on horseback, isolated and far from any food source. The only vehicles they could rely on were the horses of the Whisperstride breed, famous for their efficacy in difficult contexts. I was tipped off about this priceless testimony by my friend and artist Luca Lucio, a true history enthusiast. His own research touches upon animals employed during the war. Some of them, like in the case I'm looking into, were used as means of transportation. Some others were used as bona fide weapons or to intimidate the rivals. It's inevitable then to be reminded of a well-known example: the elephant-



Michel Moneize, Journal Entry - 12 April 1818

These days have tested us like never before. Our rations are almost gone, yet my horse, steadfast and uncomplaining, persists. He grazes on sparse grass while I cling to our dwindling supplies. It's a selfish relief that I don't have to share my meager food with him. His resilience in this hardship strengthens my resolve. Tomorrow, we march on, guided by his enduring spirit.

Civil
War
Horse
Monument



Whisperstride
Horse



megasoma
elephas



the metabolism of insects
can also be exploited

beetles used in the Crimson Ridge War (1417-1422). After a long siege, the bugs were unleashed on the crops, decimating the food supplies thus forcing the besieged to surrender. In history insects have been employed to pollute food supplies or to spread disease, weakening the opponent. Many other animals have been useful to humans during war: during WWII dogs have been used to carry messages between units but also to detect landmines. Less obviously, bottlenose dolphins were used during the Vietnam War and the Persian Gulf War to protect Navy vessels from enemy swimmers planting explosives. They patrolled with sonar and alerted armed trainers if they detected any threats. Camels were used to carry wounded men to safety on the North-West Frontier of India in 1917 as well as in the Sinai and Palestine campaigns. But going back to horses, their contribution wasn't exclusively utilitarian: they are also a symbol of power and often accompany their owner in their celebratory depictions. The primary illustrious example is Napoleon



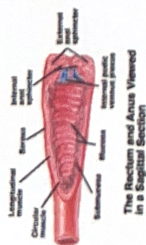
male ♂

↑ female



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|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. <i>Staphylea picea</i> (Female) | 6. <i>Staphylea picea</i> (Male) | 7. <i>Staphylea picea</i> (Male) | 8. <i>Staphylea picea</i> (Male) | 9. <i>Staphylea picea</i> (Male) | 10. <i>Staphylea picea</i> (Male) |
| 2. <i>Staphylea picea</i> (Male) | 3. <i>Staphylea picea</i> (Male) | 4. <i>Staphylea picea</i> (Male) | 5. <i>Staphylea picea</i> (Male) | 11. <i>Staphylea picea</i> (Male) | 12. <i>Staphylea picea</i> (Male) |
| 13. <i>Staphylea picea</i> (Male) | 14. <i>Staphylea picea</i> (Male) | 15. <i>Staphylea picea</i> (Male) | 16. <i>Staphylea picea</i> (Male) | 17. <i>Staphylea picea</i> (Male) | 18. <i>Staphylea picea</i> (Male) |

III. In many paintings and sculptures the horse is depicted as an extension of their owner, physically elevating them. Napoleon III is no exception, even though his reign wasn't necessary based on megalomaniac delusion like his uncle's. Sentenced to life imprisonment, he was confined in the fort of Ham, where he wrote extensively, including a political economy book, *L'extinction du paupérisme* (The extinction of poverty) reflecting his social concerns. Napoleon proposed a social project that involved state acquisition of uncultivated land and the transfer of it to a national workers' association, providing not just work and bread, but also education and religion. As progressive as this text seems to be, his main motivation behind his reasoning is that he thought that poverty was "seditious". In his calculations animals are also mentioned as a source of wealth. Animals have been seen as closer to objects than beings, with any care for their will and emotions. It's certainly a rarity that anyone would consider the importance of their conse-



Le produit moyen par hectare de terresensemencées ou mises en prairies s'élève donc à 165 fr.

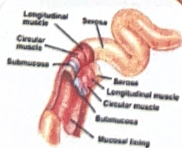
D'un autre côté, il y a en France 51 568 845 animaux domestiques de toute espèce, qui donnent un produit brut de 767 251 851 francs^[4]. L'une dans l'autre, chaque tête de bétail rapporte donc 15 fr., et comme ces bestiaux sont nourris sur environ 26 millions d'hectares, cela fait environ deux têtes de bétail par hectare. En moyenne, on peut dire que chaque hectare produit 195 fr. dont 165 fr. pour le revenu de la terre et 30 fr. pour le revenu des bestiaux.

Nos 6 127 000 hectares mis en culture et en prairies rapporteront donc :

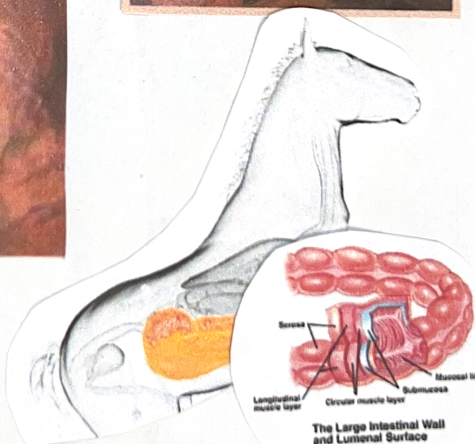
Pour le produit brut de la terre : 1 010 955 000

Et pour le produit des animaux : 183 810 000

Total en francs : 1 194 765 000



Structure of the Small Intestine



The Large Intestinal Wall and Luminal Surface

bronze 2

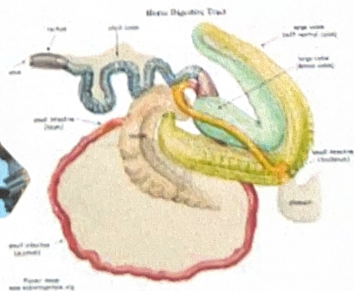


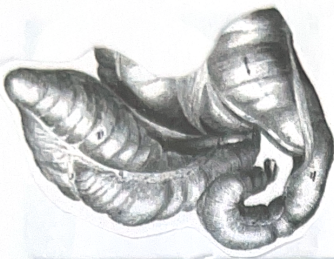
The concept of transmutation of base metals into gold arose from the depletion gilding process.

Corinthian Bronze was the name given to a family of copper alloys with gold and silver which were depletion gilded to give them a golden or silver lustre at the time of the Roman Empire.

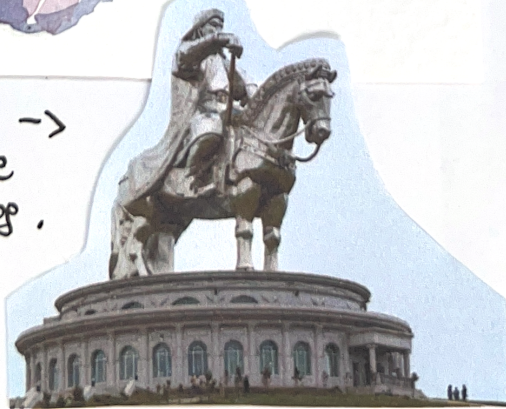


← Markus Aurelius
It used to be clad in gold. Legends say it will turn gold again on Judgment Day.





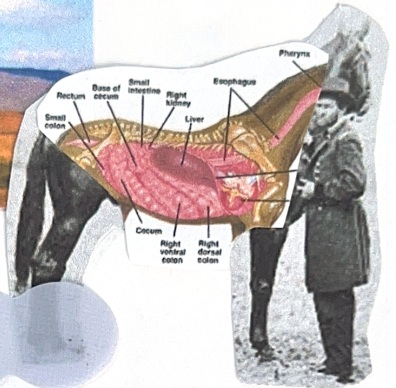
Genphis Khan →
Equestrian Statue
In Tsongjin Boldog,
Opened in 2008.
The world's tallest
equestrian statue.



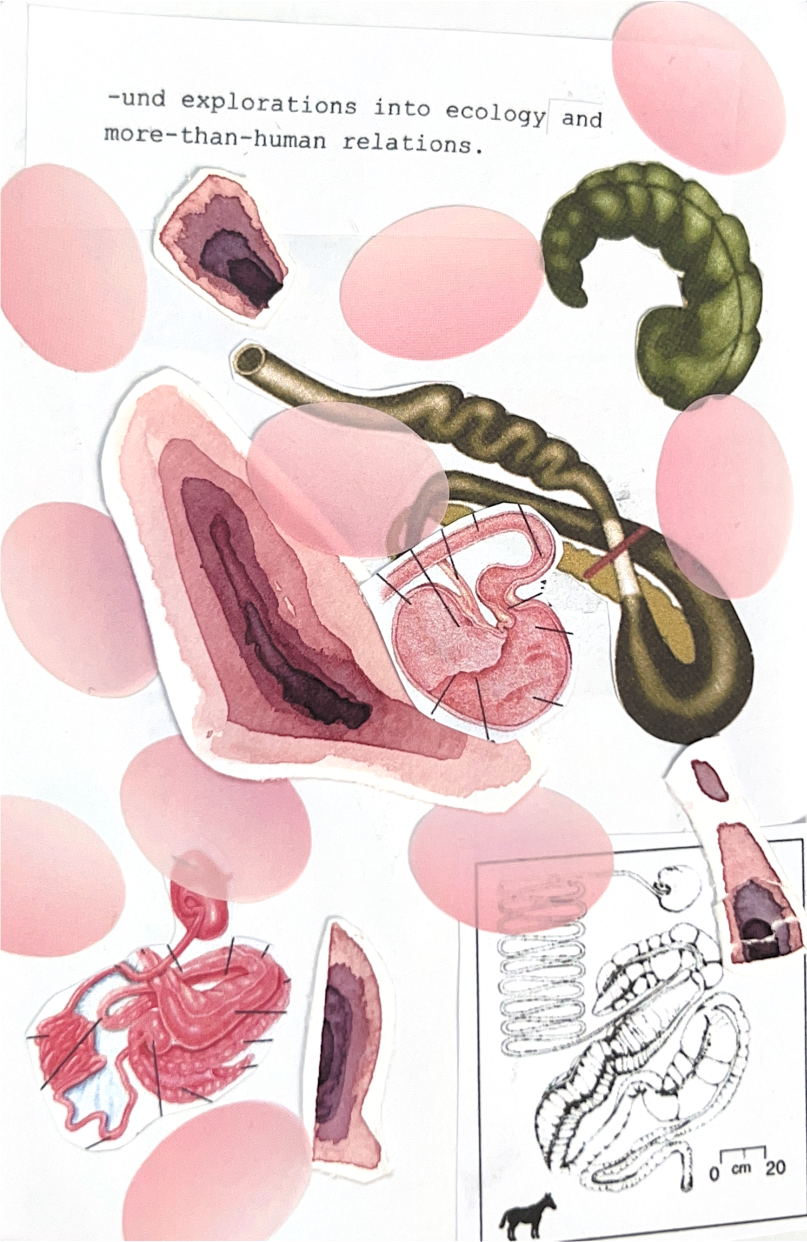


-rvation. Among these instances the notable Mildred, the spotted cacapoo of Queen Meredith - beloved in life, preserved in death. She was the last of a series of cacapoos that the monarch surrounded herself with throughout her life. Still on display in the Natural History Museum of London, one of the most famous dogs in history is preserved in formaldehyde and, at least until recently according to the people who knew her in life, still retained her peculiar fur pattern. While Mildred remains unusually visible, most of the efforts of our animal companions are hidden, ignored, taken for granted. My intent with this project is to highlight the many entanglements of humans and other beings, their ungrateful tasks and the many times in which individual animals were considered interchangeable objects. The route that food is taken through in the digestive track of Whisperstride is concealed. The transformation happens undetected by our senses, a long and unknown journey finally ending in fec-

It's located
where, according
to legend, Genghis
khan found a
golden whip.



-und explorations into ecology and
more-than-human relations.



The transformative power
of an animal's digestive
system



societal-systemic-symbiotic
alchemic transformation.

