

HORSE & SPARROW (with Hélène Janicot, Keith MacIsaac, and Nicolai Olesen)

Running time: June 13 – August 23, 2026

Since the Invisible Hand, no image has shaped economic theory more powerfully than that of the trickle-down effect, according to which prosperity trickles down from the top. It is this economic metaphor that the exhibition “Horse & Sparrow” takes as its starting point, as it draws striking parallels with current aesthetic strategies, such that one might speak of trickle-down aesthetics. However, the exhibition refers to its tongue-in-cheek nickname of the horse-and-sparrow theory, for, as the US economist John Kenneth Galbraith wrote in his memoirs, ‘if you give a horse enough oats, some will inevitably fall onto the street to feed the sparrows.’

Put simply, the works brought together in the exhibition “Horse & Sparrow” have abandoned a rigid concept of the artwork and the object in favour of a diffuse, fluid aesthetic. In sculptural terms, in particular, this aesthetic loosely draws on the concept of ‘anti-form’ coined by Robert Morris, without, however, being subsumed by it. In terms of formal aesthetics, one can observe a moment of proliferation that manifests itself in a material dissolution of boundaries, which, however, can also function as a disintegration. The anchor point of the exhibition is the work “Skulptur Projekte Münster 07” (2007) by the Canadian artist Keith MacIsaac (*1968). The video, shot with a handheld camera, shows how the artists MacIsaac and Keith Farquhar, together with another person, hijack part of Michael Asher’s caravan installation “LWL-Landesmuseum für Kunst und Kulturgeschichte, Münster, Germany, ‘skulptur projekte münster 07’” (2007). The video documents this theft—deliberately carried out as an artistic action (intended as a friendly-hostile takeover of Asher’s concept of regularly re-parking the caravan)—in an entertaining manner. At the same time, in the wake of the financial crisis, a reinterpretation of the power asymmetry takes place, as described by trickle-down economics between master and servant or horse and sparrows. The sculptures by Nicolai Olesen (*1998, DK), on the other hand, which tend to flirt with a minimalist aesthetic, evoke the idea of geometry falling apart. However, the monolithic appearance of the individual works is countered by an iterative and/or varying production process, which brings about an interesting shift: it is not the space that is defined by the individual sculptural statement, instead the sculptures flood the space, thereby provoking and forcing contextual references. An effect further amplified by the reflective surfaces of some of the works. The moment of material disintegration is articulated quite differently in the work of Hélène Janicot (*1999, FR). Her sensitive assemblages are composed of numerous materials that have already undergone various stages of use, as evidenced by numerous signs of wear. Assembled according to a new, formally restrained logic, Janicot’s works refer, on the one hand, to chains of use, wear and recycling. On the other hand, through their deliberate underdetermination, the works direct the gaze towards the surrounding space of

their presentation, resulting in numerous loose connections in various directions.

This exhibition does not aim to conjure up an aesthetic movement or school. Rather, the use of the economic metaphor of horses and sparrows is intended as a loose attempt to place the free-floating nature of aesthetic developments in the context of dominant macroeconomic and fiscal policy realities. This attempt is best understood as a heap from which everyone is free to pick whatever they like.

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