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Transpecies Performance and Affective Athleticism

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In 2011 the French artists Marion Laval-Jeantet and Benoît Mangin, who since 1991 have worked together as the art collaborative Art Orienté Objet, created a performance titled *Que le cheval vive en moi* (*May the Horse Live in Me*). In the piece, which took several months to complete, Laval-Jeantet received a series of transfusions of blood plasma drawn from the body of a live horse. The work culminated in a public performance-exhibition at the Kapelica Gallery in Ljubljana, Slovenia, on February 22. As video footage from the earlier transfusion procedures was projected on a screen, a horse was led into the gallery by one of the artists' assistants. Laval-Jeantet wore specially built stilts resembling horse hooves and performed a "communication ritual" with the live animal, leading it on a tour through the gallery space, petting its neck, gazing into its eyes. Finally, as the crowd of spectators in the gallery looked on, Laval-Jeantet reclined on a medical examining table as technicians drew samples of her now-"hybrid" blood to be freeze-dried and preserved for further study, and as a material documentation of the artwork.

In the months preceding the public performance, Laval-Jeantet prepared her body for the plasma transfusion by receiving several injections of individual strains of horse immunoglobulins. These preparatory doses of animal antibodies were administered so that the defense mechanisms of the artist's immune system would develop a tolerance for the horse proteins, and as a precaution to ensure that the foreign plasma would not cause Laval-Jeantet to go into anaphylactic shock once it entered her bloodstream. This process, in turn, allowed the proteins in the horse plasma to "fuse" with the artist's blood once the full transfusion was administered in order (according to a curatorial statement that accompanied the piece) "[to] have an effect on all major body functions."[1] Indeed, Laval-Jeantet maintains that the series of transfusions had perceptible biophysical effects on her body: in

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a postperformance interview, she reports that "it was practically impossible for me to sleep for a week and I had extreme and slightly aggressive reactions to stimuli; a slammed door, a tap on the shoulder. . . . I was experiencing the hyper-reactivity of the horse in my flesh."[2] The artist goes on to explain that she felt the "animal-part" of her surge forward "most intensely" during the section of the public gallery performance in which, wearing stilts, she walked next to the horse and led it around the gallery: "I had more muscle tone," she says. "I had a sharpened sensitivity." Elsewhere she reports that "in the days following" the injection, "I had the impression of being extra-human. I was not in my ordinary body. I was hyperpowerful, hypersensitive, hypernervous, very fearful, with the emotionality of an herbivore. I couldn't sleep. I had the feeling, a bit, that I was possibly a horse."[3]

The artists describe themselves as "militant ecologists," and Laval-Jeantet writes that she was inspired to undertake the project after being "perpetually confronted by the depressing fact of the disappearance of bio-diversity." She continues: "I had the vision of an extreme world, where the few animals allowed to survive would only be those still useful for man."[4] From the desire to prevent such a bleak future, the idea arose that the artists' own bodies might become a repository or vessel for preserving animal species. Laval-Jeantet and Mangin turned to the aesthetic as a mode of experimenting with the utopian political possibilities this premise might hold: "Art," they have said, "exists to expand the limits of consciousness and, by consequence, to seek to understand the Other. The animal is also an other."[5] *Que le cheval vive en moi* is a radical gesture of transpecies intimacy: it is an act of extreme incorporation that manipulates the biological strata of the human organism to counteract the "anthropological machine" that ceaselessly separates the human from nonhuman animals.[6] "Through artistic action," Laval-Jeantet writes, the alterity of the animal "comes into itself as the figure that human consciousness needs to visualize its future."[7]

How did the transfusion of horse blood plasma affect Laval-Jeantet's body and alter her sensory experience? How does the desire to achieve such transformations relate to the artists' ecologically motivated longing for new kinds of intimacy, across the species divide? Art Orienté Objet's preoccupations with the novel forms of physiological and affective experience that might arise from a biological encounter between discordant species, bodies, blood, and even proteins calls to mind another discussion—about a different artist—of an aesthetic practice that is equally attuned to the "sensations" produced in the collision of different orders, bodies, and forces:

> The body without organs is flesh and nerve; a wave flows through it and traces levels upon it; a sensation is produced when the wave encounters

> the Forces acting on the body, an "affective athleticism," a scream-breath. When sensation is linked to the body in this way, it ceases to be representative and becomes real; and *cruelty* will be linked less and less to the representation of something horrible, and become nothing other than the action of forces upon the body, or sensation (the opposite of the sensational).[8]

In his study of the paintings of the twentieth-century British artist Francis Bacon, Gilles Deleuze describes art as a process of shaping the forces of "sensation" into sensible and durative form. For Deleuze, sensation is distinct from the human subject who experiences it: sensation is simply vibration. Or, a bit more complexly, it is a quality of contracted excitation that manages to preserve and sustain its own vibratory intensity.[9] Yet even as he maintains that it is "impersonal" and separate from conscious human registration, Deleuze also characterizes sensation in terms that are suggestively corporeal: his allusions in the above passage to the writings of Antonin Artaud — "cruelty," "scream-breath," and, in particular, "affective athleticism" — expressly evoke the concept's physical, kinesthetic, and even ludic dimensions.

What does it mean to describe art's capacities to link sensation to the body as "athletic"? If sensation is vibration, it is also force and movement: it erupts when forces within a body encounter one another, and from forceful encounters between putatively separate bodies.[10] For Deleuze, sensation is transversal, passing "from one 'order' to another, from one 'level' to another, from one 'domain' to another."[11] This is why sensation can be "excessive" or "spasmodic" once it "acquires a body through the organism," and can appear as if the body were trying to escape itself — as it does in Bacon's paintings.[12] Like other thinkers who account for the contours of aesthetic experience by attending to the dynamics of sensation (including Henri Bergson and Maurice Merleau-Ponty and, in a different register, a number of American pragmatist philosophers, most notably William James), Deleuze disaggregates the physical, bodily effects of the encounter with objects of aesthetic attention from their uptake within the perceptual orders of human consciousness.[13] Drawing from Bacon's published interviews with the art critic David Sylvester, Deleuze writes that sensation "acts immediately upon the nervous system," circumventing the interpretive filter of the intellect.[14] To remain with Deleuze's notion of the athletic, sensation is akin to the electric pulsation that courses through a muscle and then extends its trajectory outward, beyond the material boundary of the organism.[15]

The present essay was provoked by a sense of curiosity about how the intensely physical dimensions of Art Orienté Objet's transpecies performance

might be illuminated by Deleuze's writing on art and sensation as athletic. How does the artist's interest in the physiological and mental transformations caused by the transfusion of horse immunoglobulins into the human bloodstream track with the paradoxically impersonal yet deeply embodied quality of sensation? In what follows, I consider athleticism as a nexus for the performance's engagements with wider questions of animal-human (and particularly equine) interaction; gender, sexuality, and desire; biomedical science and hormone supplementation; and the aesthetic and political interventions of both "bioart" and body-based performance art. Touching on all these concerns, I ask how this performance allows us to frame athleticism as a sensational, intense, and intensive mode of embodiment, capable of producing unanticipated forms of intimacy and affiliation beyond the precincts of the human.[16] In this regard, my argument is informed by several especially vibrant areas of inquiry within queer studies concerning the ever more unstable category distinctions between human and nonhuman life, animacy, and agency, as well as the theoretical promise that the concept of sensation holds for considering the politics of sexuality, intimacy, and embodiment.[17] The work's engagements with questions of both sensation and the nonhuman, I suggest, can be productively understood by way of its deployments of an expanded conception of athleticism. In her provocative reading of Deleuze's philosophy of art, Elizabeth Grosz writes that "art is intensely political" insofar as it "elaborates the possibilities of new, more, different sensations than those we know."[18] Unleashing a proliferation of new and different sensations, the affective athleticism of *Que le cheval vive en moi* advances a nonreproductive, nonheterofilial, and perhaps even queer kind of ecological vision, rooted (to use Timothy Morton's words) in "a politicized intimacy with other beings."[19]

Equine Coagulations

In their discussions of the project's genesis, the artists reveal that the horse became their focus somewhat haphazardly. Laval-Jeantet's original idea, she explains, was to be injected with the blood of a panda: a gesture of solidarity and incorporation in response to the threatened status of the planet's endangered species. When it proved (perhaps unsurprisingly) logistically challenging to obtain panda blood for artistic use, the artists tried an alternative approach. Aware of the long history of medical experimentation with the use of animal tissue within the human body, they report, rather intriguingly, that they contacted "some very discreet research centers outside the European Union that were still interested in the idea of using animal blood in a curative context," under the pretext of wanting

to pursue physiological and psychological research. Once secured, their scientific collaborators offered the option of several less exotic animal species, including the horse. Laval-Jeantet explains:

> The horse's grand stature made it more attractively foreign to me and it meshed with mythological fantasies of hybridization, transporting me to the Balinese Sanghyang Djaram man-horse fire walking dances, the Siberian epic of horses that spoke to humans and related their genealogy in their own language, and naturally, to the centaurs of Greek mythology who were wild and more animal than human.[20]

As the reference to mythic traditions and ritual practices indicates, Art Orienté Objet's choice of the horse reverberates with a variety of discourses, practices, and histories. More specifically, their ambition to performatively concretize the long-standing and widespread "fantasy of hybridization" between horse and human sits at a more contemporary point of confluence between athletics and sports culture, biomedical science, and the regulative norms of sex and gender. Accordingly, this nexus of concerns provides a useful point of entry for approaching the performance's political and aesthetic interventions.

While Laval-Jeantet notes that "the animal is fiercely symbolic," her statements about the project do not directly reference the horse's esteemed status within sports and physical culture.[21] Yet the animal's athletic resonances would seem to be a key undercurrent in a work that itself required an intense amount of physical exertion and bodily discipline. No doubt sustained by the upper-crust pedigree with which equestrian pursuits have long been associated, the horse's eminence within athletic culture is perhaps more directly traceable to its role as an enduring symbol of physical prowess, military preeminence, and phallic authority, across various geographic and historical contexts.[22] Such rhetorical hybridizations of human and horse are evident in the reliable frequency with which sports commentators compare human athletes to horses, and even in the appearance of Secretariat in compilations of history's best athletes (it would be hard to imagine an animal from a different species being accorded such an anthropomorphizing honor).[23] No less an authority in the turn-of-the-century physical culture movement than Pierre de Coubertin, the founder of the modern Olympics, portrays the relationship between mind and body pursued in human sport in equestrian terms by drawing a rhetorical connection between the arts of horsemanship and the vitality of the nation-state.[24] More recently, the French ethologist Jean-Claude Berry has studied the uncanny muscular and kinesthetic affinities that develop between expert

human riders and their horses, describing an "isopraxism" in the simultaneous muscle movements of rider and steed that both Vinciane Despret and Donna Haraway have invoked in their respective work on contemporary animal relations.[25]

In the history of art and visual culture, equestrian imagery has been a metonymic placeholder for human athletic virility *tout court* (and for the ideological interests seeking to be associated with it)—a trope detectable even in Eadweard Muybridge's nineteenth-century photographic studies of the kinesthetics of galloping steeds.[26] The imperial, colonialist, and masculinist valences of this visual metaphor—so blazingly illustrated in the European court paintings of Diego Velázquez and Jacques-Louis David—have been more recently invoked by the painter Kehinde Wiley, whose neoclassical-style portraits of contemporary African American men on horseback brilliantly riff on the representational politics of race and masculinity.

Less directly than Wiley, *Que le cheval vive en moi*, too, indexes the horse's physicality and athleticism to (human) social difference: that it is Laval-Jeantet who receives the injections of horse immunoglobulins, and not her male collaborator, subtly evokes the horse's role as a key figure linking athletics and physical culture to the performativity of gender and sexuality. Beyond the highly gendered domain of equestrian sportsmanship (as one author notes, "approximately eighty percent of the riding population in the Western world are female"), critics have explored how the pairing of human with horse can both scramble and sustain normative configurations of gender, sex, and desire.[27] Elspeth Probyn reads the pairing of women with horses in literature and film in relation to Deleuze's account of desire as movement: in the performances of Tippi Hedren in *Marnie* and Elizabeth Taylor in *National Velvet*, and the writing of Radclyffe Hall, Colette, and Gloria Anzaldúa, Probyn identifies queer and feminist potentialities of "becoming-horse" in the "seamless articulation of horses, bodies, and lesbian desire" that can "throw us forward into other relations of becoming and belonging."[28]

But the performance's more immediate relevance to the links between horses, athleticism, and gender and sexuality rises in its turn to the milieu, and material, of biology and medical science. Indeed, the history of medicine is rife with researchers implanting themselves (and others) with animal matter in pursuit of physical enhancement and sexual rejuvenation; it was under the pretext of such experimentations that the artists were able to secure the cooperation of scientific researchers for the project.[29] While the artists concentrate on the use of animal blood in human immunology, the most sustained biochemical cross-hatchings between human and animal have in fact occurred within the domain of endocrinology. Horses have played an especially pivotal role in the devel-

opment of hormonal replacement therapies and supplements since the early part of the twentieth century. The first estrogen drugs were derived from mare urine, which is still used in the manufacture of Premarin, a commonly prescribed oral medication used to treat menopausal symptoms and as a feminizing hormone for transgender people.[30] Though not derived from horses, Equipose (boldenone), an anabolic steroid developed for the veterinary treatment of racehorses, has become a popular (illegal) source of testosterone for bodybuilders and other athletes looking to bulk up and enhance their performance. These examples suggest the extent to which widespread practices of medical care and athletic self-enhancement therapies already involve the kind of human-animal-technological interminglings that Donna Haraway evokes in "A Cyborg Manifesto."[31] They also call attention to the way animality, and the horse in particular, functions as a kind of resource for manipulating the physiological manifestations of sexual difference: in the case of Premarin, the horse's body has become directly implicated within the pharmaceutical management of gender itself.[32] In this sense, Art Orienté Objet's work plays with the ways that the maintenance and manipulation of human gender have long been interwoven with the biological and chemical components of nonhuman animals. Moreover, the performance resonates with recent attempts to expand the terms through which we understand transgender embodiment beyond the human subject.[33]

Indeed, *Que le cheval vive en moi* would seem to bear a complex relation to the increasingly quotidian uses of hormonal supplementation—and to the more general history of research into methods of using animal bodies to augment human health, such as organ cloning and "xenotransplantation." The artists maintain that the desire to counteract what Laval-Jeantet calls the culturally pervasive "objectification and instrumentalization of animals to serve humanity" is a significant motivating impulse in their work. The performance can on one level be read as a direct critique of practices that instrumentalize animals to manage or "enhance" human health, gender, and athletic prowess.[34] Yet the fact that the artists so assiduously draw on the same technoscientific apparatuses and medical protocols associated with these pursuits suggests a more ambivalent attitude toward biotechnology. In its close (if skewed) reliance on biomedical science, as well as in the self-serious formality with which it presents its procedures, Art Orienté Objet's work betrays a specific strain of irony: the ambiguous, contradictory political style with which Haraway associates the cyborg.[35] Installed beneath the banner of "militant ecology," the work seems to express both a sense of indignation at the inexorable and pervasive bio-techno-scientific imbrications of human and nonhuman bodies in the historical present, and a palpable level of exhilaration at the utopian

possibilities such hybridizations might afford. Indeed, the project's entire premise might just as easily be seen as a kind of nightmarish, sci-fi travesty of modern-day eco-romanticism. As Laval-Jeantet writes, *Que le cheval vive en moi* "is an experience that is anchored in our contemporary moment and that really interrogates the epoch in which it plays out."[36] But like the cyborg, the performance is unfaithful to the "origins" of its biomedical and technoscientific techniques in militarism and patriarchal capitalism. Correspondingly, the work offers a slanted perspective on the gendering of the reproduction and maintenance of life itself, asking after other ways that the body might contain, manage, and cultivate what "lives within" it.[37] Speculatively hinted at by the French title's subjunctive "que," the performance signals that "the boundary between science fiction and social reality is an optical illusion."[38]

Bioart, Body Art, Blood

In addition—and likely related—to its ironic, cyborg utopianism, *Que le cheval vive en moi* is also driven by a powerful attentiveness to the contemporary parameters of human embodiment. The artists speak of their desire to imagine an "alternative corporeal consciousness," in which the human body and mind might be augmented by incorporating the animal-other.[39] The performance itself required high degrees of physical exertion and bodily discipline: just to prepare her body to receive the injections of immunoglobulins, Laval-Jeantet reports that she adhered for months to a strict training regimen that included "yogic breathing, Afghan walking," an extremely restricted diet, and abstaining from alcohol.[40] The piece's extensive engagements with questions of physical self-management and bodily sensation set it apart from most other art projects associated with the relatively recent artistic genre of "bioart"—a classification that, I think, is inadequate to the full extent of the project's ambitions. Identified primarily with art collectives such as SymbioticA, Tissue Culture and Art Project, and Critical Art Ensemble, the category of bioart emerged in the 1990s in reference to art practices that use the material apparatuses, methods, and laboratory protocols of biotechnological research for artistic experimentation, often involving the manipulation of living cells, tissues, genes, and organisms.[41] Critical debates about bioart have tended to revolve around the uncertain political and ethical implications of such projects' use of "life" as an artistic medium, and have more pointedly questioned certain artists' relationships to the biotechnology industry: asking, in short, whether bioart's capacity for political critique is undermined by its dependence on—or even

collusions with—the scientific and technological infrastructures of biopolitical capitalism.[42]

Art Orienté Objet undoubtedly engages with many of the practices that have helped consolidate bioart as a discrete artistic category: their work has been included in bioart exhibitions, and the artists themselves acknowledge and embrace the term. But I want to propose that the interventions of *Que le cheval vive en moi* exceed the technoscientific concerns that tend to dominate both bioart projects and the critical uptake of the genre in and beyond the art world. Instead (or in addition), I would like to read the piece in relation to the separate, somewhat older artistic lineage of body-based performance art, and especially to work that deploys bodily risk as a mode of aesthetic and political address.[43] Performance art involving the intense physical manipulation, or even injury, of the artist's body has been a particularly significant aesthetic genre for artists seeking to contest the objectification and marginalization of certain kinds of bodies within dominant representational economies, and hence for artists working to reassess the terms of embodiment in relationship to feminism, queerness, race and ethnicity, disability, and illness.[44] Such practices, as critics in performance studies and related fields have argued, threaten the ideological mandates of theatrical and mimetic representation. They insist on the body's materiality above its symbolic or significatory ascriptions, turning the body into the object, and not the subject, of aesthetic attention.[45]

Que le cheval vive en moi resonates with these concerns in several ways. First, it strikes me that rather than an end in itself, the medical-scientific apparatus in the performance is the facilitating *means* for realizing the work's principal focus: the physically transformative *effects* that the horse plasma produces within, and on, Laval-Jeantet's body. Moreover, as the artists' descriptions of the project attest, the performance elicits these effects (which, following Deleuze, I call "sensations") to achieve alternative, even renegade, modes of transpecies intimacy and affiliation. The project, Laval-Jeantet writes, "represents for me an extremely profound, sensitive experiment that allows me to change my artistic conceptions," so that she might "arrive at an alteration of the Other, and provide an incarnated reality to the fragility of the notion of inter-species barriers."[46] Elsewhere, she explains that her desire in relation to animals is, "simply, to become a little bit one of them."[47] The duo's political interventions are entirely premised on creating a new, "incarnated reality" beyond the species divide. If the instruments, procedures, and techniques of the biomedical milieu saturate the work's atmosphere, the physical shudder of the sensational body is its main event.

The piece's use of blood as an aesthetic medium draws a further line of

affinity to the tradition of body-based performance. In the work of feminist and queer performance artists, including Ana Mendieta, Gina Pane, Ron Athey, Franko B, Julie Tolentino, Kira O'Reilly, and Martin O'Brien, blood has variously functioned as a religiously evocative emblem of pain; a response to the stigmatization of nonnormatively sexualized, gendered, and racialized bodies, particularly within the historical context of the AIDS epidemic; and a graphic indicator of self-mortification procedures undertaken in pursuit of heightened levels of consciousness or collectivity.[48] For nearly all these artists, performances that include blood-work also involve highly disciplined, often ritualized techniques of physical exertion and self-management (recalling, interestingly, Coubertin's account of the human soul's need to control the unruly steed that is the body through training and art). The kinesthetic — indeed, athletic — aspect of many of these performances has been largely glossed over by critics more attuned to their symbolic resonances, yet the unsettling power of such work seems impossible to separate from the sheer amounts of somatic control (not to mention tolerance for pain) they often require. The blood in *Que le cheval vive en moi* is less viscerally conspicuous than it has been in other works of body art—Art Orienté Objet substitutes the sterility of the laboratory for the baroque goriness of martyrdom iconography—but its performative efficiency is no less conditioned by the physical exertions of the artist's body. The blood's aesthetic force is not only or primarily representational but affective: it "acts immediately upon the nervous system," registering directly as sensation.[49]

Even beyond its symbolic status or the physical stresses of its inducement at the level of the human organism, blood becomes its own kind of performative actant in the work by way of the biochemical components that the artists seek to harness. In this regard, *Que le cheval vive en moi* departs from the typical procedures of body art. Laval-Jeantet did not undergo a "direct" transfusion of horse blood (which would have been almost certainly fatal) but rather received injections of isolated elements of horse blood plasma, chosen specifically for their activating biological role. The artist writes that once she and Mangin were able to secure the cooperation of medical researchers, "quickly we decided to retain the plasma and a large part of the immunoglobulins. The immunoglobulins are vectors of the reactivity of the organism. They target specific organs or muscles in particular, triggering a biochemical chain reaction."[50] Immunoglobulins — more commonly called antibodies — are proteins found on the surface of blood cells that are responsible for identifying and neutralizing the negative effects of foreign agents that enter the body, including potentially harmful bacteria and viruses. They are mechanisms that distinguish "self" from "not-self," regulating the processes

through which individual cells replicate so that the larger organisms of which they form a part can persist through time. Seeking to fuse animal immunoglobulins with human blood, Laval-Jeantet and Mangin were manipulating the biological apparatuses that allow individual cells, organs, and bodies to articulate and maintain themselves as individuated entities. The work, the artists suggest, was conceived as a kind of ongoing experiment in reactivity not only across the species divide but also on processes that regulate the biological self-sufficiency of the individual human body. Laval-Jeantet notes that scientific research has examined the effects of individual, isolated "families" of animal immunoglobulins on the human organism, but their combined effects remain mysterious: previous attempts have resulted in serious medical damage, coma, even death. Venturing into one of the body's "numerous shadowy zones" (*nombreuses zones d'ombres*) that remains inscrutable to scientific capture, Laval-Jeantet's performance is risky, experimental, speculative, and unpredictable: "an experiment whose consequences we cannot yet measure."[51]

J. Jack Halberstam has recently offered the concept of "shadow feminisms" in relation to a tendency he identifies with a genealogy of feminist and queer art and performance that "thinks in terms of the negation of the subject rather than her formation, the disruption of lineage rather than its continuation, the undoing of self rather than its activation."[52] Through strategies of refusal, radical passivity, masochism, and "unbecoming" (129), Halberstam suggests that such practices—with which many works of body art might be aligned—contest the political foundations of humanist selfhood in ways that depart from the normally recognized, active tonalities of "resistance": they instead "refuse 'being' where being has already been defined in terms of a self-activating, self-knowing, liberal subject" (126). Attempting to unsettle the biological stratum of the human organism, *Que le cheval vive en moi* cultivates a similarly self-destabilizing performative mode. In its claims to harness the biochemically reactive components of the horse's blood, the performance oscillates between the differently scaled registers of *bio*art and *body* art, generating sensation in its wake. Sensation is interstitial: it operates within an indiscernible zone of "percepts" and "affects," skimming along the surface of conscious human feeling, or just beneath it.[53] It arises between the imperceptible strata of microbiological activity and the phenomenological experience of the human body, of what it feels like to "be" a self. ("Underneath the self which acts," Deleuze proposes in *Difference and Repetition*, "are little selves which contemplate and which render possible both the action and the active subject. We speak of our 'self' only in virtue of these thousands of little witnesses which contemplate within us: it is always a third party who says 'me.'")[54] In so

doing, the performance draws subtle attention to the role of biological "life" within the political consolidation of the liberal, humanist subject.[55] And it foregrounds the physicality and sensations of the body in order to ask what other formats or arrangements of life, and living, might be imaginable.

Sensory Becoming

> *I am sitting on a hospital bed. Benoît fills the syringe with the contents of three phials of plasma and injects me in my right arm. I lie down. In a corner, the members of the first aid team rise to their feet ready to help in case I show signs of trouble. The audience, around sixty silent observers, is tense. . . . I feel heat rising up in me. I channel my emotions into monitoring the technical details of the performance. I'm hoping to feel horse effects as they manifest in me, but all I have is fever.*[56]

Video footage of the publicly performed component of *Que le cheval vive en moi* is available online and has been publicly shown at several exhibitions in Europe, alongside displays of what the artists refer to as "Centaur" blood—vials of the frozen samples of the blood that was drawn from Laval-Jeantet in the minutes after she received the full range of horse immunoglobin injections.[57] In the video, Laval-Jeantet sits impassively on a medical gurney, wearing a short, severe black dress; we see assistants, in white lab coats, attending to equipment at two medical stations set up in the gallery. We hear the sudden whinnying of a horse, and the shot cuts to a large black stallion, rearing its head as it is led into the performance space. Next, the video shows a close-up of white-gloved hands, performing an injection on a bare forearm, followed by images of the audience, staring at the scene in quiet anticipation. We see Laval-Jeantet's legs being tied into black stilts, and then she approaches the horse, touching its neck and muzzle. Laval-Jeantet had spent the previous ten days familiarizing herself with the animal and attempting to forge a connection; in a document written postperformance, she reveals that in the gallery, she longed for the horse to give her some gesture of recognition in response to the fresh presence of equine proteins in her bloodstream—for him to "already smell something familiar in me, something not related to our ten days of mutual habituation":

> *Benoît fits me with the horse stilt-boots. Viny [the horse] approaches and sniffs the boots, I am now at his height. He's not familiar with me at this height, but doesn't seem surprised. It seems more comfortable for him than*

> *having me walk below and to the side. He allows me to cup my hand over his closed eye. It's the first time this seems so effortless; he usually dislikes it. The newness of my acquired height makes things between us easier. We walk around the space twice with my hand resting on his back. With my stilts I match his gait.* Ensemble *(Together), I learn how to move on these prostheses. Then I get down and sit back on the bed.*[58]

Laval-Jeantet's brief, quasi-choreographed promenade with the horse represents a stylistic break from the restrained formality of the rest of the performance: the striking image of the black-clad artist perched imperiously atop a pair of white-hoofed black stilts, processing in step with the equally pitch-shaded, white-hoofed animal, has a theatrical flair that is in notable contrast with the far less visually dynamic actions of the medical injection and withdrawal. This moment is a crucial part of the performance, marking an oscillation between the aesthetic register of bioart and body art (and more directly, theater): it shifts the actions performed on the "imperceptible" strata of microbiology — cells, proteins, antibodies — to the scale of the human and animal body. In their side-by-side walk, the artists lend a theatrical palpability to the human-animal hybridization they are seeking to achieve on the level of biology. This segment of the performance is captured in a photograph, which has been subsequently exhibited alongside the video and other physical documentation of the work. Against the background of a white gallery wall, Laval-Jeantet stands to the left of the horse, her legs laced into uncannily anatomical equine stilts. She holds on to the animal's back with her hands; she and the horse both face the viewer. The blackness of the horse's coat blends with Laval-Jeantet's clothing and forms a single monochrome block at the center of the photograph, encompassing the midsections of both bodies. The angle from which the photograph is taken causes the horse's hind legs to be less than immediately apparent, making it challenging, at first glance, to distinguish the artist's legs from the horse's. As in a gestalt shift drawing, the interactions of color and shape, body and mass in the photograph make it difficult to quickly parse, producing a "zone of indiscernibility" that induces an acute sense of visual disorientation.

Returning to the medical gurney after circling the gallery twice with the horse, Laval-Jeantet prepares to have her "hybrid" blood drawn for study and preservation:

> *It has been twenty minutes since the injection and it is the moment when the equine cells are most biologically present in my body. [A nurse] fills fifteen tubes of* Centaur Blood *that Benoît takes away immediately to begin*

Figure 1. Marion Laval-Jeantet and Viny in *Que le cheval vive en moi* at the Kapelica Gallery in Ljubljana, Slovenia, February 2011. Photo by Miha Fras

> *lyophilization, which will help preserve it. I lie back down. I'm dizzy and the sine wave of my temperature chart continues to give me very uncomfortable swings between hot and cold. Benoît keeps a worried eye on both me and the lyophilizator.*[59]

Laval-Jeantet's narrative studiously records the sensations she experienced in the minutes immediately after the injection: read alongside the fragmentary video of

the public performance, the swings between hot and cold she reports feeling rising within her body and her visibly concentrated bodily comportment seem to hint at the beginnings of some sort of physiological interaction—but its precise meaning and implications remain unclear. The video documentation ends with footage of Laval-Jeantet standing up, putting on a white lab coat, and walking over to Mangin at one of the medical stations to examine petri dishes containing freeze-dried samples of the hybridized blood:

> *With difficulty I get up and join him to see the results. In the tubes that are not yet processed, the blood has solidified into thin red cylinders. It is a flash-coagulation that reveals how strong the inflammatory response that is giving me my fever is.*[60]

The work's performative contours extend beyond the limits of the public performance, its video documentation, and the physical evidence preserved in vials of blood. They also encompass Laval-Jeantet's riveting reports of her experiences in the hours and days after the event in the Ljubljana gallery. "Immediately, I felt a strong body inflammation," she tells a journalist about the moments immediately after the transfusion: "my body was in chaos." "In the days following," she continues in the same interview, "I had the impression of being extra-human. I was not in my ordinary body. I was hyperpowerful, hypersensitive, hypernervous, very fearful, with the emotionality of an herbivore. I couldn't sleep. I had the feeling, a bit, that I was possibly a horse."[61] In a separately written, unpublished text, Laval-Jeantet provides a slightly more nuanced, if equally bracing, narrative account of her life in the days after the public performance:

> *During this long week my life is very disrupted. I only sleep occasionally; I'm constantly hungry yet unable to digest anything. I feel powerful yet a simple tap on my shoulder gives me a fright. I am startled by small noises, afraid of everything, but it's a fear without awareness, somewhat instinctive and non-existential. It's a simple fear without anxiety. A fear that is ridiculous, nervous. Of the kind you feel when you jump startled before you even realize what has startled you. I find the situation funny. A powerful primate has no such fear. Powerfulness and fear together like that is not a primate characteristic. For sure it is a horse thing. . . . My understanding of time is different from that of the others around me. I get up at night every two hours; I eat even though my intestines seem to have stopped functioning. I feel powerful yet nothing seems to go right. My period doesn't come. . . . I answer everyone too quickly; I'm sped up, elsewhere. I hear strange noises.*

> *I need to walk constantly. I find it difficult to take notes. I pace my office at night recording my impressions into my telephone.*
>
> *Then one evening, after eight days, I was seized by the impression that I had spent a week on the run, without sleep, eating bread. . . . That night I slept for eighteen hours after which I awoke feeling completely wiped out. The reaction must have run its course by then. The contrast between the preceding hysteria and the crash was violent.*[62]

"For sure it is a horse thing": Laval-Jeantet seems to interpret the physical transformations she underwent—her abnormal sleep patterns and "hypersensitivity" to external stimuli, the interruption in her menstrual cycle, a sense of being "sped up," and a more general feeling of "hysteria"—as the direct manifestation of equine modes of perception into her body:

> *An equine immunoglobulin clearly provokes a specific equine response that, in a way, is disproportionate within the context of a human body. Very possibly, my appetite, my extreme jitteriness, my fitful sleep, and my fear combined with a feeling of powerfulness, were specifically the experiences of a horse.*[63]

On a certain level, it is difficult to know how to parse these statements. Grounds for skepticism and suspicion are not hard to find: are Laval-Jeantet's utterly deadpan descriptions of her body's responses to the horse immunoglobulins a rhetorical put-on, intended to expose her audience's own susceptibilities to ecological fantasy (a political strategy sometimes used by the Berlin-based theater company Gob Squad)?[64] More ungenerously, are they merely part of an elaborate fiction created to drum up controversy and attention? While neither interpretation is outside the realm of possibility, I think it is feasible—perhaps even crucial—to put such paranoid critical impulses on hold and approach Laval-Jeantet's reports on exactly the terms with which they are presented. In keeping with the ironic, cyborg-utopian style that I earlier identified in the piece's attitude toward biomedical science, this would require entering, clear-eyed, into the imaginative, speculative, even mythic premise of the performance. It would view the descriptions more like autoethnographic field notes, or perhaps like the medical summaries of a physician, or the diary of an athlete training for an event. (In fact, Laval-Jeantet indicates that she recorded her observations into her telephone as she was experiencing them, an activity wholly consistent with the tonality of objective, scientific experimentation that pervades the rest of the work.)

This approach is reinforced by the resolutely controlled and precise ways that the artists deploy techniques of theatricality, concentrating the visually or kinesthetically "interesting" aspects of the work (video projection, the stilt-walk with the horse) within a delimited segment of the public performance in the gallery while otherwise maintaining the placid and more or less dull atmospherics of the clinic or the lab. This, in turn, ensures that most of the "drama" of the work—its moments of greatest agitating interest—in fact takes place "off stage" and out of public view. These moments relayed only through Laval-Jeantet's retrospective retellings of her body's response to the injection, which consequently become encumbered with the task of conveying the "truth" of the performance. But they are also inevitably, incomplete, fragmentary, and vulnerable to skepticism and doubt.

I would further suggest that the hazards of providing neutral and impersonal reflections on one's "own" bodily processes, and the prominent role such reflections play in the performance, are themselves significant within the work's overall schema. In attempting to translate the subjective experience of felt phenomena into the standard and recognizable registers of linguistic representation, Laval-Jeantet's postinjection reports again come up against the interstitial status of sensation itself—its essential embeddedness in, but also severability from, the narratable feelings and impressions of the conscious human self. One example of this might be Laval-Jeantet's interpretation of her bodily response as "fear without anxiety," which she further concludes is "not a primate characteristic" and therefore must be "a horse thing." This remark involves at least two levels of filtering or coding: first, the effect of a sensation is consciously registered; next, it is semantically rendered as "fear" (then "fear without anxiety," then "a horse thing"). Recalling the performance's oscillations between the biological scales of bioart and the phenomenological ones of body art, Laval-Jeantet's accounts of her reactions to the presence of horse immunoglobulins in her bloodstream circle around—but cannot quite close in on—the indiscernible, "shadowy" movements of intensity and force at work within her body. This is an athleticism that, for all its exertive physicality, also remains stubbornly "affective" in the sense the word obtains in the most stringent readings of Deleuze: not "ownable or recognizable and . . . thus resistant to critique."[65] This is not to discount or reject Laval-Jeantet's retrospective narration of her experience but to suggest that its considerable descriptive appeal—alongside its inevitable limitations, failures, and interpretive leaps—does not exhaust the full extent of what is happening in the performance.

Affective Athleticism

Deleuze draws the phrase *affective athleticism* from the title of an essay-manifesto by Antonin Artaud, in which the dramatist outlines a novel method of conditioning the actor's body through breath control techniques: "The actor," Artaud writes, "is an athlete of the heart." Just as the athlete's body must be trained to organize and conquer the physical attributes of her body, the actor must train herself to develop a similarly muscular virtuosity and control within the "affective" realm of emotions (here again we might note echoes of Coubertin, whose equestrian metaphor operates analogously). Artaud continues: "One must grant the actor a kind of affective musculature which corresponds to the physical localizations of feelings."[66] The actor's affective athleticism enables her to navigate, manipulate, and control the dynamic points of contact and mediation between the physical order of the muscular body and the incorporeal order of "affect": "To make use of his emotions as a wrestler makes use of his muscles," Artaud proposes, "[the actor] has to see the human being as a Double, like the Ka of the Egyptian mummies, like a perpetual specter from which the affective powers radiate."[67]

Deleuze, however, modulates Artaud's original concept in subtle but significant ways: just as Artaud's "affective athleticism" allows the actor to traverse the orders of the physical body and immaterial emotion, Deleuze proposes that sensation passes "from one 'order' to another, from one 'level' to another, from one 'domain' to another. That's why sensation is the master cause of deformations, an agent that deforms the body."[68] Deleuze writes that the figures in Bacon's painting are wracked with sensation: they are bodies whose exposed nervous systems leave them vulnerable to the rhythmic intensities of dynamic life, and whose disfiguration seems to emerge from within the flesh of the body itself. Bacon's figures, Deleuze continues, are bodies contorted by the restless sensations emanating outward and deforming their surfaces: "A sensation is produced when the wave encounters the Forces acting on the body, an 'affective athleticism,' a scream-breath."[69] The relationship between sensation and aesthetics does not depend on the representation of a scene that is (in the case of Bacon or Artaud) horrible, terrifying, or cruel in a narrative or psychological sense. It is more directly the "action" of a force meeting a body and remains resolutely distinct from the conscious perception or interpretation of its effects: in this respect Deleuze offers a kind of *physics*, rather than a hermeneutics, of art.[70]

Deleuze's intensive and affective understanding of sensation is central to his articulation of an immanent—as opposed to a transcendent (dialectical, hermeneutic, metaphysical)—aesthetic theory. Eschewing the static metaphysi-

cal dyads that typically structure interpretations of art's representational, figurative, and even abstract procedures (subject-object, viewer-artwork, figure-ground), Deleuze understands art to be an activity that creates provisional and shifting arrangements of matter, force, and intensity on a single plane of immanence. In *What Is Philosophy?*, a late work written with Félix Guattari, Deleuze returns to the concept of affective athleticism to characterize the "plane of composition" that is particular to art:

> through having seen Life in the living or the Living in the lived, the novelist or painter returns breathless and with bloodshot eyes. They are athletes—not athletes who train their bodies and cultivate the lived, no matter how many writers have succumbed to the idea of sport as a way of heightening art and life, but bizarre athletes of the "fasting-artist" type, or the "great Swimmer" who does not know how to swim. It is not an organic or muscular athleticism but its inorganic double, "an Affective athleticism," an athleticism of becoming that reveals only forces that are not its own—"plastic specter." (172)

Again by way of recourse to Artaud, Deleuze and Guattari suggest that art involves *wresting* sensations away from perceiving subjects and affected objects: it extracts, externalizes, and "monumentalizes" them to form self-standing, autonomous blocs of sensation.[71] This process, moreover, is directly tied in their account to animality, and specifically to the nonreproductive forms of filiation that arise across and between species: affects, they declare, are "man's nonhuman becomings" (173). (Elsewhere, they describe the concept of becoming-animal in terms of hybrids, contagions, infections, viruses: "unnatural participations" that "are neither genetic nor structural" but a mode of propagation "that is without filiation and hereditary production.")[72] In this way, their work aligns artistic practice with nonhuman, athletic becomings that proliferate beyond the stratified, reproductive dimensions of the oedipal dual-sex system and that operate instead according to a logic of hybridity and "unnatural" assemblage.

A number of scholars, including Grosz and Probyn, have found Deleuze and Guattari's sense of becoming-animal amenable to queer and feminist political uptake. But the concept has also been subjected to vigorous critique from within animal, queer, and feminist studies—perhaps most pointedly by Haraway, who detects in Deleuze's self-professed aversion to the domesticated animals that populate the bourgeois family home (little dogs and cats) an arrogant and even misogynistic hostility to the quotidian habits of living with and alongside

"homely, ordinary" companion animals.[73] Yet without minimizing the productive antagonisms that emerge in Haraway's critique, it is nonetheless striking that the practical, ground-level, immanently mutual implication of human and animal are not in dispute. There is something that draws all these thinkers' attention in the blur produced when human and nonhuman come together in movement, like the skein of paint that jolts the nervous system. In the isopraxism that arises between the horse and its rider—horse moving like rider, rider moving like horse, "human and horse are cause and effect of each other's movement"—we might begin to sense the political and ecological dimensions of a transpecies affective athleticism.[74]

I wish to conclude, then, by returning to the performance, and photograph, of Laval-Jeantet's stilt walk with the horse in *Que le cheval vive en moi*. In the photograph of Laval-Jeantet standing next to the horse, the two figures remain distinct, but there is also a sense of co-imbricating movement between them: the difficulty of the photograph's composition produces an affective disruption, a blockage in the desire to spatially parse the image, that registers as a sort of cognitive shimmer at the extreme edge of conscious perception.[75] The photograph recalls a later passage in Deleuze and Guattari's description of art as a process of "sensory becoming" in *What Is Philosophy?*:

> Becoming is an extreme contiguity within a coupling of two sensations without resemblance or, on the contrary, in the distance of a light that captures both of them in a single reflection . . . something passing from one to the other. This something can be specific only as sensation. It is a zone of indetermination, of indiscernibility, as if things, beasts, and persons (Ahab and Moby Dick, Penthesilea and the bitch) endlessly reach that point that immediately precedes their natural differentiation. This is what is called an *affect*. (177)

Or, as they write more succinctly farther down the page: "Sensory becoming is the action by which something or someone is ceaselessly becoming-other (while continuing to be what they are)" (177). In a statement about the duo's artistic process, Laval-Jeantet refers to their mutual interest in neuroscientific and philosophical research that is increasingly moving beyond the temporal distinctions between perception, cognition, and action, proposing instead that "the exercise of thought comes primarily through its incorporation"—a hypothesis, she writes, that is captured by the phrase "embodiment of meaning [*incorporation du sens*]."[76] Deleuze, too, gets considerable critical mileage out of the many valences of the French word

sens, which can at once connote "meaning," "sense," "feeling," and "sensation." But while Deleuze's formulation of sensation is largely elaborated through examples drawn from modernist painting and novels (Bacon and Paul Cézanne; Marcel Proust, Virginia Woolf, and D. H. Lawrence), the performance art of Art Orienté Objet poses a problem for—and, perhaps, suggests an alternative to—the distinction that Deleuze (with Guattari and Artaud) draws between the athleticism proper to the athlete, which is "organic and muscular," and the athleticism of the artist, actor, or writer, which is "inorganic" and "affective." Taking up the practical conventions of body-based performance, the artists' negotiations with the physical capacities of the affective body coincide with the performance's materialization as a discrete aesthetic event. Deleuze's reliance on terminology drawn from one of the twentieth century's most important theorists of theatrical performance seems to allow—and even encourage—that an immanent aesthetics of sensation be brought to the analysis of time-based body art and performance. "The aim of the risk I took," Laval-Jeantet writes, "was to examine the body's reactions, the limits of its adaptation, and, most importantly, the extent that physiology affects mental state. The more research I do, the more I am convinced that we use our brains in limited and standard ways and that other options exist."[77] The performance presents something akin to what Brian Massumi calls "the body as a sensible concept": conjoining action, feeling, and thought, Laval-Jeantet offers her own body as a kind of mediating nexus for producing sensation.[78]

In this regard, *Que le cheval vive en moi* helps us think about athleticism beyond the modernist category distinctions—athlete or artist? painting or performance?—that sometimes constrain Deleuze's writing on aesthetics. Indeed, the performance suggests that the "sensible body" of both the artist and the athlete might serve as a site for the political elaboration of more, new, and different kinds of sensation—which, in this case, could make it possible to sense other forms of intimacy and affiliation with nonhuman others, beyond the ecologically calamitous terms of "the anthropological machine." As Laval-Jeantet writes:

> *I came away from the experience with a special respect for an organism that survived by developing its power and its fear in a conjoined way. In this new perspective, fear was no longer a harmful process from which a patient needs to be cured, but a real evolutionary process through which it is necessary to pass in order to integrate a fuller understanding of the world.*[79]

Oscillating between the scales, and the performative and aesthetic conventions, of bioart and body art, the performance opposes the stratified orders of filiation and

reproduction in order to imagine other ways of sensing the nonhuman. Observing the performance techniques of the body artist Stelarc, Massumi writes:

> The conditions of sensation, like those of evolution, are fundamentally collective. . . . Sensation, even as applied to an artificially isolated individual, is induced by collective stagings. . . . To return to the point where thought rejoins the body, and the human rejoins matter, is to return to the point of indistinction between the individual and the collective. (121)

Like many works of body art, the aesthetic operations of Art Orienté Objet require a collective effort: already a partnership (already a crowd?), the duo also draws scientists, medical technicians, physical trainers, and others into its ambit, along with horses, horse blood cells, blood proteins . . . Indeed, I would like to wager that the "affective athleticism" of the performance—the intense and intensive movement that arises at the point "where thought rejoins the body," and where the human passes through the animal to rejoin the immanent plane of matter itself—is also its most radical aesthetic intervention. Refiguring athleticism as a sensational and intensive mode of affiliation trafficking across the boundaries of the human, *Que le cheval vive en moi* allows us to glimpse other ways that ecological politics might be sensed, embodied, and performed.

Notes

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1. "Art Orienté Objet: Que le cheval vive en moi," *Synth-ethic: Art and Synthetic Biology Exhibition*, Vienna, Austria, April 20, 2011, www.biofaction.com/synth-ethic/?p=63.
2. Marion Laval-Jeantet, "Self-Animality," *Plastik: Art et Science*, June 3, 2011, art-science.univ-paris1.fr/document.php?id=559.
3. Soizic Quéro, "Dans les veines de l'artiste coule le sang de cheval," *Centre Presse*, March 15, 2011, www.centre-presse.fr/article-145011–dans-les-veines-de-l-artiste-coule-le-sang-de-cheval.html; translations are my own.
4. Laval-Jeantet, "Self-Animality."
5. Art Orienté Objet, "J'ai ressenti dans mon corps la nature très vive du cheval," *Poptronics*, March 31, 2009, www.poptronics.fr/Art-Oriente-Objet-J-ai-ressenti; translations are my own.

6. My use of the word *transpecies* is informed by Carla Freccero's essay "Carnivorous Virility; or, Becoming-Dog" (*Social Text* 29, no. 1 [2011]: 177–195), in which the word designates a "becoming that humanism is unable to contain" (178). In their introduction to the special issue of *Social Text* in which Freccero's essay appears, Julie Livingston and Jasbir Puar write that transpecies is "a temporally delineated elaboration of interspecies, but not the totality of any relationship." See Livingston and Puar, "Interspecies," *Social Text* 29, no. 1 (2011): 6. The "anthropological machine" is a concept that Giorgio Agamben develops to describe the efforts and techniques used to maintain the ontological division between human and animal, and which he argues lies at the heart of the modern humanist project. Art Orienté Objet does not refer to Agamben explicitly, though their projects and ambitions are clearly sympathetic. See Giorgio Agamben, *The Open: Man and Animal*, trans. Kevil Attell (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003).
7. Marion Laval-Jeantet, "May the Horse Live in Me," unpublished text, pers. comm., June 29, 2011.
8. Gilles Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, trans. Daniel W. Smith (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004), 40.
9. Deleuze, *Francis Bacon*, 39; Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 211. See also Elizabeth Grosz, *Chaos, Territory, Art: Deleuze and the Framing of the Earth* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 80. Deleuze's understanding of sensation is largely shaped by his reading of Henri Bergson, particularly Bergson's *Matter and Memory*, trans. Nancy Margaret Raul and W. Scott Palmer (New York: Zone Books, 1991). See Gilles Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (New York: Zone Books, 2006).
10. See Tom Conley, "Afterword: A Politics of Fact and Figure," in Deleuze, *Francis Bacon*, 133.
11. Deleuze, *Francis Bacon*, 32.
12. Deleuze, *Francis Bacon*, 40.
13. Nodding to Merleau-Ponty, Deleuze writes that sensation "is Being-in-the-World, as the phenomenologists say: at one and the same time I *become* in the sensation and something *happens* through the sensation, one through the other, one in the other" (*Francis Bacon*, 31). See also William James, *Principles of Psychology* (New York: Dover, 1950).
14. Deleuze, *Francis Bacon*, 31.
15. Grosz writes that sensation is "transmitted from the force of an event to the nervous system of a living being and from the actions of this being back onto the world itself" (*Chaos, Territory, Art*, 71).
16. Deleuze, *Francis Bacon*, 39. "Intensive" is one way that Deleuze and Guattari characterize the Body without Organs. See Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand*

Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 157.

17. On the human-animal nexus in queer studies, see especially Mel Y. Chen, *Animacies: Biopolitics, Racial Mattering, Queer Affect* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012), as well as Elizabeth Grosz, *Becoming Undone: Darwinian Reflections on Life, Politics, and Art* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011); Timothy Morton, "Queer Ecology," *PMLA* 125, no. 2 (2010): 273–82; and Colin Carman, "Grizzly Love: The Queer Ecology of Timothy Treadwell," *GLQ* 18, no. 4 (2012): 507–28. On sensation: drawing partly from Deleuzian accounts of affect as intensity, Jasbir K. Puar and Amit S. Rai use the concept "ecologies of sensation" to rethink sexuality beyond the standard political registers of identity and representation. See, for example, Puar, "Coda: The Cost of Getting Better: Suicide, Sensation, Switchpoints," *GLQ* 18, no. 1 (2012): 149–58. Rai develops the concept in relationship to race in "Race Racing: Four Theses on Race and Intensity," *WSQ: Women's Studies Quarterly* 40, nos. 1–2 (2012): 64–75. Kara Keeling's work on the image of the black femme, informed by Deleuze's use of Bergson in his writing on cinema, marks another significant uptake of an immanent aesthetics of sensation within queer studies. See Keeling, *The Witch's Flight: The Cinematic, the Black Femme, and the Image of Common Sense* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007).
18. Grosz, *Chaos, Territory, Art*, 79.
19. Morton, "Queer Ecology," 278.
20. Laval-Jeantet, "May the Horse Live in Me."
21. Laval-Jeantet, "Self-Animality."
22. See, for example, Harold Barclay, *The Role of the Horse in Man's Culture* (London: Allen, 1980); or Catherine Johns, *Horses: History, Myth, Art* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006). A dusty 1963 edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica* intones, "According to western European mythology and folklore, all the great early civilizations arose among horse-owning, horse-breeding, and horse-using nations; those in which the horse was either unknown or in the feral, or untamed, state were backward and no great forward movement of man was made without the assistance of the horse. So consistently was this the case that the glorified figure of the 'man on horseback' became the symbol of power. The image of the horse was stamped upon man's coinage, sculpted on his temples and even elevated to his pantheon and worshipped as divine" (*Encyclopedia Britannica*, vol. 11 [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963], 754). The most notorious association of the horse with the phallus in psychoanalytic literature occurs in Sigmund Freud's *Analysis of a Phobia in a Five-Year-Old Boy (Little Hans)*, in *Two Case Histories*, vol. 10 of *The Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* (New York: Vintage, 2001).
23. See ESPN's "Top N. American Athletes of the Century," espn.go.com/sportscentury/athletes.html.

24. In his *Essais de psychologie sportive* (1913), Coubertin writes: "The soul is a rider who straddles the body, an animal stronger than he and at whose mercy he would be if he did not control him with sufficient art to direct and tame that force" (quoted in Kari Weil, "Purebreds and Amazons: Saying Things with Horses in Late-Nineteenth-Century France," *differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 11, no. 1 [1999]: 29).
25. See Vinciane Despret, "The Body We Care For: Figures of Anthropo-zoo-genesis," *Body and Society* 10, nos. 2–3 (2004): 115; and Donna Haraway, *When Species Meet* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 229.
26. John Ott argues that Muybridge's equestrian photographs, which were commissioned and staged by Leland Stanford, were used "to consolidate, promote, and naturalise the developments of industrial capitalism," suggesting it was no coincidence "that the owner and manager of locomotives was interested in the mechanics of animal locomotion." See John Ott, "Iron Horses: Leland Stanford, Eadweard Muybridge, and the Industrialized Eye," *Oxford Art Journal* 28, no. 3 (2005): 407.
27. Nikki Savvides, "'Loving-Knowing' Women and Horses: Symbolic Connections, Real Life Conflicts, and 'Natural Horsemanship,'" *Humanalia* 3, no. 1 (2011): 60. On gender, sexuality, desire, and the human-horse nexus, see Weil, "Purebreds and Amazons"; Kathleen E. McCrone, *Sport and the Physical Emancipation of English Women, 1870–1914* (London: Routledge, 1988); Alison Haymonds, "Rides of Passage: Female Heroes in Pony Stories," in *A Necessary Fantasy? The Heroic Figure in Children's Popular Culture*, ed. Dudley Jones and Tony Watkins (New York: Garland, 2000), 51–72; and Savvides, "'Loving-Knowing' Women and Horses.'"
28. Elspeth Probyn, "Becoming-Horse: Transports in Desire," in *Outside Belongings* (New York: Routledge, 1996), 55, 59.
29. On the historical emergence of modern epidemiology in relation to the social regulation of gender and sexuality, see Chandak Sengoopta, *Sex, Glands, and Hormones, 1850–1950* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006).
30. Increasingly, many individuals are choosing to use synthetically derived estrogen out of concern for animal cruelty.
31. Donna Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century," in *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*, (New York: Routledge, 1991), 149–81.
32. I thank Jennifer Doyle for calling my attention to this point.
33. On transgender theory's engagements with animality and the transbiological, see Chen, *Animacies*; Eva Hayward, "More Lessons from a Starfish: Prefixial Flesh and Transspeciated Selves," *WSQ: Women's Studies Quarterly* 26, nos. 3–4 (2008): 64–84; and Jeanne Vaccaro, "Transbiological Bodies: Mine, Yours, Ours," *Women and Performance: A Journal of Feminist Theory* 20, no. 3 (2010): 221–224.
34. Laval-Jeantet, "May the Horse Live in Me."

35. "The cyborg is resolutely committed to partiality, irony, intimacy, and perversity. It is oppositional, utopian, and completely without innocence" (Haraway, "Cyborg Manifesto," 151).
36. Laval-Jeantet, "May the Horse Live in Me."
37. See also Haraway: "Cyborg replication is uncoupled from organic reproduction" ("Cyborg Manifesto," 150).
38. Haraway, "Cyborg Manifesto," 149.
39. Laval-Jeantet, "Self-Animality."
40. Laval-Jeantet, "May the Horse Live in Me."
41. Deborah P. Dixon, "Creating the Semi-living: On Politics, Aesthetics, and the More-Than-Human," *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, n.s., 34 (2009): 415. Kelly Rafferty defines the term somewhat more narrowly: bioart, she writes, is a field of artistic practice in which "living organisms, tissues, cells, and genes serve as media that are shaped by a range of techniques, both artistic and scientific, from painting and graphic design to cryopreservation and tissue engineering." See Rafferty, "Tissue Engineering, Maintenance, and the Time of Performance," *TDR: The Drama Review* 56, no. 3 (2012): 82.
42. Robert Mitchell distinguishes two countervailing tactical approaches among bioartists to these issues: the first, which he calls "prophylactic" bioart, "seeks to protect spectators of art from what are understood as the unhealthy excesses of the problematic of biotechnology"; the second, which he terms "vitalist" bioart, "endeavors to transform this problematic by involving spectators more closely within it" (*Bioart and the Vitality of Media* [Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2010], 12). See also, for example, Oron Catts and Ionat Zurr, "Are the Semi-Living Semi-Good or Semi-Evil?," *Technoetic Arts: An International Journal of Speculative Research* 1 (2003): 47–60; and Beatriz da Costa and Kavita Philip, eds., *Tactical Biopolitics: Art, Activism, and Technoscience* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2008). On the role of biotech industries within global capitalism more generally, see Melinda Cooper, *Life as Surplus: Biotechnology and Capitalism in the Neoliberal Era* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2008).
43. See Adrian Heathfield, "Alive," in *Live: Art and Performance*, ed. Adrian Heathfield (London: Tate, 2004), 11; and Amelia Jones, *Body Art: Performing the Subject* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998). Kathy O'Dell notes, "The term 'body art' first appeared as a category heading in *Art Index* in 1971–72, although it had been in common usage for some time before that" (*Contract with the Skin: Masochism, Performance Art, and the 1970s* [Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998], 87n34). While I am aware that such category designations are always leaky and provisional, I nonetheless find them useful in this case.
44. In addition to Jones, *Body Art*, and O'Dell, *Contract with the Skin*, see also Peggy Phelan, *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance* (New York: Routledge, 1993); and Rebecca Schneider, *The Explicit Body in Performance* (New York: Routledge, 1997).

45. In addition to Heathfield, Jones, O'Dell, Phelan, and Schneider, see also Erika Fischer-Lichte, *The Transformative Power of Performance: A New Aesthetics*, trans. Saskya Iris Jain (London: Routledge, 2008).
46. Laval-Jeantet, "Self-Animality."
47. Laval-Jeantet, "Self-Animality."
48. See, for example, Jane Blocker, *What the Body Cost: Desire, History, and Performance* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004); John Edward McGrath, "Trusting the Rubber: Performing Boundaries during the AIDS Epidemic," *TDR: The Drama Review* 39, no. 2 (1995): 21–38; José Esteban Muñoz, "Vitalism's After-burn: The Sense of Ana Mendieta," *Women and Performance: A Journal of Feminist Theory* 21, no. 2 (2011): 191–98; and Mary Richards, "Specular Suffering: (Staging) the Bleeding Body," *PAJ: A Journal of Performance and Art* 30, no. 1 (2008): 108–19.
49. Deleuze, *Francis Bacon*, 31.
50. Laval-Jeantet, "Self Animality." "From the outset I'd like to reject the general dismissal that I've been confronted with by the most skeptical [*sic*]. It was not, of course, a direct blood transfusion from horse to man."
51. Art Orienté Objet, "J'ai ressenti dans mon corps la nature très vive du cheval."
52. Judith Halberstam, *The Queer Art of Failure* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 126. Halberstam's discussion of "shadow feminisms" makes explicit reference to the performance art of Yoko Ono and Marina Abramović.
53. See Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*: "Sensations, percepts, and affects, are *beings* whose validity lies in themselves and exceeds any lived. They could be said to exist in the absence of man because man, as he is caught in stone, on the canvas, or by words, is himself a compound of percepts and affects. The work of art is a being of sensation and nothing else: it exists in itself" (164).
54. Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 75.
55. This is the central problematic addressed in Michel Foucault's genealogical conception of biopolitics.
56. Laval-Jeantet, "May the Horse Live in Me."
57. See www.youtube.com/watch?v=yx_E4DUWXbE.
58. Laval-Jeantet, "May the Horse Live in Me."
59. Laval-Jeantet, "May the Horse Live in Me."
60. Laval-Jeantet, "May the Horse Live in Me."
61. Soizic Quéro, "Dans les veines de l'artiste coule le sang de cheval."
62. Laval-Jeantet, "May the Horse Live in Me."
63. Laval-Jeantet, "May the Horse Live in Me."
64. On Gob Squad, see Nina Tecklenburg, "Reality Enchanted, Contact Mediated: A Story of Gob Squad," *TDR: The Drama Review* 56, no. 2 (2012): 8–33.
65. Brian Massumi, *Parables of the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 28.

66. Antonin Artaud, *The Theatre and Its Double*, trans. Mary Caroline Richards (New York: Grove, 1994), 133.
67. Artaud, *Theatre*, 135.
68. Deleuze, *Francis Bacon*, 32.
69. Deleuze, *Francis Bacon*, 40.
70. If not yet an erotics—though there are perhaps resonances with Susan Sontag's clarion manifesto against interpretation.
71. Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, 167.
72. Deleuze and Guattari, *Thousand Plateaus,* 241–42.
73. See Haraway, *When Species Meet*, 27–30.
74. Despret, quoted in Haraway, *When Species Meet*, 229.
75. Following Deleuze and Guattari, Massumi identifies this extreme edge of perception with sensation itself: "Sensation is an extremity of perception. It is the immanent limit at which perception is eclipsed by the sheerness of experience, as yet unextended into analytically ordered, predictably reproducible, possible action" (*Parables of the Virtual*, 97–98).
76. Laval-Jeantet, "Self-Animality."
77. Laval-Jeantet, "Self-Animality."
78. Massumi, *Parables of the Virtual*, 118.
79. Laval-Jeantet, "May the Horse Live in Me."