

Joachim Koester / Matthew Buckingham
Sandra of the Tulphouse or How to Live in a Free State
2001

Section 5/11

I started to feel I was surrounded by these three yellow dots. The three dots—what did they mean? The Christiania Guide, a free publication for visitors, explains that the dots are from the three occurrences of the letter ‘i’ in the word Christiania. Who’s idea this might have been, it didn’t say. Perhaps it was the mysterious Victor with no last name, given credit for naming the Free Town ‘Christiania?’ Everything has a name, or the potential to be named, and I wondered if this dot—this typographical fragment—also had a name of its own.

The practice of armoring the body was not actually made obsolete by gun-powder and fire-arms as we might assume. For two centuries armorers continued production, customarily authenticating their finished work with a dent from a bullet fired at close range—indisputable evidence that their armor was up to date—and bullet proof. But the increased protection came at the high price of increased weight. Suits of armor became traps, weighing soldiers down, immobilizing them if they should be so unlucky as to fall over.

The last royal suit of armor made in Europe was created for a five-year old boy, the infanta Luis, prince of Asturias. It was probably given to him by his great-grandfather, Louis XIV, in 1712. The armor is decorated with gilt bronze and lined with red velvet in order to minimize the clattering of the young prince. This present from the Sun-King seems like a last-ditch effort to cast a spell of tradition over the youngest generation.

Although he lived more than a hundred years before the infanta Luis, I associate that last suit of armor with ‘the little fellow’ I saw in the painting at Frederiksborg Castle. I imagined him rejecting the gift of the French king, now that he had a gun to play with. To him, armor was obsolete, having been seduced by the myth of progress.

Long before obsolescence, armor was one of the first objects to be collected for its symbolic value alone. Courts and Monarchs, later city- and nation-states made prominent displays of captured enemy armor to impress their own citizens, guests and prisoners. Collectors became connoisseurs of the armorer’s artistry and this cultural prestige, closely aligned with national-identity, was inherited by the major art museums of the nineteenth century. Master armorers still compete against each other through the collections of those seeking prestige.

During World War II the steel helmet used by the U.S. army was created following designs and recommendations of the Metropolitan Museum of Art ‘Arms and Armor’ Department in New York.

Byens Lys, Christiania
backstage videoinstallation
August 25th - September 15th 2019

Efterlysning: Er du den lykkelige ejer af min blå torso?

Jeg har afleveret 3 små stentøjs torsoer til udstillingen på Galopperiet i september måned; da jeg var deroppe i onsdags, var der kun 2 tilbage. Der mangler altså en, den er meget blå, i stentøj og med klar glasur. Måske har du bare glemt at betale for den, så er du velkommen til at overføre de 300kr med MobilePay til 30637666. Måske har du fået den i gave, så må du gerne fortælle mig fra hvem, så jeg kan spørge vedkommende, om de 300kr måske er blevet betalt til en “kustode” på Galopperiet? Hvis du vil være bekendt at eje den, uden at betale de 300kr, synes jeg du skal vide, at jeg har brugt flere timer på at lave den, og jeg har lavet den med kærlighed. Så jeg håber du vil overføre beløbet, som bestemt ikke er for meget for et fint lille kunstværk.

Billedet af den anden blå er en ekstra, som jeg havde herhjemme og som jeg har sat op i Galopperiet på Christianias fødselsdag. Så hvis nogen stjæler kunst på Galopperiet, håber jeg bare, at Karma vil give dem en tung tagsten i hovedet, enten bogstaveligt eller i overført betydning.

Og ellers håber jeg på en snarlig MobilePay på 300kr.

Lots of love

Olga

