

GLADSTONE GALLERY

Roberta Smith, "Review: Art That Snorts, From Jannis Kounellis, at Gavin Brown's Enterprise," *The New York Times*, June 25, 2015

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Review: Art That Snorts, From Jannis Kounellis, at Gavin Brown's Enterprise

By **ROBERTA SMITH** | JUNE 25, 2015



Jannis Kounellis's "Untitled (12 Horses)," recreated in New York. Credit Byron Smith for The New York Times

Gavin Brown's Enterprise may be leaving its Greenwich Village home of a dozen or so years for Harlem, but not before bestowing a stupendous farewell gift on the art world. It has orchestrated the first re-creation in the United States of Jannis Kounellis's "Untitled (12 Horses)" a legendary work of living installation art first executed in Rome in 1969. Accompanied by works by Rirkrit Tiravanija and Elaine Sturtevant, it is on view at the gallery through Saturday.

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The original version in Rome, 1969. Credit Courtesy the artist, Claudio Abate, Cheim & Read and Gavin Brown's Enterprise

If you are an art seeker of a certain age, you might have become fixated, as I was, by the photograph of the original Kounellis piece, which featured a dozen horses tethered to walls of a spacious Roman garage with a glistening tile floor. The work, which has been restaged five times in Europe, is a signal example of Arte Povera, the Italian wing of Post-Minimalism known for using common or humble materials. The picture made instantly clear that art could be absolutely anything, as long as a certain level of intensity differentiated it from real life.

When an image like this is made real, it can disappoint, but not this time. Overseen by Mr. Kounellis, who flew over from Italy, the New York version of "Untitled (12 Horses)" certainly lives up to the original photograph and may exceed the original piece. The horses are just there, standing, eating hay, occasionally snorting and relieving themselves, attended by three grooms. Their accommodation in a space that is recognizably an art gallery foments an especially concentrated encounter with the brute power of art and its ability to transform space. Perhaps it has to do with the floor, covered with black rubber obtained at the last minute to protect the horses' feet. (They go home every night.) Equally important: the heightened contrast of white walls and dark matte floor, and the softening of sound, which contributes to the immense calming effect of the piece.

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In any event, the elemental, curative force of animals and their size, and quiet, are felt more keenly in this setting than in a stable.

Mr. Brown, like other dealers of his generation, has conducted his gallery with a certain largess and a multi-purposefulness that aims to make everyone — even a dozen horses — feel at home. He attached a small hospitable bar to the gallery's previous address on West 15th Street and once allowed the Swiss artist Urs Fischer to dig a huge crater in the floor of the current space (without notifying the landlord).

In keeping with this spirit, Mr. Tiravanija has removed the gallery's doors and windows and is serving lunch in its smaller space: free pork tacos, made with meat roasted in a pit in the floor. Once the horses knock off for the day, Ms. Sturtevant's "1972" reprise of Andy Warhol's "Empire" is projected on one wall through the night. It all reverberates with the generosity implicit in Mr. Kounellis's piece, creating an unforgettable New York art world moment in these overcapitalized times.

Correction: June 27, 2015

An art review on Friday about "Untitled (12 Horses)," an exhibition by the artist Jannis Kounellis that includes 12 live horses, which is on display at Gavin Brown's Enterprise gallery in Manhattan, misstated the time the exhibition opens today. It is noon, not 10 a.m. (It closes at 9 p.m.) The review also misstated the number of grooms in attendance to care for the horses. There are three, not two.

Jannis Kounellis's "Untitled (12 Horses)" is on view through Saturday at Gavin Brown's Enterprise, Manhattan, 212-627-5258, gavinbrown.biz.