

Examples of castration of cats in Art history in regards to Philipp Teister's video work "Die Kastration von Nett und Niedlich"

Already as early as in Egyptian art there are examples of castration of cats. The book "The castration of the Gods" by David Berg, Professor of Zoology at Berkley university, is giving an unique insight both to the reasons behind this practice as well as never before shown Egyptian paintings of the "surgery".

In the renaissance Leonardo da Vinci designed several surgical instruments commissioned by Ludovico il Moro in Milan for the removal of the male cats productive organs due to the plague caused by the huge amount of cats loitering around the courts. These drawings can be seen at the Royal Library of Turin in northern Italy.

In modern times the most well known examples of this practice are the paintings made by Ule Heinz Bormann the national socialist mayor of the town Hildesheim Germany. He was also an accomplished painter and part of "die Neue Sachlichkeit" movement. His painting "The Castration of the Jew Aaron Feldman`s cat" from 1934 was a great success at "the Berlin Realist Painting exhibition" in 1935.

His next painting "The castration of the Jew Aaron Feldman" was a great success at the following realist painting exhibition but angered his fellow members of "die Neue Sachlichkeit" movement so much that he was expelled from the group. It is rumored that Ule Heinz then contacted his brother Martin Borman who then made arrangements for the transportation of the remaining members of "Die Neue Sachlichkeit" movement to different concentration camps in Germany and Poland.

After the war, he fled to Italy and Argentina, eventually ending up in Egypt, where he converted to Islam and remained an active anti-feline propagandist until his death in 1965. His paintings can be seen at The Albert Speer jr. museum in the town of Chacras de Coria, Argentina.

In what was called second wave of feminism it was several examples of castration of male cats especially in video art. The New York based feminist group "The Mongrella Girls" made lots of newspaper headlines with their film "Who's the Boss" after the "Women's Film Festival" in New York 1969 where 20 chanting women was simultaneously castrating 40 male cats. This film was used to jump-start the new movement and stimulate cadres in North America and beyond. It advocated a shifting "center," and its newsletter was produced each month by a group in a different region. (It continued successfully through the mid-seventies.)

You can see that Philipp Teister in his video work "Die Kastration von Nett und Niedlich" has drawn lots of inspiration both from Ule Heinz Borman as well as "The Mongrella Girls", making him one of the few right wing feminists in the art world today. I think we can expect great things from this young artist in the future.

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