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## PHYSICIAN'S HORSE VANISHES

### JOSH TONSFELDT

Hi Simon,

Some time in the Spring, probably when I was distracted and supposed to be working on something else, I went searching online for information about the gallery and the neighborhood. Of course the space is new and has little history at this point, so there was not much to find. I ran a Google search for the gallery's address, 301 Broome, and the first result was an archived item from the *New York Times* from 1906. It was about a doctor who had lived at the same address as the gallery. His horse and carriage had been stolen while seeing a patient at St. Vincent's Hospital. The doctor sounds a bit pathetic and helpless within what must have been a very rough area at the time. I kept thinking about the story, not really in terms of a mystery to be solved, but as a continuing development of events and actions and decisions that might follow – paths moving out from that point of loss; decisions you make when the arbitrary and unexpected occur.

After a while I started thinking about how I might use the article as a kind of point of departure for my own work, a kernel around which I could begin to organize some ideas. Some pieces came to mind right away. There's a sequence of 24 photos I shot a few years back – of horses – in which I used a computer program to read out randomized instructions over my phone to determine my movement around the horses and the positioning of the camera and its exposure settings. Some newer work comes to mind too – a video I shot inside of a barn, and some painted spider webs on paper. The spider webs came about when I found some spray paint I had left behind from an earlier sculpture. I made the video when I got distracted from looking around for more spider webs. Some of the spider webs broke when I set them on top of one another, so I've been drawing between the broken ends of the web on the computer. These drawings are made through a process similar to the one I used in the earlier sequence of 24 photos.

At times I question why so much of my work is engaged with home and these rural spaces when I spend almost all of my time here in the city. The *Times* article could become a way to think specifically about the history of the location, and by extension the gallery and my relationship to that space. And maybe thinking about an exhibition within this broader framework might be the question of whether a momentary collapse between these times and spaces is possible, and whether or not something interesting or meaningful might emerge from that situation. The article has an oddly ominous and theatrical headline, which could make for a nice title – *Physician's Horse Vanishes*

Thanks, Josh

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Josh Tonsfeldt was born in Independence, Missouri and lives and works in New York. He completed his MFA at Columbia University in 2007 and his work has been exhibited recently in group shows such as *'Nina in Position'* at Artists Space and *'Hermann's Grid'* at Franco Soffiantino in Turin, Italy.