



CARY VAN DANSIK

(1947 – 2022)

■ by *Judith Wich-Wenning*

On August 15th, 2022 the Dutch Arabian horse artist Cary van Dansik passed away. The article commemorates his extraordinary work and gives an insight into the life, career and popularity of this famous sculptor.

Since ancient times, the horse has pride of place amongst sculptors and painters of animals. From the drawings of cave dwellers to the modern-day artist, they have always been a highly popular subject. The grace, elegance and muscular complexity of the horse challenges even the most competent artisans.

One of the most important contemporary horse sculptors was certainly the Dutch Cary van Dansik. Born and raised in the city of Haarlem, the Netherlands, he lived in the picturesque village Sleen in the Dutch countryside. He enjoyed a quiet life with his family there. An old hay barn has been refurbished into a beautiful



sculptor's studio called "Le Cheval Noir" ("The black horse"). It boasts all the necessary amenities to produce life-size equine art. Cary van Dansik was one of very few contemporary sporting artists. His works impress with great charisma and beauty while the horses are often shown in full movement, playful and having lots of energy. Cary van Dansik loved to immortalise typey individuals with an excellent head and high tail carriage.

Horses and art are two components, which accompanied Cary since his early childhood. "As a child of four I was already drawing horses in a special way," he related with a smile. "The educator noticed that it wasn't usual for a child of this young age to be caught drawing horses at his desk. Then and also later in school the teachers suggested I should get a special education in art. Unfortunately my father, coming from an old butchers'

tradition, decided that without any question I had to follow in his footsteps. When he did not send me to the academy of art, I was very sad and angry."

In the end however, art prevailed. Cary van Dansik was an autodidact who always studied his subjects to the best possible degree. Besides of table size bronzes and trophies, his signature pieces were life-size sculptures. As the famous English artist George Stubbs, Cary van Dansik meticulously studied the anatomy and function of all bones and muscles in order to understand the mechanisms of the body.

Since starting his career in the early 1980s, van Dansik has produced over 30 works, from table size sculptures to life-size monuments. Many of them are limited bronze editions of 6 to 15 copies.







Creating them requires besides patience, passion and an excellent eye also a good knowledge of mathematics. “It all starts on the drawing board where I do the first sketches”, Cary van Dansik explained. “I love looking at beautiful horses in all their dreamy movements and poses. Then inspiration comes just rolling in. Afterwards I figure out the necessary calculations. It is important to make an anatomically correct solid iron armature - this is like a skeleton. Then I begin to model with clay or modelling wax. If it is a portrait commission, the client can still ask for changes or amendments in this stage. Once everything is completed, people from the

local foundry come to my atelier and take the statue to be casted into bronze. All is finished under my closed supervision.”

Cary van Dansik’s favourite to model were Arabian horses and especially straight Egyptians. But he enjoyed also sculpting Baroque breeds as for example Spanish, Andalusian or Friesian horses, and Lipizzaners, as well as horses with special movements as for example English Hackney and the Dutch Harness horses. “I very much admire the old masters like Pierre Jules Mene and Auguste Rodin as well as from more recent times Edwin



Bogucki!", Cary van Dansik pointed out. His sculptures create enthusiasm worldwide and have been sold to Kuwait, Dubai, Qatar, USA, France, Belgium, Germany, Great Britain, Ireland, Ukraine, and The Netherlands etc. Many of them were live sized projects and adorn now most prestigious stud farms. Asked after his most favourite horse, Cary commented: "I have several, but if I have to name just one, it's Kubinec. I have created him

also in life-size for Karl-Heinz Stoeckle, Germany."

Due to lack of time Cary van Dansik stopped owning horses. "But the Arabian horse and horses in general are my life, my passion. Creating my art is my reason for living", he explained. "For my work I have visited many Arabian horse stud farms for example "The Kossack Stud" at the time of the Tersk Auctions. It





was then owned by the late Mr Robin den Hartog and it's now supervised by his son Robbie Den Hartog Jr. I also always enjoyed visiting Flaxman Arabians. Mrs Helen Hennekens-van Nes and her late father Jan van Nes were very great stimulants and a push for my career. My favourite show is of course the All Nations Cup

in Aachen. I was blessed to create the trophies for this event for many years, for example for the German Cup."

The world of Arabian horses lost one of its greatest artists. Cary van Dansik's fantastic talent and kind personality will be widely missed. □