

BoJack Horseman: The Art Before The Horse

The Genesis of a Modern Masterpiece

In the annals of animated television, few series have achieved the critical acclaim and cultural significance of BoJack Horseman. With its unflinching exploration of mental health, addiction, and the complexities of human relationships, the show has resonated with audiences worldwide, establishing itself as a modern masterpiece. But what were the artistic influences and creative vision that gave birth to this animated phenomenon?



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by Chris McDonnell

★★★★☆ 4.9 out of 5

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The Mind of Raphael Bob-Waksberg

At the helm of BoJack Horseman stood Raphael Bob-Waksberg, a creative mastermind with a penchant for witty satire and deeply personal storytelling. Bob-Waksberg drew inspiration from his own experiences with depression and anxiety, infusing the show with an authenticity that resonated with viewers.

In crafting BoJack's character, Bob-Waksberg subverted the traditional archetype of the anthropomorphic talking animal. Instead of portraying an endearing, whimsical creature, he created a complex and flawed individual, haunted by self-loathing and a yearning for connection.



Lisa Hanawalt's Visual Brilliance

Collaborating with Bob-Waksberg as the production designer was the talented Lisa Hanawalt. Hanawalt's whimsical and surrealist artwork had already made a name for her in the indie comics scene.

For BoJack Horseman, Hanawalt conceived a distinct and memorable visual style that seamlessly blended the anthropomorphic characters with a realistic, often gritty urban setting. Her attention to detail and use of symbolism imbued every frame with a depth and richness that elevated the show above the realm of mere animation.

Hanawalt's artistic vision extended beyond the characters' designs to encompass the show's entire aesthetic. From the neon-drenched glamour of Hollywood to the desolate landscapes of New Mexico, each environment was meticulously crafted to reflect the emotional and psychological journeys of the characters.



Influences and Inspirations

BoJack Horseman's creative team drew inspiration from a wide array of sources, including literature, film, and the comedic tradition.

Literary Influences

Bob-Waksberg and Hanawalt were both avid readers, and their literary sensibilities are evident throughout the show. BoJack's struggles with

addiction and self-destructive tendencies echo the existential angst explored in the works of Albert Camus and Fyodor Dostoevsky.

Cinematic Influences

The show's visual style and narrative structure borrow heavily from classic and contemporary cinema. The use of flashbacks and surreal dream sequences evokes the work of directors such as David Lynch and Charlie Kaufman.

Furthermore, the show's biting satire and exploration of celebrity culture reflect the influence of films like *Sunset Boulevard* and *The Player*.

Comedic Influences

BoJack Horseman's sharp wit and deadpan humor pay homage to the stand-up comedy tradition. The show's writers and performers, including Will Arnett, Alison Brie, and Amy Sedaris, have a background in comedy, bringing their distinctive voices to the characters.

The show's exploration of taboo subjects and its willingness to push comedic boundaries also owe a debt to the work of controversial comedians like Louis C.K. and Dave Chappelle.

Legacy and Impact

BoJack Horseman's impact on popular culture cannot be overstated. The show has garnered critical acclaim, receiving numerous awards and nominations. It has also fostered a devoted fan base, who connect with the show's poignant portrayal of mental health and the search for meaning in a chaotic world.

Beyond its entertainment value, BoJack Horseman has stimulated important conversations about mental health and addiction. It has helped to destigmatize these issues and has encouraged viewers to seek help if needed.

Furthermore, the show has made its mark as an innovative and groundbreaking work of animation. Its surrealist visuals and existential themes have challenged traditional notions of animated programming, expanding the possibilities of the medium.



BoJack Horseman emerged from the creative vision and artistic brilliance of Raphael Bob-Waksberg and Lisa Hanawalt. Their shared experiences, literary influences, and comedic sensibilities converged to create a show that is both deeply personal and universally relatable.

The show's groundbreaking visuals, thought-provoking narratives, and unflinching exploration of mental health have cemented its place as a modern masterpiece. BoJack Horseman continues to inspire, challenge,

and comfort audiences, proving that animation is not merely a form of entertainment but a powerful medium for artistic expression and storytelling.



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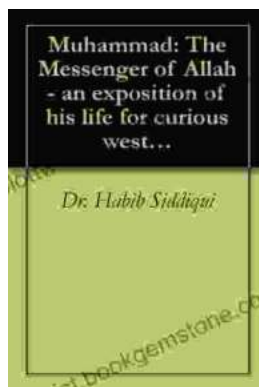
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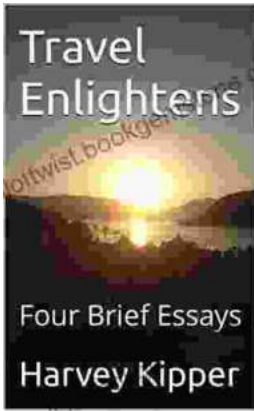
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