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Horses?

JULY 15 - AUGUST 27, 2021
opening July 15, 5-8 PM



Susan Rothenberg, *August* (1976),
acrylic and tempera on canvas, 38 x 52 ½ inches (96.5 x 133.4 cm)
© Susan Rothenberg/Artists Rights Society

JOE ANDOE, DONALD BAECHLER, ELLEN BERKENBLIT, MATTHEW CONSTANT,
WILL COTTON, JACLYN CONLEY, ANN CRAVEN, PATRICIA CRONIN,
GIOVANNI GARCIA-FENECH, MARTINE GUTIERREZ, LENA HENKE,
DOMINIQUE KNOWLES, JESSIE MAKINSON, SHONA MCANDREW, SHARI MENDELSON,
ANTHONY MILER, SANTI MOIX, EADWEARD MUYBRIDGE, LAUREL NAKADATE,
SOPHIA NARRETT, JUSTIN LIAM O'BRIEN, WENDY RED STAR, ALISON ROSSITER,
SUSAN ROTHENBERG, ADRIANNE RUBENSTEIN, DAN SCHEIN,
DANA SHERWOOD, JASON SILVA, TSENG KWONG CHI, RON TARVER, JAMES ULMER,
VINCENT SZAREK, DAVID WOJANROWICZ, ANDY WOLL

CHART is pleased to present *Horses?*, a group exhibition exploring depictions of the horse and its related cultures in the context of contemporary art history. The exhibition features a group of thirty-four multigenerational artists, including historic works as well as pieces by contemporary artists commissioned specifically for this show. By employing diverse media and practices of representational and non-representational conventions, each artist creates their unique interpretation of this traditional subject matter.

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The image of the horse has long served as an archetype and muse in art history; from the prehistoric cave paintings of Lescaux, the drama and majesty of 19th century Parisian horse markets in Rosa Bonheur's epic paintings to the contemporary appropriated imagery of the Marlboro Man in Richard Prince's *Untitled (cowboys)* series. The horse, and the culture that surrounds the equine are vehicles to communicate ineffable themes of nobility, fantasy, coming of age, gender, eroticism, identity, and the lived experience. Such various manifestations serve as a guide to the deeper values within humanity itself.

The use of the formal physicality of the animal has revolutionized multiple mediums of contemporary art. Eadweard Muybridge's film *The Horse in Motion* (1878) was the genesis of modern filmmaking, combining multiple stop-motion photographs of a jockey riding a horse in rapid succession to display a revolutionary moving image. Similarly, Susan Rothenberg's iconic horse paintings were a watershed moment during the height of minimalist abstraction. Drawing from Muybridge's sequential photographs, her horses reintroduced figuration into a world that was dominated pictorially by non-representational imagery. Peter Schjeldahl once said of this work, "The impression they give of powerful vulnerability or vulnerable power."



Jaclyn Conley, *Taming the War Horse* (2021),
oil on panel, 60 x 48 inches (152.4 x 121.9 cm)

Several artists in this exhibition deconstruct the horse into elements of abstraction. Jaclyn Conley's painting and collage study, *Taming the War Horse* (2021) source historic documentary photography of poignant moments in American history. By creating gestures of impressionistic color, Adrienne Rubenstein and Dominique Knowles employ fine brushwork to deconstruct the horses in their paintings.

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Ron Tarver, *The Basketball Game* (1993), pigment ink print, 12 ¼ x 20 inches (31.2 x 50.8 cm)

A major facet of equine culture is that of the American cowboy. The beginnings of cowboys in the United States were a result of the end of slavery in the late 1800s, where ranchers hired freed slaves to herd their cattle, as it was one of the only paying jobs open to men of color at the time. The black cowboys represented 25% of the more than 35,000 cowboys who rode in the west during the 19th century— a fact that has been obscured in more recent history. Ron Tarver, in his acclaimed series *The Long Ride Home: The Black Cowboy Experience in America*, spent two decades photographing and documenting the culture of the black cowboy in America. In *The Basketball Game 2* (1993) and *David's Last Ride* (1996), Tarver focused on two separate communities of the culture— the urban riding clubs of Philadelphia and the rodeos of East Texas.

After 1950, cowboys as a concept became adopted by the mainstream as a beacon of hypermasculinity, as evidenced in David Wojanrowicz's portrait of a sex worker in Times Square in the 1980s. Cowboys are also main characters of the "American West", a place/era that has been culturally mythologized by both Americans and those from outside the country. Tseng Kwong Chi investigated this mythology in his series *East Meets West*, where he photographed himself in a "Mao" suit in front of famous Western sites of tourism. In *Monument Valley, Arizona* (1987), the artist photographed himself atop a horse in the famous national park, co-opting the image of a masculine lone ranger, questioning issues of belonging and identity. It was his first time riding a horse.

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Laurel Nakadate, *Lucky Tiger #246* (2009), type-C print and fingerprinting ink
4 x 6 inches (10.2 x 15.2 cm)

Another significant theme of equinity explored in this exhibition is the connection between the horse and femininity. The “horse girl”, a young girl or woman obsessed with equines, is a trope that has long existed in popular culture. Dana Sherwood’s video *In Love With a Horse* (2009) charts this trajectory, juxtaposing horse girls in popular television and film with footage of herself taking care of her own horse. In the same vein *Bei Klaus und Annette* (2020), Lena Henke’s surrealist pair of ceramic horse hooves resemble twisted tree trunks, meditating on her childhood growing up on a horse farm near the Teutoberg forest in Germany. Martine Gutierrez and Laurel Nakadate explore feminine dynamics through self-portraiture—Gutierrez poses herself with an identical mannequin to reflect on the female gender itself, while Nakadate co-opts both western and pin-up aesthetics by photographing herself riding a horse in a cowboy hat and minimal clothing. She then asked male strangers to handle the prints with their fingers covered in ink, documenting a history of voyeuristic touch.

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Patricia Cronin, Tack Room (1998), installation view at The Armory Show 2017

On view in the exhibition will be the fifth iteration of Patricia Cronin's seminal Tack Room, 1997-2021, a large-scale installation which premiered at White Columns (1998) reinstalled at Real Art Ways (1999), University of Buffalo Gallery (2004) and the Armory Show (2017). Tack Room is a replica of the storage/locker room area in a horse barn, filled with a plethora of equine accoutrements and paraphernalia. Within the 100 square foot room, floor to ceiling, there are works by the artist related to equine culture, postcards depicting horses painted by Degas, Delacroix, a framed print of Rosa Bonheur's "The Horse Fair," a whole assortment of riding equipment and clothing, centerfolds from erotic magazines, equine themed collectibles and other horse girl objects of obsession. The items in the installation are loaded with double entendres, multiple meanings highlighting the suggestive undertones that exist within much of horse culture related specifically to gender, eroticism and class. As per custom, a



Patricia Cronin, Tack Room (1998) interior view, Armory Show 2017

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new item will be added to the Tack Room with this 2021 installation at CHART.

Alongside the physical exhibition, CHART will present a virtual expanded version of the show on our website. This includes all the artworks shown in the gallery, as well as trace 31 additional iconic horse works throughout art history.

In accordance to CDC guidelines and to ensure the health and safety of our visitors and staff, we ask that face coverings be worn and social distancing be practiced when visiting the gallery. [Reservations](#) are recommended, but not required.

For more information, please contact us at info@chart-gallery.com

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Susan Rothenberg: Courtesy Beth Rudin DeWoody Collection

Jaclyn Conley: Courtesy the artist and Maruani Mercier, Brussels

Ron Tarver: Courtesy the artist

Laurel Nakadate: Courtesy the artist and Leslie Tonkonow Art + Projects, New York

Patricia Cronin: Courtesy the artist

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