

PHOTOGRAPHY REVIEW

Seven photographers on four legs: At the Griffin, celebrating the horse in all its glory

Silke Hase's 'Garden Whimsy,' also on view, finds magic in the mundane

By [Mark Feeney](#) Globe Staff, Updated January 12, 2022, 11:38 a.m.



Landry Major, "Winter's Horses" LANDRY MAJOR PHOTO

WINCHESTER — The seven photographers with work in “E. caballus: The Domesticated Horse” are all talented and take different approaches to their common subject. Some of those approaches are highly inventive. Because of that subject matter, though, the talent and inventiveness might get overlooked. Content like this can almost make form seem beside the point. Really, are there any creatures on the planet, human beings included, more loved by the camera than horses?

“E. caballus: The Domesticated Horse” runs at the Griffin Museum of Photography through Feb. 27. The show was curated by the Griffin’s recently retired director, Paula Tognarelli. She’s left her successor, Crista Dix, with a real crowd-pleaser.

The domesticator of *Equus caballus* is, of course, *Homo sapiens*. Two of the photographers, Ivan B. McClellan and Chris Akula Berry, focus on horses in relationship to man.




Ivan McClellan, "Cowboy Prayer, Okmulgee, Oklahoma." IVAN MCCLELLAN

The dozen color images in McClellan’s “Eight Seconds” are big — 3 feet by 2 feet, or slightly larger — and unmatted, which adds to their impact. People share the frame with the horses. Those people are Black: cowboys and ranchers and rodeo riders. “My aim is to expand the cowboy icon to include people of color,” McClellan writes. A photograph as powerful, and unusual, as “Cowboy Prayer, Okmulgee, Oklahoma,” expands it beyond race — certainly, beyond the American West — to something

transcendent, with its image of riders on horseback, heads bowed, hands outstretched in a circle or worship.

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The advertisement shows the back and front of a silver Samsung Galaxy S21 Plus 5G. The back view highlights the triple camera system and the 'SAMSUNG' logo. The front view shows a blue and white abstract wallpaper. A white circular badge with '5G' is in the top right corner.

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In Berry's nine color photographs from "Second Chances: Josh's Salvation," a single person shares the frame with horses — or is in a horse context (working in a stable, smoking by a paddock). An Army veteran serving a prison term for second-degree burglary, Joshua Reynolds qualified for a South Carolina program where he would work with retired racehorses. Even without knowing that backstory, Berry's photographs convey a sense of inspiration and possibility. The presence of horses can have that effect.



Landry Major, "Wild." LANDRY MAJOR PHOTO

Even though horses are not indigenous to the American West (Spanish conquistadors brought them from Europe), no animal is more associated with it. The title of Landry Major's series "Keepers of the West" acknowledges that connection, and the nine examples from it very handsomely evoke the connection. Their being in black and white underscores the timelessness Major seeks to convey. Some photographs include humans or human handiwork. Others, like the ravishing

“Winter’s Horses” or “Wild,” are all horse. The sense of personality in the animal looking at the camera in the latter is pretty amazing.



Anne M. Connor, "Two." ANNE M. CONNOR

“I am drawn to shadows and light, motion and quiet moments, the many moods of the horse,” Anne M. Connor writes in an artist’s statement accompanying her series “Equus: The Horse.” The dozen photographs from it include both color and black and white. Connor’s love of these creatures suffuses her work. Perhaps it’s not too much to imagine her identifying with the young woman in “Two.” It’s quite marvelous how the girl’s long blonde hair seems almost interwoven with the mane of the horse she’s embracing. Clearly, for her and Connor both, that embrace transcends the merely corporeal.



Susan Irene Correia, "Peeking." SUSAN IRENE CORREIA

Three of the 15 photographs in Susan Irene Correia's "Power — Dance With Beauty, Play With Abandon, Be Loved" show horse and rider. But the emphasis is unmistakably on the creature wearing the saddle rather than seated thereon. Like Connor, Correia clearly adores horses. These color images are big. The smallest are 2 feet by 2 feet, the largest 2½ feet by nearly 4 feet. Their being unmatted adds a sense of immediacy. We say that a camera "captures" its subject. This is a case where the subject is capturing, or certainly captivating, the camera.



Keron Psillas Oliveira, "Jamal do Drosa." KERON PSILLAS

Keron Psillas Oliveira restricts herself to a specific breed of horse, the Lusitano. She describes them as “the truest essence of Equus.” That’s no small statement. Looking at the 11 examples of her work here, you can see why she might think that.



Mary Aiu, "Dance of the Meren." MARY AIU

As befits its title, there are no humans to be seen in May Aiu's "Unbridled: The Horse at Liberty." These 11 photographs may seem a bit stagy, especially when compared to Berry's or McClellan's, but Aiu might take that as a compliment. Staginess assumes a stage, and the stage here belongs solely to these remarkable creatures. From [Sleipnir](#) to Pegasus, the horse has its place in mythology; and it's the equine mythic that Aiu evokes.



Silke Hase, "Flock Together." SILKE HASE

Silke Hase's "Garden Whimsy" make for a striking contrast with "E. caballus." Its 17 Ziatypes are small, delicate, almost otherworldly. Except that they are very much of this world. They record findings from Hase's garden: dandelions, bees, ants, ferns. What could be more mundane? Yet in appearance they are magical. That's thanks in part to the Ziatype process. Hase brushes a photographic emulsion on watercolor paper, places the negative on top, then exposes the layers to ultraviolet light. That's also thanks to the kind of ardor Hase has for her subject matter. It rivals what Aiu feels for those unbridled horses.

Note that the Griffin will be hosting Zoom two panels with “E. caballus” contributors. On Jan. 25 at 7 p.m. Aiu, Berry, Connor, and Psillas will participate. On Feb. 10, also at 7 p.m., it will be Correia, Major, and McClellan.

E. CABALLUS: THE DOMESTICATED HORSE

Mary Aiu — Unbridled: The Horse at Liberty

Chris Aluka Berry — Second Chances: Josh’s Salvation

Anne M. Connor — Equus: The Horse

Susan Irene Correia: Power — Dance with Beauty, Play with Abandon, Be Loved

Landry Major: Keepers of the West

Ivan B. McClellan: Eight Seconds

Keron Psillas Oliveira — Cavalo Lusitano: The Spirit Within

GARDEN WHIMSY: Silke Hase

At Griffin Museum of Photography, 67 Shore Road, Winchester, through Feb. 27.
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