

# Shadow & Light Magazine

The Art of Photography

## *The Horse*



Image: Susan Friedman (detail)  
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# Showcase Portfolio: The Horse

Keron Psillas: *Precious Exchange*



*Larapio MAC.*

## ***Why do I photograph horses?***

I came out of the womb loving horses. At nearly 4 years-old my family moved to our small farm in West Virginia. Beside us was a pony farm! I would sneak through the fence to try to get one of them close enough to anything (tree stump, rock, fence, water trough) for me to stand on to jump on a pony even for just a few strides. I had a few lessons one summer, got to ride a few times as an early teen, but I did not have my own horse to ride until I was in my mid- twenties. But my passion for the horse was undiminished through all those years. There was just something about being close to one, breathing in their scent, standing as close as possible pressed up against them and just going silent, that made me feel I was in my most natural state. Fully alive, entirely at peace.

I had the great fortune to find, almost immediately, my riding teacher, Dominique Barbier. Dominique is a renowned master of French Classical Dressage. His method is based entirely on the communication we can develop with our equine partner. No aggression, no ego. Fast forward now to 35 years later and we are co-authors and collaborators on five books about the nature of the relationship that is possible with our equine partners.



*Voyeur Filhos do Vento.*

And it is easy for me to say that much of what is important to me in photography, I learned while riding. Dominique would say to his students “riding is easy, thinking is hard.” What he meant was that developing the CLARITY of our thinking is the challenge. Once we have that, the horse will be so tuned into our mental pictures that all the struggle to communicate falls away. Photography is thought made visible. The more clarity we have about what we are trying to communicate with our imagery, the more successful we will be.

When I am photographing a horse, I want nothing less than to communicate their essence, soul, nature, as well as their energetic presence. I often have a relationship with the horses I am photographing. I’ve spent time with them, have ridden many of them, have watched them mature and even pass from this life. And though photographing the Lusitano is bittersweet for me now since the death of my beloved husband (one of our horses fell with him and killed him), seeking the depth of the soul that stands before my lens has only been strengthened. I allow all the layers of emotion that I feel to become calm, I steady my breathing, and then I raise the camera. At that point the magic of this precious exchange can return.

*Keron Psillas*



*Camarguaise horses, near Saints Maries de la Mer.*



*Brilho do Romo, Manege Sant Adelaide.*



*Jamal do Drosa.*



*A1 Capone, Manege Sant Adelaide.*





*Bailado Interagro.*





*Young Stallion, Companhia das Lezirias.*



*Gaston do Drosa.*



*Ultraje, VO at Barbier Farm.*