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Heading to Kentucky: The Scottish Photographer with an Eye for Equines

By Samantha Mattocks *Wed, Mar 13, 2013*

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Photography by Lindsay Robertson

(Lead photo: Leeanne and Showtyme)

Scottish-born photographer Lindsay Robertson is fast earning himself a great reputation in an industry full of image takers. Already highly regarded the world over for his incredible landscape images of Scotland and America as well as further afield. In addition, Lindsay has worked hard over the past few years to create his own individual style of equine photography and the results are more than impressive.

What makes Lindsay's work so unique is that, rather than capturing the horses at shows or in their natural environment, he brings his own studio to the horse and thus creating a dramatic backdrop – akin to a film set – where he can capture the natural beauty of each equine in finite detail. And having horses posing on such a stage truly is taking equine photography to a different level.

It was a few years ago, after returning from a trip photographing the landscapes around the west coast of America, that Lindsay finally began to start work on the project he had conceived some years earlier – studio photography of horses, in what would become known as *The Equine Series*.



"I wanted to create images of horses unlike anything ever seen before, and on a grand scale," explains Lindsay. "I wanted to create a statuesque image of the horse that would connect with those that see it. The studio space provides the ideal stage to isolate the horse from its usual environment – and I had to do all this from scratch as nothing like this had ever been done before."

Lindsay's mobile studio includes a 700 sq ft stage as well as an enormous 3,000 sq ft backdrop of painted muslin cloth, a piece of material so large that it had to be sewn together in the car park of a railway station. Lindsay spent a month painting the muslin with mops and sponges before developing a system of large poles to raise it into place.



Incandescent Flame

At the time, Lindsay was also running landscape photography workshops and one of the workshop participants bred Arabian horses. He invited Lindsay to come and set up the studio in his barn and try it out. However, Lindsay himself admits that he was not a horsey person when he first began to photograph them. "In fact, I found them quite frightening," he says. "Now, I believe they rather like posing for me. Initially, though, asking an Arabian stallion to stand still in a studio setting for as long as needed to capture the image, and without any equipment to restrain the horse, as well as expecting it to handle unknown elements such as lighting, flashes and whirring

cameras, was a big ask. It was with Arabian horses that I honed my technique, posing and photographing a dozen of them and also, vitally, earning their trust."

Lindsay was, in particular, looking to provide an opportunity for each individual horse to project its dominance, displaying its character and spirit within a solitary space that was sympathetic to its size. And he has certainly achieved this.

From the very beginning, people were amazed by Lindsay's results, as well as the patience and perseverance required to capture these images. Lindsay, too, was surprised by how quickly he got the results he was looking for: "I was amazed that we could get a horse to just stand naked and unfettered. It was a very calm atmosphere. I was intrigued..."

Lindsay has since pushed the boundaries further, capturing horse and rider together, as well as taking images of two Arabian stallions together, something he says the horses took to naturally.

The Equine Series immediately took off and, three years later, Lindsay is still as in awe of the images as he was at the early shoots. "Horses are majestic animals with an amazing aura and I wanted to capture their noble nature.

"This project has overwhelmed me and I truly enjoy capturing these truly magnificent animals. When my clients see the resulting images, they are all so thankful, and it humbles me because I just can't believe that I have taken the images. To be able to give such a work of art to someone who loves his or her horse is a completely different feeling of satisfaction than I would get from my landscape photography. I think it is far more fulfilling and personal because it is a living creature. And I am now hooked on horses!"

The Equine Series has already been exhibited at the Royal Scottish Academy and Lindsay's next stop is the Rolex Kentucky Three-Day at the Kentucky Horse Park, Lexington, between 25–28 April.

Further ahead, Lindsay has plans to take his studio to both the US and Australia and capture just some of the magnificent horses found in these parts of the world. I am sure that the results will continue to be as breathtaking as the images from the past three years have.



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