

Gentling

July 7 - September 10, 2023

What he loved in horses was what he loved in men, the blood and the heat of the blood that ran them. All his reverence and all his fondness and all the leanings of his life were for the ardenthearted and they would always be so and never be otherwise.

—Cormac McCarthy, *All the Pretty Horses*

Sibyl is pleased to present **Gentling**, a group exhibition organized around horses as subject matter. The exhibition includes works by 27 artists from New Orleans and elsewhere.

Looking out the windows of Sibyl Gallery, past the traffic of Leake Avenue and the train tracks, out onto the verdant levee that separates the city from the Mississippi River, one is often graced with the almost mystical image of horses meandering by. These horses live at the Riverbend Stables and their ubiquity makes them feel somehow part of Sibyl. Even for those who have no emotional connection to horses, their presence bears notice.

The horse as a subject has fascinated humanity for millennia as a symbol of war, peace, pleasure, and necessity. They have held an unparalleled prevalence in our visual language, from the earliest petroglyphs to the very first film, a series of sequential images of a galloping horse filmed by Eadweard Muybridge. Even as technology progressed and humanity's labor and movement no longer relied on horses, they remained a fixture in our society. They embody both the masculine and the feminine, intertwined with the myth of the American cowboy, and foundational in the modern pink and purple lore of the Horse Girl. They fit as well in the idylls of farms and rural communities, as in the urban streets of New Orleans with Social Aid and Pleasure Clubs, as in the elite world of show jumping and dressage. Though the horse may be obsolete as a tool, they remain fixed as an icon embedded in humanity's past and present.

The exhibition's title denotes the act of nonviolently acclimating a wild horse to human contact. Gentling a horse requires that it feels safe, and learns to trust the human familiar as they bond. Gentling is a conversation; "listening" to the horse is every bit as important as leading it. It is a slow, patient process of approach and retreat that mirrors the relationship between an artist and any subject. Horses hold their space within an art historical canon, an ongoing conversation as contemporary artists continue to explore their symbolism and form.

SIBYL

Gentling features work by Mac Ball, Sue Bowers, Shawn Campbell, Hoi Chan, Nicole Charbonnet, Ariel Claborn, Kjelshus Collins, HP Denham, NH DePass, Paige DeVries, Emily DiPalo, Aron John Dubois, Jennifer Keltos, Rebecca Lowber-Collins, Tommy Malekoff, E Marshall, Tessa Greene O'Brien, Akasha Rabut, Sarah Schlesinger, Aimée Farnet Siegel, Maddie Stratton, David Surman, Jane Tardo, Colin Tom, Carlie Trosclair, Bianca Walker, and Erica Westenberger.

ABOUT SIBYL GALLERY

Founded by Katherine Lauricella Ainsley in 2022, Sibyl Gallery is a contemporary art space in New Orleans dedicated to promoting emerging artists and art practices. Collaborating with artists, patrons, and institutions alike, the gallery aims to continue to diversify and strengthen the New Orleans art community and connect it with the broader international art world. Ainsley previously spent 10 years in New York City, working at Venus Over Manhattan and Tina Kim Gallery.