

“WHEN HORSES FLY, HE TAKES THE PHOTO”

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As printed in The Bedford/Pound Ridge RECORD REVIEW
September 12, 2003



Horseplay takes on a new and creative meaning when Marc Jaffe, a Pound Ridge photographer, gets involved with taking pictures of the four-legged beasts. He chases them around a paddock, daring them to come only hooves away from his nose while he maintains a sure hand and snaps photographs with a different look.

“There are no tricks with the lens or digital enhancements,” Mr. Jaffe said. “What you see is what the camera sees.”

Mr. Jaffe’s venture in to photo-graphing horses began at the suggestion of Allen Reingold, curator of Northern Westchester Center for the Arts, who had been familiar with Mr. Jaffe’s work since the early 1980’s when Mr. Jaffe exhibited landscape photography at the center.

“I thought the images of horses were so powerful,” Mr. Reingold said. “They are absolutely riveting.”

Mr. Reingold is not only impressed with the results Mr. Jaffe achieves with his camera, but also he is amazed at Mr. Jaffe’s technique.

“If you have ever seen him work, he is courageous,” he said. “He just gets in there and look at the result. It is amazing. I love to watch him work.”

Michelle Oren, manager of Exceller Horse Farm in Poughquag, has witnessed the daring of Mr. Jaffe on a regular basis since June. Ms. Oren said when she saw Mr. Jaffe taking pictures for the first time she was more than a little concerned.

“The horses we have here are not your typical backyard horse,” she said. “When you stand in front of them you are not sure they are going to stop. The first time I saw him do this, I said to him, “Sign a release.”

Ms Oren explained that when Mr. Jaffe runs with the horses he gets some great pictures, types she has never seen another photographer produce. “I have six picture of Shadow Fax, a great thoroughbred, that I have hanging on one wall that present a story from a bunch of photographs.”

Referring to Mr. Jaffe’s work, Ms. Oren said it is different from anything she has seen in the past. “You can go into most any home where the people own horses and see pictures of their animals,” she said. “They will have the perfect portrait hanging. The horse is [typically a] still-posed portrait. That is it. With Marc’s methods you can do a whole wall of different shots. Every picture will tell a different story.”

Mr. Reingold, in addition to his duties as a curator, is an illustrator who has among his credits the logo for Tri-Star for the Columbia Tri-Star merger. The Pegasus that comes out of the clouds is the creation of Mr. Reingold, who said, “I couldn’t have done that job without Marc shooting horses for me. He was instrumental in creating that logo.”

Mr. Reingold said Mr. Jaffe is more of an artist than photographer. “That is important,” he said. “We sat down and I told him what I needed for the logo. I told him that I wanted a white horse coming at me and he said he was

going to lay down in front of a horse jumping over a fence. I told him he was out of his mind, but that is what he did. I couldn't have done it without him."

Mr. Reingold said he admired Mr. Jaffe's work for a long time. "The thing that pulled me in was a strong compositional sense in all his photographs," he said. "Most of all he thinks like a painter and you rarely see that with photographers."

Mr. Reingold said he sees the work as movement photographs, and in the movement there are streaks of color that looks exactly like pastels. "That is amazing that he can do that," Mr. Reingold said. "Some of the pieces he had here, it is hard to believe he didn't go over a picture with something to enhance it a little bit, but he didn't."

Mr. Jaffe said he believes his talent is in his ability to visualize the photo. "What you see, the brush strokes, the lines comes from the camera," he said.

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The interplay with the horses could be consider daring, but it is what Mr. Jaffe likes to do and he believes that degree of involvement is necessary to get the final effect.

According to Mr. Jaffe, it is rare to photograph horses with all four feet off the ground. He attributes his ability to do that in part to keeping the horses very active while he photographs them.

"Running toward the horse," he said, "I'm actually playing chicken with the horse. I'll run with them, and that is fun for me and they seem to like it as well."

"Marc likes mixing it up with the horses," Ellen Barth, Mr. Jaffe's partner, said. "I don't like running with the horses, but I do like photographing them."

Mr. Jaffe encourages people to go to his Web site, www.marcjaffe.com, to get a look at his work, or call him at 914-715-6969 for more information.

