

HE SHOOTS HORSES, DOESN'T HE?

He may not be a horse whisperer or a horse lover but LINDSAY ROBERTSON has made his mark in the realm of fine equine art. BY DAZZLYN KOH

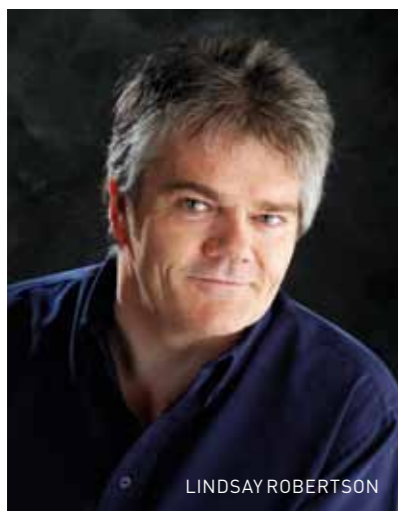
IT WAS JUST one time that Lindsay Robertson rode a horse and he did not like it at all. To make matters worse, that same horse gobbled up his packed sandwiches after the ride. That happened during his teenage years; an impressionable time for most of us.

Needless to say, the Scottish-born photographer never expected that these four-legged creatures would someday become his muse and the subject of his photographic works, but they have.

Today, Robertson is famous for his extraordinary horse portraits shot in a unique mobile studio and his stunning landscape images. Hot on his commission list, Robertson counts clients such as gentry, the wealthy equine-owners, horse-lovers, lawyers and doctors.

His exceptional fine equine photography has been featured in publications and exhibitions in the United Kingdom, Australia and the United States. More recently, he was the only photographer that the esteemed Eastman House (NY) Museum of Photography invited to exhibit at the 2013 Rolex Kentucky Three-Day Event held in April alongside works by the late American photographer Ansel Adams renowned for his black-and-white landscape photographs of the American West.

Despite having his first brush with a camera at age 14, it was only three years later, while working as a



LINDSAY ROBERTSON



SHOWTYME



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junior photographer in an advertising studio, did Robertson realise that he had found his calling. “Within the first hour of starting the job, I knew it was for me,” he quips.

What do you love about photography?

It is such a powerful and influential medium. I like being able to capture that “moment in time” and I derive satisfaction from being able to create a meaningful image, which becomes a lasting work of art.

How did you get into horse photography?

During one of my landscape photography workshops three years ago, I mentioned to a client that I had always wanted to photograph a horse within a stark studio setting. He told me that he has 35 horses and invited me to try it out. The minute I saw the first test image of

one of his Arabian stallions, I thought: “This is amazing. I have something here!”

So, why horses?

I certainly would not have found dogs challenging enough. I chose horses because they are big [and] challenging. It is all about pushing the boundaries of what is achievable photographically. Horses are powerful animals with a special presence, a captivating aura, energy, beauty and character like no other. Being a huge [yet agile] animal conveys so much in their stature, as they always seem poised to gallop off or are always “on edge” no matter how calm they appear. They also have a certain “look” — sometimes I wonder if they are super intelligent or just a bit stupid, but I suspect there is a lot more going on in their heads than we know.

Are you fussy about the breed of horses you work with?

No. I am from a “non-horsey” background and it works in my favour to show no allegiance to a specific breed. They are all magnificent creatures, each with a story to tell.

Describe a typical shoot with a horse.

It is a game of extreme patience and animal psychology. Horses are probably among the hardest animals to photograph. Just one slight movement throws up a vast range of muscle formations throughout their whole body and this can transform the whole power of the image. I always travel to where the horses are, usually in a barn or shed, which is why I developed my portable studio. When the horse enters, it is quiet and serene. I am very relaxed and patient. I let it take in the

surroundings in its own time and only start the session once it is settled. A lot depends on the horse’s owner too, who is always very good at taking my direction to manoeuvre the horse into position.

What do you hope to achieve through photographing horses?

Success, a recognised style of photography and “wow” my clients. So many doubt these are real photographs but they are. I love their reactions when I present them with the finished image. Some have even been reduced to tears.

Is this style of photography unique to you?

As far as I am aware, there is no other photographer capturing horses the way I do. There are other photographers using small

backdrops. However, mine uses a 3,000sq ft one and a fairly complex lighting set up. The whole concept is based on isolating the horse within the huge studio space.

Share your inspiration.

Nature, music and Ansel Adams. Twenty years ago, I came across Adams’ work for the first time and I was blown away by it.

It must be amazing exhibiting alongside works by him.

Exhibiting with Ansel Adams was the pinnacle moment of my career. I was speechless when I received the invitation. Opportunities like that do not just happen but in my case, it did and I could not believe I had such an honour bestowed on me. The exhibition achieved the second-highest number of viewers for an exhibition in Scotland, only trounced by *Star Wars*! The whole experience was a privilege and nothing will top that.

What does creativity mean to you?

Creativity is my world. I find it a privilege that I can survive by being able to do something I love. It is also quite humbling for someone to put their faith in you to commission an artwork. It is a pressure, however, but that is what drives my creativity.

What other types of photography are you interested in?

Landscape photography and editorial photography, where a series of images present a viewpoint and tell a story.

So to conclude: “Fine equine photography is...”

...the ability to capture that image which combines creativity, immense patience and insight from a unique animal, of which naturally commands respect, affection and reverence like no other. 🐾

Lindsay Robertson’s works are available at horsestudios.com (horse photography) and lindsayrobertson.com (landscape photography). Visit the Prestige Singapore Facebook page for more of his works.

Scan to visit the Prestige Facebook site and view more of Lindsay Robertson’s works

