



British Sporting Art

Works from the S.W. Jackman Collection

April 14 to June 6, 2010

Legacy Art Gallery and Café
630 Yates Street
Victoria, BC
250.381.7670
legacygallery.ca



University
of Victoria
Art Collections


Sporting Art: A Social History



The Death, Fores, S.W. c. 1800, tinted engraving

Sporting Art's development was centred in England and for this reason is accepted as being "British". The increased popularity of racing, fox hunting and shooting created a new niche for artists to fill. Naturalism is a theme found throughout this exhibition. These paintings are representations of social life, reverence for the landscape and portraiture. Two talented individuals who emerged from this genre were John Wooten (1678- 1765) and George Stubbs (1724-1806) who were both of critical importance to the development of Sporting Art.

England experienced many changes during the 18th and 19th centuries in large part due to the effects of the Industrial Revolution, which brought people away from the country and into the cities. Exhibitions became a popular social activity during the 19th century, shifting art away from the aristocracy, gentry and various bourgeois classes and into the public sphere. It is important to note that there has always been a hierarchical structure of The Water-Colour Society and other societies of British Artists, which were



salons run by artists who were interested in furthering landscape and genre art. These types of works were not considered to be academic enough and were regarded as ‘humble’ branches of art. The Royal Academy, founded in 1708 with the aid of King George III, was also run by artists, but had an ambiguous relationship with the public due to its ties to royal patronage. Although a few of the artists in this collection do indeed have a connection to the Royal Academy, some even having had the opportunity of showing their work during the prestigious summer exhibition, there was nevertheless a strict hierarchy of subject matter within the academy – paintings of animals came behind historical subjects, portraits, genre, and landscape. It is an interesting parallel that the subject of sport was shaped by the elite classes ability to afford the sporting lifestyle and yet in terms of art criticism, it was seen as a lower form of art making.

The artists in this collection would have been aware of the great sporting artists, and we can see their inspiration and influence from the grand portrayals of the mighty stallion standing proud and strong amidst the luminous landscape to the commotion and excitement of the fox hunt bringing forth to the public the beloved pastimes of 19th century England.

The Horse and Contemporary England

The horse has had a long-standing history throughout visual culture emerging 17,000 years ago with the cave paintings of Lascaux, France, and into more modern times with artists like the Italian Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519), the Spaniard Diego Velasquez (1599-1660), and the Frenchman Edgar Degas (1834-1917). With the perfecting of the thoroughbred horse in the 19th century and the emerging popularity of sporting and equestrian culture, images such as the ones presented in this exhibition emerged. One of the greatest contributors to sporting art was the painter George Stubbs (1724-1806), who was known as ‘Mr. Stubbs the Horse Painter.’ During his lifetime he fell out of vogue as an equine painter, and although his images showcased a great technical ability, he died without receiving the recognition he deserved. It was not until a 1938 essay in *Signature* along with a 1984 exhibition at the Tate Gallery that there occurred a marked a turning point in the popular appreciation of his



Eighth Duke of Hamilton and his Hunter, Garrard, George, c. 1800, watercolour on paper

work. In the 1790s Stubbs painted a stallion named Eclipse. Two hundred years later the British contemporary painter Mark Wallinger created a body of work titled *Race, Class, Sex* (1993) depicting four stallions that could trace their lineage back to Eclipse. In an interview, Wallinger spoke about racing being an important part of his childhood. His connection to racing along with the homage to George Stubbs in *Race, Class, Sex* brings into focus the connection between the historical past and the present even though the notion of a continued hierarchical structure is currently at play. The recognition of Stubbs as a great painter along with *Race, Class, Sex* demonstrates the relevance of these works within the milieu of contemporary British art.

This exhibition provides a window into that special world of British sporting art.

Dr. Sydney W. Jackman

A University of Victoria history professor since 1964, Dr. Jackman was awarded an honorary degree by this University in 1991. During his 21 years in our classrooms he was noted for his “witty and eclectic intellect ... as dazzling in and out of the classroom.” He supported his students by endowing numerous prizes and scholarships including the Victoria Medal and the Sydney Jackman Prize in British History. He has also been a life-long art collector. The University has benefitted from his generous donations, an extensive collection of blue and white Chinese porcelain and a large collection of English 18th and 19th century art. It is from the latter that this exhibition of “British sporting art” has been selected.

“Toby” Jackman grew up in Victoria, graduated from Victoria High School, and went on to take degrees from the Universities of Washington, Cambridge, and Harvard. A prolific scholar, his publications were wide ranging. Local history: collective biographies of the British Columbia premiers and another, biographies of the B.C. lieutenant governors. Traveler introductions to two islands, Vancouver Island and Tasmania. Canadiana: *The Life of Sir Francis Bond Head* (1958), *With Burgoyne from Quebec* (1963), *At Sea and by Land* (1968), and world political history: *Man of Mercury* (1965), *The English Reform Tradition* (1965), *Romanoff Relations* (1969) *Nicholas Cardinal Newman* (1977), *A Slave to Duty* (1979), *A Stranger in the Hague* (1989), and *Chere Annette: Letters from Russia* (1994) are some examples. Dr. Jackman was a true international academic, a fellow of both Clare Hall and St. Edmunds colleges, Cambridge, a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society, a Rockefeller Fellow; he was elected to the membership of numerous learned societies including the Massachusetts Historical Society, the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland, and the Royal Historical Society, London. And he was a dedicated clubman, holding memberships in the Athenaeum and Authors, London, and the Union Club, Victoria. The Maltwood Art Museum and Gallery at the University has also appreciated his long service on its governing and advisory committees. When asked recently as to what had prompted his interest in equine paintings he offered the suggestion that he probably followed the example of his long time friend Paul Mellon whose art collection and endowment founded the Yale Centre for British Art.



List of Works

Mares and Foals, c. 1800, oil on canvas.

Lightly Bright Boy

U009.16.255

Thomson, J. Clifton

21.5 x 26.5 cm

c. 1820

watercolour on paper

Brown Horse

U009.16.257

Thomson, J. Clifton

20.5 x 26 cm

c. 1820

watercolour on paper

Unknown

U009.16.274

Unknown

42.5 x 56 cm

1977

watercolour on paper

*Eighth Duke of Hamilton
and his Hunter*

U009.16.276

Garrard, George

37 x 46 cm

c. 1800

watercolour on paper

Six Horses and a Donkey

U009.16.289

27.5 x 40 cm

Cooper, Edwin

pencil on paper

Drawing of Donkey

U009.16.299

Frost, George

11.5 x 11.74 cm

c. 1800

charcoal on paper

Brown Horse Facing Left

U009.16.305

Thomson, J. Clifton

21.5 x 26.5 cm

c. 1820

mixed media on paper

Horse

U009.16.308

Cooper, Thomas S.

28 x 19 cm

c. 1850

wash, pencil on paper

The Death

U009.16.312

Fores, S.W.

35 x 24 cm

c. 1800

tinted engraving



Horse facing Left, c. 1800, oil on canvas.

Racehorse
U009.16.323
Wheeler, James
40.5 x 51.5 cm
c. 1875
oil on canvas

Bend Or
U009.16.331
A. Clark
35 x 47 cm
c. 1880
oil on board

Horse and Gentleman
U009.16.347
Unknown
47 x 63 cm
c. 1800
oil on canvas

Horse with Saddle
U009.16.364
Unknown
64 x 80 cm
c. 1800
oil on canvas

Horse facing Left
U009.16.365
Unknown
74 x 53cm
c. 1800
oil on canvas

Mill Reef
U009.16.381
Crawford, S.L.
50.5 x 65.5 cm
1978
print on paper

Dog
U009.16.416
Sartorius, J.F.
30 x 32 cm
c. 1800
oil on canvas

Mares and Foals
U009.16.422
Unknown
60 x 93 cm
c. 1800
oil on canvas

A Fox Chase
U009.16.394
Fores, S.W.
25.5 x 35.5 cm
1789
ink on paper



Acknowledgements

Exhibition Curators

Martin Segger

Karen Merrifield

Curatorial Staff

Caitlin Cuthbert, Kate Dahlgren, Cam Northover, Nick Poppell, Leah Taylor, Cindy Vance.

The university thanks Dr. S.W. Jackman for his ongoing advice and support.

Dog
Sartorius, J.F.
c. 1800
oil on canvas

On the cover:
Horse and Gentleman
Unknown
c. 1800
oil on canvas



**University
of Victoria**
Art Collections