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# WILDLIFE ART

**Ralph Oberg**  
Captures Wildlife in  
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Western & Wildlife  
Art

**Women Artists**  
Capture the Power  
of Horses

MAY/JUNE 2008





*Heart of Gold* (pencil, 23 x 16") by Karmel Timmons

# Karmel Timmons

Karmel Timmons credits horses with being the spark that fired her creativity, which led to phenomenal success as a pencil artist.

Though Timmons had been serious about painting and drawing in high school and college, she had not been inspired enough about art to make it a career. It was in 2000, after moving to six acres in Elbert, Colo., and purchasing four horses that Timmons became inspired to pick up a drawing pencil again.



Karmel Timmons

After a 15-year gap, she said, "The horses gave me a spark of excitement. I knew I had to draw them."

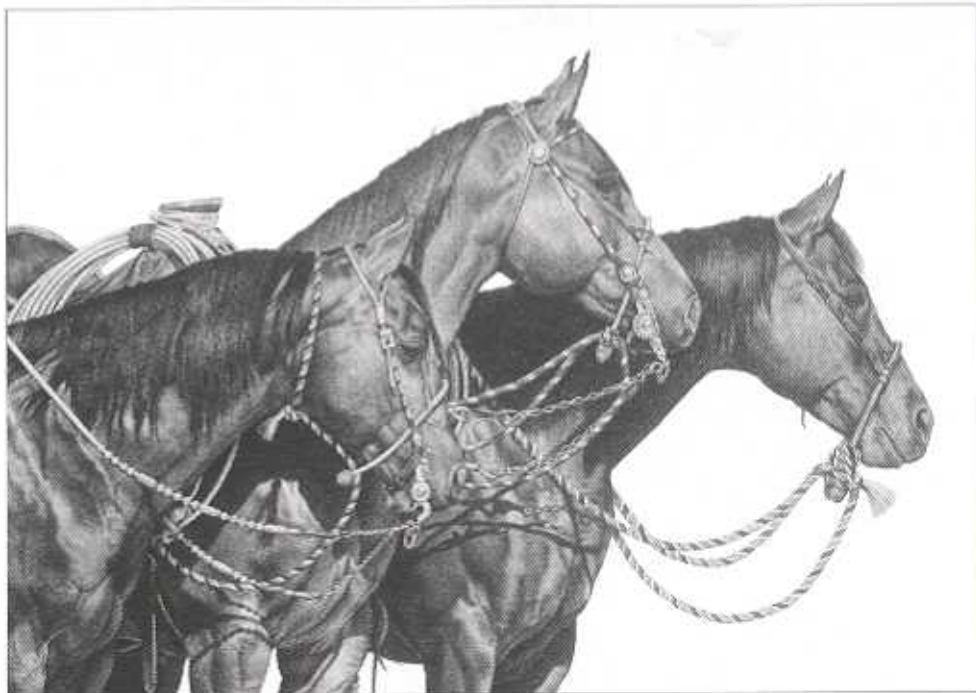
Each piece begins with Timmons taking hundreds of color photographs, which she then studies to determine which ones or portions thereof will translate into a fine art black and white pencil drawing. Once she has a concept in mind, Timmons makes small size pencil sketches until satisfied with the composition, then begins the major drawing on the smooth surface of two-ply Bristol Board Plate paper, which she finds especially superior for rendering the texture of horses. Her drawings are so finely detailed and complicated that they usually take up to a month to complete.

"It is difficult to draw every little thing," she said. "Even the animal's veins must be right. Horse people would know if it wasn't accurate."

She draws seven to 10 hours a day. Timmons usually works on more than one piece at a time, rotating between depicting a lone horse, then one with gear on it and a third one that features a horse and cowboy. "Switching back and forth is what keeps it



*Ranch Hands* (pencil, 18 x 24 1/2") by Karmel Timmons



*Legacy of the Vaquero* (pencil, 21 x 29") by Karmel Timmons

fresh for me," she explained.

Timmons concentrates on portraying "ranchy looking" horses as in *Ranch Hands*, rather than perfectly groomed show horses. "I want to depict the normal working horse with hay in their manes," she said, "the way mine would have looked."

After a serious horse accident, in which she broke her tailbone, Timmons found good homes for the horses that had inspired her to pick up a pencil again. "I wasn't prepared to be a horse owner," she said. "They were green horses and I was a green rider."

Sixteen years from when she picked up a pencil to draw those



*Break Away* (oil, 20 x 30") by Chris Cummings

"green horses," Timmons has become a successful Western artist who has received many awards, including the People's Choice Award at the Buffalo Bill Western Art Exhibit in 2005, and the People's Choice Award at the Coors Western Art Show in Denver from 2005-07.

In 2008, the Coors Show featured her drawing, *Handsome Hank*, as the show poster and her drawing, *Legacy of the Vaquero*, depicting three horses in various stages of training, received the People's Choice Award for the fourth year in a row.

## Chris Cummings

For Chris Cummings, riding her horse on a trail at least two times a week, even during snowy winter weather, is every bit as important as painting equine images. She not only trail rides and camps with horses, but has also taken part in a 25-mile endurance race on her Tennessee Walker, Rocky. It took only two hours for Chris and Rocky to complete, which placed them in the top 10. "I enjoy the partnership of being with my horse," she said.

She pastures two Tennessee Walkers on a 100-acre farm in Amity, Ore., where she and

her family have lived for more than 30 years. Cummings rarely uses her own horses as models. "Because Tennessee Walkers gait rather than trot, they look odd when photographed," she explained. "Their legs go in all directions." Instead, she chooses to paint generic looking horses that belong to friends, she said, "attractive horses that look as if they could be anyone's horse."

Preferring the rich, vivid colors of oil paints, Cummings also enjoys the ease with which they allow her to change her mind during the middle of a painting. "With oils, I can easily change the color of a horse or where it is standing," she said.

Not many of Cummings' horses are standing still. Neither are they haltered or saddled. Instead, as in *Break Away*, *Over the Top* and *Thunder Ridge*, they are running free in colorful bands, galloping through snow, across fields or splashing through water with manes and tails blowing in the wind. Though usually inspired by horses, it was the way sunlight played on aspen trees as well as the way it cast a sheen on the shoulders of the animals as they crossed water that inspired her to paint *Bear Creek Crossing*, which is about landscape as much as it is about horses.

Whether a horse is standing or running, Cummings is an expert at capturing its



Chris Cummings