

TIF SIGFRIDS

## *THE Hollywood* REPORTER

### Gotta See an Exhibit About Rainn Wilson's Horse

by Chris Gardner



Gina Clyne Photography

The actor's miniature horse, Riba, is the central focus of an art installation at the TIF SIGFRIDS gallery that runs through Aug. 8. Animal right activists need not worry: "It's a lot more fun than her wild counterparts are having."

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On the heels of the buzzworthy first U.S. re-creation of Jannis Kounellis' *Untitled (12 Horses)* -- a 1969 artwork staged in Rome featuring 12 live horses tied to garage walls -- comes an installation that also features a horse: a tiny Hollywood one. L.A. gallery **TIF SIGFRIDS**, 1507 Wilcox Ave., is hosting *A Painted Horse* by Joe Sola (With Matthew Chambers, Sayre Gomez, Rudy K. Slobbeck, and others).

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Owned by Rainn Wilson's wife Holiday Reinhorn, Riba roams the gallery space, which has been transformed by interior designer Adam Bram Straus (introduced to the artist by L.A.-based art consultant John Wolf) from a traditional white gallery space to resemble the dining room of a contemporary art collector. (In a press release from the gallery, the fictitious owner is described as "prosperous," a nod to the 17th century when miniature horses were originally bred as pets for nobility, primarily for viewing pleasure.)

The show marks Sola's second showing at TIF SIGFRIDS and according to the gallery, Sola set out to explore contemporary animal grooming by working with a miniature horse. He wound up with Riba – shaved and painted using animal-safe, vegetable-based hair dye – because of a longtime connection to Wilson and Reinhorn (Sola and Wilson were chemistry lab partners in high school; and both Sola and Reinhorn traveled in similar artist circles in New York).

"Riba is a beautiful horse, on the inside and outside. She really likes people, is incredibly patient, and also likes to be the center of attention. ... It was amazing to see how much Riba's presence and personality helps shape the experience of the whole art installation and project. I have made many sketches for this project, but none could capture what it would feel like with Riba in the art installation," Sola tells *THR*, adding that his exploration of animal grooming practices has been an enlightening one. "Since starting the project I have met so many professional creative groomers, and read about others from around the world. It's a very interesting field and craft."

On view Wednesday through Saturday from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. through Aug. 8, the gallery welcomes visitors by appointment only and only four guests are allowed at a time. Riba is shuttled to and from her home in the San Fernando Valley by a professional handler, Madeleine Woodman, who also helps monitor her daily health. But more than just providing food and water, Riba receives A-list-style care including daily Reike treatments and chiropractic care.

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(CAPTION: Joe Sola, Hollywood Hills Living Room, 2015, pigment print on fiber based paper, 26 x 40 inches, Edition of 3, AP)

Reinhorn confirms Sola's statement, telling *THR* that Riba loves all the attention.'

"She's a great individual. Not all horses would be so agreeable to this but it's a great idea for her to participate because it's like what her life is normally like – she's very social," she says, adding that 11-year-old Riba is housebroken and spends a lot of time in their home. "She's like a working girl. She goes off to work in a good mood and comes home in a good mood.

Sigfrids cautions that her gallery has gone to "extreme measures" to ensure that Riba is well taken care of. "As soon as you meet her and see the situation she's in at the gallery you can see that she's really enjoyed being here," she says.

Gallery director Alex Couri adds that not only does Riba "understand that she's coming to work everyday," having her there has changed the work of gallery staffers. "Often times you walk in the gallery and people try their best not to talk to you, but when people are presented with a horse in a gallery, they are full of questions, not only about the horse but how they can interact with her."

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Questioned about what she would tell animal rights activists who might be upset over the installation, Reinhorn says Riba enjoys the process. "We did lots of test runs of different products, but it's been no problem at all. It's easy to apply and it's not something we struggle to remove. She actually enjoys the process of putting it on. It's like a massage," says Reinhorn, whose stable of animals also includes three dressage horses and Riba's "roommate," a half-zebra, half-donkey named Derek.

"She also gets to be in a lovely air-conditioned space with no flies in the summer heat in L.A., getting double the attention she would normally receive. It's certainly a lot more fun that her wild counterparts are having. It's how I'd like to spend my summer – wandering around a gallery of great art. ... The creative mind of Joe Sola is a real pleasure."

In conjunction with the exhibition, the artist produced a series of photographs (displayed above) showing Riba posing in several stunning L.A. homes as well as Mary Weatherford's studio. Those images, while not on view at the gallery, were created to show Sola's intent with the exhibition.

Perhaps this was also one of Sola's intentions as well, but Reinhorn says an unexpected gift of visiting the gallery is the chance to bond with a real live horse. "There's such an opportunity here for people to get to know horses who maybe haven't before," she explains. "They are such emotional beings and they experience us on such an energetic level. To share space with them brings about a very meditative (reaction). It's very healing. They are an incredible part of our humanity that we don't often get a chance to access. In that way, it's a really cool thing to have in downtown Hollywood."