

TIF SIGFRIDS

Glasstire {Southern California visual art}

Joe Sola's Equestrian Abstraction

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Installation view of A Painted Horse by Joe Sola (with Matthew Chambers, Sayre Gomez, Rudy K Slobbeck, and others) [photo courtesy of TIF SIGFRIDS, photo credit: Gina Clyne Photography]

Forty years ago, Joseph Beuys famously spent three days in a gallery with a coyote. More recently, a purple legged dog named Human roamed the corridors of Pierre Huyghe's LACMA retrospective, and earlier this year Jannis Kounellis stabled a dozen horses inside Gavin Brown's enterprise for a restaging of his 1969 piece "Untitled (12 Horses)." Now it's artist Joe Sola's turn to bridge the realms of fine art and fauna.

For his aptly named exhibition, A Painted Horse by Joe Sola, the art trickster has transformed Hollywood storefront gallery TIF SIGFRIDS into the drawing room of an imaginary wealthy collector. Sola recruited interior designer Adam Bram Straus to furnish the space, and he has completely made it over, from wall-to-wall carpeting to a massive steel dining table, bookshelf, and even a liquor cabinet. Perhaps the most important part of the transformation was painting the

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gallery's stark white walls a cool dark bluish gray. On those walls Sola has placed abstract paintings by fellow LA-based artists Matthew Chambers, Sayre Gomez, and Rudy K. Slobeck (an anagram of painter Becky Kolsrud's name), alongside smaller works by Dain Blodorn, Ulrich Wulff, John Pestoni and Peter Halley. The centerpiece of the exhibition however is Riba, a miniature horse whose hair Sola has trimmed and painted with vegetable dyes. Originally inspired by a photo of a painted flower on a horse at the Kentucky Derby, Sola worked through dozens of sketches before arriving at the abstract geometric composition that covers her body. "Riba is my first abstract painting," Sola told me when I visited the gallery last week, "so I thought it would be very important to put my painting in the context of other leading abstract painters, where the ideas could communicate with one another."

Lest anyone think that the gallery is no place for a horse, both Sola and Ms. Sigfrids assured me that the animal is extremely well taken care of. She is only in the gallery three hours a day, four days a week, spending the rest of her time at home with her owner, fiction writer Holiday Reinhorn. Riba's handler is also on site whenever she is. She receives regular chiropractic and reiki treatments. Unlike Kounellis's horses, Riba is allowed to roam the intimate gallery freely. "She lives in her owner's house 25% of the time, so she's very comfortable with this environment," Sola said. "She loves people and loves to be the center of attention."

By turning TIF SIGFRIDS into a collector's domestic space, Sola draws attention to the fact that the gallery is a place where the well-heeled can feel at home. (An accompanying set of photos features the horse in the homes of other collectors.) The underlying financial and social structure of the art world is a theme Sola has explored before. He has previously invited curators to his studio, only to jump out the window, and solicited [a car salesman to sell his paintings](#) at the ALAC fair earlier this year. But why the horse?

Apparently miniature horses were first bred in the 17th century as pets for the aristocracy, who prized them for both visual pleasure and companionship. They were as much a part of the noble person's aesthetic world as the paintings and furniture that filled their homes. In this sense, Sola is not so much bringing wild nature into the gallery as "returning the horse to its first intention" as he puts it. "In some cultures, animals are so much a part of everyday life," he told me, "so it's really excellent for animals to be a part of our culture too, specifically this artistic visual culture."

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Joe Sola, Coldwater Canyon, 2015, pigment print on fiber based paper, 36 x 30 inches, Edition of 3 [courtesy of TIF SIGFRIDS]

A Painted Horse by Joe Sola (with Matthew Chambers, Sayre Gomez, Rudy K. Slobbeck, and others) is on view at TIF SIGFRIDS, 1507 Wilcox Avenue in Los Angeles through Saturday, August 8. Gallery hours are Wednesday – Saturday, 11-3 PM. Between the hours of 1 and 2, Riba will be on break and will not be viewable in the gallery. Appointments are strongly recommended. For appointments email info@tifsigfrids.com.