



## Horses

Jill Greenberg's latest opus  
takes on beasts of burden

by James Thorne  
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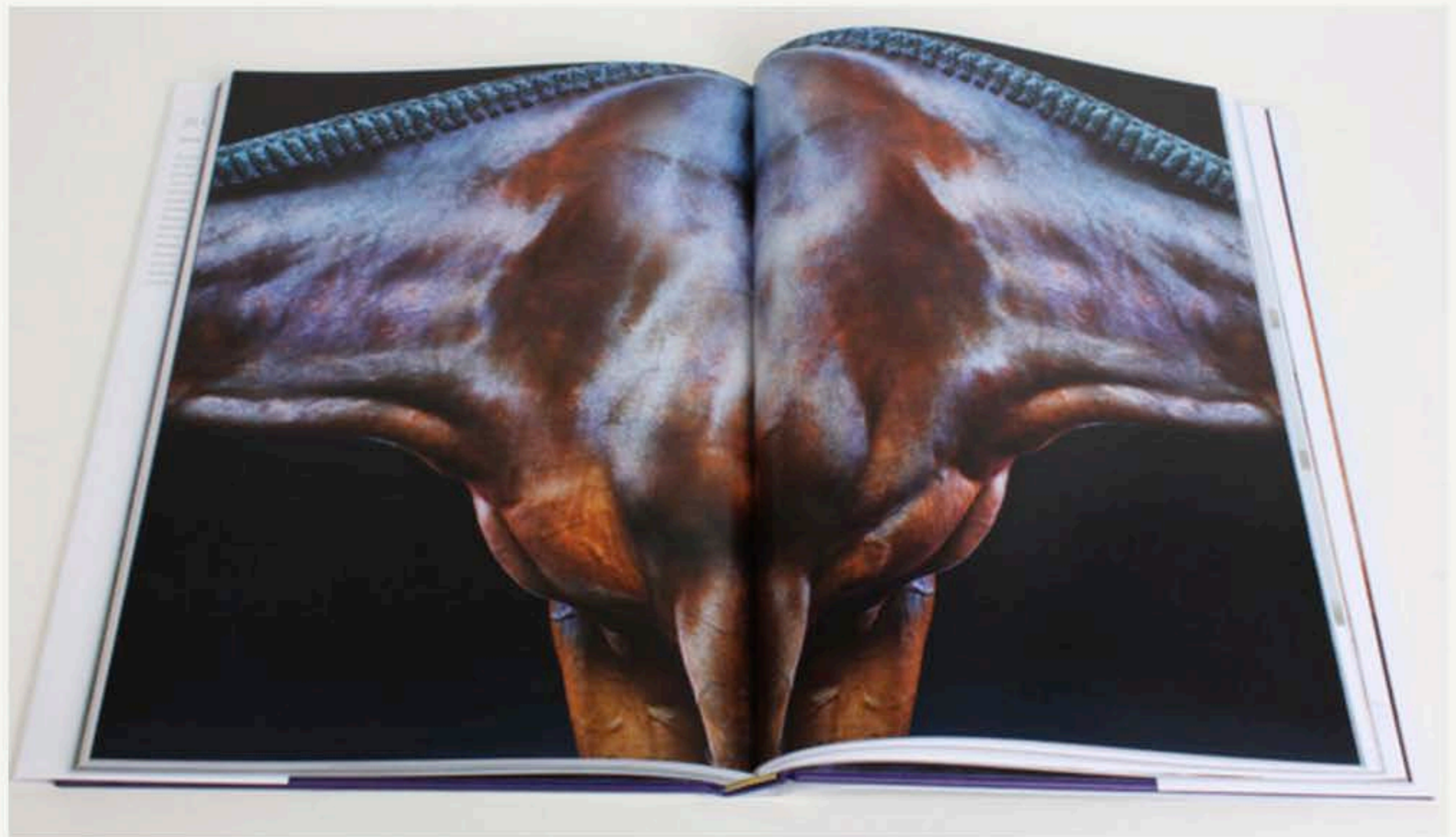


Photographer [Jill Greenberg](#) presents a mystifying new collection in "[Horses](#)," a photography book that showcases equine majesty. Greenberg will be familiar to regular CH readers for her other series, which range from [crying babies](#) to [bears](#) and [monkeys](#). Her style is marked by heavy post production, which in the case of "Horses" takes the form of vibrant reds and purples, fantastical sheens and absent backgrounds.

The focus of "Horses" strays somewhat from her previous work on animal subjects. "If the monkeys and bears series were portraits of animals as actors, these are pictures of horses as if they were supermodels," explains Greenberg. "It's about figure studies and their physiques and their silhouettes." Form, rather than expression, guides the work overall.



In terms of sheer logistics, "Horses" was a massive undertaking. Studios were erected in various arenas across North America, and the unbridled animals—most of them stallions—were then subject to high-powered strobes during the shoots. Greenberg enjoys taking her subjects out of their natural environment, although she admits that the prey animals make for skittish photographic subjects. For a better idea of the experience, take a look at this [behind-the-scenes video](#) from the Vancouver shoot.



As the artist expresses in the introduction, many of the images investigate themes of sexuality. "In my essay, I explore how the photography relates to gender issues and whether horses are perceived as feminine or masculine or both," says Greenberg. "I sort of ended up getting to the place where they're both." Phallic necks and muscles are, in the end, balanced out by feminine curves.

Images of bits and ropes in the early pages of the book set the tone for themes of submission. While the horses are photographed without their harnesses, their expressions show an undercurrent of hesitation and sadness.



Greenberg continues to evolve her post-production techniques. Working with Photoshop since 1990, she has recently downplayed her self-titled monicker "The Manipulator." Using a Wacom pad and stylus, Greenberg has been exploring Photoshop techniques that are more up-front about showing the hand. It is this interplay between photography and "digital painting" that she has set herself apart.



"Horses" is published by Rizzoli and available for purchase from [Amazon](#). A solo exhibition at [ClampArt](#) in NYC titled "Horse" runs from 18 October to 26 November 2012. Two more solo shows will follow at LA's [Katherine Cone Gallery](#) as well as the [Jaski Art Gallery](#) in Amsterdam.

*Images of the book by James Thorne*