

Captured Motion ...

...Hand-Rendered Works in Metal by Kathryn Capley

Artist's Statement

On the backs of horses, humans first departed the earthbound limitations of their bodies. They were able to travel, explore, and work beyond their levels of strength and endurance to accomplish feats impossible before the equine/human alliance. It is difficult to recall a culture that does not demonstrate its reverence for the horse by depicting or referring to it in painting, sculpture, mythology, worship, superstition or folklore.

My sculptures resemble three-dimensional gesture drawings. The quality of the line that describes the volume of the horse creates a circumstance of extreme animation. The energetic form of the horse and the way that it occupies and structures its surrounding space provides a context that allows one to easily engage and observe the complete expression of an instant. My sculpture continues the tradition of demonstrating reverence for the iconic place which the horse occupies in our psyche. - Kathryn Capley

Kathryn Capley

By Ron Jackson (an interview)

Kathryn Capley was given her first horse a month before she was born, and doesn't remember learning to ride. Her father, Mike Betley, is an equine veterinarian, and her mother grew up riding hunters and jumpers and, as an adult, trained harness racehorses. As Kathryn grew up, each day was spent working in the barn and caring for horses. As an adult, she taught riding lessons to kids and managed a farm of 40 horses, including breeding, foaling, breaking, training, and sales. Eventually, it became clear that art should come first and she now works full time at the business of being an artist.

Capley's talent was first recognized when she was six and won an award for one of her drawings. Kathryn's gift was again recognized when she was accepted into the Art Institute of Chicago at age 16, based on the submission of her portfolio. She finished high school in three years and graduated Illinois State University with a BFA with Honors. She has now been a professional artist for about 17 years.

Currently, Capley has one equine companion, Admiral, a ¾ TB/ ¼ Percheron cross whom she has trained to third level dressage and taught to drive.

The power, energy, and emotion that are depicted in Capley's work embody the essence of life and motion. Figures are not depicted in a static pose; rather, they are



captured in a phase of motion. Beyond being animated, each figure expresses an emotion which further engages the viewer.

People ask, 'How do you do this? Do you use photos?' Kathryn explains that while she uses photos for reference, she actually feels the motion and expression intrinsic to the movement that is depicted in the sculpture she is making. This is how she is able to convey such an understandable level of animation.

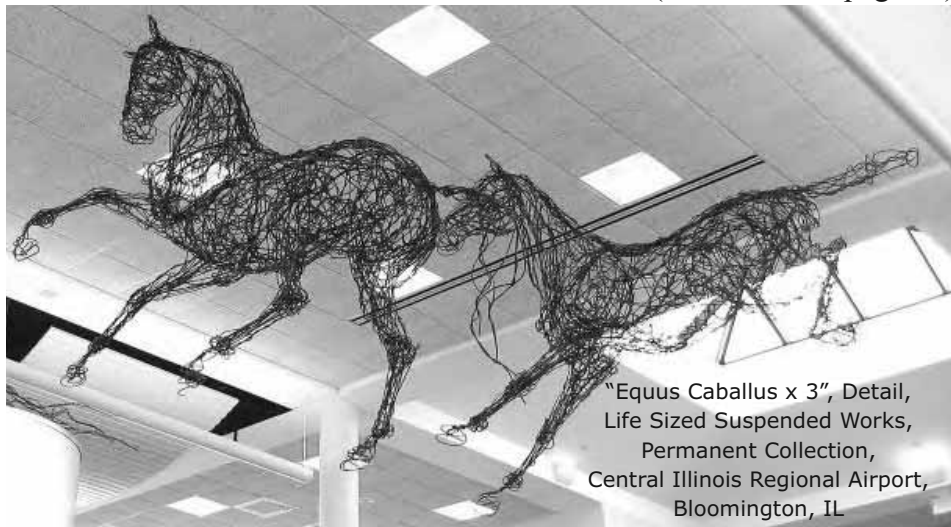
Technically, she may be described as an *anamalier*, a French term used to describe an artist who depicts animals. While she fashions a variety of animals, she is best known for her equine work.

Any figurative subject may be commissioned. Portraits of horses, dogs and cats have been executed. It is best to work from

several photos of the individual, though not necessary, as Kathryn has been commissioned to do deceased pets. Even a portrait of a pet dog combined with the mythical Norse god, Fenris, has been commissioned. If possible, Kathryn prefers to take measurements of the animal, analyzing the proportions of the body according to the length of the animal's head. The client is also asked to supply a list of adjectives describing their animal and what they would like to see the sculpture express.

Despite the abstract nature of her sculptures, they are anatomically, correctly-rendered figures, ranging in size from a mere 4" high, to life-sized. All works are metal; smaller works being made of wire, steel and copper; and larger works being made from

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"Equus Caballus x 3", Detail, Life Sized Suspended Works, Permanent Collection, Central Illinois Regional Airport, Bloomington, IL



“Capley;” (Continued from pg 64)

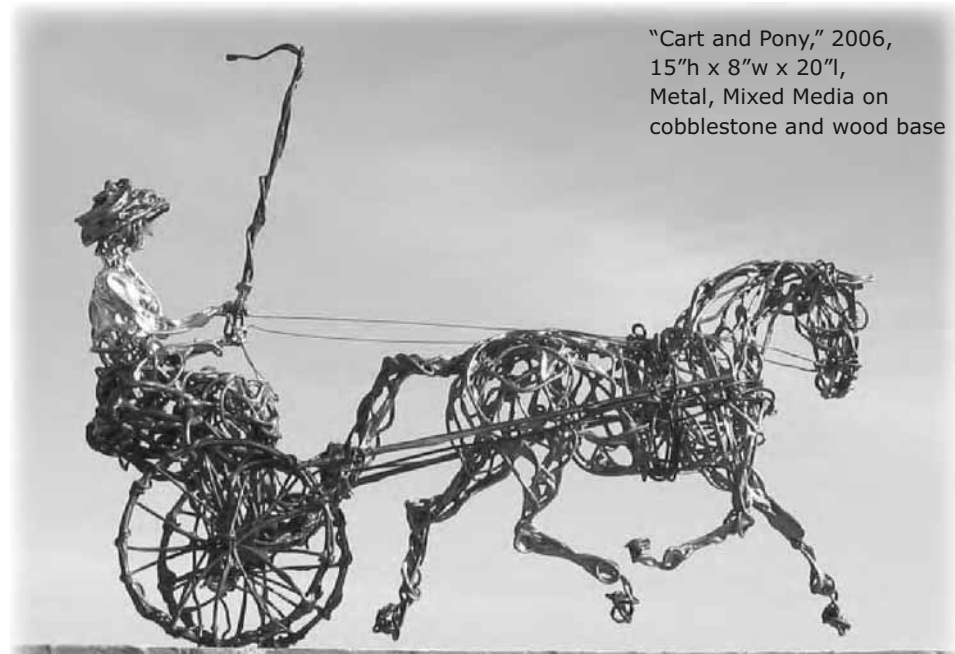
industrial tubing. The works are painted.

Medium and life-sized works are made to be displayed outdoors, but of course, may be displayed indoors as well. Ms. Capley's sculpture is an excellent addition to any landscape design. Like light on water, the play of sun and shadow on the surface of the sculpture further animates these works. It is particularly interesting to view the sculpture in the snow and when lighted at night.

Making this sort of sculpture is physically demanding. She uses very few tools -only pliers, a channel lock, bolt cutters and hammer, and of course, in a direct fashion, her hands. Much physical, mental and spiritual energy is expended while executing a work.

Images of Ms. Capley's work have appeared on many magazine covers, including the *Chronicle of the Horse*.

Suspended life-sized sculpture wonderfully compliments contemporary architecture. The energy and animation of the work pulls the viewer's eye and mind through the space activating it, as the sculpture appears to respond to its environment. The Central Illinois Regional Airport in Bloomington, IL has three life-sized works suspended over the arrival/departure gates. The sculpture is part of their permanent collection. Fal-mouth Farm and Stables in Arena, WI, owns two life-sized suspended works displayed in their clubhouse, and Barrington High School in Barrington, IL, owns a galloping Polo Pony suspended over the main entrance. The sculptures are suspended by 1/16" stainless steel aircraft cable. Additionally, Capley's sculpture can be found in several corporate and private collections, including Jaqueline B. Mars, The Plains, VA; Stoll, Keenon and Park, LLP, Lexington, KY; the permanent collection of the United States Eventing Asso-



“Cart and Pony,” 2006, 15”h x 8”w x 20”l, Metal, Mixed Media on cobblestone and wood base

ciation, Leesburg, VA; Lamplight Equestrian Center, Wayne, IL; and the permanent collection at the American Academy of Equine Art, Lexington, KY.

Capley's sculptures have been known to evoke strong emotions, with commissioned works having elicited tears. And strangers have called her from around the country to say how much they have been moved by her work.

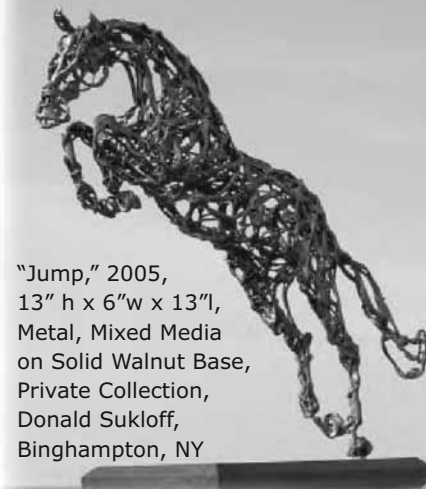
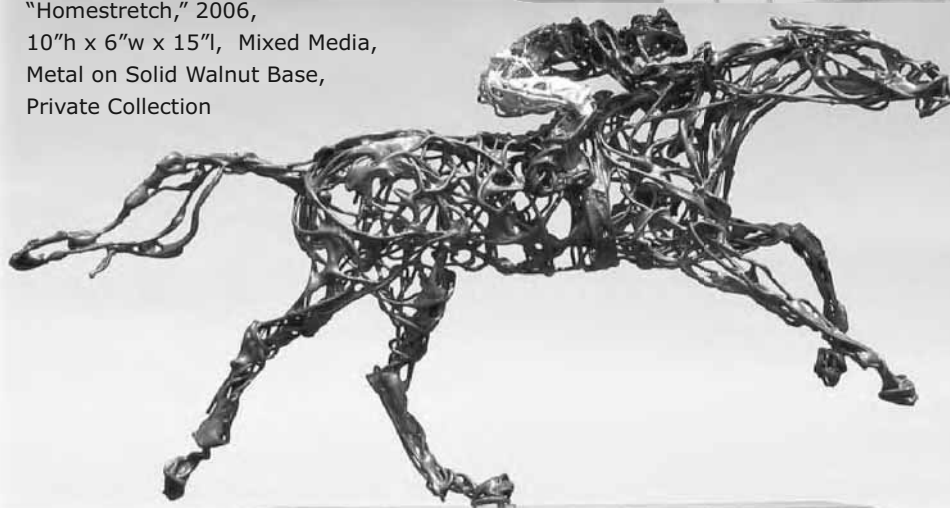
Capley loves having her pieces out in the world, in public and private collections, and knowing that her work is communicating a profound understanding of our human/animal connection.



Life-sized suspended work. Central Illinois Regional Airport, Bloomington, Illinois



“Homestretch,” 2006, 10”h x 6”w x 15”l, Mixed Media, Metal on Solid Walnut Base, Private Collection



“Jump,” 2005, 13” h x 6”w x 13”l, Metal, Mixed Media on Solid Walnut Base, Private Collection, Donald Sukloff, Binghamton, NY