

Tim Flach
More Than Human - Extended Text



Horse Mountain

Is it a mountain? Is it a horse? This image is carefully constructed to be both just abstract, and just recognisable enough to keep the viewer guessing. Modernist architect Mies van der Rohe's famous aphorism *Less is More* is called to mind with the visual simplicity of the image. It says so much by having so little in it; it is just a white shoulder and mane on a black background, yet suggests a detail of a beautiful horse, and at the same time a pristine snow covered mountain.



Chestnut Window

This highly constructed image, is of an Arabian Halter horse, or show horse, truly a supermodel of the horse world. It has been carefully structured to allude to George Stubbs' famous painting *Whistlejacket*, utilising both similar tones and pose. Taken at the pristine Ajamn Stud, it was lit by flash indoors, looking out of the window to the bright Emirati sunshine. The camera captures the darker indoors and the lighter outdoors in a way that the human eye normally cannot see. The overall effect is slightly unreal, or perhaps *hyperreal*, part painting, part photograph.



Head Protector

This horse may be tough, but he's not a professional boxer. His daffodil headwear is actually an equine head protector, a mask used to prevent trauma after surgery. Many such types of headwear have been designed for horses throughout history; armour to protect in battle, blindfold hoods to calm a horse in transit, riot gear for police horses. This is testament to the fact that historically, horses have been incredibly important to mankind. Our whole history has been shaped by horses: the way we work, play, travel, fight battles and even heal the sick has been profoundly affected by our equine relationships.



Mags wild thing

It's not easy to get a highly stylized, detailed and studio-lit image of a horse in full gallop, to really see the veins in her face, the look in her eye, and to capture the power and speed of the horse. To get this up-close and personal running shot of Mags, a full studio lighting setup was erected in an open truck, which drove alongside her as she ran.



Embryo - Day 30

These two images show equine embryo development at day 30, and at day 85. At day 30, crown to rump length is just 12mm. It is not quite recognisable as a horse yet: what you think you see as a head, is actually the tiny horse's tail. The embryo at day 85 is even more perplexing. Preserved in formaldehyde, it is far more recognisable to us as a foal than at day 30, and our natural tendency to empathise makes us question whether it is gesturing with its ar, or even smiling. This foal's mother died of colic, and as a result her foal died at day 85 of gestation, but the image itself is ambiguous, and could almost be of peaceful sleep.

The process of single embryo transfer is only regularly used on humans and horses. In the case of horses, it is done for economic management, particularly for Arabian show horses and polo ponies, although the process is banned by the Jockey Club for racehorses. It is a means of sparing a highly valuable mare from the dangers of pregnancy and labour, and creating another financial asset in the form of the foal.