

TARPAN

REPAINTING AN ANCIENT PICTURE



A FILM BY HORSEFLY FILMS

HORSEFLY FILMS PRESENTS "TARPAN: REPAINTING AN ANCIENT PICTURE"
PRODUCED & DIRECTED BY JEN MILLER & SOPHIE DIA PEGRUM
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY SOPHIE DIA PEGRUM WRITTEN & EDITED BY JEN MILLER
ASSOCIATE PRODUCER SCOTT BENJAMIN

SYNOPSIS

TARPAN: Repainting An Ancient Picture

A Documentary Film by Horsefly Films

TARPAN: Repainting An Ancient Picture is the second in an ongoing series of informative and beautiful films documenting and celebrating rare equine breeds and the unique, and often vanishing, cultures surrounding them. This film is part of Horsefly Films' Rare Equine Trust's lovingly-crafted film atlas of the horse and humanity.

This remarkable series of films explores the singular relationships between man and horse through history, featuring interviews and breathtaking footage of the horses themselves. Many of these rare equine breeds are facing extinction. As well as telling the stories and distinctive histories of these horses, we as filmmakers also hope to draw attention to horses whose futures may be threatened.

The history of man IS the history of the horse. If we fail the horse, what then of our future? From the sword to the plowshare, through our most arduous and treacherous endeavors, humanity owes an incalculable debt to the noble horse. Not only has mankind built civilizations on the backs of horses, the equine has historically conferred prestige, epitomized freedom, and represented strength, swiftness and beauty, as well as playing into regional identity and economics.

TARPAN is the story of mankind's attempt to bring back a horse from the dead. Tarpan had roamed in wild herds across Europe for millennia, running through the dreams of our ancient ancestors and onto prehistoric cave walls. Extinction of the Tarpan in the early 20th century left these rare images as a haunting reminder and cautionary tale for all mankind.

The film takes us on a unique journey of discovery, illuminating the dark past of the hunting lodges of European nobility, miraculous scientific coincidence and the chilling efforts of genetic breeders of the past. World Wars and doomed attempts to re-engineer the horse left a hopeless situation.

Finally, the careful work of an international group including the Polish State Studs, the work of biologists and environmentalists in the Netherlands and the tireless efforts of a dedicated group of scientists and field biologists in Bulgaria brought a small herd of modern Tarpan to the remote Rhodope mountains of eastern Europe.

Here the horse faces a whole new challenge, struggling to become wild once again and bravely learning to find a way back to their ancient selves, facing a different, more archaic predator than humans.

Shot on location in Bulgaria and Poland, this fragile tale is the repainting of an ancient picture.

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REVIEWS FOR TARPAN

You nailed it. This is really, really good... what really impressed me with the film was how you handled the delicate question of whether humans can truly recreate a breed. In my opinion, you nailed it. I would be proud to have this production shown at the International Museum of the Horse.

~Bill Cooke
Director, International Museum of the Horse

Smitten. Again. As Usual. Great work.

To watch a Horsefly Film like TARPAN: Repainting An Ancient Picture, is akin to a private tour of the most interactive natural history exhibit in the world (and an equi-centric world, at that).

The last pure Tarpan was lost to the wild in the Ukraine in 1879; the last in captivity by 1918. What Jen Miller and Sophie Dia Pegrum, who produced and directed this half-hour documentary, shot on location in Poland and Bulgaria, have achieved is nothing short of historic in capturing a ground floor effort to bring a breed back from the dead and reintroduce a "modern Tarpan" to its ancestral home.

In August 2014, a second herd of 35 Tarpan were released to Bulgaria's Rhodope Mountains, and in October 2014, Horsefly Films released TARPAN: Repainting An Ancient Picture, the second in its Rare Equine Trust Film Library series of intelligent, exceptionally photographed and detailed films, narrated by James Herron, that introduce us to rare equine breeds and the often vanishing cultures around them.

TARPAN joins Horsefly Films' Of Gods and Kings: The Skyros Horse, in a lovingly-crafted, ongoing "film atlas" about horses and humanity while reminding us that the fate of each of the world's vanishing and fragile breeds remains ultimately entrusted with us.

~L A Pomeroy

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

Horsefly Films is a film production company in California whose mission and passion is to create beautiful cinematic films of horses and related horse culture. Jen Miller and Sophie Dia Pegrum, the two filmmakers behind Horsefly Films, won top honors in the renowned Scriptapalooza screenwriting competition on a joint project and have worked together since to bring their vision to the screen as a team, carving out a distinctive niche by making films about famous horses, rare horses and humanity's history and changing relationship with this special animal. Working for both private entities as well as making documentary films, Horsefly Films has received significant credit for making cinematic and compelling films in a popular niche genre, where often only well-meaning but insipid films existed.

"What public television's guru of history documentaries Ken Burns did for the Civil War and baseball, Jen Miller and Sophie Dia Pegrum have done in their intelligent, coherent, photogenic, and beautifully-produced documentary on the history of the Polish Arabian and its survival amid the ravages of war and turmoil. I urge anyone with an interest in the breed, or the effect of geo-political systems on national identity and history, to check it out."
~ LA Pomeroy - International Alliance of Equestrian Journalists - on "Path to Glory"

"It is debatable whether Sophie and Jen are horsewomen or filmmakers first. They have so effortlessly bound the art of the latter with the beauty of the former that there are no clear lines of distinction. Their films capture the magic of the horse like no other..."
~Samantha Mattocks -The Arabian Magazine

Horsefly Films is knowledgeable about people and their relationships with horses, how to film horses, and why this unique relationship is enduring and interesting. They have forged relationships with scientists - folks who are interested in the genealogy of the equine and are glad for this documentation, as well as social historians, who believe that societies can be described and determined by their historical relationships (or lack thereof) with the horse. They believe that the film is story-worthy, but also has sociological value. These cultures and horses will likely be gone all too soon, and so their films are a contribution to recordmaking in what they hope is a valuable and longstanding way. Despite modern technology making horses obsolete for many, the debt to history remains. They are an integral part of who we are, of who we become. By telling the stories of this rare and distinctive relationship, we can make that bond indelible.

Cutting her teeth on "Forrest Gump", Jen Miller's subsequent inauguration in the film business was producing a feature film for MGM, on which she also served as Music Supervisor and Creative Director for the publicity campaign, overseeing key art one-sheet and trailer production. She was nominated for a Key Art Award as Copywriter and Creative Director for her efforts. Over the next five years, Jen directed and produced music videos for MTV through her own production company. As a music supervisor she put together the soundtracks for several feature films for Miramax and MGM films and also free-lanced as a music supervisor, producing music for films, commercials, trailers and TV series. As a screenwriter, her screenplays won honors in the Sundance writing program and have been optioned and produced by companies such as Columbia Tristar and Stormworks entertainment. Her first novel "Billy Bones" was a semifinalist in the 2011 Amazon Next Great Novel contest.

Sophie Pegrum is a director and filmmaker who has made films in the Antarctic, at the

North Pole and in the Himalayas. Co-owner of production company, Horsefly Films based in Los Angeles, Sophie is also an accomplished painter. Horsefly Films produced the award-winning documentary "Path to Glory" and have embarked on a series about rare equine breeds and the lesser-known horse cultures of the world. They also produce promotional films, training videos and commercials. Sophie wrote and directed her debut feature film "Dogstar" in 1997 and she directed and shot the documentary "77 Below" about Earth-artist Lita Albuquerque and her Antarctic Stellar Axis installation in collaboration with the National Science Foundation. Sophie traveled to the North Pole as the filmmaker and photographer in residence on Russian Icebreaker, Yamal, further documenting the artists work. Recently, she has been shooting a film in Jumla, Nepal entitled "Daughters of the Curved Moon".

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RARE: 1) *Of unusual, uncommon & distinctive quality, merit or appeal;*
2) *superlative or extreme of its kind;* 3) *seldom occurring or found*

The *Horsefly Films Rare Equine Trust*, is dedicated to the preservation of endangered rare equines around the world, specifically through the creation of a cinematic library. There are over 600 rare equine breeds worldwide so the work is ongoing as we try and shed light on the most unique among these.

This film library takes form with the new documentary film, "**Of Gods & Kings: The Skyros Horse**", featuring the critically-endangered Skyrian Horse of remote Skyros Island in Greece.

The RARE series of films captures the beauty, history and the fragile position of rare breeds and the work of those trying to preserve them, establishing a necessary and compelling film folio for equine enthusiasts, social historians and general audiences while archiving these breeds and related cultures for posterity.

The filmmakers fervently believe the horse is a reminder of man's loftier connection to nature and many of these breeds will disappear without intervention - a great loss to humanity. Despite modern technology making horses obsolete for many, the debt to history remains. They are an integral part of who we are, of who we became, and it is our duty to preserve that bond.

The Horsefly Films Rare Equine Trust hopes to partner with other societies, museums and organizations around the world working to educate the public and shape a viable future for rare equine breeds everywhere.

A LETTER FROM THE FILMMAKERS

As passionate filmmakers, storytellers and great lifelong admirers of the horse, creating this film has been a unique labor of love. For us, the connection between the human and the horse has always been inherently interesting—an almost mythical bond in which horses allow us a relationship, carrying us forth, imbuing us with their power as if we had wings. That union is larger than life and inspires us in our work, to always strive to capture that magic on film. The horse and the moving image are a match made in heaven—their beauty, power, movement, grace and bravery—no other creature is so tailor-made for the alchemy that is filmmaking.

After our work creating our first documentary feature *Path to Glory: The Rise & Rise of the Polish Arabian Horse*, we knew there was much in the equine world that was untapped. We were inspired to create an ongoing series of documentary films that explores truly rare equine breeds and their related cultures around the world. Our fervent underlying belief that the history of man is the history of the horse, coupled with our deep passion for creating cinematically beautiful and emotional stories drove us to create *Of Gods And Kings*, the first of our Horsefly Films Rare Equine Trust Film Library. Now we are proud to unveil the second in the series, **TARPAN: Repainting An Ancient Picture**.

The horse is a reminder of man's connection to loftier nature. What happens when the last of a breed disappears? Man can destroy or create even beyond human imagination. It seems preservation is a harder skill. This story is uniquely significant and traces man's attempt to right an ancient wrong. Our passion for this story multiplied as our film grew and we connected to those involved in rewilding this breed. Our most fervent hope as filmmakers and horsewomen is to share this utterly unique horse with the world. To have audiences respond with a desire to get involved in rare equine preservation is the greatest achievement this film could have. We have formed our Horsefly Films Rare Equine Trust to oversee dissemination of a portion of the film's proceeds to rare equine breeds around the world and to work with museums and other organizations in that endeavor.

We are without doubt, unabashedly enthralled with the horse and we wanted to give something back to them for all they have given the world. **TARPAN: Repainting An Ancient Picture** was born out of our intense desire to tell this unique story to people everywhere.

We hope you enjoy the film.

Jen Miller & Sophie Dia Pegrum
Horsefly Films

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Two Modern Tarpan among the ruins of Sbor, Bulgaria.



Two Modern Tarpan look out to the future in the Rhodope Mountains of Bulgaria.

rareequinetrust.com 323-445-8871 or 323-356-4472
ien@horseflyfilms.com or sophie@horseflyfilms.com



Two modern Tarpan play at the watering hole in the Rhodope mountains of Bulgaria.



Two Tarpan stallions fight for mares in the Rhodope mountains of Bulgaria.

