



NATIONAL SPORTING LIBRARY & MUSEUM
A RESEARCH CENTER FOR EQUESTRIAN, ANGLING AND FIELD SPORTS

PRESS RELEASE

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FROM:
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Caption: *Dead Heat*, 1999
58 x 36 inches, oil on canvas
courtesy of the National
Sporting Library & Museum,
© Clarice Smith

Clarice Smith: Power & Grace
At the National Sporting Library & Museum

MIDDLEBURG, VA – *Clarice Smith: Power and Grace* on view from April 11 to September 28, 2014 at the National Sporting Library & Museum, in Middleburg, Virginia, offers a comprehensive range of the artist's equestrian subjects. The exhibit spans over thirty years with almost forty paintings from the early 1980s to the present.

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“I paint my life,” Clarice Smith says quite matter-of-factly. She and her husband Robert H. Smith acquired Heronwood Farm to start a breeding program in Upperville, Virginia in 1983, having had an interest in race horses for several years. This presented a whole new subject matter for the D.C. artist’s already varied oeuvre of landscapes, portraits, and still lifes. Classically trained, she was a member of the George Washington University art faculty from 1980 to 1987, teaching portraiture and watercolor, after receiving both her B.A. and M.F.A., from the University, writing her dissertation on John Singer Sargent. Then Smith was awarded Doctor of Fine Arts, Honoris Causa, in 2012.

Smith’s racing scenes, the equestrian subject for which she is best known, are well represented in the exhibition. Foreshortened compositions with low perspective draw the viewer into thundering hooves and flying dirt, and tightly framed views of jockeys astride, clamoring for position, prove the power of Smith’s work.

There is, however, a softer side too. Graceful compositions such as Mr. Smith with back turned, standing at a paddock fence with his horses lined up to



Caption: *Paddock Rendezvous*, 1991
24 x 36 inches, oil on canvas
courtesy of the National Sporting
Library & Museum,
© Clarice Smith



Caption: *Dead Heat*, 1999
58 x 36 inches, oil on canvas
courtesy of the National
Sporting Library & Museum,
© Clarice Smith

greet him, completed in earthy brown tones; and equine portraits imbued with personality, show intimate moments as well.

There is a refreshing sincerity about Smith and her work that cannot be denied. She is not a sporting artist in the traditional sense, but instead creates her equestrian compositions with the eye of a contemporary artist. Influenced by several traditions, she seeks to convey an interpretation of the moment, sometimes riotous, and at other times tranquil. Equestrian subjects inspire her; “I see the horse as a dynamic beautiful form; a combination of power and grace.”

The National Sporting Library & Museum is dedicated to preserving, promoting and sharing the literature, art and culture of equestrian, angling and field sports. Founded in 1954, the institution has over 26,000-books dating from the 16th-21st centuries. The John H. Daniels Fellowship program supports the research of visiting scholars. The Museum, a newly renovated and expanded historic building on the Library campus, houses exhibits of American and European animal and sporting fine art. Information is shared through exhibitions, lectures, seminars, publications and special events. The NSLM is open to researchers and the general public.

Admission to the National Sporting Library & Museum:

- Library Free | Museum Free for NSLM Members
- Free Wednesdays and the last Sunday of each month.
- General Admission for Museum: Adults \$10, Seniors (65 and older) \$8, Youth (13–18) \$8, Youth (12 & under) Free

NSLM hours: Wednesday - Saturday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.

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