

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Neil Latham: American Thoroughbred

Exhibition: June 9<sup>th</sup> – July 29<sup>th</sup>, 2016

Opening Reception: Thursday, June 9<sup>th</sup>, 2016, 6 – 8 PM

Steven Kasher Gallery is pleased to present the debut exhibition of *Neil Latham: American Thoroughbred*. The show will feature over 25 large-scale black and white photographs of America's greatest race horses including the winner of the Triple Crown, American Pharoah. The show is held in conjunction with the publication of Latham's monograph *American Thoroughbred* (Twin Palms, 2016) and on the occasion of the 2016 Belmont Stakes.



In 2013, Latham took a drive from New York City north into horse country to clear his head after his mother's passing. "I remember the instant it happened. I saw the muscular shoulder of a horse standing by a fence, and I flashed on my mother's similar back shoulder as she worked in her rose garden. I stopped breathing. I hit the brakes and stared." Then he did what came naturally as a photographer: he reached for his camera and began to photograph. "The muscular definition and power of the animal was intriguing to me. I tapped into something in that split second, and it linked to my mother. I felt compelled to discover what the connection was." What he recorded that day on film launched him on a three-year journey to explore the enigma of the American Thoroughbred.

Latham convinced horse owners and trainers to let him photograph their multimillion-dollar racehorses. He crisscrossed the country loaded with equipment. He spent months sleeping in the groom dorms at Saratoga Race Course and camping in a tent at Kentucky Horse Park. He photographed thoroughbred legends such as A.P. Indy, Curlin, Tapit, Rachel Alexandra, and Ghostzapper and shared a unique connection with retired racing legend Zenyatta, the winningest horse of our time.

What is it about these animals that continues to captivate us? The relationship between man and horse is undoubtedly unique. Perhaps we relate to their incredible strength, which we aim to conquer. Recent studies have shown that when in contact a horse's heart rate may mirror a human's emotions, signifying an unspoken form of communication between man and beast. Artists carved crude images of horses on cave walls in the prehistoric era. Thousands of years later, these magnificent creatures continue to fascinate us. Thoroughbred racing, which was developed

in France during the 19th century, inspired the Romantic and Impressionist artists. Latham's portraits extend this long tradition. Classical yet remarkably fresh, his photographs examine the thoroughbred as it has never been captured before.

Latham spent months photographing at premier race courses and horse farms, roaming the stables, seeking to comprehend the special pride and dominant air that the thoroughbreds embody. Latham experimented with various cameras and films, with lighting and exposure, and with large-scale sets to achieve his creative vision. He decided to use only natural lighting, creating a further set of technical challenges, and chose to shoot on film with medium and large-format cameras. "To portray true essence, the image has to be truthful, I used film because it can't be manipulated like digital photography. Film also gives a softness and subtlety that enhanced the emotional connection."

Latham built a remarkable portable studio with a black backdrop 20 feet tall and 36 feet wide held up with industrial stands, staked to the ground. The entire set had to be rotated 10 degrees every fifteen minutes to maintain the perfect angle to the sun; in a full day twenty-seven times. Each photograph was based on an initial sketch.

Latham says, "As an artist, I'm intrigued by the juxtaposition of strength and power with beauty and fragility, the illustration of determination and character through taut muscles and coursing veins after a fast-paced run, the wild spirit of a charging herd. I've never felt as deeply about anything as I have about this work."

Neil Latham was born 1969 in Warwickshire, England, and lives and works in New York City. Latham is a fine art and commercial photographer. From an early age, Latham was exposed to photography by his parents who always carried their 35mm cameras. After the passing of his mother, Latham's work has made a major shift toward the more personal and serious, starting with *American Thoroughbred*.

*Neil Latham: American Thoroughbred* will be on view June 9<sup>th</sup> – July 30<sup>th</sup>, 2016. Steven Kasher Gallery is located at 515 W. 26<sup>th</sup> St., New York, NY 10001. Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday, 10 AM to 6 PM through July 8<sup>th</sup>. Summer hours begin July 11<sup>th</sup>, Monday – Friday 10AM to 6PM. For more information about the exhibition and all other general inquiries, please contact Cassandra Johnson, 212 966 3978, [cassandra@stevenkasher.com](mailto:cassandra@stevenkasher.com).