



In a way, the horseback rider – whether male or female – provides access to the whole world of ancient myth, a continuum extending from ancient heroes to their modern counterparts. Like Odysseus in the Greek myth, the cowboy or cowgirl is a self-styled adventurer who survives by his or her wits, who challenges and subdues nature. Such myths act out our primal fears and fantasies, linking modern humanity to something bigger, stronger, and more permanent than ourselves. Being astride a horse, or even posed with riding paraphernalia, enhances the presence and power of the human figure, as artists have known for thousands of years. The horse elevates, supports, and accelerates the personal power of its rider in an observable but at the same time mystical fashion best understood by artists and cowboys. Images of horses, such as

those portrayed by Barbara Meikle or Rox Corbett, allow us to glimpse the beauty – in motion or in close-up detail – and power of the much-mythologized animal. Other artists, when they pair the horse with cowgirl subjects, sometimes – but only sometimes – convey a vaguely sexual aspect that adds piquancy and punch to the image.