

# ARTFORUM

## Passages: Gillian Jagger (1930-2019)

Ursula von Rydingsvard  
December 5, 2019



Gillian Jagger, *Rift*, 1999. Courtesy the estate of Gillian Jagger and David Lewis Gallery, New York.

Somehow, at the beginning of August 1988, I ended up in the Catskills with Nancy Graves and my husband, Paul Greengard, hell-bent on trying out our riding talents on Gillian Jagger's horses. We were giddy like a group of children hungry for adventure. Being lifelong, thoroughbred hard workers, we weren't used to taking a month off for anything, but that year we bought plenty of country records, cowboy boots, chaps, and riding helmets. I believe Gillian had four horses that summer. They were old and tired, but more than willing to do anything their beloved Gillian asked of them. She was their leader, as she was ours.

Our glory with the horses ended when I broke my back, Paul hit his head, and Nancy broke her clavicle, all before any of us got even near the galloping point. Nancy, with her splintered collarbone, kept the date she had that evening with the man she would marry. I had a ten-day stay in the hospital, while Paul's headache disappeared within the hour. The horses so adored Gillian that whenever she appeared in front of them, they would stop dead in their tracks. And so I flew, headfirst, into the ground.

She once told us that, in her younger years, she competed in the Olympic Games for horseback riding, being the only woman. All her cats and many dogs were at one with her. She understood them, loving them like no other human being I know. She honored all animals, their lives, and their trials with deep sympathy, and with a radical fury against atrocities done to them. She was a strong woman who had convictions she acted on without doubt, and with fierce determination.

Original article: <https://www.artforum.com/passages/gillian-jagger-1930-2019-81424>