



# The Artist's Horse

By Helen Herold, *Director, National Museum of the Morgan Horse*

**T**he *Artist's Horse* is a 20-minute film originally produced by the British Art Society, directed by the award winning director and British Morgan breeder John Bulmer, and

is a comprehensive view of equestrian art shown comparatively with footage of Morgan horses in motion. The Morgan horse is the living embodiment of the classical qualities and versatility found in the European Baroque equine image. The American Morgan Horse Institute provided funding for the distribution of the film to Art, Art History, and Animal Science departments in high schools and colleges after its release in 1991.

Classical artists have been inspired by the power and beauty of the horse throughout time. The Assyrians, Greeks, and Romans first celebrated these qualities, which again became popular during the Renaissance, and reached a pinnacle of popularity during the Baroque period beginning in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century. The art of equitation was revived during this

time and the horse being depicted in art was more popular than ever. "Opulence" was the key word of the Baroque period and the full-bodied, up headed horses that became the preferred mounts of European royalty were the embodiment of this description.

The Morgan breed shares many of the qualities found in the horses featured in the art of the Baroque period—proud carriage; upright and graceful necks; elegant heads with expressive eyes and large nostrils; small alert ears; sweeping manes and tails; deep compact bodies—all seen in portraits of kings and queens. Horses of this type lost favor in Europe as the sleek form of racing horses gained in popularity, but continued in America through the Morgan horse. The Morgan is often still referred to as "America's Baroque Horse."

*The Artist's Horse* is again available to the public on DVD and can be ordered from the National Museum of the Morgan Horse in Middlebury, Vermont. ■



Peter Paul Rubens, oil sketch (1625) for a portrait of the first Duke of Buckingham. Courtesy Kimball Art Museum, Fort Worth.

## The 1950s Are Almost Over!

*The Morgan Horse*, AMHA's official breed journal, continues to make available vintage issues of the magazine online. In our continuing "Download A Decade" series, the last five years of the 1950s (1955-1959) are currently on the AMHA website. They are in PDF format and are best viewed by downloading and saving to your desktop. They will remain online for the remainder of 2014.

Enjoy the journey through Morgan history by going to:

[www.morganhorse.com/about/breed-magazine/download-a-decade](http://www.morganhorse.com/about/breed-magazine/download-a-decade)