



Cabin Fever  
1976  
Acrylic and tempera on canvas  
67" x 84 1/8"

SOURCE: <https://www.artnews.com/gallery/art-news/photos/susan-rothenberg-famous-works-slideshow-1202687917/sr-76-010-cabin-fever/>

My first impression: a horse in motion. Everything about this horse is oddly presented – it is flatly 2D but feels like it has volume, it is exuberantly galloping but this is communicated by two frozen moments superimposed on each other, one red and one black. The simple colour scheme evokes red clay or red sandstone and the black of shadow or charcoal. I have read of her inspiration by prehistoric cave paintings and I think the colour and simplicity of line references that. Her choice to use two canvases tightly against each other is also unusual. It makes me see this as parts of a horse as well as a whole horse. The title *Cabin Fever* pushes the idea of a burst of energy in response to being confined. Perhaps this is her finding her way to challenge the minimalist and abstract art aesthetic of the era which really sidelined representational images. I am also reminded of Edward Muybridge's early photographs of a galloping horse. I came across a couple of quotes from Rothenberg about her horse series: "It was important that I was painting something that was alive. I didn't want to paint something inanimate. It needed to have flesh and spirit. I guess I wanted to paint the kind of energy you find in the real world rather than the abstract world." "It was never about making a pretty horse. It was something else." (SOURCE: <https://www.richardgraygallery.com/viewing-rooms/susan-rothenberg#tab-5:thumbnails;tab-7:thumbnails>)