

● The Crusader
ANDREA MAKI

She's the woman who literally put everything on the line for a promise.

A contemporary visual artist and daughter of a sculptor, Andrea Maki grew up immersed in the art world. After graduating from NYU, she plunged into pursuing art as a full time career, something that, as her father warned, is certainly not easy. Maki never blinked in the face of challenge. As she described it, "I didn't have a choice. Art is what I do; it's who I am."

Similarly, in April 2010, when Maki coordinated a photo shoot and found herself face-to-face with 21 displaced wild mares and their foals just south of Bellevue (where the horses had been residing under protection of Silent Voices Equine Rescue since the 2009 Challis Wilderness wild horse roundup), she didn't think she had a choice—she was going to have to do something. Right there, as she stood in that crisp field, Maki made a promise to herself that she was going to make a change.

She immediately started knocking on doors and picking up the phone and discovered that being an artist and an outsider, originally from Seattle, actually worked to her advantage. People were more open and didn't assume she was attached to any predetermined viewpoint about the issues of wild horses.

Historically, wild horses were protected in the United States under a 1971 law that banned inhumane treatment and selling for slaughter. In 2004, however, the law was gutted when Montana Senator Conrad Burns attached a one-page rider to a 3,300-page appropriations bill that was passed by Congress, and later signed into law by President Bush.

Maki noted that the current system for rounding up and taking wild horses out of their habitat is incredibly mismanaged, not to mention unethical. "Last year alone, \$77 million of taxpayer money was used for helicopter roundups, shipping, and placing 47,000-50,000 wild horses in holding pens," she explained. "The roundup in the Challis Wilderness



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(Above) "Wild Arapaho" with 12-day-old foal, "Wild Glow," May 2012. (Right) The white masked stallion, July 2012.

Area in 2009 alone cost \$410,000."

In 2010 Maki officially founded Wild Love Preserve, a non-profit that has been working collaboratively with the Bureau of Land Management, ranchers and locals. The ultimate goals of the foundation are: to replace helicopter roundups with roundups using local labor; to end future removal of wild horses from their primary habitat; to develop a responsible and sustainable regional wild horse management program; and to buy 432-acres and grazing parcels that are surrounded by public lands and forests, as well as create a protective corridor in the Herd Management Area. The property will also be used to hold conferences and educational retreats.

Maki is hoping that this model of collaboration can be used on a national level. It certainly takes time, as after working for the past two years on the project, Maki has just recently come to a place in which she can put out information. Ultimately and ideally, her work will create something that is long-lasting and durable.

At this point in her life, all of



her time and effort are going into Wild Love Preserve, which she stated is primarily in need of funding. "This is about what carries on for future generations," she explained. "In terms of my art, when people see these magnificent animals in huge six-foot-high

images, when they see the details of eyelashes, the wonderfulness—they feel it and that's what inspires people to act."

To check out Maki's photography or for more information about the Wild Love Preserve please visit wildlovepreserve.org.