

PRESS RELEASE

Deborah Butterfield: New Sculptures
September 5 through October 11, 2003
Reception for the artist: Friday, September 5, 6 - 8 p.m.

LA Louver is proud to present an exhibition of eight new bronze horse sculptures by Deborah Butterfield.

Deborah Butterfield began exploring the subject of horses in the early 1970s. These early works utilized humble materials such as mud, sticks, and clay. Butterfield's move to a large, derelict Montana farm in 1979 affected both her medium, with the introduction of scrap metal, and form, with her pursuit of dematerializing the work. Open work metal horses of the 1980s gave way to the large-scale bronze and steel sculptures that continue to occupy the artist today. The horse farm also gave Butterfield the freedom and means to achieve an even greater understanding of the character, personality, strength, and soul of the animals she so loved. It enabled Butterfield to ride every day, and to live and work with her subject just outside the studio door.

"My work isn't about horses at all" —Deborah Butterfield

In developing an intimate understanding of horses, Butterfield evokes an interior life with which the viewer connects. Each sculpture depicts a solitary horse, introspective, unriden, at rest, which despite their mass and materiality, appear animated. Butterfield constructs these works first with found wood branches and sticks that she twists into the horse forms. The bronze is cast from this wood, which is burned out in the casting process, to produce a unique work. Butterfield then applies patina, which conveys with astonishing accuracy the texture and nuances of the original wood.

Each horse stands as a metaphor for the artist; each is a self-portrait that embodies the mood and personality of their maker. Butterfield takes one of the oldest subjects of art and interprets it in a way that while personal, feminist and highly refined, is also accessible and direct.

Born and raised in San Diego, Deborah Butterfield studied at the University of California, Davis and the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in Maine. From the mid-1970s through the mid-1980s Butterfield taught sculpture at the University of Madison, Wisconsin and Montana State University, Bozeman. Since 1976 the artist has exhibited extensively. Important solo shows include the Israel Museum, 1981; Dallas Museum of Arts and Seattle Museum, 1982; Oakland Museum, California, 1983; Contemporary Art Center, Honolulu, 1986; Denver Art Museum, 1989; University of Miami, 1992. An exhibition of new work opens at the Yellowstone Art Museum in Billings, Montana (August 15, 2003 - January 5, 2004) and will travel to The Contemporary Museum, Honolulu and Norton Museum of Art, West Palm Beach. Commissions include the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis and the Franklin D. Murphy Sculpture Garden at UCLA, California. Works are also represented in numerous public collections, including the Art Institute of Chicago, Illinois; The Brooklyn Museum, New York; Cincinnati Museum, Ohio; Dallas Museum of Art, Texas; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C.; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; San Diego Museum of Art, California, and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, to name a few.

We are pleased to announce the publication of the first major monograph on the artist. This lavishly illustrated 180-page book by Robert Gordon, includes an introduction by Jane Smiley, essay by John Yau and poems by the late Vicki Hearne. Published by Harry H. Abrams, Inc., availability of the book will coincide with Butterfield's exhibition at LA Louver.

LA Louver is open Tuesday through Saturday, 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Validated parking available.

For further information and visuals please contact:
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