



Deborah Butterfield, *Untitled*, 2012  
cast bronze , 38 x 40 x 26 in. (96.5 x 101.6 x 66 cm)

# DEBORAH BUTTERFIELD

## New Sculptures

11 October - 10 November 2012

Reception for the artist:  
Thursday, 11 October, 6-8 PM  
*Valet parking available*

make sculptures in the figure of a horse, the form for which she is renowned. The show includes both larger-than-life-size and smaller-scale horse sculptures, as well as a single work made in found steel. The sculptures are presented throughout all first and second floor galleries.

For almost four decades, Deborah Butterfield has focused on the horse as the inspiration for her art. In her early work, Butterfield used humble materials such as mud, clay and sticks. However, it was her move in 1979 to a ranch in Montana that provoked a change in medium. From this time forward, Butterfield used scrap metal, and in 1985, also began casting in bronze. Concurrent to this change in materials there was a dematerializing of form, as well as a shift in scale, to include larger-than-life-size horses. In this current series, Butterfield uses a broad range of wood: including Hawaiian Ohia wood (primarily for the smaller works), willow, fir, driftwood, Koa'ia, and burnt campfire and wildfire wood. She also incorporates natural growths from the original trees – such as leaves and flowering buds – to dynamic effect. Experimentation continues to play a vital role in the artist's process: Elements appear to fall away from the horse, or to embrace it in sheltering fashion, alluding to a world outside the horse itself.

Butterfield begins each sculpture by creating it with the gathered wood. She then meticulously documents the sculpture before taking it apart and casting the wood in bronze. Referring to her images of the original wood sculpture, Butterfield welds the individual bronze elements together, and patinas the surface. The unique bronze sculptures (the artist does not edit her work) allude to volumetric drawings. They are sophisticated, calligraphic, resolute forms that convey the skeleton, muscle, energy, spirit and grace of the animal that inspires their making. Yet, Butterfield has also claimed that her work is not about horses at all: Rather, the horse is a *tabula rasa*, or blank image, to which the viewer gives meaning. Butterfield takes one of the oldest subjects of art, which she interprets in a way that is personal, distinctive, and highly refined, while also making it accessible and direct.



Deborah Butterfield, *Looking Glass*, 2012 (detail)  
cast bronze , 96 x 110 x 71 in. (243.8 x 279.4 x 180.3 cm)



Deborah Butterfield at the Walla Walla Foundry, 2012

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 Wisconsin at Madison and Montana State University, Bozeman. Since 1976, the artist has exhibited extensively. Solo shows include the Israel Museum, Jerusalem, 1981; ARCO Center for Visual Art, Los Angeles, CA (traveled to Oklahoma State University, OK; University of Colorado, CO; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN; Seattle Art Museum, WA; Boise Gallery, ID; and Utah Museum of Fine Art, UT) 1981-1983; the Seattle Art Museum, WA and the Dallas Museum of Fine Arts, TX, 1982; Oakland Museum of California Art, CA, 1983; San Diego Museum of Art, CA, 1996; Yellowstone Art Museum, Billings, MT (traveled to the Contemporary Art Museum, Honolulu, HI and Norton Museum of Art, West Palm Beach, FL) 2003 - 2004. Commissions include the Walker Art Center and the Franklin D. Murphy Sculpture Garden at UCLA, CA. Works are also represented in numerous public collections, including the Art Institute of Chicago, IL; The Brooklyn Museum, NY; Cincinnati Museum, OH; Dallas Museum of Art, TX; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C.; Metropolitan Museum of Art, NY; San Diego Museum of Art, CA; Speed Museum, Louisville, KY; and the Whitney Museum of American Art, NY.

Butterfield divides her time between her home and studio on the Big Island, Hawaii, and her studio and ranch in Bozeman, Montana.

For more information and visuals, please contact Elizabeth East, L.A. Louver, 45 North Venice Boulevard, Venice, CA, USA  
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Gallery Hours: Tues - Sat, 10 - 6 PM; Validated parking available

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