



DEBORAH BUTTERFIELD (b. 1949)**Untitled (Horse)**

sticks and paper on wire armature

100 x 157 x 36 in.

254 x 398.78 x 91.44 cm

1981

28596

PROVENANCE:

O.K. Harris, New York

Mr. and Mrs. Henry V. Heuser, Sr., Louisville

Private Collection, 1982, gift from the above

Christie's, "Summer Edition Online Only Auction", Sale 773838, Lot 39, 17-29 July, 2014 Private Collection, Puerto Rico

EXHIBITION:

Louisville, The Speed Art Museum, Changing Tastes in Representational Art, September-November 2007

LITERATURE:

S. Landsdell, "Butterfield's Horses Take on New Qualities, Personalities," The Courier-Journal, May 2, 1982, p. H10

Bennett, A.E., ed., J.B. Speed Art Museum Handbook, Louisville, 1983, p. 27

Butterfield, D., Kuspit, D. B., Tucker, M., & Lowe Art Museum, (1992), Horses: The art of Deborah Butterfield, Coral Gables, Fla: Lowe Art Museum, University of Miami

Deborah Butterfield is an American sculptor, best known for her sculptures of horses made of objects ranging from wood, metal, and other found objects. The 1981 piece, *Untitled (Horse)*, is comprised of sticks and paper on wire armature. The impressive scale of this piece creates a remarkable effect in person, presenting a striking example of Butterfield's celebrated subject matter. Butterfield originally created the horses from wood and other materials found on her property in Bozeman, Montana and saw the horses as a metaphorical self-portrait, mining the emotional resonance of these forms.

The artist grew up in San Diego in the 1950s and 60s, and frequently rode and drew pictures of horses. At the University of California, Davis, in the 1970s, she studied ceramics under Robert Arneson, the funk artist who helped propel the medium from the realm of craft and encouraged his student to pursue her idea of making elaborate life-size saddles. In graduate school, she moved onto a horse farm and helped take care of the animals to pay her rent.

In the 1970s, Butterfield made her first horses from plaster, papier-maché, and mud and sticks. In 1980, she traveled to Israel on a John Simon Guggenheim grant, and worked with steel and other detritus of wars, and determined the material held emotional content. This set her on a course of making horses with found and welded steel, fused aluminum, copper, and wood — materials that also have a history. In the mid-'80s, she discovered the possibilities of bronze to retain the aesthetics of rotting wood in the casting process.

She and her artist husband John Buck live on a Montana ranch, where they maintain separate studios and sometimes host equine events, including dressage shows and training clinics.

Butterfield's work is held in the collections of dozens of U.S. museums, including Art Institute of Chicago, H.M. de Young Museum in San Francisco, Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York, Palm Springs Art Museum, Seattle Art Museum, and Walker Art Center and Walker Sculpture Garden in Minneapolis.

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