

DEBORAH BUTTERFIELD

New Sculpture

Exhibition Dates: September 6 - November 9, 2024

Opening Reception: Friday, September 6, 5:00PM - 8:00PM



Deborah Butterfield, *Whitebird*, 2023-24
Cast Bronze, 78 x 95 x 42 inches, Unique
Photo: Walla Walla Foundry

Haines proudly presents ***Deborah Butterfield: New Sculpture***, the gallery's debut exhibition with the celebrated American artist. The exhibition features a selection of Butterfield's signature equine sculptures, constructed from wood and cast in bronze, and marks her first solo showing in San Francisco in more than a decade.

"The first time I saw a horse, it filled my eyes and my heart, and spoke to me without language. Standing next to my work, I hope you can feel the calm I feel around horses, and sense their power and order through your skin and in your belly."

For over fifty years, Butterfield has relayed a love of horses into a sculptural practice known for its craftsmanship, material experimentation, and nuanced depictions of a singular, recurring subject. *Deborah Butterfield: New Sculpture* premieres *Whitebird* (2023-24), a dense construction of bronze driftwood that ineffably coheres into a majestic, life-sized creature. The exhibition also features a selection of smaller sculptures, each measuring two- to three-feet tall. Presented on pedestals,

these new works are created from the fallen branches of indigenous Hawaiian trees—ohia, 'a'ali'i, and lama—collected from the artist's home on the island of Hawaii, where she spends part of the year.

These bronze horses are the result of an intricate casting process described by the writer Laurie Delk as “a tour de force of convincing falsehood as bronze takes on the attributes of wood.” Butterfield creates her sculptures intuitively, responding to the natural properties and expressive potential of each branch, twig, and log, building and bending until they form the skeletal outline and musculature of a horse. These individual components are then cast in bronze, and finally patinated to achieve the appearance of worn, weathered wood.

Butterfield's masterful sculptures invite us to consider both the whole and its parts, a gestural sketch of a horse imbued with a striking sense of its own character and presence. Poised and powerful, these graceful forms reject equestrian statuary traditions and pastoral cliches, serving as both thoughtful portraits—of specific horses, of friends and family, of Butterfield herself—and metaphors for the beauty and vulnerability of nature, and our connection with animals, the earth, and with each other.

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ABOUT THE ARTIST

Deborah Butterfield's (b. 1949, San Diego, CA; lives and works in Bozeman, MT and Holualoa, HI) horses can be found in the collections of museums including the Art Institute of Chicago, IL; Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, CA; Brooklyn Museum, NY; Cantor Art Museum at Stanford University, CA; de Young Museum, San Francisco, CA; Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park, Grand Rapids, MI; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, CA; Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, MO; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, CA; Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, D.C; Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, VA; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MI; and Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY. Her work has been the subject of solo exhibitions including *P.S These are not horses*, a recent career retrospective at the Jan Shrem and Maria Manetti Shrem Museum of Art, UC Davis, CA. She was awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award from the International Sculpture Center in 2022, as well as a Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship (1980) and National Endowment for the Arts Fellowships (1977, 1980).

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Deborah Butterfield, 'Ele'ele, 2021
Cast Bronze, 25 x 29 x 13 inches, Unique



Deborah Butterfield working at studio in Montana, 2005