

Educator Notes

Lynda Benglis

April 23–October 30, 2016



Installation view: Lynda Benglis, 2016. Courtesy the artist and Cheim & Read, New York. Photo: © Tony Prikryl

About the artist

Renowned artist Lynda Benglis was born in 1941 in Lake Charles, Louisiana, and currently lives and works between New York, Santa Fe, and Ahmedabad, India. In the sixties, she emerged as a pioneer in abstraction, placing both traditional and nontraditional materials in action. A survey of her work recently took place at the Van Abbemuseum, the Netherlands, which then traveled to the Irish Museum of Modern Art, Le Consortium, Dijon, the Museum of Art Rhode Island School of Design, the New Museum, New York, and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles.

About the exhibition

Benglis works with diverse materials—both traditional (wax, bronze, and clay) and nontraditional (latex rubber and polyurethane foam). Since 1984, she has explored the form of the fountain as well as reinterpreting natural forms. Her AAM exhibition consists of a series of working water fountains presented outdoors in the Roof Deck Sculpture Garden.

In 1979, Benglis was invited to a six-week artist residency program in Ahmedabad, India. A single pink kite in an annual kite-flying festival in Ahmedabad became the source of inspiration for the brightly colored works *Pink Ladies* (2014) and *Pink Lady (For Asha)* (2013). The three smaller fountains also on view, *Storm Pattern*, *Thunderbird*, and *Summer Dreams* (all 2003), were named after explosions and resemble the mushroom clouds that followed the detonations.

This juxtaposition between the delicate and the powerful reflects the many other forces that Benglis's work is able to balance: nature and human-made, chance and control, abstract and representational, familiar and unexpected.



Lynda Benglis, *Thunderbird*, 2003. Bronze, 29 x 27 x 26 in (73.7 x 68.6 x 66 cm). Courtesy the artist and Cheim & Read, New York

Questions for discussion

- | How are these sculptures similar? How are they different?
- | What textures do you notice? What do they remind you of?
- | Can you imagine these sculptures moving? How would they move?

Suggested activities

Water features

Invite students to go on a walk where they can observe water—perhaps a natural body of water like a river or a lake, or something manmade like a sprinkler or a fountain. Bring along sketchbooks and ask students to either draw what they notice about the water or write down words that describe it.

Back in the classroom, cover tables with a protective sheet.

Provide each student with a disposable cup, placed upside down on top of a sheet of wax paper.

Give students small cups of acrylic paint in various colors. Invite students to carefully pour one color at a time over the upside-down cup, allowing each layer to dry before beginning to pour a new one.

Ask students to think about what they noticed about the water during their observational time, and how they are incorporating this into their sculpture. Ask students to think about their color choices, and suggest experimenting by mixing in other materials with the paint to create texture, such as dirt or oil.

When the sculptures are completely dry and finished, peel off the layer of wax paper, and have students place their sculptures either in the classroom or around school where their classmates might make connections with water.

For more information, please contact the Education Department at 970.925.8050 ext. 133 or email education@aspenartmuseum.org

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