LEE BONTECOU: DRAWN WORLDS

FIRST DRAWINGS RETROSPECTIVE BRINGS A NEW PERSPECTIVE TO THE WORK OF A CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN ARTIST

On View at the Menil January 31 – May 11, 2014
Public preview & wine reception, 7:00–9:00 p.m, Thursday, January 30

Organized by Curator Michelle White for the Menil Drawing Institute

HOUSTON, TX, November 26, 2013 — Throughout her distinguished career, Lee Bontecou (b. 1931) has created drawings as a vital component of her artistic practice, both in relation to the sculptures for which she is renowned, and as independent works of art. Exhibitions (including a landmark retrospective in 2003) have occasionally paired her sculptures and drawings, but no museum to date has dedicated an exhibition solely to this distinct aspect of her work.

Beginning January 31, 2014, the Menil Collection will become the first museum to present a retrospective of this major facet of the artist’s oeuvre in Lee Bontecou: Drawn Worlds. The exhibition is organized by Menil Curator Michelle White under the auspices of the Menil Drawing Institute (MDI).

On view through May 11, Lee Bontecou: Drawn Worlds spans the years 1958 through 2012 with approximately 76 works drawn from the museum’s own holdings and from other institutions (including The Museum of Modern Art, LACMA, and the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden). Works from private collections include more than two dozen of the artist’s drawings. Stated Josef Helfenstein, director of the Menil Collection: “Lee Bontecou’s drawings provide us with a new way of seeing the world while also illustrating the power of the medium. Lee Bontecou: Drawn Worlds takes its place as the most recent in the series of exhibitions, such as Richard Serra Drawing, that exemplify the founding principles of the Menil Drawing Institute.”

Truly “drawn” worlds, Bontecou’s drawings take us into unsettling realms of human folly and the frailty of the natural world. Often characterized by gaping black holes, undulating form, and sinuous organic lines, they have been consistently experimental in their materials and
With Lee Bontecou: Drawn Worlds, said Allegra Pesenti, chief curator of the MDI, “my colleague Michelle White significantly advances our understanding of one of the leading artists of our time. Like this exhibition, the MDI emerges from inquiries into the fundamental nature of drawing itself.”

Lee Bontecou: Drawn Worlds will be accompanied by an illustrated catalogue featuring new essays by Michelle White, Dore Ashton, and Joan Banach about the artist and her drawing practice. 144 pp., 91 color illustrations. Hardcover (paper over board) $50.

The exhibition will travel to the Princeton University Art Museum, Princeton, New Jersey, from June 28 through September 21, 2014.

PUBLIC PROGRAMS:
The Drawings of Lee Bontecou.
Thursday, February 27, 2014, 7:00 pm
Exhibition curator Michelle White is joined by Maura Reilly, Executive Director, Linda Pace Foundation in San Antonio; and Veronica Roberts, Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art, Blanton Museum of Art, University of Texas, Austin.

Tuesday, April 1, 2013, 7:00 p.m.
Mona Hadler is professor of art history at Brooklyn College and the Graduate School of City University of New York. She was a contributor to the 2003 exhibition Lee Bontecou: A Retrospective.

The exhibition is made possible in part through the generous support of Louisa Stude Sarofim; The Brown Foundation, Inc.; The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts; The John R. Eckel, Jr. Foundation; Marilyn Oshman; Agnes Gund; and the City of Houston.


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