

Essence: The Horses of Deborah Butterfield



Palma, 1990

January 27 - April 29, 2012

Teacher Packet



The artist in her studio.



Billings

Exhibition Overview

World-renowned sculptor Deborah Butterfield expresses not only the physical form of her horses but also the energy, spirit and personality each possesses. Inspired by her love of animals, she considered becoming either a veterinarian or an artist. She currently lives and creates her sculptures on her ranch in Montana. She is an avid rider and owns many horses; some have become the subjects of her sculptures. This exhibition includes horses made from a variety of found objects as well as some cast in bronze.

Tours will include time in the exhibition and time at the Discovery Cart, our hands-on station. There students will learn fun and interesting horse facts, try to name the parts of a horse, discover what's in a grooming kit, touch real horse hair, and see what kind of shoes horses wear. Students will also watch the DVD *Deborah Butterfield: Dialogue with the Artist*. In this short film (approximately 15 minutes), Butterfield creates three specific sculptures while she discusses the creative process, her relationship with horses, and her philosophy of living. Filmed primarily on location at her studio in Montana, this is a vivid and insightful portrait of a remarkable artist.

Animal Inspirations: Creating Expressive Portraits

Enhance your visit to *Essence: The Horses of Deborah Butterfield* with an interactive classroom activity. Building upon the concepts discussed on a 45-minute, docent-led gallery tour, students will experiment with creating animal "portraits". Students will work in small groups to design an animal sculpture where posture and position are used to express a specific emotion or character. After sketching their ideas, students will use recycled/found materials to fashion their non-representational portraits and give them titles. Each group will use similar materials. Finally, students will present their sculptures to the class and describe their designs.

This activity is a team-building, group exercise that does not result in a take away object.

The entire program is 90-minutes (45-minute tour and 45-minute classroom activity). Cost: \$5 per student.

For more details or to schedule your field trip, please contact Suzie Doten at sdoten@meijergardens.org or at 616-974-5239.

Curriculum Connections Michigan Benchmarks and Standards

ART Content Strand – Analyzing in Context

Elementary - Understand there are different responses to specific artworks.

Middle School - Describe how materials, techniques, technology, and processes cause responses.

High School - Describe how expressive features and organization principles cause responses.

Exhibition Public Programs

- Family Art Activities
Saturdays, February 4, 11, 18, 11am-1pm
In collaboration with GVSU Art Education students
Learn about the unique horse sculpture of Deborah Butterfield, then create an art project based on the exhibition.
- Curator's Choice
Friday, February 10, 12 pm
Joseph Becherer, Vice President and Chief Curator
Walk through the exhibition guided by the Chief Curator as he discusses theme, scale and innovative use of materials.
- Book talk: My Favorite Horse Books
10-12 year olds
Saturday, February 18, 1:30 pm
Linda Gidley, Volunteer
Join us for an informal talk about classic books about horses including *Black Beauty*, *Misty of Chincoteague*, and *My Friend Flicka*. Bring your own favorites.
- Gallery Walk
Saturday, February 25 at 2pm
Julie Wallace, Horse Trainer and Rider
Discover the meaning of Butterfield's horses from a horse expert. Walk through the galleries and learn about horse anatomy, best breeds for different riding disciplines and horse personalities.
- Lecture: The Horse in Art
Friday, March 2, 12 pm
Dr. Craig Hanson, Calvin College
The horse symbolizes both humankind's mastery of the landscape and its romantic yearnings for untamed open spaces. Dr. Hanson highlights Butterfield's work and considers other famous horses in the history of art.

- Gallery Walk
Friday, March 9, 12 pm
Kathy Ryan, Executive Director, Equest Center for Therapeutic Riding, Inc. with Linda Godlewski and John Agar, Riders
Find out how equine-based therapy can help improve the quality of life for physically, mentally and socially/emotionally challenged individuals.
- Gallery Walk: Perspectives
Friday, March 16, 12 pm
Wendy Pektunus, Manager of Indoor Horticulture
Dawn Kibben, Vice President of Finance and Administration
Roger Bleiler, Director of Communications
Hear from staff and learn about their own perspectives on the exhibition.