

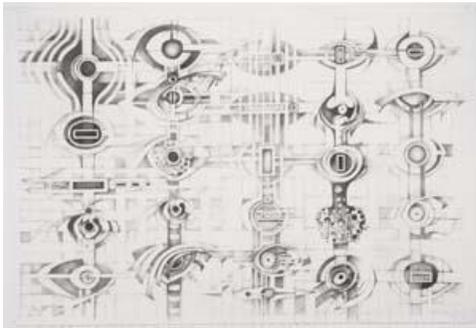
LEE BONTECOU: DRAWN WORLDS

**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



technique, beginning with the artist's early use of a welding torch to deposit velvety layers of black soot on paper, muslin, and canvas. The exhibition will examine the historical context of the artist's characteristic imagery, linking Bontecou's use of the circle and the void with her political and environmental concerns. Curator Michelle White added, "It is thrilling to be able to present such a remarkable and unknown group of drawings to our audience. Spanning over fifty years, the works are a testament to the artist's important place in postwar American art."

"With **Lee Bontecou: Drawn Worlds**," said Allegra Presenti, 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.

Mona Hadler—Lee Bontecou: Nature, Wonder, Horror, and Play

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.

Images: Lee Bontecou, *Untitled*, 2011. Pencil on paper. Collection of the artist © 2013 Lee Bontecou. Photo: Paul Hester. Lee Bontecou *Untitled*, 1967. Graphite and ink on paper. The Museum of Modern Art, New York, Gift of Wilder Green © 2013 Lee Bontecou. Digital image © 2013 The Museum of Modern Art, New York/Licensed by SCALA/Art Resource, NY.

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