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ANN CHRISTOPHER | DOROTHY DEHNER

January 3 – March 26, 2022

A profound engagement with material unifies the work of Ann Christopher and Dorothy Dehner. Sculpture and drawing occupy equal places in the oeuvre of both artists, and whether of paper, bronze, steel, or wood, the works brought together in this exhibition utilize a dynamic abstraction that emphasizes the material itself.

Ann Christopher (b.1947) is a British abstract artist and member of the Royal Academy of Arts. Her enigmatic, cast-bronze sculptures evoke modern industrial landscapes, prehistoric monoliths, and natural rock formations. The finished textures recall both the geological and the mechanized: *Finding Stones -4* (2019), for example, seems to depict an ancient shaped stone, yet the organic rock striations are layered with machine-like grooves. The sculptures' intensive patinas remind the viewer that the work is bronze, a material bound to both art history and human evolution.



Ann Christopher, *Finding Stones -4*, 2019

While Christopher's sculpture speaks to the confluence of ancient and industrial, her mixed media works on paper use contemporary everyday materials such as polyester film, paper, and binder clips. Hard-edged abstraction meets textural line work, and layered elements add shadow or obscure detail. Mixed media works from three different series are included in this exhibition: *Following Lines*, *The Lines of Time*, and *Outside the Shadows*. The titles of Christopher's work illuminate the primary idea of Rosalind Krauss' *Passages in Modern Sculpture*, that "into any spatial organization there will be folded an implicit statement about the nature of temporal experience."

Dorothy Dehner (b.1901 – d.1994) was an American painter, printmaker, and sculptor. Initially working figuratively, Dehner was influenced by biomorphism and the burgeoning Abstract Expressionist movement; in the 1950s, she began modeling in wax and casting abstract bronze sculptures. Using the lost wax process, Dehner created a series of unique bronzes, many of which are totemic in form. According to Joan Marter, the foremost scholar on Dehner, "She assembled her works of disparate parts, and approached the use of wax as a constructivist using planar elements. Bronze casting provided a certain elegance and refinement to her work . . . [and] textural effects were explored by the artist in order to bring attention to the surface of her works." Dehner's surface texture is a quality echoed in the bronze sculptures of Ann Christopher: the work of both artists balances form, surface, and material force.

Toward the end of her career, Dehner began working with steel fabricators to produce sculptures of monumental proportions. The painted steel sculpture *Balancing* (1989), created just a few years before she died, represents an apotheosis in Dehner's constructed forms: despite the change in scale, the geometry and dynamism of her work prevails. A critical step in the direction of her steel constructions occurred in the 1970s, when Dehner began working in wood. She created freestanding sculptures such as *The Ball (Ball in Landscape)* (1978) in addition to a series of wall works inspired by the I Ching. Through her longtime friend Louise Nevelson, Dehner met John Cage, who was deeply interested in chance systems and cosmological texts. Likely from Cage's influence, Dehner began composing pieces using the ancient divination system. Dehner's *I Ching Series* has never before been exhibited in New York, and Rosenberg & Co. is delighted to introduce this little-known body of work.

It is a privilege to present the work of two great contemporary sculptors, and to exhibit a representative range of both artists' oeuvres. Of different generations and nationalities, the sculptures and drawings of Ann Christopher and Dorothy Dehner nevertheless form a concordance: materially, technically, and philosophically.

See the online viewing room for *Ann Christopher | Dorothy Dehner* [here](#). For press and sales inquiries, please contact [kadie@rosenbergco.com](mailto:kadie@rosenbergco.com).

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**Ann Christopher** is a British abstract sculptor working primarily in cast bronze, stainless steel, silver, and fabricated corten. Her enigmatic, non-figurative sculptures evoke modern industrial landscapes, ancient monoliths, and natural rock formations. She describes her practice as "a visual diary of my physical and emotional life." Christopher has won numerous awards throughout her career, including the Otto Beit Medal of Sculpture of Outstanding Merit (1997), the Silver Medal for Sculpture of Outstanding Merit by the Royal Society of British Sculptors (1994), the Peter Stuyvesant Award (1971), and first place in the Harrison-Cowley Sculpture Competition (1968). She was inaugurated as a member of the Royal Academy in 1980, and in 1989 she was elected to be a Royal Academician, one of eighty practicing artists who help guide the Royal Academy of Arts in London. In 1992, she became a Fellow of the Royal Society of British Sculptors. The University of Bristol, the City of Bristol Museum & Art Gallery, the Chantrey Bequest, and the Contemporary Art Society have all acquired her work. Christopher lives and works near Bath, England.

**Dorothy Dehner** was an American painter, printmaker, and sculptor. Dehner was born in Cleveland, Ohio and as a young woman pursued drawing, modern dance, poetry, and acting. After a trip abroad in 1925, she enrolled at the Art Students League in New York and met the artist David Smith, whom she married in 1927. The couple spent many summers at their upstate home in Bolton Landing, permanently moving there in 1940. During their marriage, Smith was a domineering figure and limited Dehner's opportunities for art making. After her permanent separation from him in 1950, Dehner returned to New York and was free to make work without fear of Smith's jealousy, control, or violence. Rose Fried Gallery held Dehner's first solo exhibition in 1952, and in 1953 she participated in group shows at both the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the MoMA. Dehner began printmaking at Atelier 17, where she became life-long friends with Louise Nevelson. In 1955, Dehner began creating sculpture, modeling abstract forms in wax for bronze casting at the Sculpture Center, and Marian Willard signed on as her dealer. Later in Dehner's career, she began making sculptures in wood, and eventually worked with fabricators to create steel sculptures of monumental proportions. Throughout the decades, she utilized a personal iconography of arcs, lines, stars, and wedges. Dehner worked prolifically until her death at the age of 92 and today her work is held by many public collections, including the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; the Philadelphia Museum of Art; The Art Institute of Chicago, the Hirshorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington D.C.; and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.