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Bonnie Bronson Retrospective Celebrates Thirty Years of Northwest Influence
Exhibition Catalog Available at Museum of Contemporary Craft

September 1, 2011–October 9, 2011

First Thursday Opening Reception
Thursday, September 1, 2011, 6 pm–8 pm

PACIFIC NORTHWEST COLLEGE OF ART
1241 NW Johnson Street, Portland, OR 97209

September 1, 2011 — PORTLAND, OR — Pacific Northwest College of Art (PNCA) is proud to announce the first major retrospective of Northwest artist and PNCA alumna Bonnie Bronson ‘61 since the Portland Art Museum’s posthumous survey of her work nearly two decades ago. The exhibition, organized in partnership with the Estate of Bonnie Bronson and curated by Randal Davis, Bonnie Bronson: Works 1960–1990 is a comprehensive exploration of her entire body of work, numbering nearly 60 pieces and spanning 30 years of her career.

One of Portland’s best-known artists from the 1970s and 80s, Bonnie Bronson (1940–1990) was recognized for her signature enameled steel-relief sculptures and for her collaborations on public art projects with her husband, also a PNCA alumnus, Lee Kelly ’59. Her career spanned from 1964 to 1990, when Bronson died in a mountaineering accident on Mt. Adams. Born and raised in Portland, Bronson attended school in Kansas and in Eugene before settling at PNCA, formerly known as the Museum Art School. She graduated in 1961.

Bronson was at the heart of a post-minimal generation of artists that included Robert Smithson, Elizabeth Murray, Pat Steir and Richard Tuttle. Her fascination with unusual structures and systems and her abiding love for the sheer beauty of materials can be seen throughout her body of work. The depth of material in Bonnie Bronson: Works 1960–1990 offers a complex and nuanced view of her oeuvre. Indeed she was much more productive than many people imagined, and it may be seen, too, that her talents could fairly have been called mercurial.

The exhibition includes many drawings and paintings on paper, the majority of which have never been exhibited. In archiving the contents of the Estate, a cache of some six-dozen unexhibited works was discovered, packed for nearly 30 years, spanning her student years to the early 1980s. The exhibition also includes two of the large Jas series (1979),
made as a memorial to her son and shown together at PNCA for the first time since their creation. Another highlight is the reconstruction of *Kassandra*, a monumental cardboard wall sculpture only shown once at Blackfish Gallery in 1980. Though Bronson couldn’t preserve the piece because of its immense size (over 10 x 20 feet), her working drawings remain and the piece has been rebuilt in its original size, aided by PNCA students.

*Bonnie Bronson: Works 1960–1990* honors the 20th anniversary of the Bonnie Bronson Fund and is one of a number of simultaneous exhibitions celebrating Bronson’s continued influence on art and artists in the Northwest. Further examples of Bronson’s art and of the recipients of the Bonnie Bronson Fellowship can be found in the galleries of The Art Gym at Marylhurst University, the Douglas F. Cooley Memorial Art Gallery at Reed College, Elizabeth Leach Gallery, The Ronna and Eric Hoffman Gallery of Contemporary Art at Lewis & Clark College, Portland Art Museum, and The White Box at the University of Oregon. Check the PNCA calendar for details about the complete list of exhibitions at cal.pnca.edu.

An accompanying 36-page fully illustrated catalog featuring essays and poetry by Kassandra Kelly and Lee Kelly and an extended critical essay by exhibition curator Randal Davis has been produced to coincide with the exhibition. The exhibition catalog is available at The Gallery at Museum of Contemporary Craft and Elizabeth Leach Gallery for $20.

**About the Bonnie Bronson Foundation**

The Bonnie Bronson Fellowship was founded in 1991 by friends who wished to honor her memory with an award furthering the development of an artist living in Oregon or Washington. This year’s recipient is PNCA faculty member Nan Curtis. The fellowship gives special emphasis to sculptors and women artists. Through the work of the Foundation and the fellowship program it operates, the careers of 20 of Portland’s most talented mid-career artists have been advanced, including alumni Judy Hill ’96, Anne Hughes ’94, Malia Jensen ’89 and Lucinda Parker ’66, and faculty members Nan Curtis, MK Guth and David Eckard. The Fellowship allows for the pursuit of new avenues of investigation and the production of new bodies of work. The results benefit all who care about the quality of our shared culture, and they regenerate Bonnie Bronson’s own inspirational artistic vision and legacy.

**About Pacific Northwest College of Art**

Since its founding in 1909, Pacific Northwest College of Art (PNCA) has become a leader in innovative educational programs that connect students to a global perspective in the visual arts and design. In addition to its nine Bachelor of Fine Arts degrees, PNCA offers graduate education with an MFA in Visual Studies, a Low-Residency MFA in Visual Studies and an MFA in Collaborative Design, as well as an MFA in Applied Craft and Design developed in collaboration with the Oregon College of Art and Craft.

PNCA is actively involved in Portland’s cultural life through exhibitions and a vibrant public program of lectures and internationally recognized visiting artists, designers and creative thinkers. With the support of PNCA+FIVE (Ford Institute for Visual Education), the College has a partnership with the nationally acclaimed Museum of Contemporary Craft. For more information, visit [www.pnca.edu](http://www.pnca.edu).