

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, April 26, 2016

**THE MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART, LOS ANGELES (MOCA) PRESENTS
*BARBARA KASTEN: STAGES***

**May 28–August 14, 2016
MOCA Pacific Design Center**



LOS ANGELES—The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, presents *Barbara Kasten: Stages*, the first major monographic survey of work by artist Barbara Kasten. Organized by the Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia, in conversation with the artist and with full access to her extensive archive, the exhibition includes approximately 60 works spanning nearly five decades of Kasten’s career. MOCA’s presentation of the touring exhibition will be the final stop, following presentations at the ICA Philadelphia and the Graham Foundation, Chicago. This exhibition brings together major bodies of work from the 1970s to the present, contextualizing for the first time Kasten’s earliest fiber sculptures, mixed media works, cyanotype prints, photographic series, and forays into set design, alongside selected archival material and video documentation.

Barbara Kasten: Stages situates Kasten’s work within current conversations around sculpture, abstraction, and photography, tracing its roots to the unique and provocative intersection of Bauhaus-influenced pedagogy in America, the California Light and Space movement, and postmodernism. Kasten’s concern with the interplay between three-dimensional and two-

MOCA PRESENTS *BARBARA KASTEN: STAGES*

Page 2 of 3

dimensional forms, her interest in staging and the role of the prop, her cross-disciplinary process, and the way she has developed new approaches to abstraction and materiality are relevant to younger generations of artists working today.

Barbara Kasten (born 1936, Chicago; lives and works in Chicago) trained as a painter and textile artist, receiving her MFA from the California College of Arts and Crafts in Oakland in 1970. There she studied with pioneering fiber artist Trude Guermonprez, a former teacher at Black Mountain College and associate of Anni Albers. In 1971, Kasten received a Fulbright to travel to Poznan, Poland, to work with noted sculptor Magdalena Abakanowicz. During the 1980s, she embarked on her Construct series, which incorporated life-size elements such as metal, wire, mesh, and mirrors into installations produced specifically for the camera. Kasten was one of the first artists to be invited by Polaroid to use its new large-format film, and it was with this that she made many of her best-known works. Her palette became bolder in response to the lush, saturated quality of the medium.

In the mid-1980s, Kasten stepped out of the studio and began working with large architectural spaces symbolic of both economic and cultural capital. Institutions such as the High Museum of Art in Atlanta, designed by Richard Meier, and The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, designed by Arata Isozaki, as well as the World Financial Center in New York, designed by César Pelli, were eager to showcase their new postmodern buildings via the cinematic lighting, mirrors, and fabrications that were part of her monumental productions. Kasten's most recent work has taken her back to the studio, where she has explored a more minimal palette using many of the same materials that shaped her early constructed photographs. Over the years her vocabulary and interests have provided a through line and given a unity to her artwork, even as she has experimented with multiple processes, from cyanotypes and Polaroids to Cibachromes and video installations.

Kasten's photographs are included in the collections of major museums such as The Museum of Modern Art, The Whitney Museum of American Art, The Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, The Los Angeles County Museum of Art, and The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles.

This exhibition is accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue co-published by the ICA Philadelphia and JRP Ringier. It includes a biography of the artist, a conversation between Kasten and artist Liz Deschenes, and new scholarly essays by curator Alex Klein and art historians Alex Kitnick and Jenni Sorkin.


Barbara Kasten: Stages is organized by the Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania and is curated by ICA Curator Alex Klein.

Original support for *Barbara Kasten: Stages* was provided by The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage, Philadelphia.




Support also comes from the Nancy E. and Leonard M. Amoroso Exhibition Fund, Pamela Toub Berkman & David J. Berkman, Bortolami, the Carol T. & John G. Finley Fund, Kadel Willborn Gallery, the Marjorie E. and Michael J. Levine Fund, Toby Devan Lewis, Gallery Luisotti, Amanda & Andrew Megibow, Stephanie B. & David E. Simon, Babette L. & Harvey A. Snyder, and Meredith L. & Bryan S. Verona. Additional support provided by The Chodorow Exhibition Initiative Fund.

The Los Angeles presentation is organized by MOCA Senior Curator Bennett Simpson.

Lead support for MOCA Pacific Design Center is provided by Charles S. Cohen. 

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MOCA PRESENTS *BARBARA KASTEN: STAGES*

Page 3 of 3

Image credit: Barbara Kasten, *Architectural Site 17, August 29, 1988*, 1988, Cibachrome print, 60 x 50 in., High Museum of Art, Atlanta, GA, architect Richard Meier, courtesy of the artist

RELATED PROGRAMS

ARTISTS ON ARTISTS: CHANNING HANSEN ON BARBARA KASTEN

Sunday, June 12, 3pm

MOCA Pacific Design Center

INFO: 213/621-1741 or visitorservices@moca.org

FREE

BARBARA KASTEN, ALEX KLEIN, AND BENNETT SIMPSON IN CONVERSATION

Sunday, July 24, 3pm

MOCA Pacific Design Center

INFO: 213/621-1741 or visitorservices@moca.org

FREE

THE MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART, LOS ANGELES (MOCA)

About MOCA: Founded in 1979, MOCA's vision is to be the defining museum of contemporary art. In a relatively short period of time, MOCA has achieved astonishing growth with three Los Angeles locations of architectural renown; a world-class permanent collection of more than 6,800 objects, international in scope and among the finest in the world; hallmark education programs that are widely emulated; award-winning publications that present original scholarship; groundbreaking monographic, touring, and thematic exhibitions of international repute that survey the art of our time; and cutting-edge engagement with modes of new media production. MOCA is a not-for-profit institution that relies on a variety of funding sources for its activities.

Hours: MOCA Grand Avenue (located at 250 South Grand Avenue in Downtown Los Angeles) is open Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 11am to 6pm; Thursday from 11am to 8pm; Saturday and Sunday from 11am to 5pm; and closed on Tuesday. The Geffen Contemporary at MOCA (located at 152 North Central Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90012) has the same hours as MOCA Grand Avenue during exhibitions. Please call ahead or go to moca.org for the exhibition schedule for The Geffen Contemporary at MOCA. MOCA Pacific Design Center (located at 8687 Melrose Avenue, West Hollywood, CA 90069) is open Tuesday through Friday from 11am to 5pm; Saturday and Sunday from 11am to 6pm; and closed on Monday. The MOCA Store at MOCA Grand Avenue (located at 250 South Grand Avenue) is open Monday through Wednesday and Friday from 10:30am to 5:30pm; Thursday from 10:30am to 8:30pm; and Saturday and Sunday from 10:30am to 6:30pm.

Museum Admission: General admission is free for all MOCA members. General admission is also free for everyone at MOCA Grand Avenue and The Geffen Contemporary at MOCA on Thursdays from 5pm to 8pm, courtesy of Wells Fargo. General admission is always free at MOCA Pacific Design Center. General admission at MOCA Grand Avenue and The Geffen Contemporary at MOCA is \$12 for adults; \$7 for students with I.D. and seniors (65+); and free for children under 12.

More Information: For 24-hour information on current exhibitions, education programs, and special events, call 213/626-6222 or access MOCA online at moca.org.

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