

THOMAS DANE GALLERY

Barbara Kasten

Intervals

Private View: 2nd February 2017

6-8PM

Exhibition Dates: 3rd February – 25th March 2017

As in painting so in photography we have to learn to see, not the 'picture,' nor the narrow rendering of nature, but an ideal instrument of visual expression.

- László Moholy-Nagy, Vision in Motion (1947)

Thomas Dane Gallery presents *Intervals*, the very first solo presentation in the UK of the internationally acclaimed artist Barbara Kasten (b. 1936). The exhibition displays both historic and recent works that showcase the Chicago-based artist's striking oeuvre, which spans over 40 years.

Kasten herself speaks of her work as 'Painting in motion', as it incorporates sculpture, photography and film, all of which contribute equally to the formation of her pieces. Her works are the results of extensive and carefully constructed installations, which she assembles in the studio by using 'props' like glass, mirrors, acrylic and metal elements, meticulously set up, solely for the camera. Kasten's work is strongly informed by Postmodern Design and Architecture as well as by Constructivism, not to mention the works and lives of Kazimir Malevich and László Moholy-Nagy and the latter's engagement with the Bauhaus School. Deeply shaped by the California Light and Space Movement in the 1970s, Kasten, who was trained as a sculptor and painter, began to challenge preconceived notions of these disciplines by making use of the photographic medium.

In her ground breaking series *Construct*, developed in the late 70s and early 80s and taken with a Polaroid camera, Kasten transformed building materials into tableaux whose composition, style and manipulation of space display a true painterly sensibility. In her recent series *Transpositions* (2014-2016) and her latest body of photographic work titled *Collisions* (2016), she uses Plexiglas elements to create large-scale compositions. The use of Plexiglas allows the artist to achieve a degree of transparency whilst simultaneously denying its own physical existence – further intensified through the strong color saturations typical of the Cibachrome print's surface, these works seem to amalgamate foreground and background to an abstract surface. Kasten's diligent treatise of material, undeniably tied to her insatiable drive to explore the mysticism of light, questions the very essence of the image-making process, a quality that seems to defy medium-specific categorisation. In light of the contemporary habit of taking images without necessarily *materializing* them, this tension between the object-ness of the "thing" and the flat surface of the image adds a significant and growingly topical facet to her oeuvre.

A restless innovator, Kasten's most recent body of work takes on the form of a mixed media projection. *Revolutions* (2017) comprises characteristic components such as Plexiglas, neutral photographic backdrop paper and light, channelled through a moving image recording. For the first time in the artist's career, these hitherto "passive" elements, observed exclusively in their photographic reproduction, now step into 3-dimensional reality. Drawing from the paintings of Malevich, the work resonates with the findings of Suprematism, whose pursuit was to reach for the so-called *zero degree* of painting. Thus, *Revolutions* is structured by an algorithm, that creates repetitive and lingering elements which, darting to others, mimic habitual ways of examining works of art. Perceptually deceitful, or even illusionistic, solid material travels back and forth between sheer obscurity and physical presence: as with Kasten's photographic work, the scale and materiality are interchangeable and thus become co-dependent.

The transition to moving image in Kasten's oeuvre constitutes a metacommentary on the relationship between photography and film. The artist's ongoing exploration of concepts rooted in art history and her experimentation with a wide variety of media, moving fluidly between the fine and applied arts, reveal an inquiry of the Constructivists endeavours to illuminate the interrelation of life, art, and technology. Always in sync with her times, yet in conversation with her predecessors, the ability of her imagery to transmit change and flexibility triggers an understanding of the present, which today seems utterly vital from our contemporary, digital perspective.

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Barbara Kasten lives and works in Chicago. The monograph titled "Stages" has been published on the occasion of the same –named retrospective at The Institute of Contemporary Art Philadelphia, The Graham Foundation and the Museum of Contemporary Art Los Angeles, curated by Alex Klein. Recent exhibitions include "IMAGINE REALITY. RAY 2015" MMK Frankfurt / Museum für Angewandte Kunst / Fotografie Forum Frankfurt, "A World of Its Own: Photographic Practices in the Studio", Museum of Modern Art New York, "Extended Composition: Künstlerhaus Bethanien (, Nürnberger Kunstverein; and her work is included in renowned collections such as: Centre Pompidou Paris; Tate Modern London; Generali Foundation; Museum of Modern Art NY; Whitney Museum NY; J. Paul Getty Museum L.A.; The Hammer Museum, UCLA, CA; National Gallery of Art, Washington DC.

Concurrently with Kasten's show Thomas Dane Gallery will also present Anya Gallaccio *Beautiful Minds* at 3 Duke Street St James's.

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Gallery hours: Tuesday to Friday 10am – 6pm, Saturday 12pm – 6pm or by appointment.

Admission: Free

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Nearest Tube: Green Park or Piccadilly Circus