

BORTOLAMI

BARBARA KASTEN *SET MOTION*

2 April – 2 May 2015

Bortolami is pleased to announce *SET MOTION*, our first solo exhibition with Barbara Kasten. On view from April 2 through May 2, 2015, this show coincides with a survey exhibition — covering five decades of Kasten's career — which is currently on view at the Institute for Contemporary Art, Philadelphia.

A restlessly inventive and experimental artist, Kasten began making art in the 1970s, engaging with Bauhaus pedagogy, Constructivism, the California Light and Space Movement, and Postmodern architecture and design. Her work sits at the intersection between photography, sculpture and installation, and this exhibition at Bortolami brings together two important bodies of photographic works — a series of *Amalgams* from the 1970s and a new series of large *Transpositions* — as well as a new video installation, *Sideways*.

The *Amalgams* are a particularly significant group of works within Kasten's oeuvre. Made in the late 1970s, between her *Photogenic Paintings* (cyanotypes) and *Polaroid Constructs*, the *Amalgams* are unique silver gelatin prints created in the darkroom, with a novel combination of camera-less image-making (objects placed directly on photographic paper) and the traditional tools of photography (light sensitive paper, an enlarger, and a negative.) In some cases, Kasten then drew or painted on top of the resulting images. "At its core," Alex Klein writes, the *Amalgams* are "a consistent and rigorous investigation of materiality and perception."

Recalling an experience she had in the 1960s at Le Corbusier's Notre Dame du Haut in Ronchamp, France, Kasten's new *Transpositions* mark the return of color into her work. In each image sheets of Plexiglas, which adopt the building's distinctive color scheme, both reflect light and cast dramatic shadows, seeming to float in a disorienting environment that skews scale and perspective. Produced in her studio, these works extend the investigations that Kasten began in her *Constructs*, photographs of sculptural, set-like constructions that dissolve space into geometric forms, planes of color, light, and shadow.

Sideways, Kasten's newest moving image work, engages directly with the architecture of Bortolami; projected across the back wall of the gallery, this black-and-white video makes the space itself appear distended, in constant motion.

Coinciding with her retrospective at the Institute of Contemporary Art, a new monograph on Kasten's work will be published in late April by JRP Ringier, with essays by Alex Kitnick, Jenni Sorkin, and Alex Klein, as well as a conversation between the artist and Liz Deschenes. *Barbara Kasten: Stages*, curated by Klein, will remain on view at the ICA through August 16, 2015. For more information: <http://icaphila.org>

The work of Barbara Kasten (b. 1936 Chicago) has been exhibited extensively since the late 1970s. Most recently, in the exhibitions *A World of Its Own: Photographic Practices in the Studio*, at The Museum of Modern Art, New York; *The Will to Architecture*, at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; *The Material Image*, curated by Debra Singer at Marianne Boesky Gallery, New York; and *Section IV: Lens Drawings*, curated by Jens Hoffmann, at Marian Goodman Gallery, Paris. Her work is included in numerous museum collections, including: The Museum of Modern Art, New York; The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; SF MoMA, San Francisco; The Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia; the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, and Tate Modern, London. Kasten has been awarded several grants, the John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship, the Fulbright Hays Fellowship, among others. She lives and works in Chicago.

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