

DE LA WARR PAVILION

Press Release

Barbara Kasten: *Site Lines*
22 June - 1 September 2024



Barbara Kasten, *Architectural Site 7, July 14, 1986, 1986*, Cibachrome. Courtesy of Bortolami, NY;
Thomas Dane Gallery, London; Kadel Willborn Gallery, Düsseldorf

This summer, De La Warr Pavilion is pleased to present the first institutional solo exhibition in the UK of artist Barbara Kasten, comprising a major new site-specific commission in the Ground floor gallery.

Since the 1970s, Kasten (b. 1936, United States) has been constructing expansive installations made of architectural 'props' such as glass, mirrors, metal, or wood constructions in front of the camera for her abstract 'photographs'. Space as a stage for a changing reality is the central motif of her photographs, film, and sculptural installations, which she produces in an 'interdisciplinary performance' between photography, sculpture, architecture, and painting. These theatrical arrangements are notable for their use of colour, light and shadow, an approach going back to Kasten's roots as a painter and sculptor.



During her sojourn in Germany in the 1960s, Kasten observed an affinity between her painting and a new sculptural medium, fibre, frequently being exhibited at the time. She returned to the US to pursue a graduate degree at California College of Arts and Crafts with Bauhaus disciple Trude Guermonprez. Experimentation and modernism's notions of space, stage, and architecture became the core of her practice. While living in Los Angeles in the early 1970s, the 'Light and Space Movement' had an influence on Kasten's subsequent work. Through her cross-genre practice and continued use of analogue photographic materials, Kasten's visionary practice has influenced a new generation of contemporary artists amidst the prevalence of digital imagery, Photoshop and 3D rendering today.

At DLWP, Kasten has responded to the distinctive architectural features of the Grade I listed modernist building and the unique setting of the Ground floor gallery, which looks directly out to the English Channel. Furthering her interest in the mechanisms and structures of how images are created, she has reconceived the gallery's windows as a proscenium: a threshold between inside and outside space. Leant up against the glass will be a series of coloured, acrylic beams, the forms of which echo the internal and external columns that support the Pavilion's rectilinear geometries. Installed throughout the gallery - 'backstage' behind the proscenium - will be a series of stage flats constructed out of metal and mirror.

Kasten imagines these as 'movie screens' that provide a cinematic experience for visitors across the site through reflection and warping. Combined with stage lighting, these screens create a choreography of colour, light, and shadow throughout the space as its atmosphere changes with the weather outside.

Presented in the context of this new commission is Kasten's landmark Architectural Sites series (1986-89). Made on location with a single exposure and no digital intervention, this body of work restages the architectural sites of several museums and institutions through bold colours and kaleidoscopic perspectives. As reconfigurations of architectural forms shifting from two to three dimensions, this photographic series speaks to Kasten's transformation of the gallery this summer, as she invites visitors to enter her theatrical construction and move through modernist form in real time.

Notes to Editors

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Biography

Barbara Kasten lives and works in Chicago. Her works are included in institutional collections such as the Museum of Modern Art New York, the Centre Pompidou Paris, the Tate Modern London, the Smithsonian's Hirshhorn Museum Washington DC, the National Gallery of Victoria, Australia, and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, California. Solo exhibitions include Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg, Germany; the Aspen Art Museum (both 2020); the Philara Collection in Düsseldorf, Germany (2018); the ICA Philadelphia (2015), and the MoCA Los Angeles (2016). Her work has been part of international group exhibitions, including Women in Abstraction at the Centre Pompidou, the Sharjah Biennial 14, Bauhaus and America, LWL – Landesmuseum Münster, History of Photography at Sprengel Museum Hannover, Shape of Light at Tate Modern London, and Color Mania at Fotomuseum Winterthur.

Exhibition supported by

THOMAS DANE GALLERY Kadel Willborn