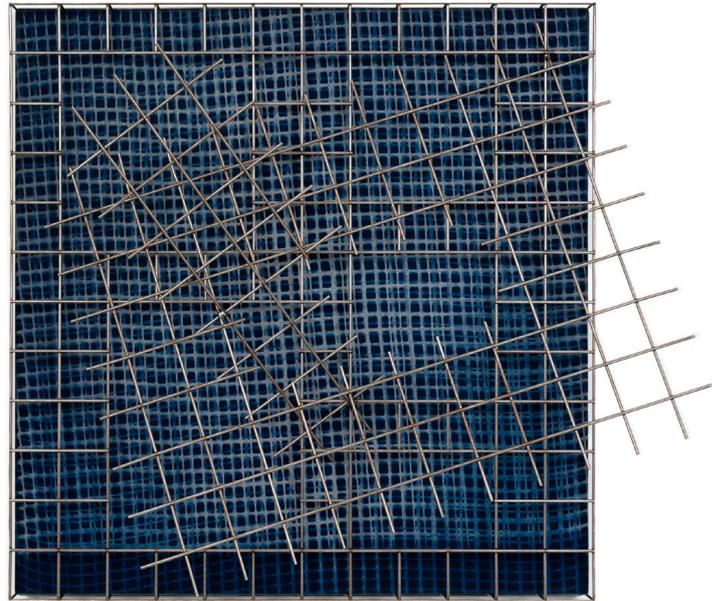


Barbara Kasten
Spatial Dissidence
21.1.–18.3.23

“The concept of my work deals with the contradictions between the veracity of materials and space.”



SHIELD XVI, 2022

cyanotype on raw linen, steel, unique
60 × 72,7 × 22,9 cm

We are delighted to present the ninth exhibition of Barbara Kasten at our gallery. Since the beginning of her career in the 1970s, Barbara Kasten has been combining photography, sculpture, painting, and installation, focusing on the interplay of light, space and material. Her current show concentrates on spatial conditions and unconventional materiality to provide new perspective that stimulates abstract thinking and a new “architecture of seeing”. The connection between her Polacolor photographs from the early 1980s and her new works from the series SHIELD and PLAN reveals Kasten’s approach of using real objects to construct abstract mise-en-scènes that are at once painting, photography and sculpture. Barbara Kasten:

“(…) I rely on the qualities of the material to find the essence of the material. (…) ideas are not preconceived, they come from the material itself (…) (…) for example, a metal panel normally used to build a concrete wall might be turned into a prop to create shadows (…)”.

Originally trained as a painter and sculptor in the 1960s, Barbara Kasten studied under the renowned proponents of textile art, Trude Guermonprez and Magdalena Abakanowicz, in the 1970s. Since that time, industrially produced woven mesh for windows has been part of Kasten’s repertoire of materials. In her new series entitled SHIELD, an enlarged grid of iron metal interacts with a cyanotype photogram on raw linen to form a three dimensional object. The scale and rhythm of the illusionistic blue cyanotype grid is juxtaposed with the rigid iron grid in various configurations. There is an interplay of material and space between illusion and reality. This misalignment causes a literal and conceptual shift in perspective.

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Barbara Kasten

Spatial Dissidence

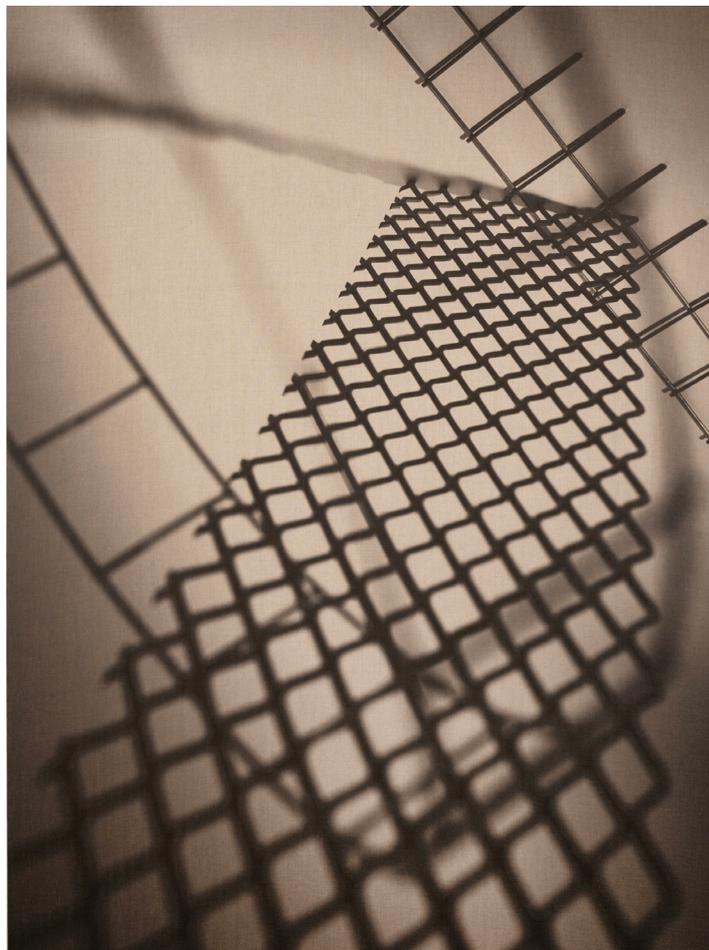
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As with SHIELD, the works of the PLAN series are unique entities. Kasten regards the works of this series as paintings, however, an installation of castoff remnants of metal grids used in building construction was staged in the studio and photographed to become the image of a PLAN. The archival pigment print on canvas and the inclusion of the canvas itself as a negative space underscores the painterly aspect of a PLAN. The works bear witness to Kasten's deep interest in architecture. Even though they were assembled for the camera in the studio, the metal arrangements remind one of the "architectural anatomy" of highrise towers in various states of completion or demolition. The construction of space literally and conceptually comes to light in the SHIELD: relations dissolve, are newly determined and balanced, depending on the individual viewing position. "A spotlight focused on the SHIELD is part of the piece because it engages an intersecting third plane of a grid with the shadow." While Kasten's new pieces in the SHIELD and PLAN series become distinctive objects, the early Polacolor works from the 1980s rely on a photographic single point of view for perspective on a two-dimensional surface. A key moment for the way Barbara Kasten approaches making her art was her visit to Corbusier's church in Ronchamp as a young woman in the 1960s:

"As I walked into the cool quiet of the interior, swatches of color floated in space changing shape as they landed on surfaces of different textures. (...) My desire to capture a sense of three-dimensional complexity in a two-dimensional image has led me to become a sculptor-cum-architect of sorts, creating unique multimedia works."

Biographical Note:

Barbara Kasten was born in the United States in 1936 and 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 Hirshhorn Museum Washington DC, the National Gallery of Victoria, Australia, and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, California. Solo exhibitions took place at the 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, in-



PLAN III-C, 2022

archival pigment on raw linen, unique
143 × 107 × 5 cm

cluding „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. The Ingvild Goetz Collection is currently dedicating an extensive solo exhibition to her (on view through April 29, 2023). In 2023, several works will be included in the exhibition „Re-Inventing Piet. Mondrian and the Consequences“ at the Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg, and the publishing house Skira Editore will release the large-scale monograph „Barbara Kasten: Architecture & Film (2015-2020)“ by Stephanie Cristello (ed.), Hans Ulrich Obrist, Humberto Moro and Mimi Zeiger.

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