

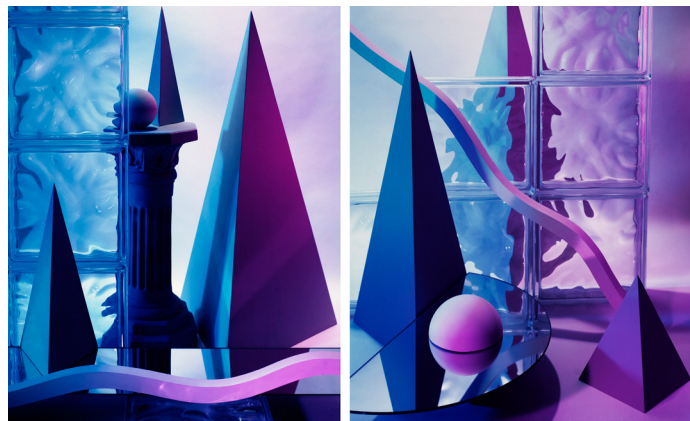
Barbara Kasten

Abstract Horizons

16.11.–21.12.2019

Abstraction rebels against convention
and allows us to see the world in a
new way, challenging entrenched
beliefs.

(Barbara Kasten)



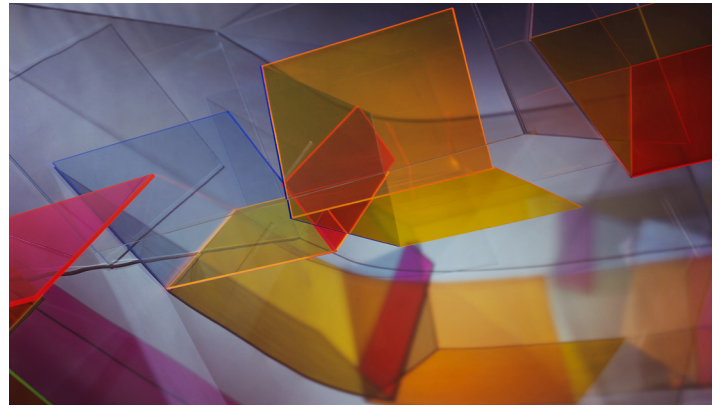
Diptych I 84 (CONSTRUCT XXVI), 1984

2 polacolor photographs
each 60,96 × 50,8 cm, total dimension 60,96 × 101,6 cm

The title of the exhibition, “Abstract Horizons,” opens up new perspectives, referring to conceptual horizons of different worldviews. Since the early 1970s, abstraction has been at the core of **Barbara Kasten’s** work, which is created in an interdisciplinary performance between painting, architecture, sculpture, and photography. “Abstract Horizons” sets Barbara Kasten’s most recent series of horizontal “Collisions” in a dialogue with the photo series “Constructs” made between 1979 and 1986. Both series embody several key aspects of her artistic approach to abstraction. First, the real construction of her abstract scenes in the studio, then art-historical references to modernist abstract painting and sculpture, and finally the photographic image as an abstract construction. Light and space are factual parameters of reality here, which in Barbara Kasten’s work process become constructors of new ways of interpreting reality.

In this sense, Barbara Kasten’s motifs combine both the adaptation and the abstraction of reality, while simultaneously evoking the digital illusions of our present-day synthetic image worlds. However, and this is the striking difference, Barbara Kasten’s photographs are based on an analog work process in which the real space and body are crucial components. In her studio, Barbara Kasten constructs her abstract scenes using industrial props such as Plexiglas, metal grilles, mirrors, color gels, or architectural building props such as columns, corrugated roof elements or glass blocks that she buys in hardware supplies venues or builds herself. Comparable with the sensitivity of an architect, she always plumbs the proportions between body and space by moving around in her installations, permanently changing the perspective and the positions of her objects to redefine the refraction, reflection, or path of light. Without the use of light, Barbara Kasten’s theatrical installations remain “dormant.” While for many photographers the “ma-

gical moment” is when the picture becomes visible in the photo lab, for Barbara Kasten it is when light brings the neutral stage set to life and is redefined by the artist in the studio. Barbara Kasten’s works are political in the tradition of Constructivism promoting a free perspective in the mindset of the viewer.



Collision 122, 2019

digital chromogenic print / fujiflex chrystal archive
122,6 × 214,1 cm

Biographical note

Barbara Kasten was born in the United States in 1936, she lives in Chicago. Her works are included in institutional collections such as those of the Museum of Modern Art New York, the Centre Pompidou Paris, Tate Modern London, the Smithsonian Hirshhorn Museum Washington DC, the National Gallery of Victoria, Australia, and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, California. In 2020, the Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg will feature a solo show. Recent solo exhibitions were held at the Philara Collection in Düsseldorf (2018), the ICA Philadelphia (2015) and the MoCA Los Angeles (2016). She recently presented her works in international group exhibitions including the Sharjah Biennale 14, “Bauhaus and America”, LWL - Landesmuseum Münster, “History of Photography” at the Sprengel Museum Hannover, “Shape of Light” at Tate Modern London, and currently “Color Mania” at the Fotomuseum Winterthur.

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