



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Wednesday, March 4, 2015

THE MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART, LOS ANGELES (MOCA) PRESENTS

STURTEVANT: DOUBLE TROUBLE

March 20–July 27, 2015
MOCA Grand Avenue



LOS ANGELES—The Museum of Contemporary Art is pleased to present the first comprehensive survey in the U.S. of the 50-year career of Sturtevant (American, b. 1924, d. 2014). *Sturtevant: Double Trouble* is organized by the Museum of Modern Art, New York, and Peter Eleey, Curator and Associate Director of Exhibitions and Programs, MoMA PS1, with Ingrid Langston, Curatorial Assistant, Department of Drawings and Prints, MoMA. Rather than taking the form of a traditional retrospective, the exhibition offers a historical overview of her work from a contemporary vantage point, interspersing more recent video pieces among work from all periods of her career, including *Johns Target with Four Faces (study)* (1986) from MOCA's permanent collection. The exhibition brings together over 40 key artworks in every medium in which Sturtevant worked—including painting, drawing, photography, performance, sculpture, film, and video—and identifies her as a pioneering and pivotal figure in the history of modern and postmodern art.

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“Sturtevant and I were very good friends for many years and to me she represents what is most important in contemporary art. Her work is critical, uncompromising, and consistently pushes the envelope,” says MOCA Director Philippe Vergne. “In many ways she was a philosopher who used images to articulate her ideas and who anticipated very early how our culture has come to produce and distribute images.”

The artist began showing under the name “Sturtevant” in a group exhibition at the Betty Parsons Gallery, New York, in 1960. She started making her own versions of the works of her contemporaries in 1964, using some of the most iconic artworks of her generation as a source and catalyst for the exploration of originality, authorship, and the interior structures of art. Beginning with her versions of works by Jasper Johns and Andy Warhol, Sturtevant initially turned the visual logic of Pop art back on itself, probing uncomfortably at the workings of art history in real time. Yet her chameleon-like embrace of other artists’ art has also led Sturtevant to be largely overlooked in the history of postwar American art. As a woman making versions of work by mostly better-known male artists, she has passed almost unnoticed through the hierarchies of mid-century modernism and postmodernism. Ironically she is at once absent from these histories while nevertheless articulating their structures.

Though her “repetitions” may appear to be simply mimetic exercises in proto-appropriation, Sturtevant is better understood as an artist who adopted style as her medium and took the art of her time as a loose score to be enacted and reinterpreted. Far more than mere copies, her versions of Johns’s flags, Warhol’s flowers, and Joseph Beuys’s fat chair are studies in the action of art that expose aspects of its making, reception, circulation, and canonization. Working primarily in video during her last decade, Sturtevant extended her interest in simulation to the media environment, incorporating footage from Hollywood films, television, and advertising to make literal reference to larger considerations of politics, truth, and violence—concerns that animated her work from its inception.

ARTIST BIO:

Sturtevant was born in Lakewood, Ohio, in 1924, and died in Paris on May 7, 2014. She received her BA from the University of Iowa and studied thereafter at the Cleveland School of Art and the Cleveland Art Institute, as well the University of Michigan, before moving to New York in the 1950s where she attended classes at the Art Students League and completed graduate work at Columbia University. She had her solo debut at Bianchini Gallery in 1965 and her first museum show at the Everson Museum of Art in 1973. In 1974 she withdrew from exhibiting her work for more than a decade, reappearing in New York in 1985 within the sympathetic context of postmodernism. She continued thereafter to use the art of some of the era’s most iconic artists (including Robert Rauschenberg, Felix Gonzalez-Torres, Keith Haring, and Anselm Kiefer) as sources for her work, eventually expanding in 1998 to work in video, which became her primary focus. Major exhibitions of her work have been organized in Europe in the past decade, including at Serpentine Gallery, London; Moderna Museet, Stockholm; Kunsthalle Zürich; Musée d’Art Moderne de la ville de Paris; and Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt, which in 2004 turned the entire museum over to the artist. A survey of the artist’s drawings, *Sturtevant Drawing Double Reversal*, organized by Mario Kramer for the Museum für Moderne Kunst in Frankfurt am Main, is on view at the Albertina in Vienna until May 10, 2015 and will be subsequently presented at the Nationalgalerie im Hamburger Bahnhof of Berlin. Sturtevant received the Golden Lion for Lifetime Achievement at the Venice Biennale (2011) and the Kurt Schwitters Prize (2013).

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PUBLICATION:

Sturtevant: Double Trouble

By Peter Eleey. Interview with the artist by Bruce Hainley and Michael Lobel

Published to accompany the first major exhibition of her work organized by a U.S. museum, this book presents Sturtevant as an artist who adopts style as her medium to expose aspects of art's making, circulation, and canonization. It features works from all periods of Sturtevant's career and previously unpublished documents from her archive, linking her earliest repetitions to the video works she produced after 1998. The result is a comprehensive overview of her unique practice that is situated firmly within postwar American culture. Hardcover. 9.5 x 12"; 192 pages; 102 color illustrations. ISBN 978-0-87070-949-4. \$50. Published by The Museum of Modern Art and available at the MOCA Store and online at moca.org/store. Distributed to the trade through ARTBOOK | D.A.P. in the United States and Canada, and through Thames & Hudson outside the United States and Canada.

Sturtevant: Double Trouble is organized by The Museum of Modern Art, New York. **MoMA**

Curated by Peter Eleey, Curator and Associate Director of Exhibitions and Programs, MoMA PS1.

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Image credit: Sturtevant, *Johns Target with Four Faces (study)*, 1986, encaustic collage on canvas with objects, 33 1/4 x 26 1/8 x 2 5/8 in. (84.46 x 66.36 x 6.67 cm), The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, gift of Ron and Kelly Meyer, © Estate Sturtevant, Paris

RELATED PROGRAMS

ART TALK: BRUCE HAINLEY AND HELEN MOLESWORTH

Thursday, April 30, 7pm

MOCA Grand Avenue, Ahmanson Auditorium

Los Angeles's own Bruce Hainley is the author of *Under the Sign of [sic]: Sturtevant's Volte-Face* (Semiotext(e), 2013), the first and most extensive monographic study of Sturtevant in the English language.

Hainley joins MOCA's Chief Curator for a lively discussion about *Sturtevant: Double Trouble*.

FREE; RSVP at moca.org

LOS ANGELES FILMFORUM AT MOCA: *DIFFERENT EVERY TIME*

Thursday, May 14, 7pm

MOCA Grand Avenue, Ahmanson Auditorium

In person: Mariah Garnett

"In every respect," writes Gilles Deleuze, "repetition is a transgression." In connection with *Sturtevant: Double Trouble*, Los Angeles Filmforum at MOCA presents *Different Every Time*, a program of five films using repetition with radically divergent results. Featuring Ken Jacobs's *Soft Rain* (1968), Hollis Frampton's *Works and Days* (1969), Cauleen Smith's *Chronicles of a Lying Spirit* (by Kelly Gabron) (1992), Jill

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Godmellow's tribute to the late Harun Farocki, *What Farocki Taught* (1998), and Mariah Garnett's *Encounters I May Or May Not Have Had With Peter Berlin* (2012), while thematically related, each film is aesthetically and politically dissimilar. Garnett will be present to discuss her film.

\$12 general admission, \$7 students with valid ID; Advance tickets at moca.org

FREE for MOCA & Los Angeles Filmforum members; must present current membership card to claim free tickets

ALSO OPENING AT MOCA

William Pope.L: Trinket

March 21–June 28, 2015

The Geffen Contemporary at MOCA

William Pope.L: Trinket is an exhibition of new and recent work by the Chicago-based artist, an essential figure in the development of performance and installation art since the 1970s. The exhibition will be installed in the soaring spaces of The Geffen Contemporary at MOCA and comprises large-scale installations, videos, paintings, photography, and performance works, including a new performance and sculpture work made especially for the exhibition. The centerpiece of the show is *Trinket*, a monumental installation of a 45 x 16 foot custom-made American flag. During the museum's public hours the flag is blown continuously by four large-scale industrial fans—the type used on Hollywood film sets to create wind and rain effects—and illuminated from below by a bank of custom theatrical lights. Over time the flag will appear to fray at its ends due to the constant whipping of the forced air, a potent metaphor for the rigors and complexities of democratic engagement and participation. This is the largest museum presentation of Pope.L's work to date. Organized by MOCA Senior Curator Bennett Simpson.

Kahlil Joseph: Double Conscience

March 20–August 16, 2015

MOCA Grand Avenue

Kahlil Joseph: Double Conscience is MOCA's presentation of Kahlil Joseph's *m.A.A.d* (2014), a double screen projection that is a lush portrait of contemporary Los Angeles. The camera sinuously glides through predominantly African American neighborhoods, pausing to capture quotidian moments—driving in a car, a marching band, the barbershop—that are suffused with creativity, joy, and sadness. The split screen divides the viewer's attention, and alludes to the history of auteur cinema, a form of filmmaking pioneered by French director Jean Luc Godard that sacrificed linear narrative for experimentation with the medium's formal and political possibilities. *m.A.A.d* extends this tradition by crossing the wires of music video, amateur film footage, and moments of magical realism. The two-part projection may also slyly evoke philosopher W.E.B. Du Bois's early twentieth century concept of "double consciousness," a psychological description of black life in America. The film's verbally dense and thick, booming soundtrack, provided by hip-hop artist Kendrick Lamar, adds yet another layer to this prismatic account. Organized by MOCA Chief Curator Helen Molesworth.

THE MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART, LOS ANGELES (MOCA)

About MOCA: Founded in 1979, MOCA's vision is to be the defining museum of contemporary art. In a relatively short period of time, MOCA has achieved astonishing growth with three Los Angeles locations of architectural renown; a world-class permanent collection of more than 6,800 objects international in scope and among the finest in the world; hallmark education programs that are widely emulated; award-winning publications that present original scholarship; groundbreaking monographic, touring, and thematic exhibitions



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of international repute that survey the art of our time; and cutting-edge engagement with modes of new media production. MOCA is a not-for-profit institution that relies on a variety of funding sources for its activities.

Hours: MOCA Grand Avenue (located at 250 South Grand Avenue in downtown Los Angeles) is open Monday and Friday from 11am to 5pm; Thursday from 11am to 8pm; Saturday and Sunday from 11am to 6pm; and closed on Tuesday and Wednesday. The Geffen Contemporary at MOCA (located at 152 North Central Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90012) has the same hours as MOCA Grand Avenue during exhibitions. Please call ahead or go to moca.org for the Geffen Contemporary at MOCA exhibition schedule. MOCA Pacific Design Center, located at 8687 Melrose Avenue; West Hollywood, CA 90069, is open Tuesday through Friday from 11am to 5pm; Saturday and Sunday from 11am to 6pm; and closed on Monday. The MOCA Store at 250 South Grand Avenue is open Monday through Wednesday and Friday from 10:30am to 5:30pm; Thursday from 10:30am to 8:30pm; and Saturday and Sunday from 10:30am to 6:30pm.

Museum Admission: General admission is free for all MOCA members. General admission is also free for everyone at MOCA Grand Avenue and The Geffen Contemporary at MOCA on Thursdays from 5pm to 8pm, courtesy of Wells Fargo. General admission is always free at MOCA Pacific Design Center. General admission at MOCA Grand Avenue and the Geffen Contemporary at MOCA is \$12 for adults; \$7 for students with I.D. and seniors (65+); and free for children under 12.

More Information: For 24-hour information on current exhibitions, education programs, and special events, call 213 626 6222 or access MOCA online at moca.org.

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