

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

THE BASS ANNOUNCES ACQUISITION OF MAJOR CONTEMPORARY WORKS TO THE PERMANENT COLLECTION, INCLUDING SANFORD BIGGERS, MARK HANDFORTH, KAREN RIFAS, MIKA ROTTENBERG, PASCALE MARTHINE TAYOU & LAWRENCE WEINER

Selections of the newly acquired work are now on view at Miami Beach's contemporary art museum



MIAMI BEACH, Fla. (July 31, 2018) – The Bass is pleased to announce the acquisition of major contemporary works by living artists to the permanent collection. Significant work by Sanford Biggers, Mark Handforth, Karen Rifas, Mika Rottenberg, Pascale Marthine Tayou and Lawrence Weiner are the latest additions to the museum's permanent collection, and were made possible by the John and Johanna Bass Acquisition Fund, which was launched in 2016 to expand the museum's international contemporary art collection. Spearheaded by Executive Director and Chief Curator Silvia Karman Cubiñá and Board President George Lindemann, the program aims to forge a strong connection between the collection and the museum's changing exhibition program, which features established and mid-career international contemporary artists.

"Continuing to grow and expand our permanent collection is a vital part of our commitment to international contemporary art," says Executive Director Cubiñá. "In particular, the Rifas, Rottenberg and Tayou acquisitions came out of integral dialogue with our robust exhibition program. The Bass is excited to deepen our connections with all three artists."

The Bass is pleased to support living artists whose practice has a significant impact on the landscape of contemporary art. Sanford Biggers' interactive piece *Poteau Mitan* transforms the traditional use of the mandala into a physical experience, while Lawrence's Weiner's iconic text-based works play with the relationship between language and object. Finally, Mika Rottenberg's work pays homage to South Florida, transporting the state's ubiquitous air conditioning units into a white box exhibition space. The Bass is also pleased to acquire works by significant Miami-based artists Mark Handforth and Karen Rifas.

FURTHER DETAILS ON THESE ACQUISITIONS:

SANFORD BIGGERS (b. 1970, United States)

Poteau Mitan, 2002

Rubber tiles, Formica, plywood, mirrors

120 x 120 in. (floor), 120 x 120 in. (ceiling)

An LA native working in NYC, Sanford Biggers creates artworks that integrate film, video, installation, sculpture,

drawing, original music and performance. He intentionally complicates issues such as hip hop, Buddhism, politics, identity and art history in order to offer new perspectives and associations for established symbols. Through a multi-disciplinary formal process and a syncretic creative approach, he makes works that are as aesthetically pleasing as they are conceptual.

In *Poteau Mitan* Biggers transforms his use of the mandala, sometimes defined as a doorway between heaven and earth, from a viewed surface into a physical experience, effectively allowing the viewer the sensation of being inside of the mandala. The title *Poteau Mitan* describes a column used in Yoruba and Voudun rituals. In these ceremonies, people dance around a central column that acts as a portal, which allows spirits to come in and inhabit the bodies of the dancers. Similar to dance floors Biggers has created for break-dancers, the floor of *Poteau Mitan* is a place for the viewer to enter, move around, and possibly be transported to a spiritual place.

MARK HANDFORTH (b. 1969, Hong Kong)

Silver Branch, 2016

Aluminum, lamppost

120 x 310 x 80 cm / 47 1/4 x 122 x 31 1/2 inches

Based in Miami since 1992, Mark Handforth is profoundly tied to the legacy of the 20th-century American avant-garde. He freely makes use of a formal vocabulary borrowed from ready-made, Minimalist or Pop Art, which he confronts with an iconography often derived from the urban environment.

His work has appeared in exhibitions internationally, including solo presentations and outdoor public sculptures at the Museo d'Arte Contemporanea, Villa Croce, Genova, Italy (2016); Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago (2011); Dallas Museum of Art (2007); Kunsthaus Zürich (2005); and the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (2002).

KAREN RIFAS (b. 1942, United States)

Untitled, 2018

Vinyl and wood

Dimensions variable

Based in Miami for over 60 years, Karen Rifas' artistic practice is rooted in an unwavering exploration of geometry and the possibilities of the straight line. Currently on view in her solo exhibition at The Bass, *Untitled*, 2018 is an installation of vinyl-covered wooden sculptures and a floor applique, site-specific in scale and pattern to the architecture of the gallery. Anchored by the square, Rifas' turquoise, pink and orange floor vinyl becomes three-dimensional with the layering of two, L-shaped, horizontal sculptures of the same palette. Functioning as seating, from which to experience the totality of the exhibition, the sculptures can be manipulated and moved by the artist throughout the duration of the exhibition.



MIKA ROTTENBERG (b. 1978, Argentina)

AC Trio, 2015

Mixed media

Dimensions Variable

The exteriors of three window air conditioner units clustered together comprise *AC Trio*, a work with obvious relevance to South Florida residents as a predominant fixture on most buildings. Placed here on Miami Beach, the aged exteriors and audible hum suggest a daily, working-class and domestic necessity. Rottenberg creates an artificial ecosystem with the work, where drips of condensation land on heated pots and pans below, suggesting a certain precarity. Her interest in shifting states of matter is evidenced within *AC Trio* as the seductive “hiss” of the water hitting the hot pan signals the transition from liquid to vapor. Through a bizarre and artificial contraption, seemingly endless and pointless in its production, the work perhaps foregrounds shifting climatic conditions through the context of the installation’s location. The appliances specifically intended to mask and alleviate heat are set within the museum’s temperature-controlled environment, and call attention to the increasingly visible symptoms of global climate change.

LAWRENCE WEINER (b. 1942, United States)

SHELLS USED TO BUILD ROADS POURED UPON SHELLS USED TO PAY THE WAY, AT THE LEVEL OF THE SEA, 2008

Language + the materials referred to

Dimensions variable

Lawrence Weiner’s texts have appeared in all sorts of places over the last five decades and although he sees himself as a sculptor rather than a conceptualist, he is among the trailblazers of the 1960s to present art as language. He defines his sculptural medium simply as ‘language + the material referred to’, in the sense that language is a material for construction. Accordingly, his first book *Statements* (1968) contains 24 typewritten descriptions of works, where only a few had been made, suggesting that a work’s existence requires a readership rather than a physical presence. Weiner’s *Statement of Intent* (1969) even more clearly identifies ‘universal availability’ as a guiding principle:

1. The artist may construct the piece.
2. The piece may be fabricated.
3. The piece need not be built.

Each being equal and consistent with the intent of the artist, the decision as to condition rests with the receiver upon the occasion of receivership.

While his works exist only as language and can be displayed in any form, he is closely involved in manifestations, detailing the size of the font, the surface texture and placement of the paint or vinyl letters and indeed often inventing new fonts. Texts appear on walls and windows of galleries and public spaces, as spoken word in audio recordings and video, printed books and posters, cast or carved objects, tattoos, graffiti, lyrics, online, ad infinitum.



PASCALÉ MARTHINE TAYOU (b. 1966, Cameroon)

Welcome Wall, 2015

LED signs

Dimensions variable

The site-specific work, commission by the museum, is composed of animated LED signs that read "welcome" in over 70 languages, broadcasting a message of profound inclusion from the lobby of the museum. Through the context of existing social, cultural and political structures, Tayou's creations both mediate between cultures and question the frameworks in which they exist. His concern for the decolonization of histories and territories aligns with the international and transient nature of Miami Beach and the impact tourism continues to have in shaping the city. The work first went on view coinciding with Tayou's solo exhibition, *Beautiful*, on view at The Bass from October 29, 2017 to May 21, 2018.

ABOUT THE BASS

The Bass is Miami Beach's contemporary art museum. Founded in 1964 by the City of Miami Beach, the museum was established after the donation of a private collection by residents John and Johanna Bass and opened in what was formerly the Miami Beach Public Library and Art Center, a 1930s Art Deco building designed by Russell Pancoast. Recognized for organizing the first solo museum exhibitions in the United States of international artists such as Erwin Wurm, The Bass has also presented major exhibitions by influential artists including El Anatsui, Isaac Julien, Eve Sussman and Piotr Ukiński. The exhibition program encompasses a wide range of media and artistic points of view, bringing fresh perspectives to the diverse cultural context of Miami Beach. The Bass is a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization accredited by the American Alliance of Museums. For more information, please visit www.thebass.org, or follow The Bass on social media at www.facebook.com/TheBassMoA or Twitter and Instagram via @TheBassMoA.

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For a complete selection of high-res imagery and to access a full press kit, please visit www.thebass.org/presskit.

[Image credits: (First page - left) Sanford Biggers, *Poteau Mitan*, 2002. Rubber tiles, Formica, plywood, mirrors, 120 x 120 in. (floor), 120 x 120 in. (ceiling). Image courtesy The Bass, Miami Beach. (First page - center) Lawrence Weiner, *SHELLS USED TO BUILD ROADS Poured upon shells used to pay the way, at the level of the sea*, 2008. Language + the materials referred to, dimensions variable. Image courtesy The Bass, Miami Beach. (First page - right) Mika Rottenberg, *AC Trio*, 2015. Mixed media, dimensions variable. Image by Zachary Balber, courtesy The Bass, Miami Beach. (Second page - left) Karen Rifas: *Deceptive Constructions* at The Bass, May 24 - October 21, 2018 with *Untitled* (2018) in the foreground. Image by Zachary Balber, courtesy The Bass, Miami Beach. (Second page - right) Mark Handforth, *Silver Branch*, 2016. Aluminum, lamppost, 47.25 x 122 x 31.5 in. Image courtesy the artist and Eva Presenhuber. Pascale Marthine Tayou, *Welcome Wall* (2015) inside the lobby at The Bass. Photography by Zachary Balber. Courtesy of The Bass, Miami Beach.]