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Maren Hassinger to Receive Her Largest Retrospective to Date Next Year



BY MAXIMILIANO DURÓN  August 19, 2025 3:00pm



Maren Hassinger, documentation of performance *Tree Duet I*, 5617 San Vicente Blvd, Los Angeles, ca. 1974.
PHOTO ADAM AVILA/COURTESY SUSAN INGLETT GALLERY, NEW YORK

The [Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive](#) in California will mount a retrospective for interdisciplinary artist [Maren Hassinger](#), opening next June.

"One impetus is based on the need and desire to amplify, via the museum's platform, an artist that needs to be more recognized, like Maren, effect a change in art history," Margot Norton, BAMPFA's chief curator and the exhibition's cocurator, told *ARTnews* in a phone interview. "But I also think a lot about what emerging artists are doing and how many artists are working in ways that I felt like they needed to know Maren's work. I feel like her work resonates so much in the present moment."

Billed as her most comprehensive retrospective to date, the exhibition will bring together work from across her five-decade career, including her early pieces from the 1970s made from wire rope and tree branches; later large-scale pieces, some of which are being recreated for the exhibition; and performances and workshops, some of which will be staged at BAMPFA, with others represented via photo and video documentation.

"In order to present this picture of what Maren does, we wanted to illustrate the interdisciplinary nature of the practice and the varying forms that she has created," said Norton, who is co-organizing the exhibition BAMPFA senior curator Anthony Graham. The aim of the exhibition is to show "this dual nature

of Maren as a performer and as a sculptor, and she's talked about how her work in movement affects her work in sculpture and vice versa."

In an email to *ARTnews*, Hassinger wrote, "Creativity means you start with nothing, just nothing, and you make something. It's a challenge and it's an adventure. It's not what a lot of people want to spend their life doing, but I think it's really important to make something that no one has ever seen. It means everything to me to have this opportunity at BAMPFA to look at my entire past in one place, and to talk with people. I'm happy to be showing in a place close to students, where people are serious about looking and learning."

Norton said her interest in Hassinger's work dates back over 20 years, and that she has since encountered Hassinger's art in major shows such as 2011's "Now Dig This!" at the Hammer Museum and 2022's "Just Above Midtown: 1974 to the Present" at the Museum of Modern Art. "I was just so struck by them in terms of how they hold space," she said. "Through her manipulations of these materials, she's able to infuse the spaces with this palpable energy, [and] how they affected my body as I navigated through them. These encounters made me realize there was so much more to discover about Maren."

The exhibition's title, "Living Moving Growing," Norton said, reflects Hassinger's interdisciplinary approach to art-making, with "her performance and movement practice existing so simultaneously to her sculptural practice," she said. "We're thinking about the exhibition also as reflecting this idea. Maren's work often takes readily available objects and thinks through them in order to transform them so they appear to be natural—or living, moving, and growing."

The exhibition will be loosely chronological, with some site-specific works, like *Love* (2008), consisting of inflated plastic bags filled with love notes, interrupting that chronology. The exhibition will also be a chance to see works that no longer exist, as some of Hassinger's early large-scale works "were destroyed in the past, mostly due to storage concerns," Norton said. Other works, which involve tree branches and were recreated for each presentation, will be staged in partnership with University of California Botanical Garden, which will help source the organic materials.

The retrospective will also include workshops and performances throughout its run. One of these will be a reconceived version of *Women's Work* (2006), which involved participants working with the artist to knot and twist newspapers. That work prompted Hassinger to continue hosting those workshops more informally in the nearly 20 years since; Norton recently participated in one version of that at the Columbus Museum of Art, as part of Hassinger's two-person show with her longtime collaborator Senga Nengudi. At BAMPFA, Norton said she plans to conduct several workshops that will go toward making the work, which itself will evolve during the course of its six-month run.

Hassinger's approach to art-making, "where she's not necessarily thinking about the finished product because the process, is so important," Norton said, adding that the show will provide a view into how she creates "a sense of impermanence and a capacity for simple acts of maintenance and care for one another and for the world. These are themes that feel essential right now."

She added, "It's incredible how she's able to take the everyday things from her surroundings and then instill them with a quality that makes them feel simultaneously intimate and monumental."