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These massive rope sculptures are unlike anything else at BAMPFA

By **Letha Ch'ien**, Contributor

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Part of Maren Hassinger's "Living Moving Growing" exhibition, on view at BAMPFA in Berkeley through Nov. 29.
Chris Grunder/BAMPFA

The expansive retrospective titled "Maren Hassinger: Living Moving Growing," on view through Nov. 29, traces nearly five decades of work by the artist and educator, whose art blurs the boundaries between sculpture, performance, film and dance.

Working with everyday and industrial materials, Hassinger, who earned her MFA at UCLA in 1973, has long challenged expectations of what strength, movement and beauty can look like. Some of the exhibition's most striking works transform heavy materials into unexpectedly graceful forms.

That tension is on display throughout the exhibition, where massive materials take on surprising elegance. Thick rope strong enough to pull a barge rests lightly across the gallery floor in loose, elegant knots, while wire rope unravels into sculptures that resemble flowing hair or cascading vines.

Elsewhere, films and documentation of Hassinger's performances explore family, race, community and the passage of time, often weaving in episodes from her own life.

See the artist in action when she restages her landmark 1982 performance, "Pink Trash," on UC Berkeley's Crescent Lawn on Sept. 20.