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**New Museum to Spotlight Four Decades of Works by Lynda Benglis  
in Major Retrospective**

**On view from February 9 through June 19, 2011.  
*Phantom*, an Installation of Phosphorescent Sculptures  
Not Seen Since 1971, to be Presented**

New York, New York...Beginning February 9, 2011, the New Museum will present a major exhibition of works by **Lynda Benglis**, the renowned American artist's first museum retrospective in over twenty years. Benglis is an artist whose work continues to challenge artistic norms and exceed easy definition. Initially developed in the 1960s, her singular practice did not fit clearly within the sharp aesthetics of Minimalism or in the overtly political gestures of feminist art. Unlike Minimalist sculpture, Benglis's works are steeped in the organic, with rivers of vibrant colors and erotic melting forms populating her sculptures. Rejecting the formalist influences of modernism, Benglis takes painting off the wall and brings color back into sculpture; she captures sensual experience and creates a visceral tie between the viewer and her biomorphic figures. With this unique combination of sensuousness and punk attitude, Benglis has influenced many generations of artists.



Lynda Benglis, *Phantom*, 1971. Polyurethane foam with phosphorescent pigments, 8 1/2 x 35 x 8ft (overall installation dimension variable). Marianna Kistler Beach Museum of Art © Lynda Benglis. DACS, London/VAGA, New York 2009

Spanning forty years of work, "Lynda Benglis" will be on view at the **New Museum** from **February 9 through June 19, 2011**. The exhibition was organized by the Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin, in collaboration with Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, the Netherlands; Le Consortium, Dijon; Museum of Art, Museum of Modern Art, Rhode Island School of Design, Providence; and the New Museum. The presentation at the New Museum is coordinated by Massimiliano Gioni, Associate Director and Director of Exhibitions.

The New York presentation of the exhibition will be supplemented by a selection of specifically chosen works such as ***Contraband*** (1969), Benglis's largest and most significant pour sculpture at almost forty feet in length, on loan from the Whitney Museum of American Art. Most significantly, the New Museum exhibition will also include ***Phantom*** (1971), a polyurethane installation consisting of five monumental sculptures that glow in the dark. Realized over forty years ago and **unseen since its original presentation at Kansas State University**, *Phantom* has been known during intervening years exclusively via photographic documentation. Included in the presentation at the Museum of Art, the Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, *Phantom* has come to be considered the apex of the artist's early accomplishments. It is an event of art historical importance that *Phantom* will be on display at the New Museum for the **first time ever in New York City**.



Lynda Benglis, Karen, 1972. Wax on wood, 36 x 5 x 3in (91.4 x 12.7 x 7.6 cm).  
Collection of Howard Read © Lynda Benglis, DACS, London/VAGA,  
New York 2009

In addition to Benglis's extraordinary poured latex pieces from the 1960s and 1970s, the exhibition will include early bronze casts, wax reliefs, and videos, revealing the creative universe of an artist who has radically reinvented the language of contemporary sculpture. Works from her "Torsos" and "Knots" series of the 1970s will be presented in close dialogue with such irreverent installations as *Primary Structures (Paula's Props)* (1975). Benglis's recent work in polyurethane and signature pleated-metal sculptures of the 1980s and '90s will also be on view in the exhibition, as will Benglis's rarely seen photographic work. The exhibition will also explore the artist's landmark media interventions, such as the infamous 1974 *Artforum* advertisement featuring a nude Benglis holding a double-headed dildo, a commentary on the machismo that dominated the New York sculpture milieu at that time.

Most recently, Benglis has experimented with plastics, cast glass, paper, and gold leaf. Continuing to use the body and landscape as primary references, Benglis's latest sculptures reveal a striking sense of immediacy and physicality even as they seem to defy gravity.



Lynda Benglis, Sparkle Knot V, 1972. Acrylic paint and sparkles on aluminum screen, cotton bunting, and plaster, 42 x 25 x 13 in (106.7 x 63.5 x 33 cm). Courtesy of the artist and Cheim & Read Gallery © Lynda Benglis. DACS, London/VAGA, New York 2009

## Publication

*Lynda Benglis*, a 450-page fully illustrated hardcover monograph, produced by Les Presses du Réel, accompanies the exhibition. It comprises texts by Dave Hickey and Elisabeth Lebovici and exhibition curators Franck Gautherot, Caroline Hancock, Laura Hoptman, and Judith Tannenbaum; an interview with the artist conducted by curator Seungduk Kim; and an in-depth chronology compiled by curator Diana Franssen. Renown and unseen archival material, including magazine articles, photographs, letters, and installation shots, are reproduced, as well as an overview of Benglis's work since the mid-1960s. Two seminal articles published in *Artforum* magazine are also reproduced: "The Frozen Gesture" by Robert Pincus-Witten (November 1974) and "Bone of Contention" by Richard Meyer (November 2004).

## About Lynda Benglis

Born in 1941 in Lake Charles, Louisiana, Lynda Benglis lives and works between New York; Santa Fe; Kastelorizo, Greece; and Ahmedabad, India. A longtime resident of the Lower East Side in Manhattan, Benglis's studio is just across the street from the New Museum on the Bowery. The New Museum was an early supporter of Benglis and showed her work in two group exhibitions at the New Museum's Broadway location: "Early Work," in 1982, and "Vision," in 1983.

Benglis studied at Newcomb College, now part of Tulane University, graduating with a BFA in 1964. Her solo exhibitions include Galerie Hans Müller, Cologne, 1970; Paula Cooper Gallery, New York, 1970; Hayden Gallery, MIT, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1971; Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas, 1971; "Lynda Benglis: Video Tapes," curated by Robert Pincus-Witten, Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse, New York, 1973; "Sparkle Knots," The Clocktower, New York, 1973; "Moving Polaroids," The Kitchen, New York, 1975; "Lynda Benglis-Keith Sonnier, A Ten Year Retrospective, 1977–1987," Alexandria Museum of Art, Alexandria, Louisiana, 1987; "Dual Natures," curated by Susan Krane, High Museum of Art, Atlanta, 1990 (Benglis's last major retrospective); "Lynda Benglis: From the Furnace," Auckland City Art Gallery, 1993; Margo Leavin Gallery, Los Angeles, 1991; Michael Janssen Gallery, Cologne, 1997; "Lynda Benglis: Sculptures," Bass Museum of Art, Miami, 2003; "A Sculpture Survey 1969–2004," Cheim & Read, New York, 2004; "Lynda Benglis: Pleated, Knotted, Poured...", Locks Gallery, Philadelphia, 2006; and "Shape Shifters," Locks Gallery, Philadelphia, 2008.

Benglis has also exhibited widely in major group exhibitions, including the seminal "Anti-Illusion: Procedure/Materials," the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 1969 (catalogue only); "Works for New Spaces," the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, 1971; Whitney Museum of American Art Biennials, New York, 1973 and 1981; "Three-Dimensional Painting," the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; "Early Work," the New Museum, New York, 1982; "The New Sculpture 1965–75: Between Geometry & Gesture," the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 1990; "Fémininmasculin: le sexe dans l'art," Centre Pompidou, Paris, 1995; "More Than Minimal: Feminism and Abstraction in the '70s," Rose Art Museum, Brandeis University, Waltham, Massachusetts, 1996; and, more recently, "Century City: Art and Culture in the Modern Metropolis," Tate Modern, London, 2001; "Summer of Love: Psychedelic Art from the '60s," Tate Liverpool, 2005; "High Times, Hard Times: New York Painting 1967–1975," Independent Curators International, New York, 2007; "Circa 70: Lynda Benglis and Louise Bourgeois," Cheim & Read, New York, 2007; and "Lynda Benglis/Robert Morris: 1973–1974," Susan Inglett Gallery, New York, 2009.



Lynda Benglis, *Untitled (VW)*, 1970. Pigmented polyurethane foam, 48 x 69 1/4 x 41 3/4 in (122 x 176 x 106 cm). Courtesy of Galerie Michael Janssen © Lynda Benglis. DACS, London/VAGA, New York 2009

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### **About the New Museum**

The New Museum is the only museum in New York City exclusively devoted to contemporary art. Founded in 1977, the New Museum was conceived as a center for exhibitions, information, and documentation about living artists from around the world. From its beginnings as a one-room office on Hudson Street to the inauguration of its first freestanding, dedicated building on the Bowery designed by SANAA in 2007, the New Museum continues to be a hub of new art and new ideas and is a place of ongoing experimentation about what art and arts institutions can be in the twenty-first century.

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