

LACMA FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

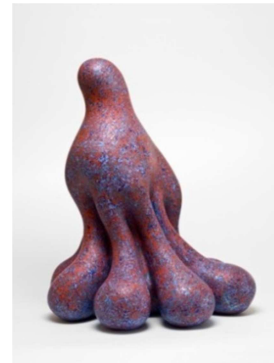
EXHIBITION: KEN PRICE SCULPTURE: A RETROSPECTIVE

ON VIEW: SEPTEMBER 16, 2012–JANUARY 6, 2013

LOCATION: RESNICK PAVILION

LACMA PRESENTS GROUNDBREAKING RETROSPECTIVE OF AMERICAN SCULPTOR KEN PRICE

EXHIBITION TRACES THE ARTIST'S SCULPTURAL PRACTICE OF MORE THAN FIFTY YEARS AND FEATURES GALLERY INSTALLATION DESIGNED BY FRANK GEHRY



(IMAGE CAPTIONS ON PAGE 4)

(Los Angeles, June 13, 2012) The Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) presents *Ken Price Sculpture: A Retrospective*, a groundbreaking exhibition featuring 100 works by the prolific ceramic artist, Ken Price (1935–2012). On view in the Resnick Pavilion from September 16, 2012 through January 6, 2013, the exhibition traces the development of Price's sculptural practice from his luminously glazed ovoid forms to his suggestive, molten-like slumps, positioning him within the larger narrative of modern American sculpture. This sculptural retrospective honors the late artist's creativity, originality, and revolutionary art practice.

"For more than fifty years, Los Angeles artist Ken Price made remarkable and innovative works that have challenged contemporary sculptural practice," says Stephanie Barron, senior curator of modern art and curator of the exhibition. "It is only through assembling the entire range of his sculpture on the occasion of this retrospective (it has been twenty years

since the last one), that we can see the essential unity of his sculptural practice – the connections that exist among different periods and styles. Price’s work commands a unique position somewhere between sculpture and painting.”

The exhibition is designed by Pritzker Prize-winning architect, Frank O. Gehry, a close friend of Price’s since the 1960s. After its presentation at LACMA, the exhibition will travel to the Nasher Sculpture Center, Dallas (February 9- May 12, 2013) and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (June 18- September 22, 2013).

Exhibition Overview

Ken Price Sculpture: A Retrospective moves the artist’s work outside of the realm of craft and into the dialogue of contemporary sculpture. To situate his works within a sculptural context, the exhibition is installed in reverse chronology. The first gallery presents work from 2000 to 2011, including new sculptures from the last years of his life. In the late 1990s, Price began a new series of mottled sculptures, for which he has become most well-known. The work’s surface is composed of roughly seventy layers of paint that he painstakingly sanded, each stratum uncovered as he varied the pressure of his sanding. The result is a lyrical composition of colors held together in a layered arrangement that is anthropomorphic.

The middle gallery displays work from 1959 to 2000 and highlights each of the major styles of his prolific career including slumps, rocks, geometrics, cups, eggs, and mounds. While Price tended to progress in loose series, this large main gallery reviews his career in a broader and yet more integrated way, establishing connections and linkages across the years, rather than in simple series. Eleven works on paper and two large-scale sculptures from 2011 to 2012 are also presented in this gallery.

Finally, the last gallery displays three of the units from his 1970s project *Happy’s Curios* as well as sculptures made in the last year of his life. Named after his wife Happy, *Happy’s Curios* were comprised of large cabinets, filled with between eight and twenty or more ceramics mimicking the style of Mexican folk pottery. The recent sculptures in this gallery continue the speckled surface that has become iconic of his late sculptures.

About Ken Price

Born in Los Angeles, Ken Price received his BFA from the University of Southern California in 1956 and his MFA from the famed New York State College of Ceramics at Alfred University in 1959. In the late 1950s, at the Chouinard Art Institute and the Los Angeles County Art Institute (later renamed CalArts and the Otis College of Art and Design, respectively), Price's ceramics professor, Peter Voulkos, encouraged the artist to create work that transcended the traditional boundaries of the medium.

Price's first exhibitions from 1960 to 1964 were at the Ferus Gallery, sales of which allowed Price to travel throughout Japan in 1962. Price's involvement in Ferus placed his work in dialogue with other Venice artists, including Robert Irwin, Larry Bell, and Billy Al Bengston, with whom he shared a studio for some time. His suggestively oozing eggs from this period, modest in scale by comparison with prevailing abstract expressionist work, reflect his lifelong interest in precision and finish.

In the early 1970s Price moved with his family to Taos, New Mexico, where the predominant Mexican folk aesthetic inspired him to embark on *Happy's Curios* (1972-77). After the *Curios*, Price's work in the 1980s became highly colorful and architectural, and returned to the more intimate scale of his eggs and cups. He explored differences between surfaces that were highly polished and roughhewn, and experimented with the impact of planes of color colliding to create forms. Building upon the advancements he had made in the 1960s, he focused on the articulation of architectural forms through color and shape.

From 1991 to 2001, Price was a professor of ceramics at USC. It was during this time the hard edges of his sculptures melted into globular lumps and blobs and he developed his method of layering several coats of paint and then sanding them down to reveal each layer. In 2002 Price and his wife returned to Taos, where they built a new home and an attached studio. Five years later, Price was diagnosed with cancer and, after going through treatments in Los Angeles, moved permanently back to Taos, where he remained until his death on February 24, 2012.

Exhibition Publication

The 288-page catalogue, *Ken Price Sculpture: A Retrospective*, is co-published by LACMA and DelMonico Books/Prestel, and features essays by Stephanie Barron, Frank Gehry, Phyllis Tuchman, Dave Hickey, as well as a compilation of interviews with the artist from 1980 to 2011 by MaLin Wilson-Powell. An anthology of texts from 1963 to 1970 and an illustrated chronology reproduces family photographs, gallery announcements, installation shots, and other archival material alongside the exhibition checklist to situate and contextualize his practice. The catalogue introduces extraordinary new photography of all the sculptures in the exhibition, commissioned from Fredrik Nilsen.

Credit

This exhibition was organized by the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. It was made possible through major grants from the LLWW Foundation, The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, and The Aaron and Betty Lee Stern Foundation. Generous support for the catalogue was provided by The Shifting Foundation and Friends of Contemporary Ceramics

About LACMA

Since its inception in 1965, LACMA has been devoted to collecting works of art that span both history and geography-and represent Los Angeles's uniquely diverse population. Today, the museum features particularly strong collections of Asian, Latin American, European, and American art, as well as a contemporary museum on its campus. With this expanded space for contemporary art, innovative collaborations with artists, and an ongoing Transformation project, LACMA is creating a truly modern lens through which to view its rich encyclopedic collection.

Location and Contact: 5905 Wilshire Boulevard (at Fairfax Avenue), Los Angeles, CA, 90036 | 323 857-6000 | lacma.org

Hours as of July 1, 2012: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday: 11 am-5 pm; Friday: 11 am-8 pm; Saturday, Sunday: 10 am-7 pm; closed Wednesday

General Admission: Adults: \$15; students 18+ with ID and senior citizens 62+: \$10

Free General Admission: Members; children 17 and under; after 3 pm weekdays for L.A. County residents; second Tuesday of every month; Target Free Holiday Mondays

Image captions (page 1):

(Left) *Red*, 1963, ceramic painted with lacquer and acrylic on wood base, 13 ½ x 12 x 10 inches, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, Evelyn and Walter Hass, Jr. Fund Purchase, 82.155, © Ken Price, photo © Fredrik Nilsen

(Center) *Reltny*, 1983, fired and painted clay, 2 ¾ x 5 ¼ x 2 ¾ inches, Ken Price, © Ken Price, photo © Fredrik Nilsen

(Right) *Balls Congo*, 2003, fired and painted clay, 22 x 18 x 18 inches, Linda Schlenger, © Ken Price, photo © Fredrik Nilsen

Press Contact: For additional information, contact LACMA Communications at press@lacma.org or 323 857-6522.

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