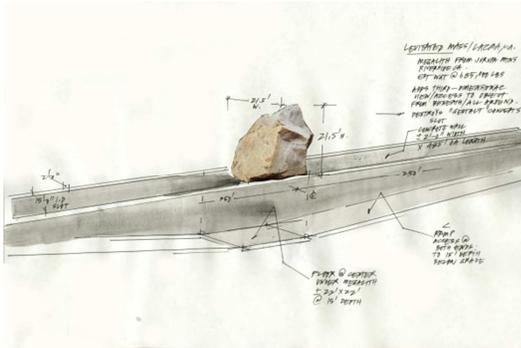


LEVITATED MASS BACKGROUND



(IMAGE CAPTIONS ON PAGE 4)

DESCRIPTION

The newest monumental outdoor artwork installed at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) is Michael Heizer's [*Levitated Mass*](#)—a 456-foot-long concrete slot constructed on LACMA's campus, over which sits a 340-ton granite megalith. As visitors walk into the slot, it gradually descends to fifteen feet in depth, running underneath the boulder into an open central chamber before ascending back up. *Levitated Mass* will open to the public on June 24, 2012 and will be situated north of the Lynda and Stewart Resnick Exhibition Pavilion, near the museum's 6th Street entrance.

Levitated Mass was made possible by private gifts to *Transformation: The LACMA Campaign* from Jane and Terry Semel, Bobby Kotick, Carole Bayer Sager and Bob Daly, Beth and Joshua Friedman, Steve Tisch Family Foundation, Elaine Wynn, Linda, Bobby, and Brian Daly, Hanjin Shipping Co., Ltd., Richard Merkin, MD, and the Mohn Family Foundation. LACMA has dedicated this acquisition to the memory of Nancy Daly, former chair of LACMA's board of trustees and an influential advocate for children and the arts in Los Angeles. Transportation of the megalith was made possible by Hanjin Shipping.

Levitated Mass was originally conceived by Heizer in 1969; a drawing of the work is in the collection of the Staatliche Museen ze Berlin. The

original attempt to build the sculpture took place in 1969 when a 120-ton rock was obtained by Heizer in the Sierras above Reno, Nevada. Although a slot depression had been excavated in a northern Nevada dry lakebed to set the megalith on, the rock proved too heavy to load, breaking one of the two cranes being used. The slot was never combined with the megalith. In 2007, Heizer was working at the then Pyrite-Hubbs Quarry in nearby Riverside County when a 340 ton megalith came off the quarry wall during a detonation. The large size and impressive scale of the boulder were perfect criteria to realize *Levitated Mass*. It was soon developed between Heizer and LACMA director Michael Govan that this work could be constructed at LACMA.

Due to its massive size, the boulder required a complex and thoroughly reviewed transportation process from its quarry to the museum, a distance of approximately 105 miles. Its transportation took place over the course of roughly eleven nights which began on February 28, 2012. The transporter carrying the boulder travelled on a specially designated route—covering four counties (Riverside, San Bernardino, Orange, and Los Angeles) and twenty-two cities—with movement happening only at night. At 340 tons, the boulder was one of the largest megaliths moved since ancient times.

The boulder is one component of the artwork, as is the 456-foot-long slot beneath it and the surrounding environment. As with other works by the artist, such as *Double Negative* (1969) or *North, East, South, West* (1967/2002), the monumental negative form is key to the experiential nature of the artwork. Taken whole, *Levitated Mass* speaks to the expanse of art history – from ancient traditions of creating artworks from megalithic rock, to modern forms of abstract geometries and cutting-edge feats of engineering, as well as the modern philosophies underlying Heizer’s work of using negative space and volume as “physical” or measurable entities in major proportions in his sculptures and paintings.

Key statistics

Weight	340 tons
Height	21 1/2 feet
Width	21 1/2 feet
Length of slot	456 feet
Depth of slot (at lowest point)	15 feet
Interior width of slot	15 feet
Exterior width of slot	19 feet

MICHAEL HEIZER BIO

Michael Heizer was born in Berkeley, California, in 1944. He briefly attended the San Francisco Art Institute and moved to New York City in 1966, where he produced large-scale paintings. In the late 1968-69, Heizer chose to operate between his studios in New York and a ranch he eventually built in Nevada. Here, he began to produce large-scale sculptures such as *Nine Nevada Depressions* and *Displaced/Replaced Mass*, as well as large earth drawings and paintings on dry lakes in California and Nevada. To interpret these immense sculptures in a gallery setting, Heizer developed his unique use of large-scale still photography in the form of collages and static projections. Several shows with oversize rock-in-floor depressions were produced in Los Angeles and New York with Ace Gallery. His 1969 artwork *Double Negative* (now owned by the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles) inspired generations of artists. Heizer is currently completing his largest project, *City*, begun in 1972. Permanent installations of Heizer's sculpture can be found throughout the United States, including Seattle, Washington; Oakland, California; the Menil Collection and Rice University in Houston, Texas; the MIT campus in Boston, Massachusetts and the corner of 56th and Madison Avenue in New York City. Major exhibitions of his work have been presented at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Fondazione Prada, Milan, Italy, and at the Rijksmuseum Kröller-Müller, Otterlo, Holland.

Heizer's maternal grandfather, Olaf P. Jenkins, was Chief of California Division of Mines; his paternal grandfather, Ott F. Heizer, was a mining engineer who managed the Nevada-Massachusetts tungsten mine in Nevada. His father, Robert F. Heizer, was a prominent archaeologist. Among Robert F. Heizer's best-known works were his studies of the Native American Indian cultures of California and Nevada and his examination of the Olmec culture at the La Venta site in Tabasco, where he and others excavated and discovered large stone monuments similar to those recently on view at LACMA.

Other large size works by Michael Heizer include

- *Double Negative* (1969), a 1,500-foot-long trench cut into a desert mesa near Overton, Nevada (owned by the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles)

- *North, East, South, West (1967/2002)*, four negative geometric forms sunk from the floor of Dia:Beacon to a depth of twenty feet.
- *Effigy Tumuli (1983-1985)*, a work consisting of five massive geometric mounds derived from abstractions of fish, amphibians and reptiles, a continuation of the tradition of Native American mound building; located on the Illinois River at Buffalo Rock State Park near Ottawa, Illinois
- *City (1972-present)*, one of the largest sculptures ever created, covering an area of 1.25 miles long by .5 miles wide; comprised of a number of rock covered earthen structures defined by lineal concrete curbs, some as tall as sixty-five feet

CREDIT

Michael Heizer, *Levitated Mass*, conceived 1969, realized 2012, and made possible by gifts to *Transformation: The LACMA Campaign* from Jane and Terry Semel, Bobby Kotick, Carole Bayer Sager and Bob Daly, Beth and Joshua Friedman, Steve Tisch Family Foundation, Elaine Wynn, Linda, Bobby, and Brian Daly, Richard Merkin, MD, and the Mohn Family Foundation and has been dedicated by LACMA to the memory of Nancy Daly.

Transportation made possible by  HANJIN SHIPPING

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

Images (page 1): Left image: Michael Heizer, preliminary sketch for *Levitated Mass*, 2011, courtesy the artist, © Michael Heizer

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

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