

**PRESS RELEASE**

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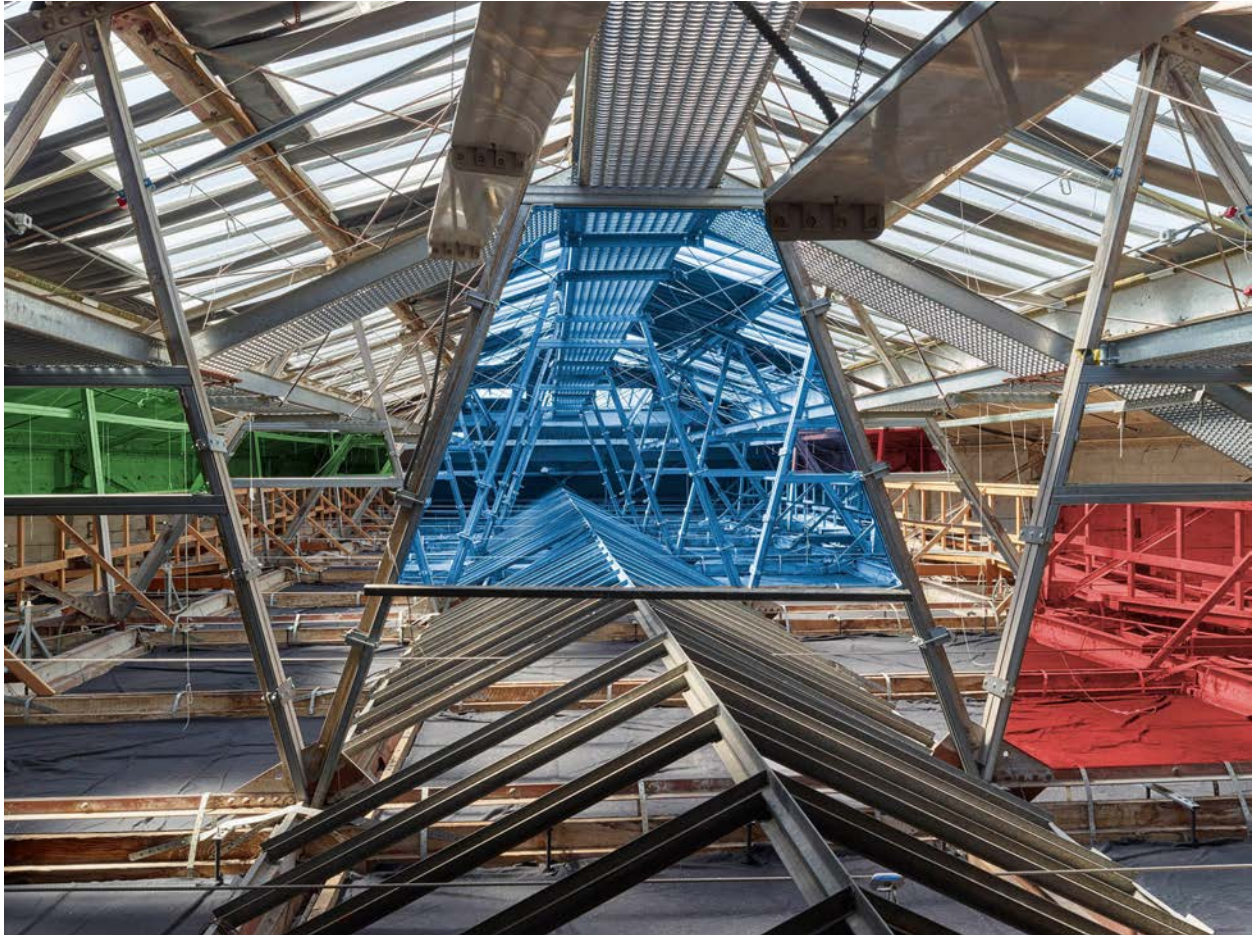
Jayna Swartzman-Brosky

Mills College Art Museum

(510) 430-3340 or [JSwartzmanbrosky@mills.edu](mailto:JSwartzmanbrosky@mills.edu)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

July 2, 2018



Catherine Wagner, *Archaeology in Reverse* (installation view inside MCAM glass-roof), 2018. Chromogenic print.

**Catherine Wagner: Archaeology in Reverse**

September 8–December 9, 2018

**Opening Reception:** Saturday, September 8, 2018 | 5:00-7:00 PM

**Oakland, CA—June 26, 2018.** Mills College Art Museum is pleased to announce *Archaeology in Reverse*, a series of new, immersive site-specific installations and photographs developed by Catherine Wagner, Nancy Cook Chair of Photography at Mills College. Working with architecture firm *modem* (Nicholas de Monchaux and Kathryn Moll) *Archaeology in Reverse* highlights the extraordinary architectural space of the Museum through sculptural installations, site-specific interventions, photographs and documentation of site-specific choreography by Molissa Fenley. The exhibition is accompanied by a full-color publication.

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Focused on the intellectual and physical frame of the art museum, Catherine Wagner's ambitious project exposes normally unseen corners of Mills College Art Museum (MCAM). Wagner's previous photographic and public art works reveal architecture as a source of social construction, particularly in museums where architecture frames and guides how visitors see and interact with objects that inhabit the space. Refocusing the attention and experience of the viewer, *Archaeology in Reverse* explores the museum as a cultural, social, and experiential lens.

As a photographer long interested in the phenomenon of light, Wagner examines the possibilities of physically transforming the museum's ceiling and gallery walls into a series of apertures. Her project reveals the Museum's usually hidden, glass-roofed skylight enclosure with the use of large periscopes that both project and reflect elements within the ceiling. Penetrating the perimeter of the walls of the gallery, Wagner reveals previously covered windows and doorways, including a defunct loading dock entrance, bridging interior and exterior space. The addition of colored acrylic accentuates the inherent geometry of these spaces, focusing the eye and creating order within the chaotic layers of architectural history embedded in the building. The exhibition also includes a new series of photographs that document the palimpsest of history embedded in various structures of the museum, from abandoned materials and retrofitted repairs, to signs of on-going activity and use in the gallery.

For over forty years Wagner, has challenged traditional ways of viewing by collapsing temporal boundaries, museum conventions, display methods, and how we understand the past and share knowledge across time. In many ways, *Archaeology in Reverse* represents a natural culmination of Wagner's ideas and practice combining aesthetic and theoretical rigor with a deep awareness of the specifics and history of a site. Above all, this project is intended as an opportunity for the artist to develop interdisciplinary collaborations and generate new ideas around experimentation with materials and space. The design and execution of sculptural elements of the project are in collaboration with *modem*, led by Bay Area architectural designers Nicholas de Monchaux and Kathryn Moll. In addition, Wagner invited Molissa Fenley, the Danforth Professor of Dance at Mills, to choreograph site-specific dances in the museum's rafters and in locations that intersect with the views from the outward looking apertures.

At its core, Wagner's work changes the way we see and examines how institutions relate to their audiences and their communities.

## **ABOUT THE ARTISTS**

### **Catherine Wagner**

Catherine Wagner is the Nancy Cook Chair of Photography at Mills College, where she has been a professor of studio art since 1979. She has exhibited extensively nationally and internationally, and her work is represented in major collections, including the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, The Whitney Museum of American Art, Museum of Modern Art, and Museum of Fine Art Houston. Her published monographs include *American Classroom*, *Art & Science: Investigating Matter*, *Cross Sections*, and *In Situ: Traces of Morandi*. She has received major awards, including the Visual Arts Fellowship from the San Jose Museum of Art, a Guggenheim Fellowship, NEA fellowships, and the Rome Prize. Wagner has also created site-specific public artwork for the City of San Francisco, University of California San Francisco Medical School, and the City of Los Angeles.

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**modem: Nicholas de Monchaux + Kathryn Moll**

Nicholas de Monchaux is Associate Professor of Architecture and Urban Design at the University of California, Berkeley, and Director of the Berkeley Center for New Media. He is the author of *Spacesuit: Fashioning Apollo* (MIT Press, 2011) and *Local Code: 3,659 Proposals About Data, Design, and the Nature of Cities* (Princeton Architectural Press, 2016). With Kathryn Moll, he is principal of *modem*. De Monchaux received his BA with distinction in Architecture from Yale, and his professional degree (MArch) from Princeton. He is a Fellow of the American Academy in Rome.

Kathryn Moll is an architect and partner at *modem* who has practiced in the public and education sectors managing the design and construction of LEED-certified and net-positive energy projects. Most recently, Moll was a Project Architect at WRNS Studio in San Francisco, Wesley College, Tisch School of the Arts at NYU, and Syracuse University in Florence Italy.

**Molissa Fenley**

Molissa Fenley is a choreographer, performer, and teacher of contemporary dance. She founded her company in 1977 and has created over 80 dance works. Her work has been commissioned by the American Dance Festival, the Brooklyn Academy of Music, Dia Art Foundation, Jacob’s Pillow, The Joyce Theater, and Lincoln Center. She has received numerous awards, including a Guggenheim Fellowship, and she is a Fellow of the American Academy in Rome. Fenley graduated from Mills College in 1975 with a BA in Dance, where she is now the Danforth Professor of Dance.

Catherine Wagner: *Archaeology in Reverse* is supported through the generosity of the Phyllis C. Wattis Foundation

**PUBLIC PROGRAMS**

Visit [mcam.mills.edu](http://mcam.mills.edu) for details.

**Opening Reception: *Archaeology in Reverse***

Saturday, September 8, 2018

5:00-7:00 PM

[Facebook](#)

**ABOUT MILLS COLLEGE ART MUSEUM**

Founded in 1925, Mills College Art Museum is a forum for exploring art and ideas and a laboratory for contemporary art practices. Through innovative exhibitions, programs, and collections, the museum engages and inspires the intellectual and creative life of the Mills community as well as the diverse audiences of the Bay Area and beyond. [mcam.mills.edu](http://mcam.mills.edu)

Museum hours are Tuesday-Sunday 11:00 am-4:00 pm and Wednesday 11:00 am-7: 30 pm. Admission is FREE for all exhibitions and programs unless noted.

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