

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 14, 2021

DIA CHELSEA, REIMAGINED, REOPENS TO THE PUBLIC THIS WEEK AFTER RENOVATION BY ARCHITECTURE RESEARCH OFFICE

Part of a comprehensive, multi-year plan to strengthen and revitalize Dia's constellation of sites in Chelsea, Beacon, and SoHo, as well as renovation of two landmark artist installations



New York, NY – Dia Art Foundation and Architecture Research Office (ARO) are celebrating the completion and the public reopening of Dia Chelsea.

Established in 1974, Dia Art Foundation supports the vision of artists through organizing and commissioning permanent and long-term exhibitions and installations at its constellation of sites in the United States and Germany. Dia's collection spotlights in particular the work of artists from 1960s and 1970s, ranging from site-specific Land art such as Nancy Holt's *Sun Tunnels* and Walter de Maria's *The Lightning Field*, to significant works by Sam Gilliam, Richard Serra, Donald Judd, Agnes Martin, Andy Warhol and many other acclaimed artists of the past half-century. Dia originated the concept of repurposing old factories and warehouses to create generous daylight spaces for art outside the context of the 'white cube' museum or gallery. In the 1980's, Dia relocated its offices and exhibition space to the west Chelsea area of New York City, a formerly industrial neighborhood that is now home to more than 200 galleries. In 2003, Dia opened Dia Beacon in upstate New York, in a nearly 300,000 square foot former Nabisco box printing factory boasting more than 34,000-square-feet of skylights.

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The renovation and expansion of Dia Art Foundation's three adjacent buildings in Chelsea establishes a greater street-level public presence for Dia. Grounded in Dia's architectural legacy of adapting existing structures in deference to the experience of art, the design adds new facades and extensive building systems that respect the integrity of the buildings' original spatial, structural and material qualities. The six-story easternmost building contains a new ground floor entry, bookstore, and a flexible "talk space" for 150 people. The exhibition spaces, located in the one-story middle and western buildings are connected to the lobby by new openings cut into their adjoining walls. By remaining single-story, the exhibition spaces retain the maximum amount of natural light. Today Dia Chelsea is a 32,500-square-foot facility, with 20,000 square feet of integrated, street-level exhibition and programming space. The project also includes new offices for Dia and an expanded library and education space on two upper floors of the eastern building.

ARO's design presents each of Dia's buildings as a distinct element within a unified composition. In keeping with the character of the formerly industrial neighborhood and the existing structures, brick is the primary material on the facade. It is laid in a common bond pattern and particular attention was given to the detailing of the openings. The lower level of the eastern building has symmetrically-organized doors and windows which position the public entry separate from the entry that serves the tenants on the floors above. The facades of the exhibition buildings have large central openings that facilitate art handling and are scaled to the proportions of the spaces within. The western building has tall glass doors; the middle building has an oversize metal paneled door, which references the previous industrial door. Smaller doors for emergency egress flank these openings. The new steel-framed window and door system is painted gray, matching the color used across Dia's other sites.

The interior of each building is designed to reveal its structure and the full extent of the interior spaces. To create open, full-height spaces for the lobby, bookstore and talk space, support programs including storage and restrooms are strategically located and the HVAC system is concealed. The service desk and bookstore millwork are low in height in deference to the overall spatial order of the lobby with exposed structural columns and ceiling. This design also opens up sightlines from the street through the talk space doors to the back wall of the building. This back wall is washed with daylight from new skylights. The exhibition buildings have exposed structural systems, new, high-performance skylights that match the originals, new HVAC systems that include humidification and seamlessly integrated infrastructure for lighting and audio-visual systems.

"Dia's mission has always been artist-focused. Since its founding in the 1970s, it has created powerful platforms for artists to realize ambitious projects and for audiences to have unmediated and durational interactions with works of art. This project establishes a strong public presence for Dia, while always working in deference to the art itself and the institutional mission," says Kim Yao, one of ARO's Partners in Charge of this project.

"Rather than pulling the focus to the architecture itself, the renewal of Dia's existing buildings strengthens their specific qualities of daylight, structure, materiality and space to create an authentic place that brings art and viewer into a closer relationship," says Adam Yarinsky, ARO's other Partner in Charge. "In other words, the architecture works in service to the art, not in service to itself."

In addition to the work in Chelsea, ARO's scope of work for Dia encompasses the restoration, renovation, and expansion of Dia's space in Beacon, NY; the reactivation of one of its original programming spaces in SoHo; and the revitalization of two permanent, landmark installations by Walter De Maria, *The New York Earth Room* and *The Broken Kilometer*, which have been maintained by Dia since first installed in the 1970s.

In making this announcement, Jessica Morgan, the Nathalie de Gunzburg Director of Dia, stated, "The revitalization of our three buildings on West 22nd Street establishes a permanent home for Dia in Chelsea. Dia first began programming in the Chelsea neighborhood in the 1980s, so this reopening is an important and long-awaited moment. With our new free admission policy, this space will have an open door for all. ARO is noted for its sensitive designs that enhance the original architectural character of a space and that support a focused art viewing experience. This approach is synchronous with Dia's history of repurposing

and activating found architectural spaces. We are delighted to be working with ARO on both Dia Chelsea and all of our forthcoming building projects.”

About ARO

Architecture Research Office is the New York City firm led by Stephen Cassell, Kim Yao and Adam Yarinsky. At its core, ARO is a practice for this new millennium. Since 1993, ARO has worked with leading universities, cultural institutions, global corporations, government agencies, and international fashion labels. In addition, the firm has gained a reputation for work that expands the boundaries of architectural practice, defining new ways of thinking about the designed environment. The firm’s approach to architecture is motivated by the understanding that we live in a complex world facing unprecedented challenges and is never driven by a priori formal agenda; ARO uses design to elevate the quality of our world. The firm is the winner of the 2011 National Design Award for Architecture from the Smithsonian’s Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum. For more information on Architecture Research Office, please visit www.aro.net.

Dia Art Foundation

Taking its name from the Greek word meaning “through,” Dia was established in 1974 with the mission to serve as a conduit for artists to realize ambitious new projects, unmediated by overt interpretation and uncurbed by the limitations of more traditional museums and galleries. Dia’s programming fosters contemplative and sustained consideration of a single artist’s body of work and its collection is distinguished by the deep and longstanding relationships that the nonprofit has cultivated with artists whose work came to prominence particularly in the 1960s and ’70s.

In addition to Dia Beacon, Dia Bridgehampton, and Dia Chelsea, Dia maintains and operates a constellation of commissions, long-term installations, and site-specific projects, notably focused on Land art, nationally and internationally. These include:

- Walter De Maria’s *The New York Earth Room* (1977) and *The Broken Kilometer* (1979), Max Neuhaus’s *Times Square* (1977), and Joseph Beuys’s *7000 Eichen* (*7000 Oaks*, inaugurated in 1982 and ongoing), all of which are located in New York City
- De Maria’s *The Lightning Field* (1977) in western New Mexico
- Robert Smithson’s *Spiral Jetty* (1970) in the Great Salt Lake, Utah
- Nancy Holt’s *Sun Tunnels* (1973–76) in the Great Basin Desert, Utah
- De Maria’s *The Vertical Earth Kilometer* (1977) in Kassel, Germany

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