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For Immediate Release

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**Major Survey of Barry Le Va's Early Work
Opening at Dia:Beacon in November 2019**



Barry Le Va installing *Four (Cleaved Floor)* (1969/2016) at MoMA PS1, New York, in 2016. © Barry Le Va. Photo: C. J. Nolan © David Nolan Gallery, New York City

Beacon, NY – August 14, 2019 – This fall, Dia Art Foundation will present a survey of early work by Barry Le Va at Dia:Beacon in Beacon, New York. The exhibition features several of the artist's most important floor-based, site-responsive installations from the 1960s, using felt, aluminum bars, and ball bearings, as well as early works using glass, meat cleavers, and powder. Though seemingly random in their presentation, these radical works are rigorously planned and arranged, and offer a counterpoint to the stark geometry of his peers' Minimal sculptures. The yearlong exhibition opens November 9, 2019.

Since the 1960s Le Va has been regarded as one of the leading practitioners of Postminimal and Process art. Alongside peers such as Robert Morris and Richard Serra, he renounced the contemporary mainstays of concrete form and geometry, embracing instead the concepts of dispersion, chance, and impermanence. Originally educated as an architect, Le Va ultimately abandoned his training to focus on his artistic practice. However, the question of how space is organized and produced continued to inform his work, even as he turned his attention to the remnants of the sculptural process. Arranging non-

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precious materials such as felt and flour according to principles of order and disorder, Le Va's scattered installations compel the viewer to consider this evidence of prior activity as they move through the gallery.

"From the very beginning of his artistic career, Le Va resisted traditional notions of composition and form. Instead of creating an object, he became concerned with the process of making itself, and especially with how discarded scraps of material could be harnessed to produce perceptual or psychological experiences," said Jessica Morgan, Dia's Nathalie de Gunzburg Director. "The works on display at Dia:Beacon will offer a comprehensive view of Le Va's early practice, charting his move away from the strictly rigid and logical forms of Minimalism and toward a different mode of approaching sculpture and installation."

The survey at Dia:Beacon will include a large powder dispersal that spans the entire width of one of Dia's vast central galleries. *Here to There; From There to Here* (1969/2019) combines elements of two of the artist's earliest works with powder: *Omitted Section of a Section Omitted* (1968–69), first presented in the 1969 exhibition *Anti-Illusion: Procedures/Materials* at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York City; and *6 Blown Lines (Accumulation Drift)* (1969), first presented in a 1969 solo exhibition at Stout State University (now the University of Wisconsin–Stout) in Menomonie. In *Omitted Section of a Section Omitted*, Le Va used flour to delineate a negative space across a gallery floor that spanned the width of an existing door frame. To produce *6 Blown Lines (Accumulation Drift)*, he poured linear segments of the same material onto the floor and then spread the powder into even drifts using an air compressor. At Dia Le Va will join similar waves to a more evenly distributed section of chalk whose dimensions also reflect a passageway into the gallery.

Four of Le Va's works from his series of Layered Pattern Acts (conceived between 1968 and 1971) will also be included in this exhibition. For this series, sheets of geometrically stacked glass are smashed with a hammer, creating shards that endure as evidence of the destructive action. Like Le Va's scatter pieces, three of which will also be on view at Dia:Beacon, the Layered Pattern Acts are meticulously diagrammed in advance and then realized spontaneously on-site. These arrangements juxtapose hardness and softness, fixity and motion, spilling out of view in a vast horizontal sprawl.

In an adjoining gallery, the artist will realize a wall-based installation from his Cleaver series, in which butcher knives are dramatically cleaved into the architecture of the gallery. As with his dispersals, the placement of the knives suggests the reach of the artist's own body, inviting the viewer to imagine the process by which they became lodged into the wall. The result is an implied choreography of movement, method, and angle of attack. This implicit violence is not accidental. Le Va's work, while not overtly political, considers violence and destruction in formal terms and highlights gesture, location, material, and structure.

"Le Va's installations combine a rigorously methodical approach to material and form with a sense of mischievous danger," said Alexis Lowry, Curator, Dia Art Foundation. "He leaves a series of spatialized

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clues to this process—from strewn scraps of felt to neatly organized metal rods—within the gallery for each viewer to uniquely piece together through their own embodied perceptual encounter.”

About Barry Le Va

Barry Le Va was born in Long Beach, California, in 1941. He is known for his abstract sculptures and installations that make use of a variety of unconventional materials including broken glass, meat cleavers, and powdered chalk. With these process-based works, Le Va expanded traditional notions of sculpture. His pioneering scatter pieces made him a leading practitioner in the Postminimalist, Post-Studio, and Process art movements of the late 1960s. He studied at California State University, Long Beach, from 1960 to 1963, and later received a BA and an MFA from Otis Art Institute, Los Angeles, in 1964 and 1967, respectively. He started teaching art in the late 1960s and has worked as an instructor at Minneapolis College of Art and Design, Princeton University, and Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut. He was awarded a Young Talent grant from the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (1968), a Guggenheim fellowship for sculpture (1976), and a National Endowment for the Arts fellowship (1976). After his first solo exhibition in 1969 at the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, his work was included in other landmark presentations including *Anti-Illusion: Procedures/Materials* in 1969 at the Whitney Museum of American Art and *Information* in 1970 at the Museum of Modern Art, both in New York City. Le Va has also participated in Documenta (1972, 1977, and 1982) and the Whitney Annual and Biennial exhibitions (1971, 1977, and 1995). Major surveys of his work have taken place at, among others, the New Museum, New York (1979); Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia (2005); and the Serralves Museum, Porto, Portugal (2006). In recent years Le Va’s work has been included in exhibitions at MoMA PS1, New York (2015–16); Yale University School of Art (2015); Dallas Museum of Art (2015); and David Nolan Gallery, New York (2018). He lives and works in New York.

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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 1970s.

In addition to Dia:Beacon 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, which was inaugurated at Documenta in 1982), all of which are located in New York City
- The Dan Flavin Art Institute (established in 1983) in Bridgehampton, New York
- De Maria’s *The Lightning Field* (1977) in western New Mexico

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- Robert Smithson's *Spiral Jetty* (1970) in Great Salt Lake, Utah
- Nancy Holt's *Sun Tunnels* (1973–76) in Great Basin Desert, Utah
- De Maria's *The Vertical Earth Kilometer* (1977) in Kassel, Germany

As part of a strategic and comprehensive plan to further advance its mission, program, and ongoing operations, Dia is upgrading and expanding its principal programming spaces of Dia:Chelsea, Dia:SoHo, and Dia:Beacon.

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