



Eleanor Antin

# Eleanor Antin

Howard N. Fox

*With an essay by Lisa E. Bloom*

Los Angeles County Museum of Art  
Fellows of Contemporary Art

This book was published in conjunction with the exhibition *Eleanor Antin*, organized by the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and initiated and sponsored by the Fellows of Contemporary Art. In-kind support for the exhibition is provided by KKGQ, the museum's official classical radio station. Additional support was generously provided by Hotel Nikko at Beverly Hills. The exhibition was held at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art from May 23 through August 23, 1999.

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Portions of Lisa E. Bloom's essay were excerpted by arrangement with the University of California Press.

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#### Cover

*From the Archives of Modern Art, 1987.*

#### Frontispiece

*Representational Painting, 1971.*

#### Page Two

*Eleanor Antin in her studio, ca. 1981.*



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## Foreword

For more than three decades Eleanor Antin has been a notable presence on the American art scene, first in New York City and later in her adoptive home in Southern California. During that time she has developed a body of work that is remarkable for its inventiveness, its wit, and its poignancy. Beginning her career as a painter but moving early into conceptual art, she became a pioneering figure in the development of video, performance, and installation art. Deeply affected by feminist thought and activity in the late 1960s and early 1970s, she was among the first artists to reassert the importance of biography, autobiography, and history for contemporary art. And she has been widely acknowledged by critics and artists alike as a formidable influence on successive generations of artists and on individuals.

Antin has had dozens of solo exhibitions, performances, and video and film screenings in museums and galleries over the years and has been represented in countless group exhibitions and festivals. The bibliography of critical response to her art is impressive. Recently she has earned such prestigious awards as the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship (1997) and the Cultural Achievement



Award of the National Foundation for Jewish Culture (1998), reflecting her long record of artistic accomplishment. Surprisingly, until now, there has not been a full survey of Antin's artistic development—possibly because some of her most ambitious works, being ephemeral, have had to be partly or entirely replicated to be seen; and, once replicated, they involve complex, space-consuming installations. The challenges of organizing such an exhibition are imposing for any institution; yet, as curators and art historians continue to reassess the art of the very recent past, it is appropriate that Eleanor Antin's significant contribution be acknowledged and studied. I am proud that the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, in association with the Fellows of Contemporary Art, has met the challenges of producing this comprehensive representation of one of the most stimulating, thought-provoking, and rewarding artists of the period.

Graham W. J. Beal

*Director*

*Los Angeles County Museum of Art*

## Sponsor's Statement

It is with great pleasure that the Fellows of Contemporary Art has collaborated with the Los Angeles County Museum of Art to present *Eleanor Antin*. This retrospective exhibition provides a timely opportunity to reexamine the myriad forms of the artist's innovative work. Eleanor Antin was an early advocate of the idea that art documents life—and what inventive, interesting, quirky lives she has shown us! We heartily anticipate revisiting documentations of the past as well as exploring the new work created for this exhibition.

*Eleanor Antin* is the twenty-eighth exhibition sponsored by the Fellows since the group's inception in 1975. During the past twenty-four years, the mission of the Fellows has been to encourage and present the art of emerging and midcareer California artists. A scholarly catalogue is published in conjunction with each exhibition underwritten by the Fellows.

Although *Eleanor Antin* is the first collaboration of the Fellows of Contemporary Art with the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the members of the Fellows have previously enjoyed a long and congenial association with curator Howard N. Fox. His astute and witty observations have informed numerous art encounters with the members of the

Fellows. We thank him for the lively dialogues of the past and are grateful indeed for his superlative guidance and the command that he has exercised over this project. Thanks also to Lisa E. Bloom, whose insightful essay provides a context for Eleanor Antin's work. The Fellows wishes to thank LACMA's president and chief executive officer, Andrea L. Rich, and director Graham W. J. Beal for the opportunity to work with the museum on this important exhibition.

Numerous Fellows helped to bring this exhibition to fruition. Thanks go to immediate past chair Diane Cornwell; to past chair of long-range exhibition planning Tina Petra and her committee for selecting this show; and to current chair of long-range exhibition planning Linda Polesky. Thanks also to Suzanne Deal Booth, who has provided able leadership as Fellows' liaison for the exhibition, and to administrative director Merry Scully, who has cheerfully and competently orchestrated communications and countless details. Very special appreciation goes to the members of the Fellows, whose financial support and dedication to the contemporary art of California bring to life exhibitions like *Eleanor Antin*.

Joan Rehnborg  
*Chairman (1997–98)*  
*Fellows of Contemporary Art*