

FRED SANDBACK AND LUIS BARRAGÁN SINGULAR ENCOUNTER BETWEEN TWO MASTERS IN THEIR FIELDS

In 2016 sculptures by the artist Fred Sandback were exhibited in buildings designed by the famous architect and Pritzker Prize winner Luis Barragán. *The Properties of Light* resulted in a sensitive dialogue between sculpture and architecture—the presence of absence, for Sandback initiated the project just before his death.

Berlin, March 6, 2018 – When the sculptor Fred Sandback (1943 – 2003) had a show in 2002 in the Museo Tamayo Arte Contemporáneo in Mexico City, he visited the Convento de las Capuchinas Sacramentarias while his exhibits were installed. The chapel was designed in the 1950s by the famous architect Luis Barragán (1902– 1988) for the Capuchin order. Deeply moved by the play of light, shadow, color, and architecture there, Sandback discovered a fascination for Mexican architecture. A year later, the American artist died. When his works were requested for an exhibition in Mexico City in 2016 with the gallery Proyectos Monclova, the Sandback estate suggested displaying his sculptures in various buildings designed by Luis Barragán. In collaboration with Proyectos Monclova, 23 of Sandback’s works were ultimately installed in four Barragán designed homes.

With the permission of each property owner, Sandback’s sculptures—colorful acrylic threads strung taut to form geometrical figures—were installed inside or outside the various buildings, including the Casa Luis Barragán (1948) and the Casa Gilardi (1975–77). After being documented in photographs, Sandback’s works vanished immediately, without a trace. *The Properties of Light* is an illustrated portrait of the meeting of two visionary spirits, whose absence defines their presence and makes it possible to see the way they mutually contrast and complement each other.

“The Barragán-Sandback pairing gives us a unique and very refined example of that respectful dialogue in absentia: on the one hand, both practitioners are now no longer with us; on the other, their ideas and creativity are still very much present, vital, and forceful. They have a clear-cut place in our mental archive and evoke very particular iconographies,” writes the art historian Federica Zanco.



LUIS BARRAGÁN, FRED SANDBACK

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