

# MASS MoCA

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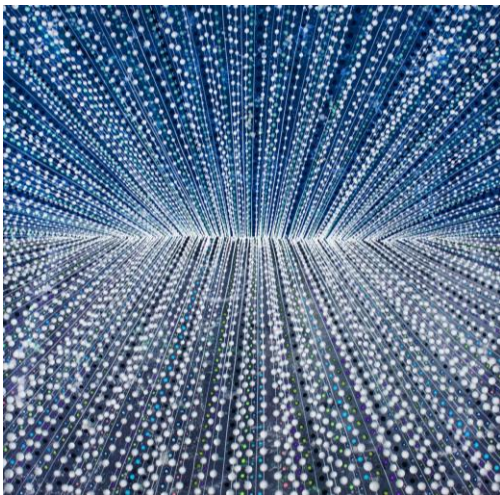
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Contact: Jodi Joseph  
Director of Communications  
413.664.4481 x8113  
[jjoseph@massmoca.org](mailto:jjoseph@massmoca.org)

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## Barbara Takenaga

*Painter translates exuberant work to large-scale mural installation*

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Barbara Takenaga, *Nebraska*, 2015  
Original acrylic on paper work for digitally reproduced  
wallpaper, 60 x 44 inches  
Courtesy of the artist and DC Moore Gallery, New York

North Adams, Massachusetts — Painter Barbara Takenaga creates a new work of an unprecedented scale for a 100' wall in the Hunter Center lobby at MASS MoCA. Known for her labor-intensive, exuberant abstractions composed of matrix-like, swirling patterns of dots, Takenaga translates her meticulous, handcrafted, easel-sized work to wallpaper in this large-scale commission. The mural features a new image from her series, *Nebraska Paintings*, a body of work that moves closer to the representational imagery only implied in earlier pieces, but which captures the wide open spaces and big sky of the artist's native state. The work will be on view at MASS MoCA beginning July 12, 2015.

At MASS MoCA, Takenaga's pared-down landscape of earth and atmosphere is painted in grays and muted tones, which the artist likens to the quality of light at dusk. In her words, the moody palette, punctuated with the artist's signature burst of high color, conveys "the 'violet hour' of in-between time, when the land and sky start to blur." A horizon line, situated high in Takenaga's composition, places the viewers' perspective floating above the ground, suggesting that an immense expanse of plain stretches out in front of them. Repeated lines of white dots radiate out in all directions from an implied vanishing point on the horizon line to suggest blooming crops, a snowy blizzard, or a star-filled sky. The single image is repeated twelve times along the length of the wall, with the composition's receding lines and diminishing dots of classical one-point perspective alternately moving backward toward the horizon and forward toward the viewer. The long horizon is regularly interrupted by a diamond-like shape formed by the intersection of lines at the seams between each image. As viewers walk the length of the

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wall, the chain of images functions like a series of film stills, implying movement and the rhythm of time. The result is a tension-filled composition that emphasizes both the flat surface of the wall and an illusion of depth. Adding even more dimension to the work, as well as a sense of the artist's hand to the digitally reproduced image, Takenaga will apply iridescent paint to the wallpaper surface.

Describing Takenaga's paintings as both "hallucinogenic" and "sternly disciplined," writer Nancy Princenthal aptly describes the *Nebraska Paintings*: "It would be misleading to overstate the figurative suggestions of these paintings, or their emotional weight. Many present a sleek seductiveness that combines acid-trip visual plentitude with James Bond cool. But given a minute, the imagery grows more complex. Takenaga's work explores the minimum requirements for evoking astral space, or snow over the plains, or an uncharted sea. And it demonstrates the many pleasures, not excluding the optical, that such evocations provide."

### **About the Artist**

Barbara Takenaga was born in North Platte, Nebraska, and has a M.F.A. from the University of Colorado, Boulder. She has had solo exhibitions at the Colorado University Museum, University of Colorado, Boulder; Brattleboro Art Museum, Brattleboro, Vermont; McKinney Avenue Contemporary, Dallas; Art in General, New York; and the Williams College Museum of Art, among other museums and galleries. Takenaga's work has also been exhibited in group exhibitions at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia; San Antonio Museum of Art, Texas; Henry Art Gallery, Seattle; American Academy of Arts & Letters, New York; Bell Gallery, Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island; deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum, Lincoln, Massachusetts; Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery, Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs, New York; Museum of Contemporary Art, Denver; and the Asia Society, New York. In 2013 Takenaga was elected National Academician of the National Academy, New York. Her work can be found in numerous public and private collections, including the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts; Crocker Art Museum, Sacramento, California; Neuberger Museum of Art, Purchase, New York; the San Jose Museum; Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; and the Frederick R. Weisman Art Foundation, Los Angeles; among others. Takenaga is the Mary A. & William Wirt Warren Professor of Art at Williams College, Williamstown, Massachusetts. She is represented by Gregory Lind Gallery, San Francisco; and DC Moore Gallery, New York. Takenaga lives and works in New York City and Williamstown, Massachusetts.

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### Images

A collection of high-resolution images is available here: [bit.ly/1vlqrxA](http://bit.ly/1vlqrxA).

### About MASS MoCA

MASS MoCA is one of the world's liveliest (and largest) centers for making and enjoying today's most important art, music, dance, theater, film, and video. Hundreds of works of visual and performing art have been created on its 19<sup>th</sup>-century factory campus during fabrication and rehearsal residencies, making MASS MoCA among the most productive sites in the country for the creation and presentation of new art. More platform than box, MASS MoCA strives to bring to its audiences art experiences that are fresh, engaging, and transformative.

MASS MoCA's galleries are open 11am to 5pm every day except Tuesdays. In the summer months, the galleries are open 10am to 6pm every day. The Hall Art Foundation's Anselm Kiefer exhibition is open seasonally, reopening in May 2015. Gallery admission is \$18 for adults, \$16 for veterans and seniors, \$12 for students, \$8 for children 6 to 16, and free for children 5 and under. Members are admitted free year-round. For additional information, call 413.662.2111 x1 or visit [massmoca.org](http://massmoca.org).