

FOREWORD

The ICA is extremely pleased to present *Jaap Bongers: Reflections*, the first survey exhibition devoted to this very talented artist. Covering 25 years of Bongers' work, this exhibition reflects the ICA's commitment to contemporary Bay Area artists and to exploring the cultural and historical contexts in which their work is made. The accompanying monograph serves to document not only the ICA's exhibition, but a much larger body of Bongers' work by examining it from a number of perspectives. It is a true reflection of the extraordinary scope of his art making.

Bongers was born in Stein, Holland and studied at the Jan Van Eyck Academie of Fine Arts and the Stadsacademie of Fine Arts, both in Maastricht, Holland. In addition to his travels to Africa, Bongers also visited the United States for the first time in 1985 and settled permanently in San Jose in 1987. In order to fund his art making, he held a number of jobs: working in a foundry, making molds out of his garage for other sculptors, and then teaching at the San Jose Museum of Art School and the San Francisco Academy of Art College. In 1997, he began teaching full-time at Harker, a college prep school in San Jose, CA. That year was also when Harker expanded to include instruction at the high school level. Bongers was instrumental in shaping the art curriculum and the vision for the high school program. He currently is the chair of the art department at The Harker School and teaches Sculpture, Stone Carving and the Study of Visual Art.

Bongers' art has been shaped by numerous influences, which go back to ancient archaeological ruins and extend to Mondrian, the *Arte Povera* artists and Joseph Beuys. The exhibition and publication include a wide variety of genres from small bronze sculptures to large-scale installations, as well as documentation of Bongers' numerous public art projects. The works range from fictitious tools and other seemingly ancient artifacts to extremely minimalist statements of presence and absence. Although the work has changed in style and medium during the past 25 years, a common aesthetic exists throughout.

The ICA's exhibition and the accompanying monograph would not have been possible without the considerable efforts of numerous individuals. I would first like to thank Sheila Pickett for her commitment to the ICA and this project. She has been a loyal supporter of Jaap's work for many years and was the perfect candidate to conduct an interview with the artist. The result is an insightful and detailed look at the work through Bongers' own words. Curatorial Assistant Chrissy Kennedy, the newest member of the ICA team, became completely immersed in the details of the show and the publication the moment she began. Her patience, good humor, and attention to detail have guided the process throughout. Thanks also go to Matthew Isble, Chief Preparator, for a stellar installation of the exhibition, as well as to the entire ICA staff for their tireless efforts in realizing this ambitious project. I would also like to extend our deep appreciation to Alessandro Paladini for designing and producing such a distinctive publication of Jaap's work. Of course, the book would not have been possible were it not for the generosity of the many individuals who contributed to its production. Their names are listed at the back of the catalogue. And, finally, I would like to thank Jaap for sharing his art and his story

with us. He was an enthusiastic participant in the entire process and was instrumental in securing the necessary funds to make this publication a reality. It has been a joy to work with him over these past few months.

Cathy Kimball
Executive Director

I would like to thank the many individuals who have supported me and this important project from the beginning. I am extremely grateful to the donors to the catalogue. It would not have been possible without their generous contributions. Many of them are also collectors of my work and to them and all those people who have collected my work over the years, thank you. A special thanks is due Christine Scheerder who has dedicated herself during the past several months to producing a film about my work. She has created a lasting document that provides a beautiful compliment to the catalogue. I would also like to thank Ken Matsumoto of Art Object Gallery in San Jose for including my work in a number of gallery exhibitions and Andrea Schwartz Gallery for promoting my work over the years. I am also deeply grateful to the Harker School for supporting my endeavors as a working artist as well as a teacher. Thank you also to Cathy Kimball for curating the exhibition and providing an insightful overview of my career in her catalogue essay. And, finally, I would like to thank my wife, Mary, for keeping my feet on the ground. – JB