

ART SPIEL

Reflections on the work of contemporary artists

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Mapping the Invisible at the Flinn Gallery

IN DIALOGUE



Flinn Gallery Installation Photo by Patrick Vingo

Mapping the Invisible, the final show of the '23-'24 season at the Flinn Gallery in Greenwich, Connecticut, showcases the work of Laura Battle, Jaq Belcher, and Amy Myers, each of whom contemplate and explore the mysteries of our existence through the lenses of science, math, and geometry. Co-curated by Francene Langford and Caren Winnall, the show runs till June 19, 2024. Langford elaborates on the curatorial process and highlights the work in this show.

What is your curatorial vision for this show?

In order to speak about curating this show, I'd like to explain a bit about the Flinn Gallery and the unique approach our members have developed over the 95 years it has been operating. The Flinn Gallery is run by a committee of volunteers, which influences the unusual way curatorial decisions are made. Sponsored by the non-profit Friends of the

Greenwich Library and staffed by our forty-plus volunteers and a part-time gallery manager, we are open seven days a week during our season, which runs from September through June. A smaller group of 13 individuals make up the Selections committee, which reviews self-submitted artists as well as artists who have been recommended. This smaller committee votes on these potential artists; the resulting list is the pool we draw from as we design the next season's shows. As the Selections committee reviews this list, themes and synchronous pairings or groups emerge as we find consensus and develop the five shows for the following season.

The decision to show these three artists together began with a largely intuitive feeling the committee had about how the three very different artists share similarities in their work and how the viewer experiences their work. Several of us had recently appreciated the Hilma af Klint show at the Guggenheim Museum, and we were sensitized to how geometry, science, physics, and spirituality could all be at play within artworks. I had seen Amy Myers' *Daughter Universes* at Malin Gallery. I was moved by how her monumental drawings were intimate yet massive, still yet vibrant, and unlike anything I had ever seen, so I recommended her. Laura Battle was recommended by another committee member, and Jaq Belcher came to us through her online submission.

After securing the artists' interest in showing with the Flinn, Caren Winnall and I volunteered to co-curate. In this hybrid curating model, when we started our "curating," we already had our artists in place and a working title. As we dove further into each artist's work and visited their studios, we found that, indeed, there were many shared sensibilities. Most striking is how all three artists feature meticulous geometric

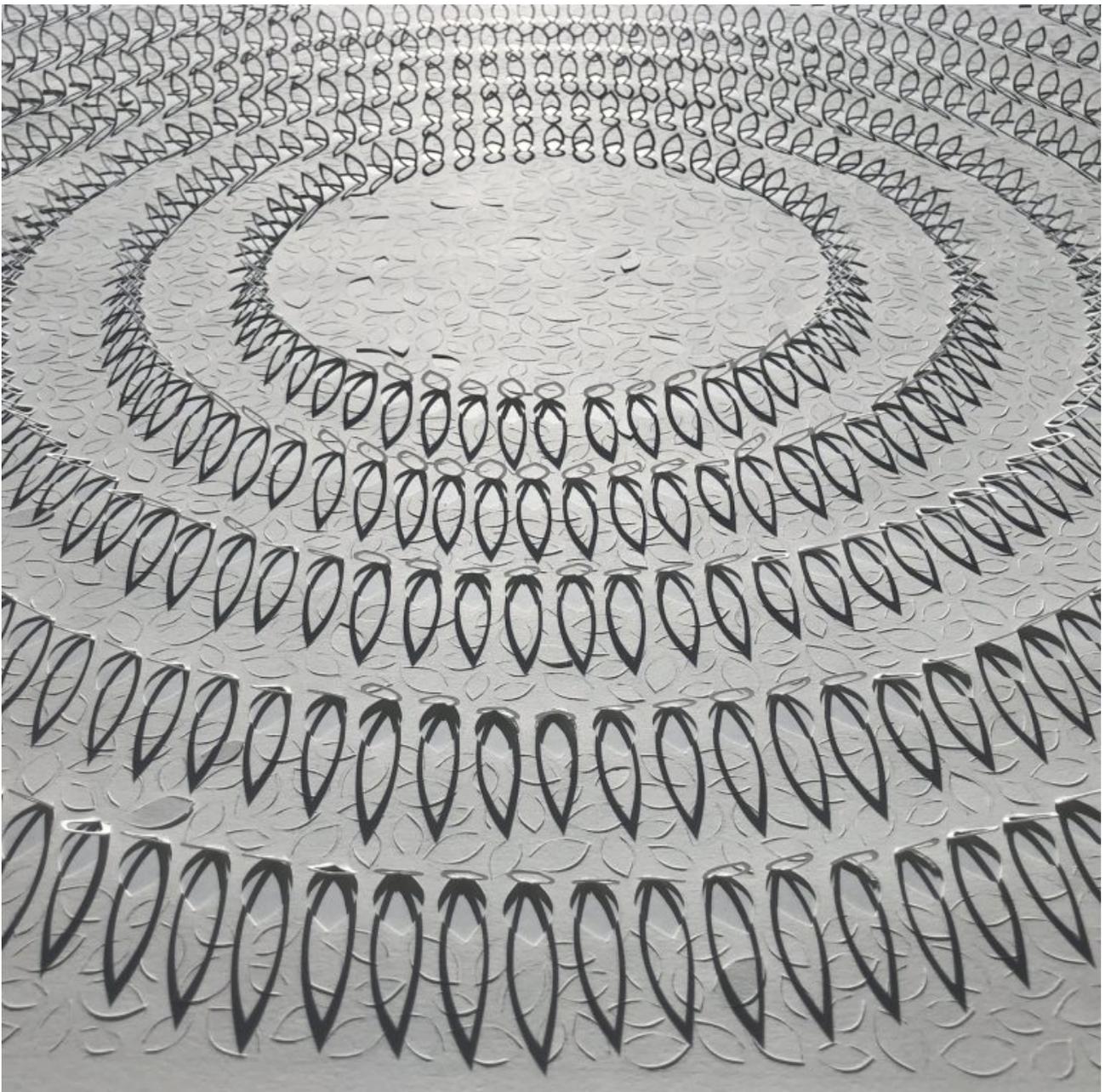


Gallery view of Jaq Belcher's work. Photo by Patrick Vingo

relationships and develop visual form and meaning through repetitive and precise mark-making. We found that Battle and Belcher were both deeply inspired by time spent in Egypt and both shared a fascination with the work of the late Swiss artist Emma Kunz.

What do we see in the exhibition?

We show seven framed paper sculptures by the New York-based artist Jaq Belcher. Originally from Australia, Belcher started her art career as a sculptor working in metal. Upon moving to New York in 2001, Belcher embraced the qualities of paper's simplicity and ecology and began using pristine white paper in her intricately executed dimensional work. Her work is grounded in a process of reduction and repetition influenced by Eastern



Jaq Belcher, Sun Seeds for Central Park, 2021, Hand cut paper, 7011 cuts (detail), 37" x 37". Photo by White Line Studios

and Western contemplative traditions. Using nothing more than an X-acto knife and handmade stencils, Belcher crafts mesmerizing patterns based on the “vesica piscis,” a seed-like petal shape rich in historical, symbolic, and energetic associations.

Her meticulous attention to detail and mastery of paper manipulation result in works that shimmer with reflected light and shadow. A temporary installation of excised “seeds” of paper form a mandala on a platform referencing the continuous cycle and transformation of matter and energy. Jaq writes, “My work is a physicalized prayer. The pieces are created through intention and attention. Hand drawn, cut and each seed counted. Underlying geometry creates a structure for the “seed” mantra to create a field. I use a scale of thirteen and variations of cuts to create dimensionality. It’s an exploration of the frequency of white light. Timed and dated in the margins, each piece is an imprint created by a story that first inspired it.” Visitors are mesmerized and amazed by the patience and focus required to produce this work.

Intricate graphite, ink, and watercolor drawings along with large-scale oil paintings make up Laura Battle’s contribution to the show. Inspired by the patterns found in nature, such as the ebb and flow of ocean tides or the circling sweep of swallows, as well as ancient diagrams of the universe and ways of measuring time, Battle’s complex geometries and sensitively rendered colors lead viewers into a world of heightened order and emotive energy. Her art explores the relationship between structured design and spontaneous creation; each piece, some with upwards of 4000 lines, offers exciting optical effects and unexpected compositions that become intense spaces with visceral impact and a universally relatable visual language.



Laura Battle, Untitled (Red/Black), 2024, Mixed Media on Paper, 22" x 38". Photo by Chris Kendall

Although Amy Myers is well known for her monumental-scale drawings, we are showing more intimate pieces of her drawings and paintings. Myers is influenced by her interest in the implications of quantum mechanics. Sensitive to the emotive properties of color, her mixed-media drawings and paintings evolve as poetic imaginings and intuitive explorations of theories related to ideas as small as the atom and as big as the birth of galaxies. Through graphite, ink, gouache, conte, and oil paint, Myers portrays nearly symmetrical forms that seem organic and mechanical, inviting viewers to engage with the layered details and the sense of vibration and spinning energy they portray. Myers says, “My work is a gender fluid lens into the unseen world of molecules and atoms, the laws that govern their interaction, coupled with the exposure to ideas concerning scientific experimentation within the notion that everything is a combination of something else.”



Amy Myers, Spectral Burn, 2019, Oil on Canvas, 36" x 36". Photo by Jeanette May Studio

Visitors to the show are drawn into the layered detail in all of the works in this exhibition and sense the curiosity, reverence, and wonder that propel the explorations of these three artists. As our gallery is within a library, we make an effort to encourage children's art appreciation and have a corner of the gallery where children are invited to make art in the spirit of the show. In this case, we encourage children to play with Spirographs, Etch-a-Sketches, and mandala coloring pages so they can create their own geometric-inspired art.

The Flinn Gallery is sponsored by Friends of the Greenwich Library and features five curated shows a year.

Mapping the Invisible at Flinn Gallery Greenwich Library through June 19, 2024
Instagram: [@flinngallery_greenwich](https://www.instagram.com/flinngallery_greenwich)