

Contemporary Clouds

“A promise is a cloud; fulfillment is rain. “

Marine Cloud Brightening

Marine cloud brightening also known as **marine cloud seeding** and **marine cloud engineering** is a proposed solar radiation management climate engineering technique that would make clouds brighter, reflecting a small fraction of incoming sunlight back into space in order to offset anthropogenic global warming. Along with stratospheric aerosol injection, it is one of the two solar radiation management methods that may most feasibly have a substantial climate impact.^[1] The intention is that increasing the Earth's albedo, in combination with greenhouse gas emissions reduction, carbon dioxide removal, and adaptation, would reduce climate change and its risks to people and the environment. If implemented, the cooling effect is expected to be felt rapidly and to be reversible on fairly short time scales. However, technical barriers remain to large-scale marine cloud brightening. There are also risks with such modification of complex climate systems.

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LLgAZOaK70c&t=75s>

El Greco—View of Toledo

In this, his greatest surviving landscape, El Greco portrays the city he lived and worked in for most of his life. The painting belongs to the tradition of emblematic city views, rather than a faithful documentary description. The view of the eastern section of Toledo from the north would have excluded the cathedral, which the artist therefore imaginatively moved to the left of the Alcázar (the royal palace). Other buildings represented in the painting include the ancient Alcántara Bridge, and on the other side of the river Tagus, the Castle of San Servando.

<https://artincontext.org/view-of-toledo-el-greco/>



Heinrich Heidegger, *View of Basel*, 1904.
Oil on canvas.

In this painting, Heidegger depicts the city of Basel from a hillside, looking down at the Rhine. The painting is a study of the city's architecture and the surrounding landscape. The city is built on a steep slope, with a large church spire visible in the background. The foreground is dominated by lush green hills and a river flowing through the valley. The sky is filled with dramatic, dark clouds, suggesting an approaching storm or late afternoon light. The painting is framed by an ornate, carved wooden frame.

Heidegger Collection, Basel, Switzerland.
© 2004.

John Constable

In 1821 Constable began to make studies of clouds **in an attempt to capture their transient energy**. This cloud studies is anchored by the inclusion of treetops. Constable made notes on the reverse of such sketches that underline his analytical observation of weather conditions.

Constable's oil studies of skies show a remarkable understanding of the structure and movement of clouds. Most also give a good impression of their three-dimensional volume.

The studies vary in size. This is one of only four examples he painted on a larger format. The larger the scale the more difficult Constable found it to balance crispness of detail with speed of execution. This is why the larger cloud studies tend to be more generalized. The inscriptions on the back – '11 o'clock' and 'Noon' – indicate that this study took him about an hour to paint.

<https://www.thehistoryofart.org/john-constable/cloud-study/>









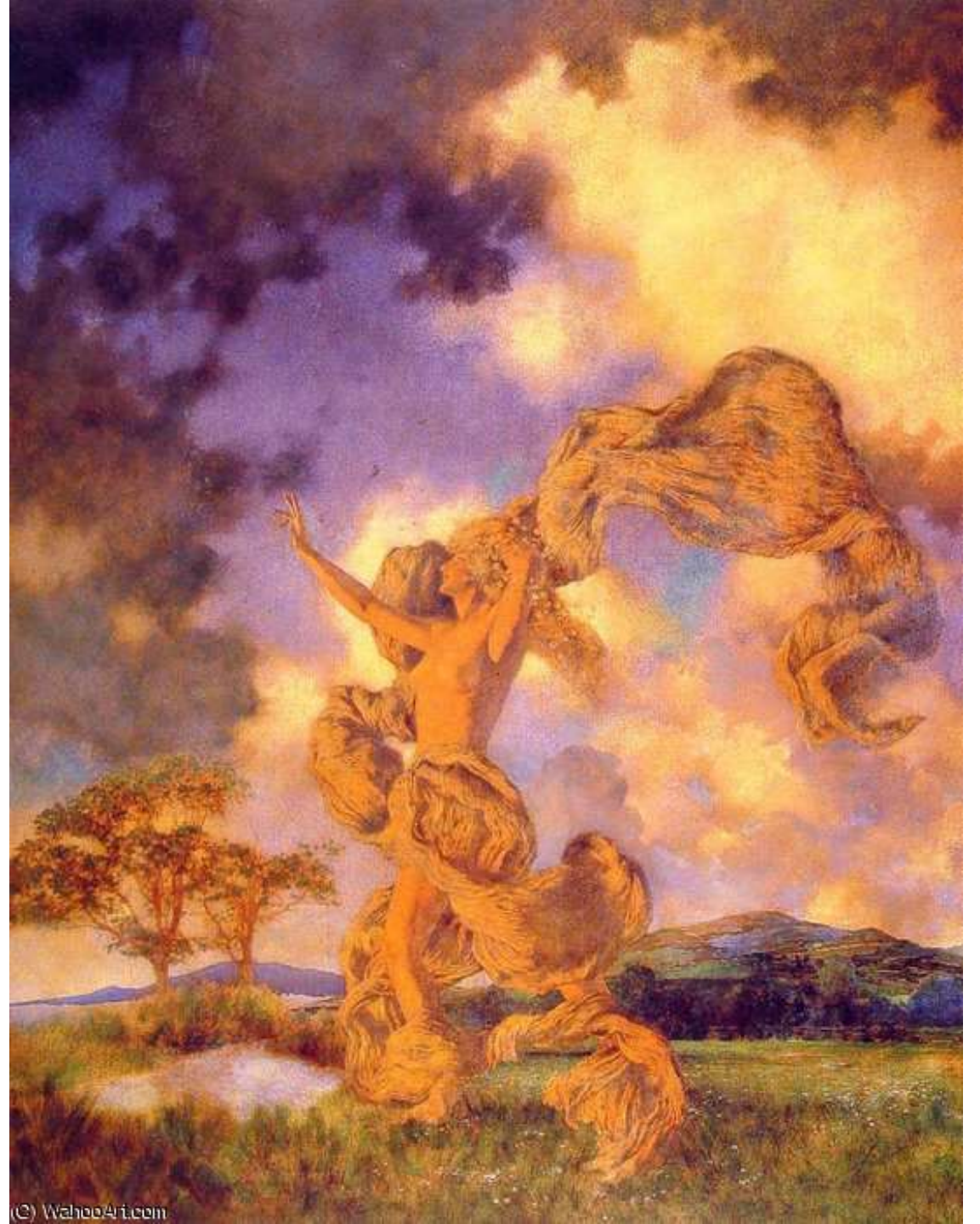


Maxfield Parrish

Maxfield Parrish was an American painter and illustrator active in the first half of the 20th century. He is known for his distinctive saturated hues and idealized neo-classical imagery.

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j1yWcl8oXtE&t=282s>







Rene Magritte

The puffy white clouds in the blue sky are a common theme throughout Magritte's work. He purposefully paints it to be "too perfect" that it becomes unsettling. Could it be that we become too focused on everything to be so perfect and on that "clear sky" positivity that we lose sight of reality?

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4iWgiUkSw_A
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xMrKd54z1wM>







Chagall





Alfred Stieglitz—Equivalents

In the summer of 1922, Alfred Stieglitz began to take photographs of clouds, tilting his hand camera towards the sky to produce dizzying and abstract images of their ethereal forms. In an article the following year, Stieglitz maintained that these works were a culmination of everything he had learned about photography in the previous forty years: “Through clouds [I wanted] to put down my philosophy of life—to show that my photographs were not due to subject matter—not to special trees, or faces, or interiors, to special privileges, clouds were there for everyone—no tax as yet on them—free.” [\[1\]](#) Over the next eight years, he made some 350 cloud studies, largely produced as contact prints on gelatin silver postcard stock.

Stieglitz called these photographs *Equivalents*. More than describing the visible surfaces of things, the works could express pure emotion, paralleling the artist’s own inner state. Stieglitz, along with many of the artists of his circle, argued that visual art could assume the same nonrepresentational, emotionally evocative qualities as music. Indeed, music was an inspiration for the *Equivalents*, and this is reflected in the early titles he gave them: *Music: A Sequence of Ten Cloud Photographs* (1922) and *Songs of the Sky* (1923). Stieglitz did not limit himself to clouds, or allusions to music, in these photographs: one notable work, *Spiritual America*, shows a close-up of the nether regions of a harnessed gelding (a castrated male horse), the image serving as a metaphor for the artist’s impression of a diminished American culture in the same way that his depictions of clouds represented his emotions.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kdRk1p5mDp4&t=16s>











Georgia O'Keeffe

Sky Above Clouds IV is **the final monumental painting in a series around the theme of clouds, painted by Georgia O'Keeffe in the 1960s**. In her mature, abstract style she created this atmospheric immersion in the sky-scape which oscillates between pattern and landscape.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TfiG6BV_sVY&t=111s









Spencer Finch

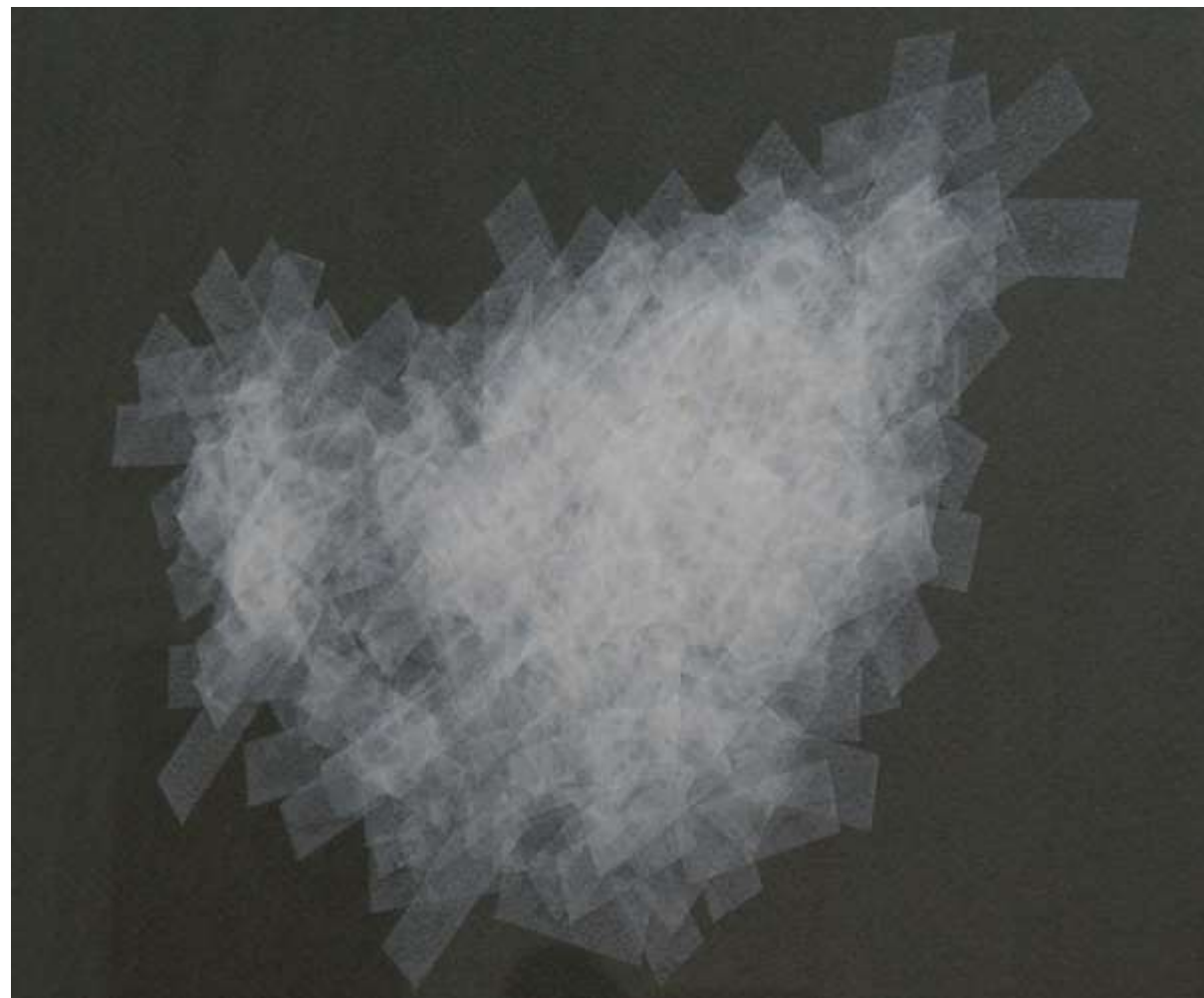
Spencer Finch is an American artist. After attending The Hotchkiss School, he graduated magna cum laude with a B.A. in comparative literature from Hamilton College in 1985. Finch then pursued an M.F.A. in sculpture from the Rhode Island School of Design, graduating in 1989.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=as4c_mojl_8&t=12s

Published 2007









Berdnaut Smilde

The lifespan of a typical [Berdnaut Smilde](#) sculpture is 10 seconds—just long enough to be photographed. And his sculptures are as unusual as they are ethereal: Smilde makes perfect miniature clouds in a diverse array of indoor locations, from coal mines to cathedrals.

He's been at for several years now and calls the ever-expanding series [*Nimbus*](#).

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bat_yMCcMCU&t=83s

- <https://www.wired.com/2015/06/berdnaut-smilde-nimbus/>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GRHWCcOktHI>









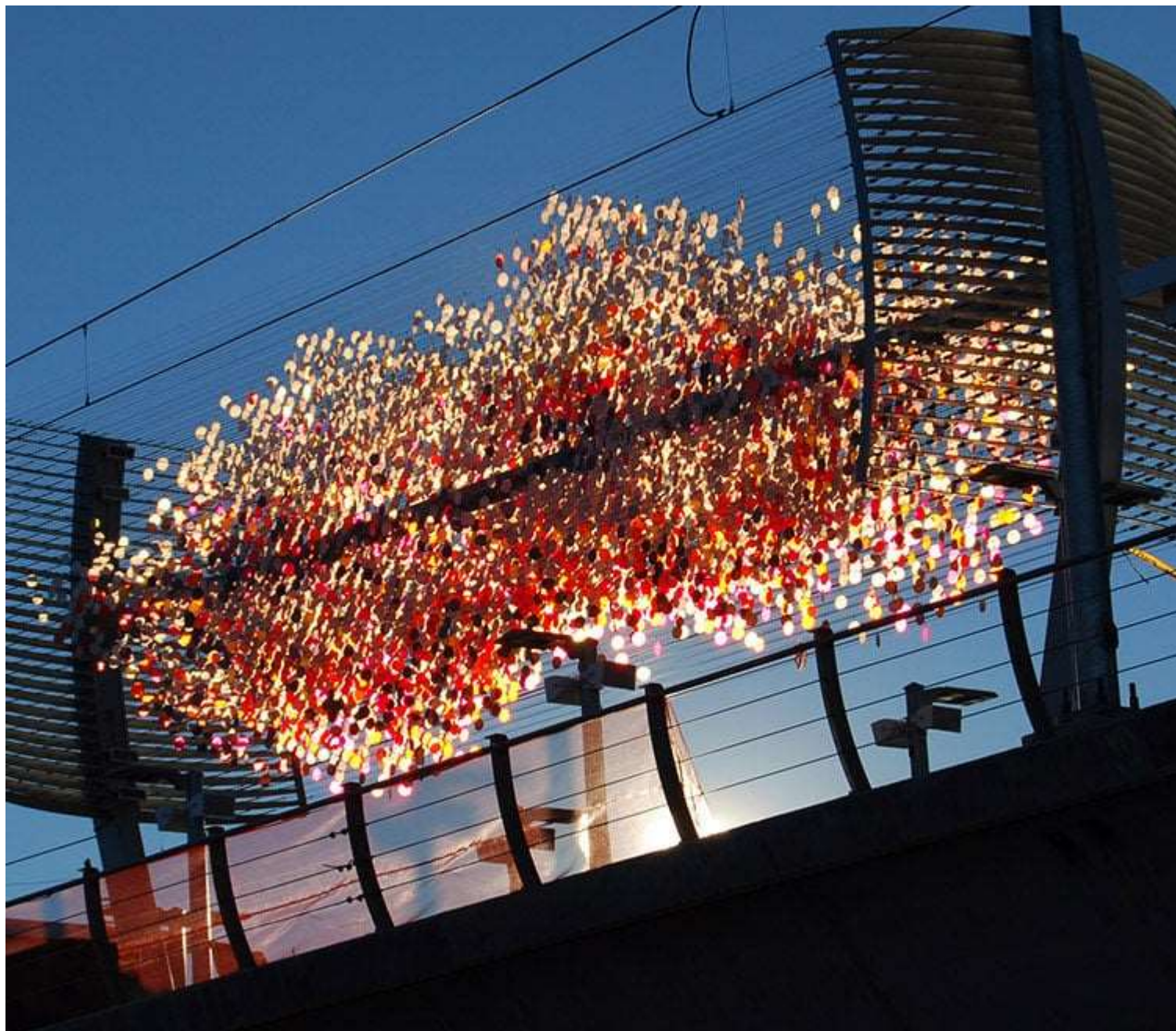
Laura Haddad

Cloud is a suspended sculpture at Sound Transit's Angle Lake light rail station, a mile and a half south of Sea-Tac Airport. The kinetic, illuminated *Cloud* hovers over the elevated station platform that straddles S. 200th Street. The sculpture is 48-feet-long and 26-feet-high and composed of over 6000 acrylic discs in shades of white, violet, yellow, orange, pink, and silver. The discs hang from stainless steel cables strung horizontally between large curved structural columns that act as conceptual arms holding the *Cloud*. From a distance the five-inch diameter discs coalesce into a 3D cumulus cloud shape. When viewed up close the gently fluttering discs create an immersive environment of light and motion.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p7L0c0FtkOc>

<http://haddad-drugan.com/cloud>





Chinese Clouds

Clouds are also one of the most important elements in Chinese traditional paintings. Clouds are also symbols of **celestial mobility** because many gods and immortals used the cloud as a vehicle on which they traveled. Scrolling clouds are associated with deities, foretelling their arrival.

In Chinese culture, clouds (especially the five-coloured clouds) are perceived as **an auspicious sign (e.g. an omen of peace), a symbol of Heaven, and the expression of the Will of Heaven**. They also symbolize happiness and good luck.

<https://www.cityartsydney.com.au/artwork/in-between-two-worlds/>



Nine Cloud Dream

The Cloud Dream of the Nine by Kim Man-jung is a 17th-century Korean novel set in the Chinese Tang Dynasty. It has been called "one of the most beloved masterpieces in Korean literature." It was the first literary work from Korea to be translated into English, by James Scarth Gale in 1922.

This video re-tells a popular Korean folktale using a Korean folding screen from the collection of the Asian Art Museum.

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DSvLJZnH2KQ&t=87s>



Jacob Hashimoto

Clouds have played a variety of roles as a visual element in the arts of Asia across time. As a stylized motif, clouds have often functioned as a framing device, an interstitial motif, or compositional boundary in paintings. A cloud could conjure anything from a celestial Daoist realm to *lingzhi*, medicinal mushrooms of immortality once believed to revive the dead. The generative and auspicious potential of clouds has long existed in the history of art. The amorphous nature of mist in dialogue with the tangible and rigid has long inspired the work of artists, designers, and architects, from Fujiko Nakaya's cloud paintings and fog sculptures, to Diller and Scofidio's Blur Building in Lake Neuchâtel. In today's era of big data, clouds have also come to represent the negligibly small, where modular bits of information are now amassed into infinitely scalable systems that function at a distance, removed from sight but still lingering overhead.

Like clouds of our digital age, Hashimoto's sculpture shows how there is much to be found in both the intricate detail of minute components and the large-scale meanings that can result from their accumulation.

This exhibition's central work, **Nuvole (2006-2018)** — which literally means clouds — explores these formal traditions and looks at how clouds can function as divisions of space while still serving as the apotheosis of ethereal formlessness. Like clouds of our digital age, Hashimoto's sculpture shows how there is much to be found in both the intricate detail of minute components and the large-scale meanings that can result from their accumulation. The work weaves around the gallery's architecture and over major artworks from the museum's permanent collection, to serve as both helpful foil and a meditation on the continuum of human expression. For more than a decade, Hashimoto has re-used many of his discs in his various site-specific installations around the world. Each time, each disc is newly looped, rhythmically tied and hung, existing briefly together to form a greater whole. Through the staging and spectacle of this giant cloud, we are reminded of the voices of progenitors, and how our individual accretion of effort, experience, and value in the arc of human experience is shared.

<https://jacobhashimoto.com/jacob-hashimoto-clouds-and-chaos>

- <https://crowcollection.org/exhibition/jacob-hashimoto-clouds-chaos/>







Charles Petillon

French artist and photographer [Charles Pétillon](#) has just unveiled a cumulus cloud composed of 100,000 white balloons illuminated from the inside at London's [Covent Garden](#). Titled 'Heartbeat,' the installation was created as part of the upcoming [London Design Festival](#) and stretches the length of the South Hall ceiling of the Market Building. Pétillon is known for his use of white balloons to fill unusual spaces, a photographic series he refers to as [Invasions](#). This is by far his largest installation to date and his first public art piece. He shares about *Heartbeat*:

The balloon invasions I create are metaphors. Their goal is to change the way in which we see the things we live alongside each day without really noticing them. With Heartbeat I wanted to represent the Market Building as the beating heart of this area – connecting its past with the present day to allow visitors to re-examine its role at the heart of London's life. Each balloon has its own dimensions and yet is part of a giant but fragile composition that creates a floating cloud above the energy of the market below. This fragility is represented by contrasting materials and also the whiteness of the balloons that move and pulse appearing as alive and vibrant as the area itself.

<https://www.thisiscolossal.com/2015/08/covent-garden-balloons/>









April Gornik



April Gornik is an American artist who paints American landscapes. Her realist yet dreamlike paintings and drawings embody oppositions and speak to America's historically conflicted relationship with nature.

April Gornik has been a seminal member of New York's thriving art scene since the late 1970s. Dominated by sky and devoid of people, Gornik's dramatic landscapes—luminously lit and eerie—demand a powerful emotional response. Stylistically mature and graceful, her work reflects an artist confident with her talent, channeling an assuredness that is manifested in her breathtaking panoramas.

<https://www.vertufineart.com/artists/april-gornik/>







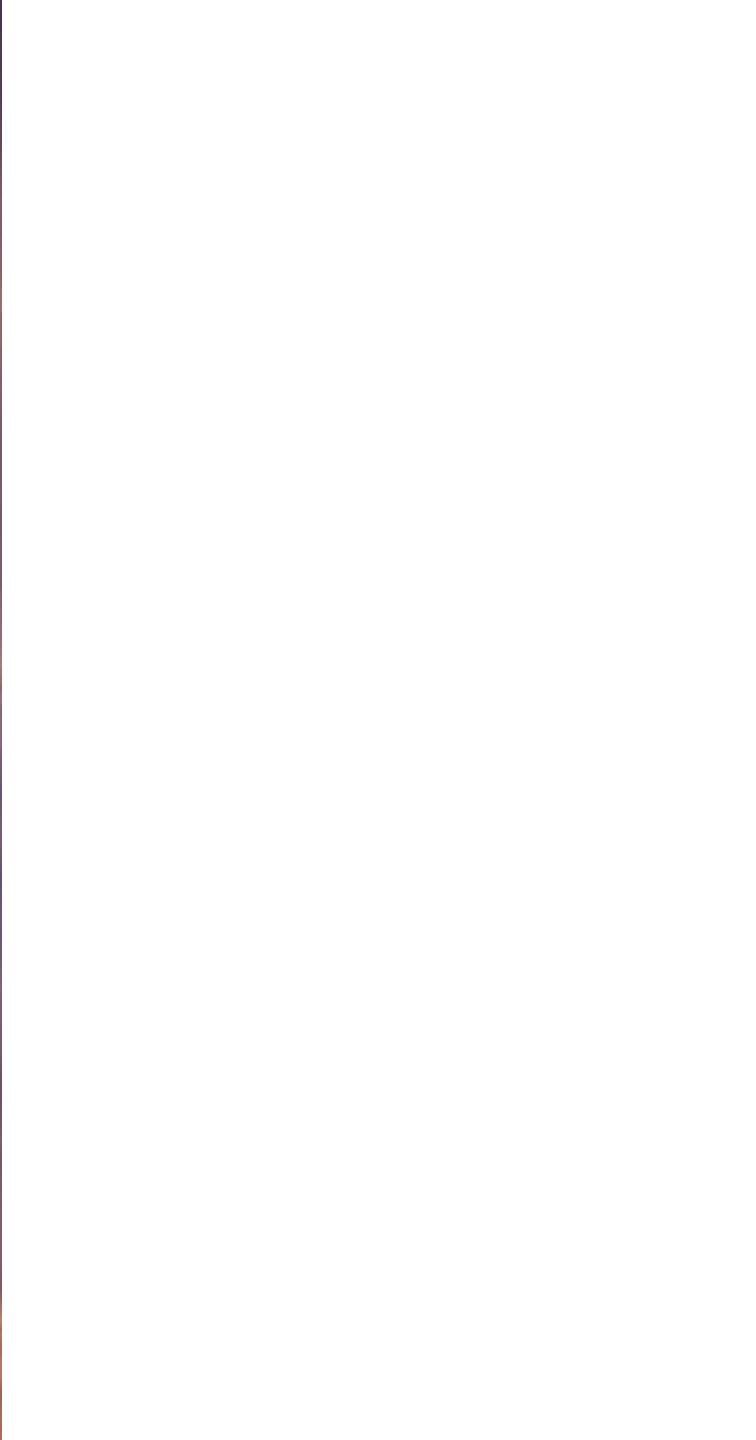


Nobuyoshi Araki

Nobuyoshi Araki, born in Tokyo in 1940, is one of Japan's most well-known and controversial photographers. Araki studied photography and filmmaking at Chiba University, where he developed an interest in Italian Neo-Realist and French Nouvelle Vague films, in particular the works of the directors Carl Theodor Dreyer and Robert Bresson. This influence is clear in Araki's diaristic, erotically charged works, which are equally influenced by Japan's urbanization and newfound commercialism after the Second World War, as well as in the artist's stylistic references to Japanese toys, Karaoke bars, and other aspects of contemporary Japanese culture. In *It Was Once A Paradise*, Nobuyoshi Araki juxtaposes two images on top of one another, offering artistic commentary on man versus nature. This work was produced in an edition of 10.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ENPyDkzwWt0>











Ernesto Neto

Ernesto Neto is known for his biomorphic sculptural environments. Originally inspired by the Brazilian Neo-Concrete movement of the 1950s and 1960s, Neto moved from hardedge iron sculptures to his signature pendulous nylon sacks filled with aromatic spices, lead, sand, and Styrofoam balls. Neto mixes the highbrow formalism of minimalism with the sociability and fun of relational aesthetics. Viewers are encouraged to poke, touch, and—in some cases—even walk through these plush organic forms. Neto has had solo shows at major art institutions around the world, including London's Institute for Contemporary Art, Site Santa Fe, Kunsthalle Basel, and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles. He represented Brazil in the 2001 Venice Biennale.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HH6xjOy8KAo>

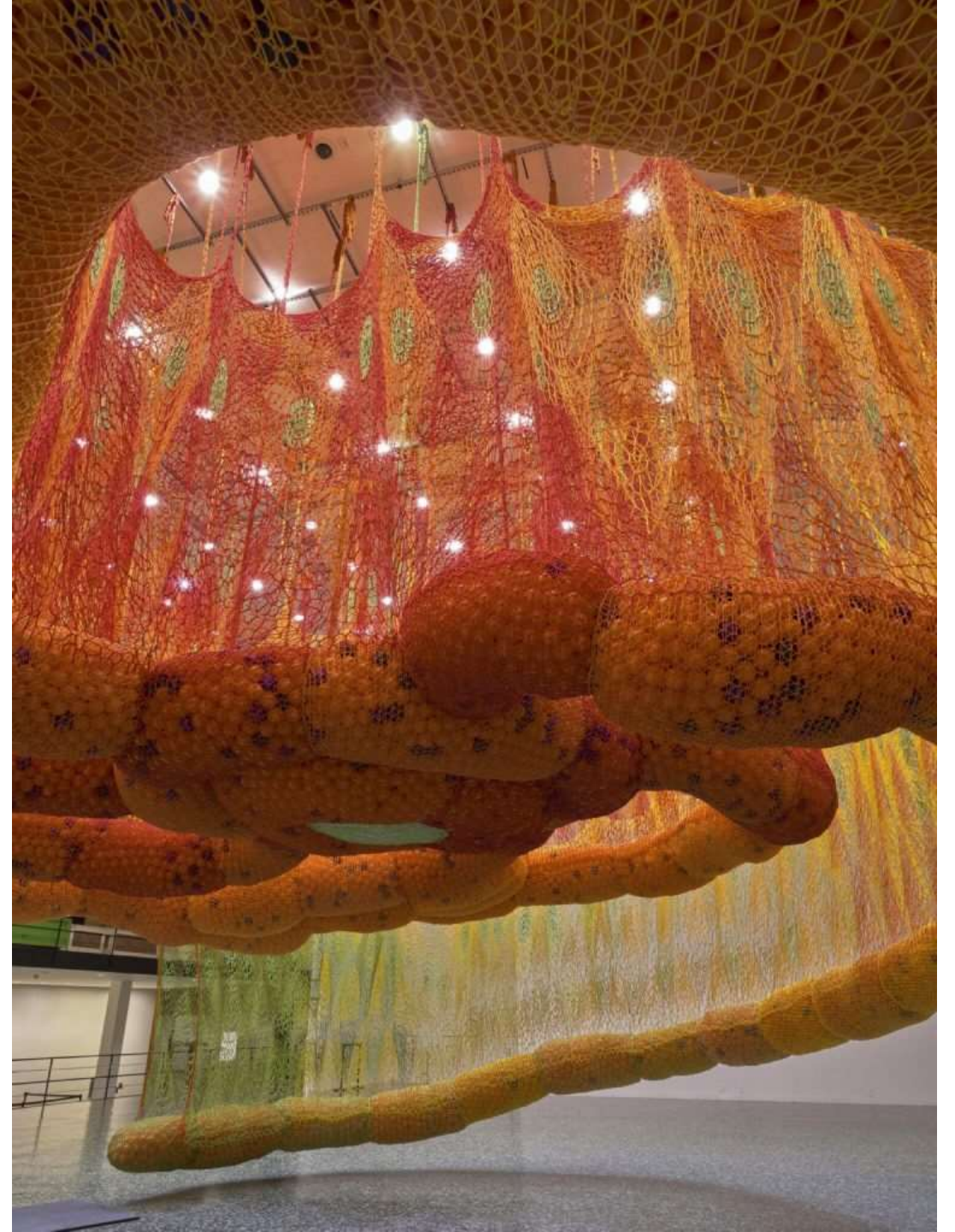
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xXQVSlARfZ4&t=11s>











Inigo Manglano-Ovalle

[Inigo Manglano-Ovalle](#)'s technologically sophisticated sculptures and video installations use natural forms such as clouds, icebergs, and DNA as metaphors for understanding social issues such as immigration, gun violence, and human cloning. In collaboration with astrophysicists, meteorologists, and medical ethicists, Manglano-Ovalle harnesses extraterrestrial radio signals, weather patterns, and biological code, transforming pure data into digital video projections and sculptures realized through computer rendering. His work is attentive to points of intersection between local and global communities, emphasizing the intricate nature of ecosystems.

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1056809304995252>

<https://art21.org/watch/extended-play/inigo-manglano-ovalle-oppenheimer-short/>

<https://art21.org/watch/art-in-the-twenty-first-century/s4/inigo-manglano-ovalle-in-ecology-segment/>





Florian Maier-Aichen

Florian Maier-Aichen uses the computer to introduce imperfections and detach his photographs from reality, bringing them closer to the realm of drawing.

“Photography used to be like alchemy back in the 19th century,” says the artist in our “Fantasy” episode. “Maybe it's reactionary to turn backwards and to try to establish artistry again, but it's also the most interesting part of the process.”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bePIROIHKqY>

<https://art21.org/watch/art-in-the-twenty-first-century/s5/florian-maier-aichen-in-fantasy-segment/>







Anish Kapoor

Cloud Gate is a public sculpture by Indian-born British artist Anish Kapoor, that is the centerpiece of AT&T Plaza at Millennium Park in the Loop community area of Chicago, Illinois. The sculpture and AT&T Plaza are located on top of Park Grill, between the Chase Promenade and McCormick Tribune Plaza & Ice Rink.

<https://art21.org/watch/art-in-the-twenty-first-century/s10/anish-kapoor-in-london-segment/>





Tracey Cockburn

***Skying: Cloudscapes in Tasmanian Art* is an atmospheric installation by Tasmanian artist Tracey Cockburn, exploring the unique and ephemeral qualities of light and clouds in Tasmanian painting, through contemporary print techniques.**

Studying the works of early Tasmanian artists and looking back to the influences of English romantic artists, John Constable and J.M.W. Turner, the evocative exhibition draws inspiration from the obsession with capturing the unique light of the Tasmanian landscape and atmosphere.

Accompanying Cockburn's original work will be *View of Mount Wellington from Risdon* by W.C. Piguenit [1875], from the Allport collection. Piguenit departed from earlier colonial artists in such works by placing an emphasis on atmospheric conditions of mist and clouds enhancing the drama of his subjects and the romantic landscape. The painting's delicate depiction of a clouded sky started a journey of enquiry leading to the *Skying* exhibition.

- <https://libraries.tas.gov.au/exhibitions/skying-cloudscapes-in-tasmanian-art/>







Ernesto Morales

Ernesto Morales, the Italo-Argentinian artist was born in 1974 in Montevideo, Uruguay, and began his career in Buenos Aires where he lived until 2006 and then moved to Europe. After the first period in Paris, he established his studio in Italy, initially in Rome and from 2011 in Turin.

The Argentinian artist brings all three of his series together in one itinerary for the first time, series dedicated to Clouds, Urban Landscapes, and Forests.

Each of the themes that Morales deals with is articulated like a narration, canvas after canvas, with the aim of inviting the audience to dwell on metamorphosis, on the evolution of reality, on the passing of time. A kind of constant meditation on the form that makes him similar to the most contemplative artists: Claude Monet in his investigation of Rouen cathedral or Giorgio Morandi in his infinite variations on the theme of still life. The clouds that are silhouetted against the dark background show us their elusive yet tangible nature, the dense and impenetrable forests that reveal secret lights at a distance, the cities vibrant with mists that invite us to explore their infinite perspectives are places of the mind and memory that push us towards a beyond, inside and outside of us.

In the reiteration of the image that seduces us in its small deviations of difference, Morales reveals that, beneath the surface of a refined and sophisticated figuration, he is a deeply conceptual painter. Conceptualism also involves the materials. In fact, the artist creates the colours he uses himself, obtaining them from minerals and plants that he collects during his travels; he only uses natural materials, therefore, convinced that if the painting is to speak of nature it must do so using nature itself as a raw material.

- <https://www.ecoplasteam.com/en/2019/04/18/ecoplasteam-timelapse-cosmogony-di-ernesto-morales/>





Ian Fisher

Inspired by the sky, Canadian artist [Ian Fisher](#) paints large-scale skyscapes that capture the beauty of billowing clouds. From light, heavenly hues to dark, thunderous casts, each magnificent oil painting is both hyperrealistic and abstract.

“Many think that, nowadays, it is impossible to create something [new] with the painting. In fact, it is an art form that still leaves great room for experimentation,” Fisher explains. “In my case, for example, the abstraction and the hyperrealism coexist within the same work.”

https://www.robischongallery.com/exhibition/347/pres_s_release/

<https://twitter.com/pattrn/status/1125452667592040448?lang=en> (use this)









Assignment Suggestions...

- Do a cloud study—then abstract it
- Partially obscure a drawing/painting/print/collage in clouds
- Create an artwork inspired by your favorite cloud image