

Projection

Art Writ Large

Using Projection in Art

As Greek myth would have it, cast shadows created the world's first artwork: the daughter of a famous potter [traced the outline of her lover's shadow](#) on the wall as he departed on a journey, and from these lines her father modeled the first sculpture. In the [Renaissance](#), artists began to employ [camera obscuras](#)—optical devices that project images from life onto a surface—as aids for painting in [one-point perspective](#). In more recent decades, projection has moved from the artist's studio to the gallery space, acting as a prominent display method for [video art](#) and [light art](#), as in [James Turrell](#)'s installation *Aten Reign* (2013). Contemporary artists [Paul Chan](#), [Bill Viola](#), [Steve McQueen](#), and [Shirin Neshat](#) have all displayed their video footage using projection, favoring the medium for its ability to transform a space into an immersive viewing environment.

Projection Mapping

Projection mapping, similar to **video mapping** and **spatial augmented reality**, is a [projection](#) technique^{[1][2]} used to turn objects, often irregularly shaped, into display surfaces for video projection. The objects may be complex industrial landscapes, such as buildings, small indoor objects, or theatrical stages. Using specialized software, a two- or three-dimensional object is spatially mapped on the virtual program which mimics the real environment it is to be projected on. The software can then interact with a projector to fit any desired image onto the surface of that object.^[3] The technique is used by artists and advertisers who can add extra dimensions, optical illusions, and notions of movement onto previously static objects. The video is commonly combined with or triggered by audio to create an audiovisual narrative. In recent years the technique has also been widely used in the context of cultural heritage, as it has proved to be an excellent [edutainment](#)^[4] tool.

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5oOAoKk6gww>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jtFthRSqRwQ>

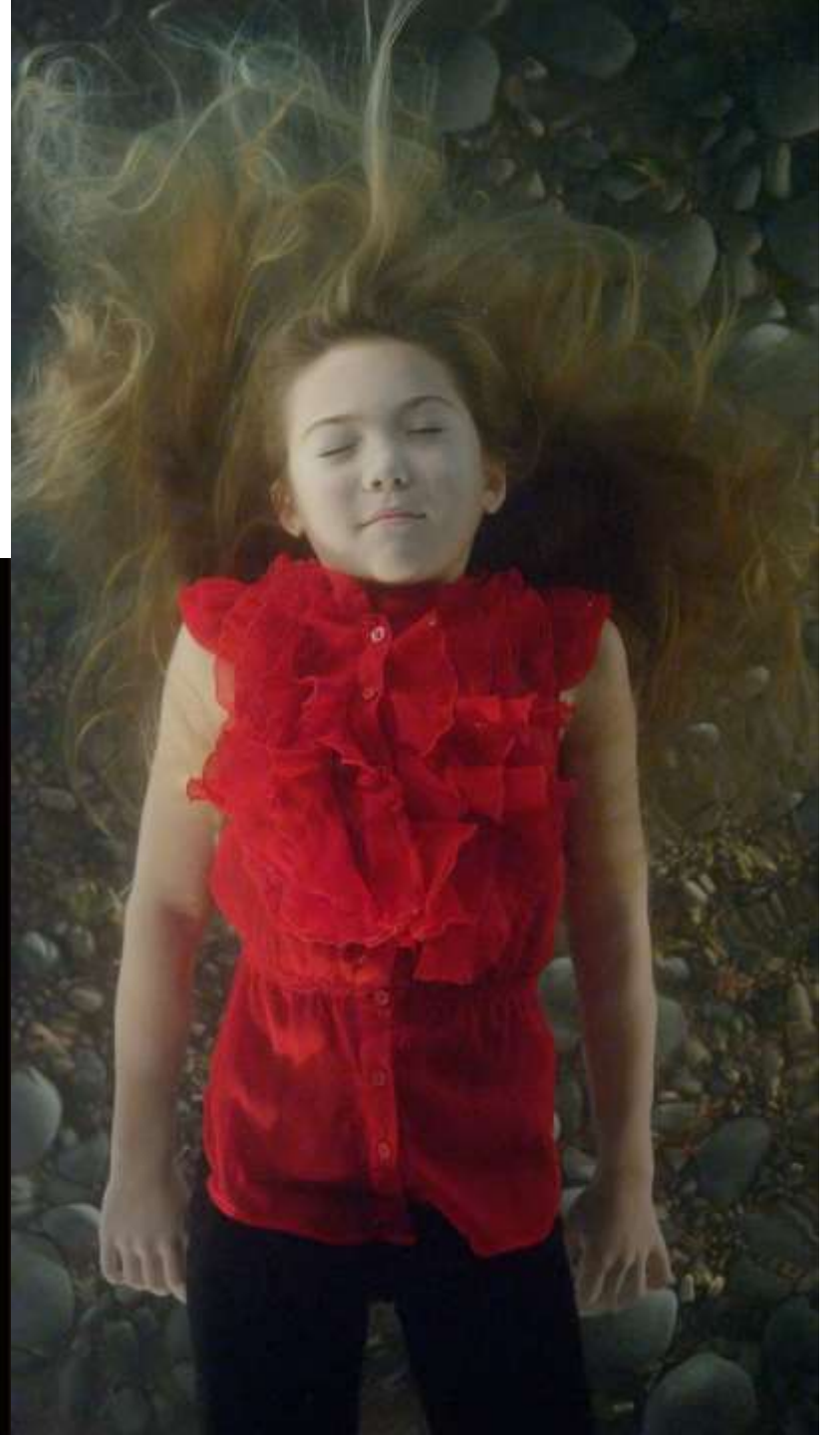
Bill Viola

Widely regarded as a pioneer of new media art, Bill Viola creates works that combine filmed images and music in what he calls “total environments that envelop the viewer in image and sound.” With roots in both Eastern and Western art and spiritual traditions, Viola’s visual and sound installations impart a transcendental experience of their own, alternating between electronic scores and silence, and pursuing timeless themes like birth, death, and extremes of emotion. For example, in the soundless *Quintet of the Astonished* (part of the “Quintet” series, 2000), five figures in the throes of a powerful feeling are filmed in ultra slow motion, resulting in tableaux reminiscent of [Renaissance](#) painting. A similar technique is at work in “The Passions” (2000-), an ongoing series that draws in part from the conventions of sacred Christian frescoes to create filmed scenes of great suffering and redemption.

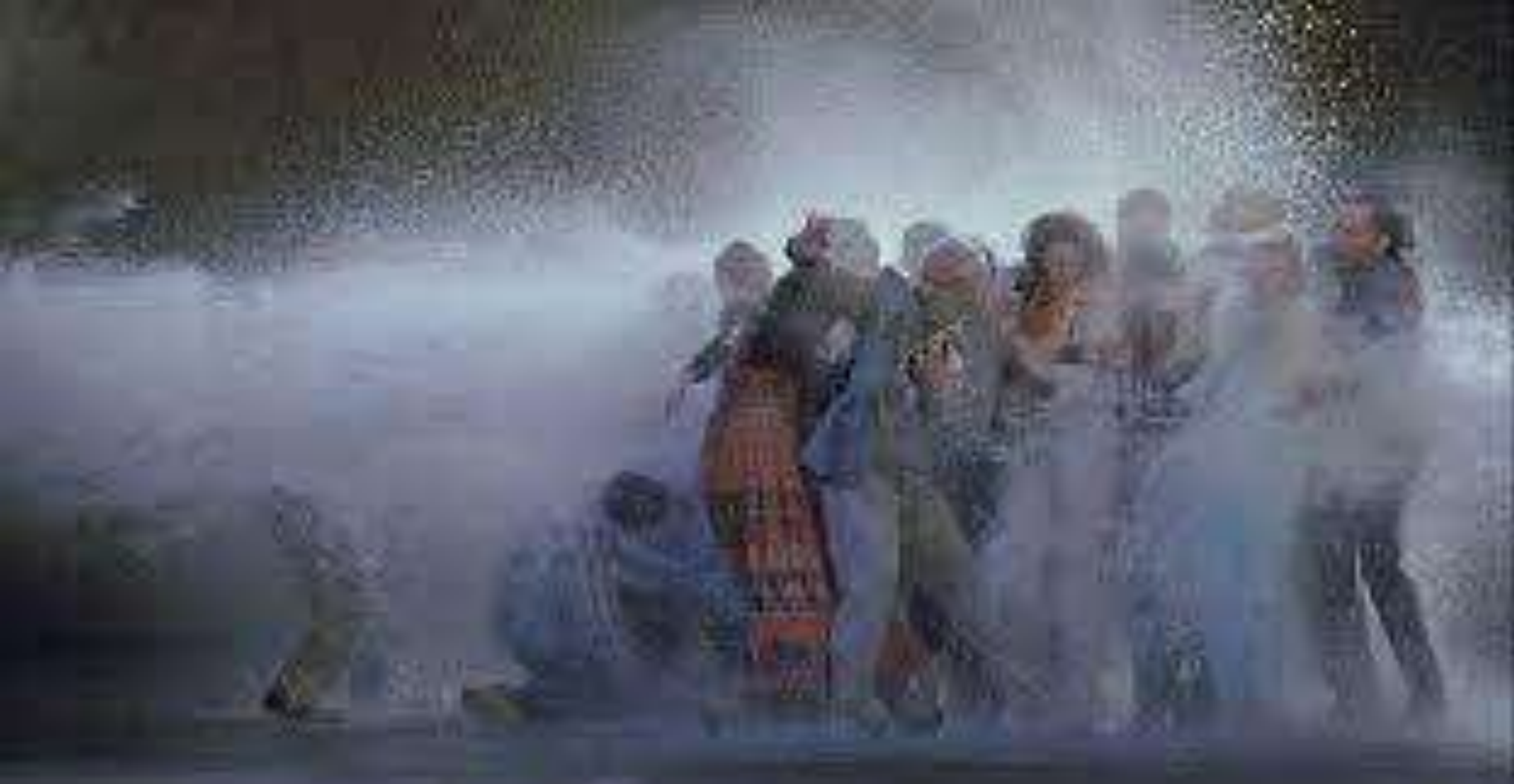
<https://besharamagazine.org/arts-literature/bill-viola/>











Krzysztof Wodiczko

Video and installation artist Krzysztof Wodiczko amplifies the voices of refugees with [Monument](#), his 2020 site-specific commission for [Madison Square Park](#) in New York City. From his Manhattan apartment, Wodiczko shares his early drawings of the project, where he conceived of how he would project video onto a prominent 1881 monument to Civil War admiral, [David Glasgow Farragut](#). “It was very important for me to imagine how this statue can be animated with the projection,” says the artist. Monuments carry special significance for Wodiczko, as sites for public gatherings and protests, witnesses and recorders of history, and blank canvases upon which new narratives can be painted.

- <https://art21.org/watch/extended-play/krzysztof-wodiczko-monument-for-the-living-short/>
- <https://art21.org/watch/art-in-the-twenty-first-century/s3/krzysztof-wodiczko-in-power-segment/>







Sarah Sze

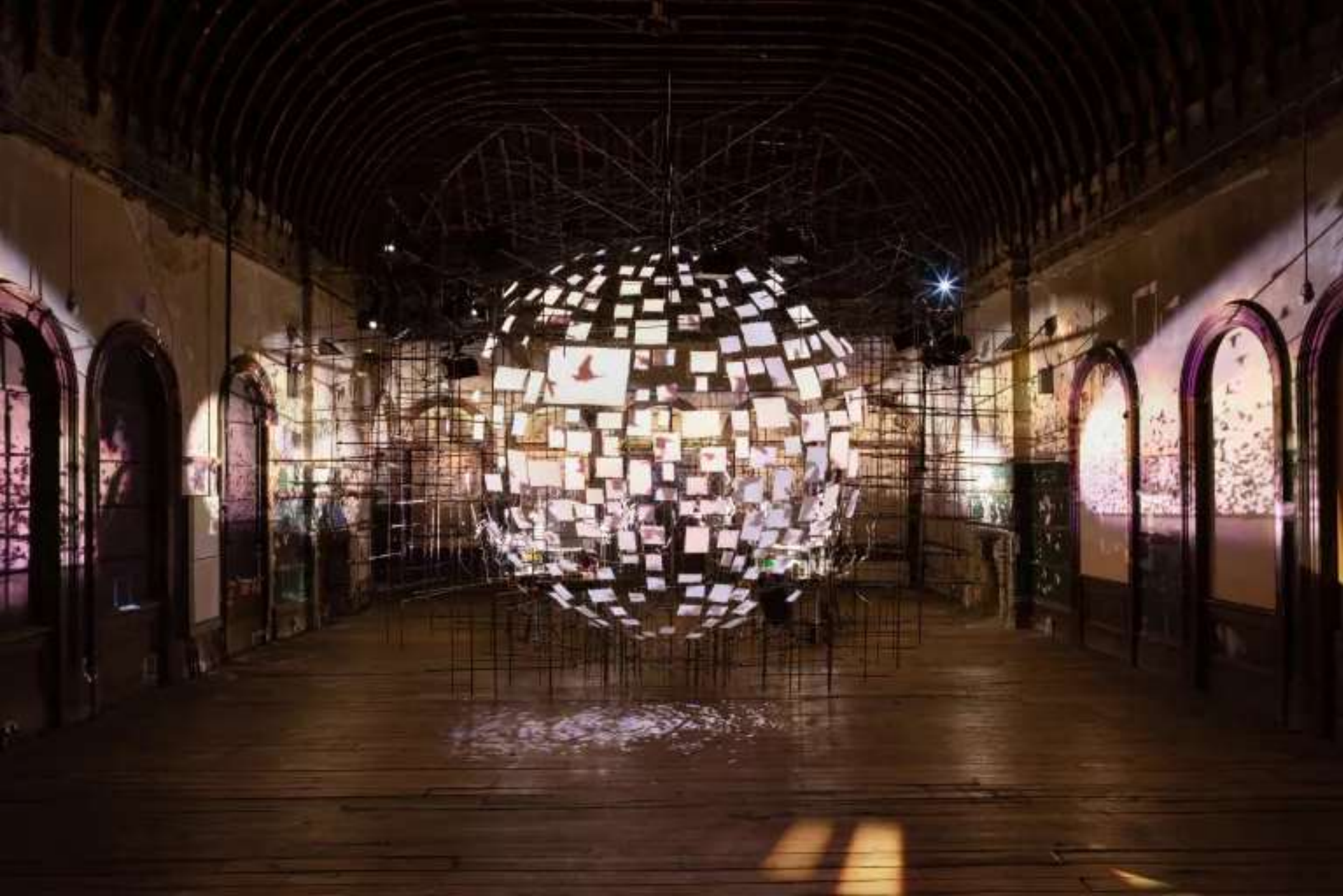
Sarah Sze is an American artist and professor of visual arts at Columbia University. She has exhibited internationally and her works are in the collections of several major museums. Sze's work explores the role of technology and information in contemporary life utilizing everyday materials.

Within the iconic spiraling architecture of New York City's Guggenheim Museum, a series of projected videos drift along the walls and collide with one another: a peregrine falcon soaring in a clear sky, a tall building collapsing in a cloud of smoke, a finger gently disturbing a pool of blue liquid, and more. Bleeding into the museum walls, Sarah Sze's *River of Images* (2023) is one of many site-specific works that call attention to the museum's unique design in Sze's 2023 exhibition, *Timelapse*. Throughout the exhibition, the artist emphasizes how both art and architecture impact one's experience of the world. Her works play off the Guggenheim's design, drawing the viewer's gaze to elements like the immense void at the center of the building or the play of light and shadows created by the bay walls. "This is one of the most radical architectures built," says Sze, "It's the air, it's the light, it's the tilt. It's all of these things that really create an entirely new inner world when you enter this museum."

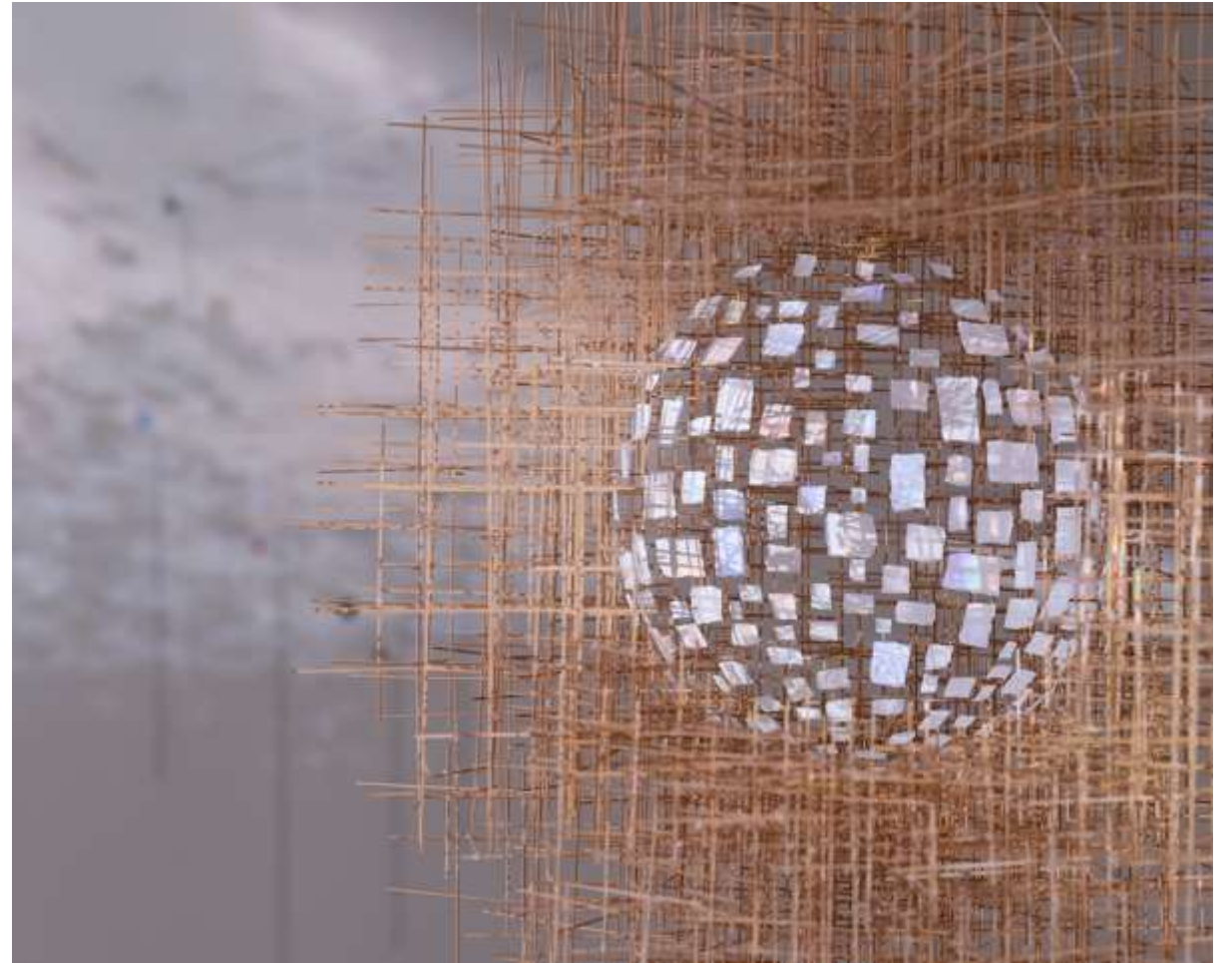
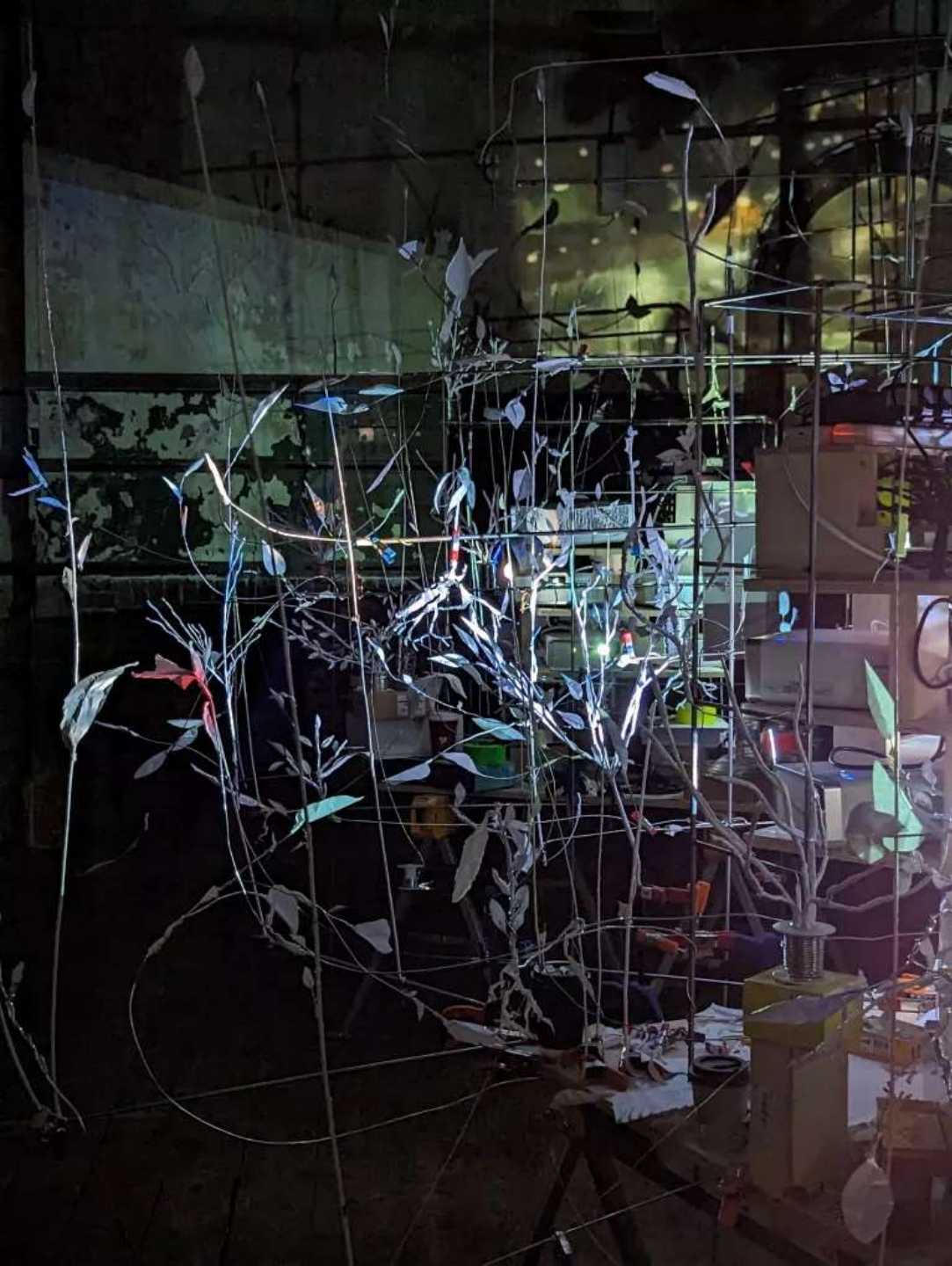
- <https://art21.org/watch/extended-play/sarah-sze-emotional-time/>
- <https://art21.org/watch/art-in-the-twenty-first-century/s6/sarah-sze-in-balance-segment/>











Diana Thater

Artist Diana Thater discusses her interest in improving the lives of both humans and animals through art and activism. Speaking from the site of the former Los Angeles Zoo, Thater describes her activism as being focused on “anti-captivity.” As an activist she has worked with Ric O’Barry and the Dolphin Project to bring attention to the sale and slaughter of dolphins in Japan’s Taiji cove.

Thater’s multi-channel video installation *Delphine* (1999) is shown in the artist’s solo exhibition, *The Sympathetic Imagination*, at Los Angeles County Museum of Art last year. In the work “you can see a dolphin spinning underwater and you can almost feel it.” Thater hopes *Delphine* generates a sympathetic response from the viewer and creates a new way to communicate between species. “My life as an artist is a different one,” says Thater. “The politics are much more subtle.”

- <https://art21.org/watch/extended-play/diana-thater-delphine-short/>
- <https://art21.org/watch/art-in-the-twenty-first-century/s8/diana-thater-in-los-angeles-segment/>











Josiah McElheny

Josiah McElheny explores the relationship between abstraction and the body as he makes *Projection Painting 1* (2015). “We’re projecting lost footage or abandoned footage by the great filmmaker [Maya Deren](#),” says McElheny, who further abstracts Deren’s images by filming the footage “from the worst seats.” McElheny’s distorted footage is then projected once more onto a framed fractured landscape in another round of abstraction to create the final painting.

Working with cinematographer Martina Radwan at a photography studio in Manhattan, McElheny found that utilizing unedited footage “felt more malleable” than when he attempted to work with completed narrative films. The finished *Projection Painting* was shown in a continuous loop during McElheny’s [Fall 2015 solo show](#) at Andrea Rosen Gallery in New York City.

- <https://art21.org/watch/extended-play/josiah-mcelheny-making-a-projection-painting-short/>



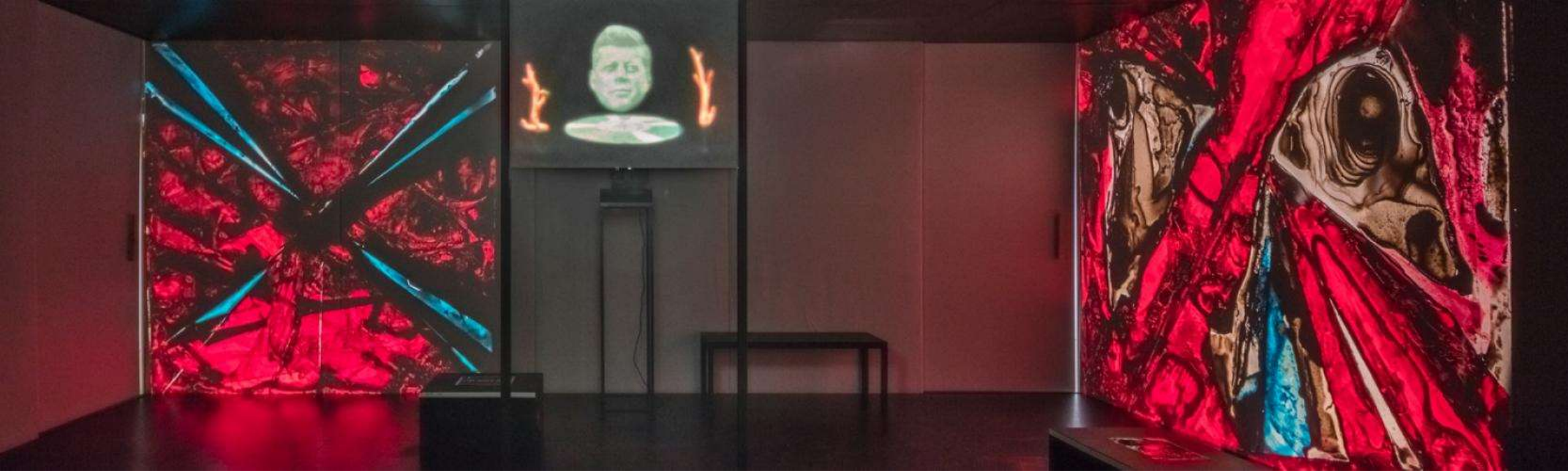


Ellen Gallagher

Artist Ellen Gallagher recounts her childhood obsession with projecting films, paired with documentation of her work *Murmur* (2003-04) installed at Gagosian Gallery in New York.

- <https://art21.org/watch/extended-play/ellen-gallagher-projections-short/>





Jenny Holzer

Jenny Holzer discusses the process behind her ongoing series of *Xenon Projections* as part of the exhibition *PROTECT PROTECT* at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago. Featured works include *Projection for Chicago* (2008), a multi-part projection of the texts of Polish poet Wislawa Szymborska on building facades around the city, including the Lyric Opera House & Riverside Plaza, among others.

- <https://art21.org/watch/extended-play/jenny-holzer-projection-for-chicago-short/>

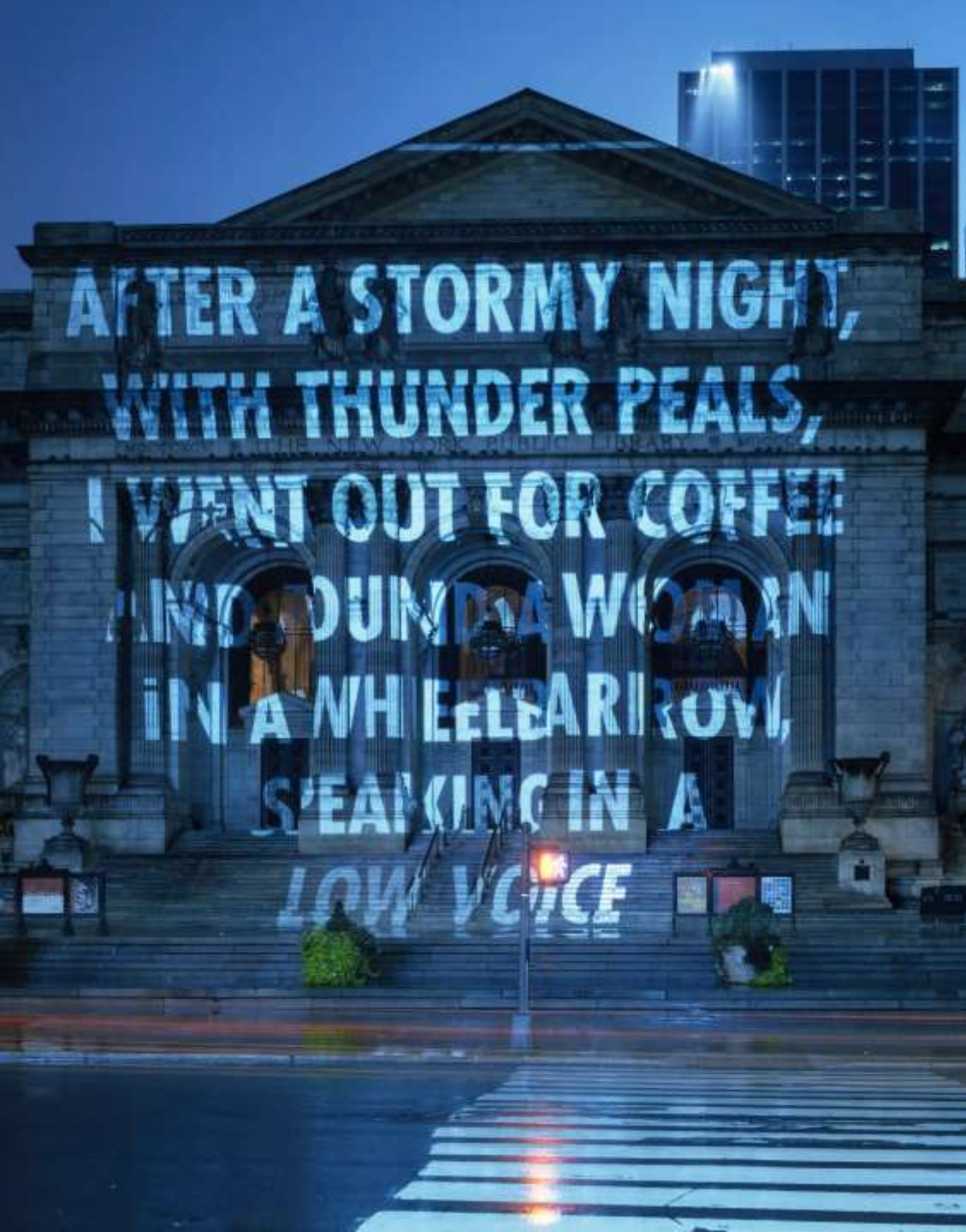
UNDER MY FINGERTIPS.

SILENCE
SILENCE—
SILENCE

THE WORDS ALSO RUSTLE
THE WORDS ALSO RUSTLE

ACROSS THE PAGE
AND PARTS THE BOUGHS
THAT HAVE SPOOKED
FROM THE VAST WOODS.

LYING IN WAIT, SET TO POUNCE
ON THE BEANK PAGE,
ARE UP TO NO GOOD
OF CLAUSE.



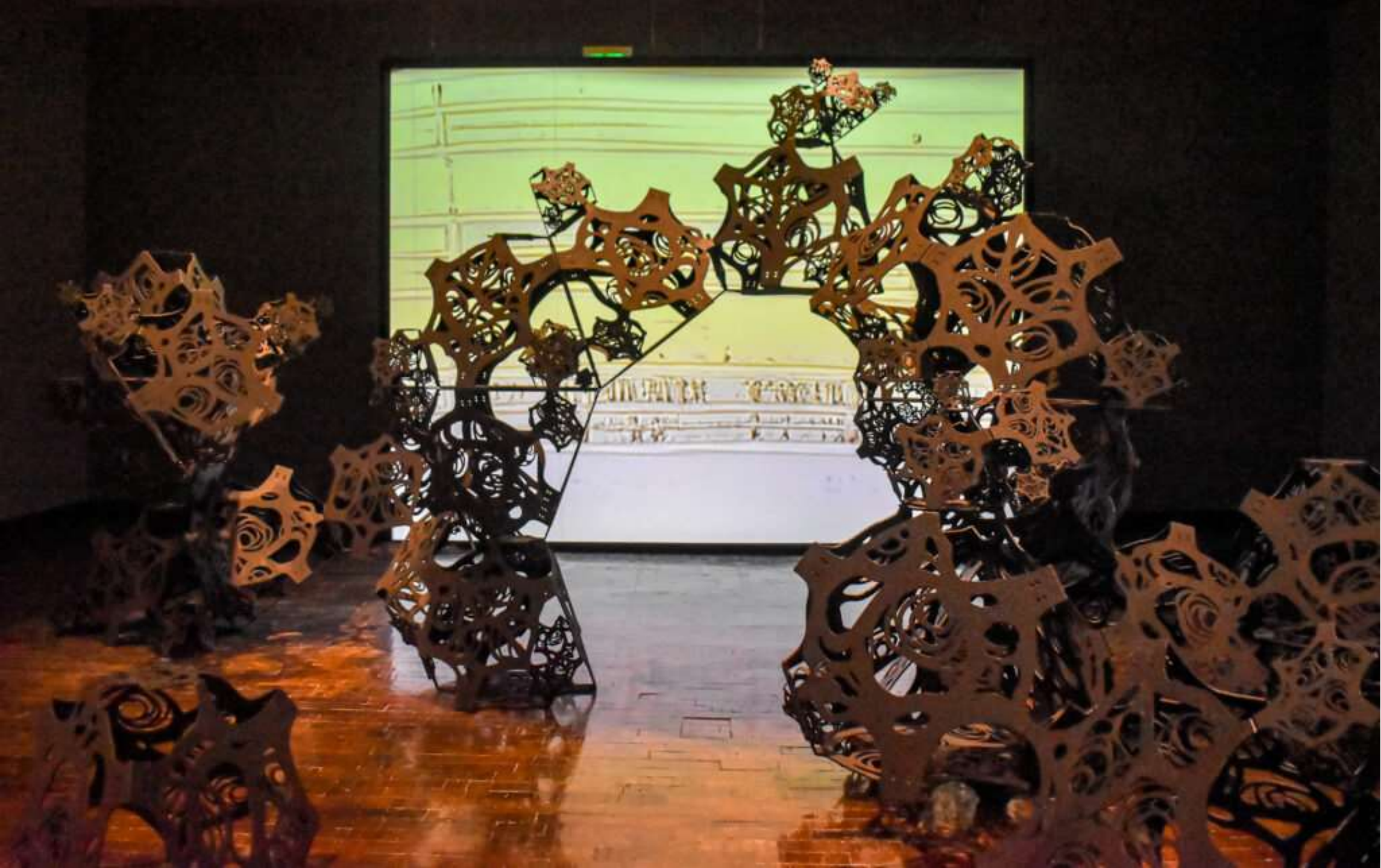


AND IN THIS NATION OF
MEN AND WOMEN,
NO FACE IN THE MIRROR
REFLECTING MORE
DARKNESS THAN LIGHT,
MORE STRIFE THAN LOVE,
NO MORE STRIFE
THAN IN MY HANDS NOW,
AS I SIT ON A ROCK,
TEARING UP BREAD FOR
RED AND WHITE CARP
PUSHING OUT OF THE
ELEMENT INTO N

Matthew Ritchie

In this film, Matthew Ritchie describes his fascination with using post-apocalyptic imagery. Focusing on the aftermath of destruction fabricated within his video works *The Iron City* (2007) and *Raphael* (2007), Ritchie describes the relevance of apocalyptic imagery in entertainment. “All of the movies just show the world turning into different versions of the same apocalypse. Everyone gets really excited about the end of the world,” says the artist. “But imagine a movie that was just touring around the ruins afterward. It’s a totally different feeling—they don’t make movies about that.”

- <https://art21.org/watch/extended-play/matthew-ritchie-apocalypse-short/>







Craig Walsh

In the mid-nineties, Australian artist [Craig Walsh](#) created his first projection at Woodford Folk Festival in Queensland. Made with photographic slides, the massive installation temporarily transformed a tree into a large-scale portrait, enlivening the canopy and initiating what's become a 30-year project.

Now encompassed within the artist's *Monuments* series, the digital works continue to animate landscapes and public spaces around the globe, and they've evolved in breadth and scope, sometimes incorporating live video and sound that allows viewers to interact with the illuminated characters. Blinking, yawning, and displaying various facial expressions, the emotive figures address both connections between people and their surroundings and conversations around whose stories are upheld and disseminated. "The work in the early days conceptually linked more to how the environment we exist in influences the human condition," Walsh tells Colossal. "Surveillance was another interpretation."

<https://www.monumentscraigwalsh.net/>





Joanie Lemercia

[Constellations](#) is a light-based audio-visual installation by [Joanie Lemercier](#) that explores the great expanse of our universe through the presentation of morphing geometric shapes and bright glowing orbs. The three-dimensional light work is projected onto water, which gives it a rippling, holographic effect, further intensified by an electronic soundscape produced by [Paul Jebanasam](#). “It’s an exploration of the stars, constellations and the vastness of the cosmos, suggesting the beauty of geometry, simple and complex structures of the universe,” explains Lemercier. The project was first shown in Bristol, UK in March 2018 at [Layered Realities](#) in Millennium Square, and is produced by [Juliette Bibasse](#).

<https://www.thisiscolossal.com/2019/03/constellation-by-joanie-lemercier/>





Daan Roosegaarde

Dutch artist and designer [Daan Roosegaarde](#) created [WATERLICHT](#) to raise awareness about rising water levels and the need to continue to innovate and adapt to our changing environment. The ethereal projection uses a combination of LED and lenses, which forms a constantly shifting layer of billowing blue light above the heads of viewers. Since its inception in 2016 as a site-specific artwork for Amsterdam's Dutch District Water Board, the immersive installation has been shown across the world in London, Toronto, Paris, Rotterdam, Dubai, and at the United Nations headquarters in New York City.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6cVNStE7wco>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VESOBfcAk2c&t=9s>





Craig Burrows

Artist [Craig Burrows](#) captures the natural fluorescence of flowers using a unique UV imaging technique, resulting in spectacularly luminescent photographs. The process, known as ultraviolet-induced visible fluorescence photography, involves projecting electromagnetic radiation on to the flower, and then capturing the visible light briefly emitted by the plant. Lest you think everything around us is secretly glowing all the time, the light shown in Burrows' photographs appears within nanoseconds of the UV light projection, and decays within ten nanoseconds. Objects that emit a longer afterglow are referred to as phosphorescent. The incredibly brief window of illumination is usually not observable to the human eye not because it is itself invisible, but because the glow is so brief, and generally surrounded by much more powerful, atmospheric sunlight.







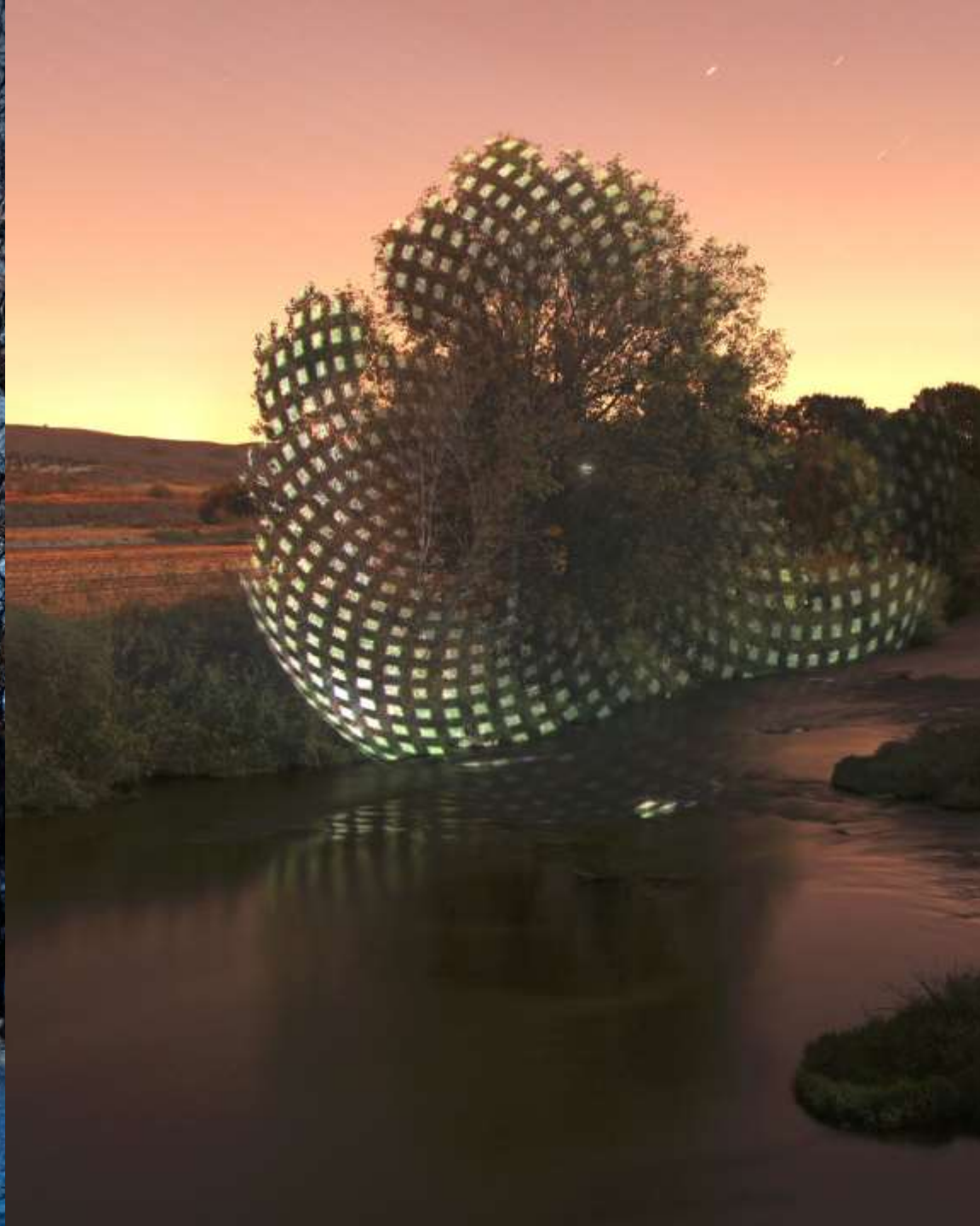
Javier Riera

Spanish artist [Javier Riera](https://javierriera.com/exposiciones-javier-riera/alameda-illum/?lang=en) designs and photographs light projections that fit perfectly onto specifically shaped trees and their branches. The geometric forms are inspired by the particular landscape, and are used to reveal what Riera perceives to be latent dimensions or energies embedded in the natural environment. “His hopes the photographs deepen the connection between nature and the audience, allowing the viewer to find a greater appreciation for the multitude of layers that compose the nature world.

<https://javierriera.com/exposiciones-javier-riera/alameda-illum/?lang=en>







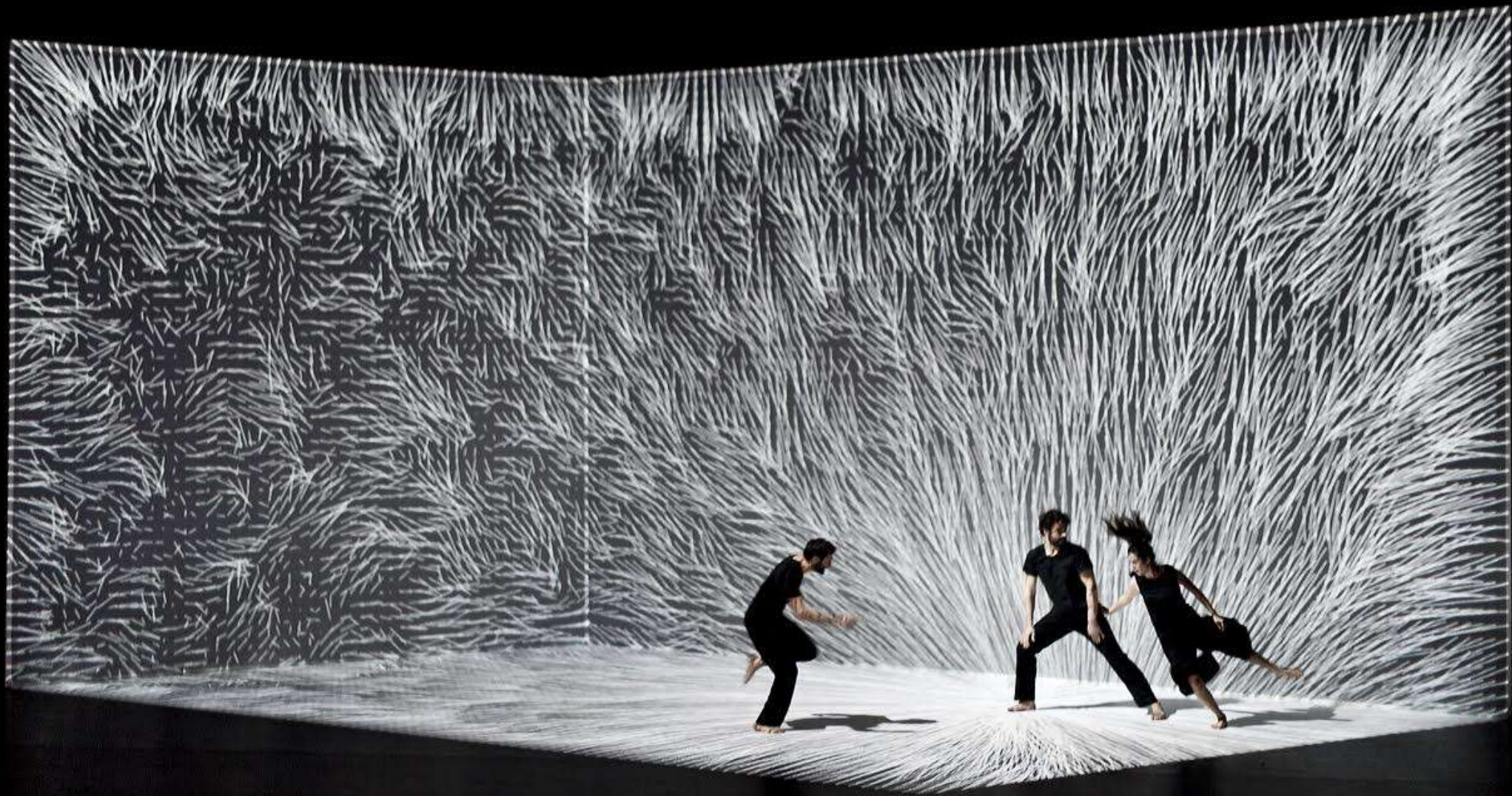


Adrien M & Claire B

Artist duo [Adrien M & Claire B](#) have lifted the curtain on their latest acrobatic dance performance utilizing digital projection titled [The Movement of Air](#). Seen in this video is a handful of moments taken from an hour-long piece performed in France last month by a trio dancers. Unlike more common uses of digital project mapping where a recorded animation or scene is projected in a space, Adrien M & Claire B instead utilize fully interactive “scenes” that respond to human interaction. Nothing you see on the set is animated beforehand.

<https://www.thisiscolossal.com/2015/11/movement-of-air-dance/>

<https://www.thisiscolossal.com/2015/01/pixel-a-mesmerizing-dance-performance-incorporating-digital-projection/>







Özge Samancı

Ozge Samancı is a Turkish American artist, and professor at Northwestern University. She creates media art installations and graphic novels. Her art installations merge computer code and bio-sensors with comics, animation, interactive narrations, performance, and projection art.

<https://vimeo.com/707811273>

<https://www.ozgesamanci.com/dare-to-disappoint>





William Kentridge

William Kentridge is a South African artist best known for his prints, drawings, and animated films, especially noted for a sequence of hand-drawn animated films he produced during the 1990s. The latter are constructed by filming a drawing, making erasures and changes, and filming it again.

- <https://www.thebroad.org/art/special-exhibitions/william-kentridge-praise-shadows>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iur0MAQ2Atk> (use this)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dnweo-LQZLU>
- <https://www.sybariscollection.com/5-exhibitions-to-understand-the-aesthetics-of-william-kentridge/>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RyTphZ8xhIk>

Cultura

Aprile

1926



9

Riparto
Guas

2915
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34410

16

Harmonia
ferugine
H. Club
Cap. F.
Quaranta
Pantini

22125
9721
4174

Har. F. L. L.
F. L. L.

Integramente S. F. L.

Enormi 249
P. L. L.
S. P. L.

Riparto

Carai & L. L.
L. L. L.
F. L. L.

Colorigine S. L. L.
G. L. L.
F. L. L.
F. L. L.
F. L. L.
F. L. L.

2515
2515
1515

Isolabula S. L. L.
S. L. L.
S. L. L.

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Correntaria
F. L. L.
F. L. L.
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Colorigine S. L. L.
G. L. L.
F. L. L.

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Colorigine S. L. L.
G. L. L.
F. L. L.

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Assignment Suggestions...

- Take a short video with your phone
- Make a “still” artwork inspired by the video
- Make an artwork inspired by a video projection (perhaps from a childhood memory)
- Work on a charcoal sketch—photograph, erase and rework, photograph again; repeat