

# It's About Time

In art

# The Concept of Time

Time and movement in art are closely linked. Time, however, is an abstract concept, with cultural and historical implications. It does not have the physicality that movement does. Time-based artwork is more ephemeral.

## **Linear vs. circular, or cyclical time**

In the concept of **linear time** there is a beginning (the past), and an end (the future). Between the two is the present, which is always moving forward.

In contrast, **circular, or cyclical time** is a repeating process, like cycles and seasons, that creates continuous and infinite outcomes.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RS6wHAEVdHE>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PhnoQRzQJ60>



# Linear Time

Examples of linear time represented by a digital clock and a timeline and a comic strip.



Linear time is practical because it is able to measure progress toward a goal or destination, rises in percentages.

Every moment is unique, no moment can ever be repeated. This idea favors risk-taking, living life to the fullest, seizing the day. And yet the innovation is a profoundly bitter one: when change over time is irreversible, loss and mourning become daily things.



# Circular Time

Analog clocks and labyrinths are good examples of circular time. In circular time, every object and event must return to its own beginning, curl back up into an embryo and repeat the process of maturation and death. The creative life is *not* linear. It's not a straight line from point A to point B. It's more like a loop, or a spiral, in which you keep coming back to a new starting point after every project. No matter how successful you get, no matter what level of achievement you reach, you will never really "arrive."





~~SECONDS~~

HEARTBEATS

~~DAYS~~

SUNRISES

~~WEEKS~~

MOON

~~MONTHS~~

PHASES

~~QUARTERS~~

SEASONS

~~YEARS~~

THE RETURN  
OF SPRING

You have to p  
creative outpu  
You have to g  
own patterns  
David Thore

One way to  
Kent and  
Draw the  
astronom  
the moon  
for nonr  
changes

# Bayeux Tapestry

The Bayeux Tapestry is an embroidered cloth nearly 70 metres long and 50 centimetres tall that depicts the events leading up to the Norman Conquest of England in 1066, led by William, Duke of Normandy challenging Harold II, King of England, and culminating in the Battle of Hastings.

- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F8OPQ\\_28mdo&t=40s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F8OPQ_28mdo&t=40s)











# Chartres Cathedral—Labyrinth

**The labyrinth of Chartres** evokes Greek mythology. The architect Daedalus constructed it for the destruction of a monster – the Minotaur – who ate the children of Athens. Theseus vanquished the monster, and he was successful due to the thread spun by Ariadne.

In the Middle Ages, several labyrinths were created on the pavement of religious buildings: Reims, Amiens, Saint-Quentin. They appeared also as a signature of their sponsors and project managers (*indicated by their names on a central plaque*). Appreciate the complexity and elegance of the patterns, the main director that represented the execution of pattern in stone.

Religious pilgrimages were common during the Middle Ages. Most Christians could not make the actual pilgrimage to Jerusalem, so they made a symbolic one by walking the labyrinth in cathedrals such as Chartres.

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1uktDlrFTMg&t=24s>











# The Medicine Wheel

The Medicine Wheel, sometimes known as the Sacred Hoop, has been **used by generations of various Native American tribes for health and healing**. It embodies the Four Directions, as well as Father Sky, Mother Earth, and Spirit Tree—all of which symbolize dimensions of health and the cycles of life.

The Medicine Wheel symbolizes the Sacred Hoop of Life, the four directions, and humanity as one people of many hues. The colors represent: red for East, awareness, and beginnings; yellow for South, healing, youth, and growth; black for West, inner vision, soul searching, and endings; white for North, wisdom of ancestors, higher power, and guidance.

<https://www.ictinc.ca/blog/what-is-an-indigenous-medicine-wheel>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fMFg9q3k2rM&t=20s>

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







# Sumito Sakakibara

One night, a man's car goes off the road. His life flashes before him, as the synopsis of "Iizuna Fair" says, "In the midst of the frenzied night, a man finds himself lost in the crevasse of time." Dreamlike scenes unfold in [Sumito Sakakibara](#)'s poignant short film as it pans across the anonymous protagonist's buried memories, inhibitions, and unkept promises, as he realizes, "he was the phantom."

In hand-painted frames that merge gradually from one scene to the next, Sakakibara taps into the nuances of nostalgia, human experience, regret, grief, and what it means to truly be alive. Seemingly unrelated scenes unfold simultaneously, dipping in and out of different time periods and events, centering around a fair that has come to the town of Iizuna. Watch from beginning to end, and you'll witness how Sakakibara composed the film into an infinite loop.

"Iizuna Fair" was commissioned by [Nagano Prefectural Art Museum](#), where it is currently on view on a massive 26-meter-wide, L-shaped screen, and you can also watch the animation above through December 15. See more on the artist's [Vimeo](#) and [website](#).

- <https://www.thisiscolossal.com/2023/10/iizuna-fair/>













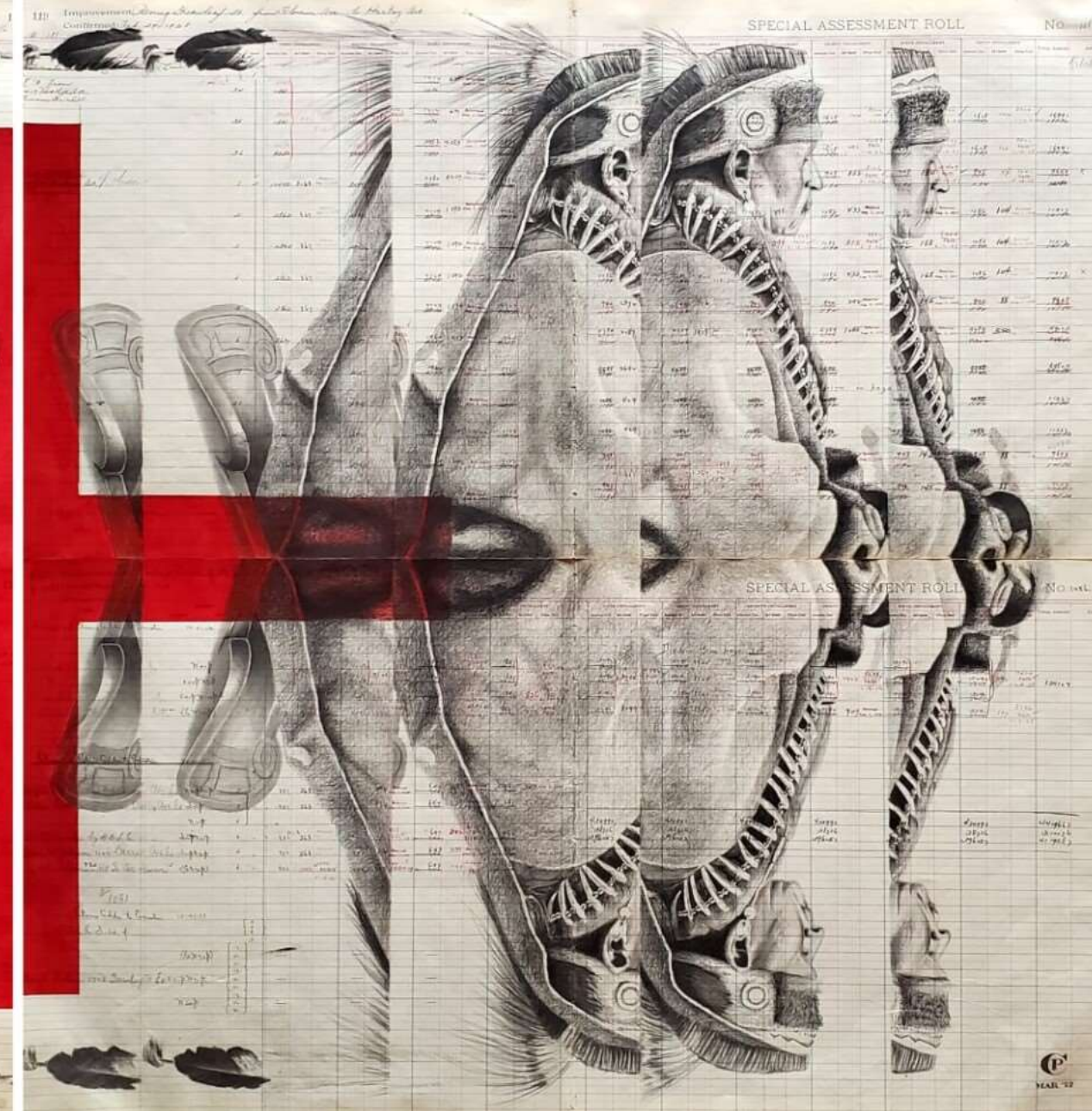
# Chris Pappan

For [Chris Pappan](#), distinguishing between the past and present, the present and the future, is irrelevant. Time, for him, is circular and cyclical, something that ensures he's able to connect to those who came before him and also to those who will after.

A citizen of the Kaw (Kanza) Nation and of Osage, Lakota, and European descent, Pappan is invested in honoring his ancestors while emphasizing Native American contemporaneity. He often works on municipal ledger paper and other found substrates to depict people in photorealistic detail, mirroring their faces and forms and creating myriad metaphors for split selves, distortion, and human interaction that transcend time and space.

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=508821806890535>











No. 57



# The Maya Calendar

The **Maya calendar** is a system of [calendars](#) used in [pre-Columbian Mesoamerica](#) and in many modern communities in the [Guatemalan](#) highlands,<sup>[1]</sup> [Veracruz](#), [Oaxaca](#) and [Chiapas](#), Mexico.<sup>[2]</sup>

The essentials of the Maya calendar are based upon a system which had been in common use throughout the region, dating back to at least the 5th century BC. It shares many aspects with calendars employed by other earlier Mesoamerican civilizations, such as the [Zapotec](#) and [Olmec](#) and contemporary or later ones such as the [Mixtec](#) and [Aztec](#) [calendars](#).<sup>[3]</sup>

The Maya calendar consists of several cycles or *counts* of different lengths. The 260-day count is known to scholars as the [Tzolkin](#). The Tzolkin was combined with a 365-day vague solar year known as the [Haab'](#) to form a synchronized cycle lasting for 52 Haab', called the [Calendar Round](#). The Calendar Round is still in use by many groups in the Guatemalan highlands.<sup>[6]</sup>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MFsWmxk4QzM&t=66s>

<https://maya.nmai.si.edu/maya-sun/sun-corn-and-calendar>











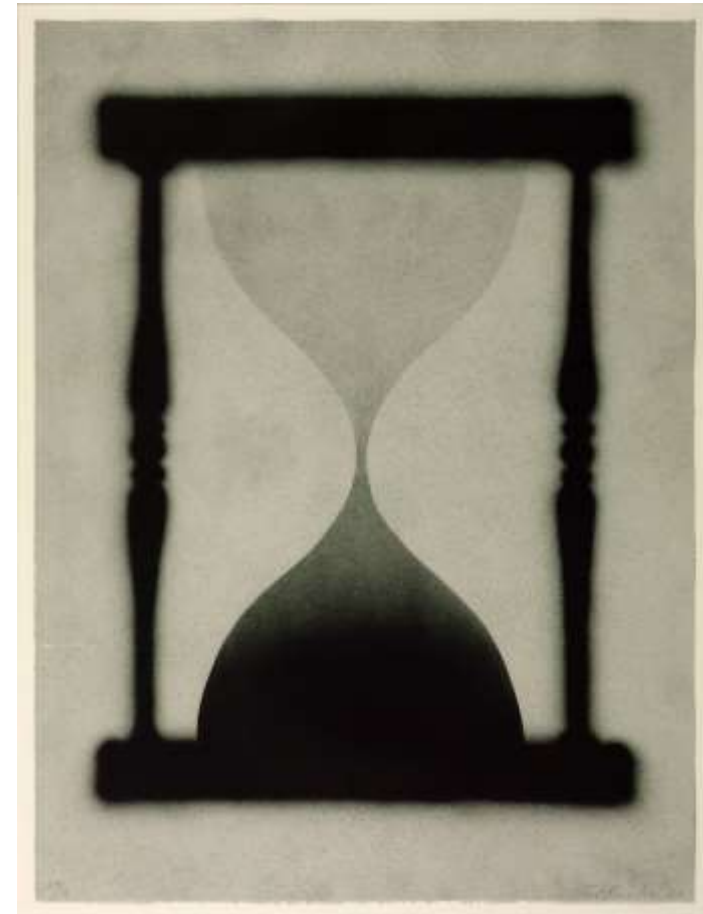
# Edward Ruscha

**Edward Joseph Ruscha IV** is an American artist associated with the pop art movement. He has worked in the media of painting, printmaking, drawing, photography, and film. He is also noted for creating several artist's books. Ruscha lives and works in Culver City, California.

<https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artists/edward-ruscha-1882/ed-ruscha-and-art-everyday>

# Time is Up

Ed Ruscha's expansive oeuvre defies easy categorization, though it's all infused with a kind of deadpan California cool. Since the 1960s, Ruscha has made photographic books, tongue-in-cheek photo collages, paintings, and drawings that demonstrate a keen interest in language and the idiosyncrasies of life in [Los Angeles](#), where the artist has lived since the 1950s. In his most famous works, he places words and phrases from the colloquial and consumerist vernacular atop photographic images or fields of color—a strategy that situates him within a larger [Pop art](#) lineage. Ruscha often paints and draws with unusual materials such as gunpowder, blood, and Pepto Bismol, drawing attention to the deterioration of language and the pervasive clichés in American culture. Ruscha's work has been exhibited across the globe, and the artist has enjoyed solo shows at the [Los Angeles County Museum of Art](#), the [Art Institute of Chicago](#), and [Moderna Museet](#), in addition to the Venice Biennale, where he represented the United States in 2005. At auction, his work has sold for eight figures.





# Jens Lausen

Jens Lausen was a **German Postwar & Contemporary painter** who was born in 1937. Their work is currently being shown at Hamburger Kunsthalle.

- The Time Before and After Mid Day—Homage to C.D. Friedrich





# David Lamelas

In this performance at Tate Modern, Argentinian artist David Lamelas sets out to capture the essence of time. Though the project was created in 1970, [\*Time\*](#) was only recently acquired for the Tate Collection, one of the first examples of Tate buying a performance in the form of set of instructions explaining how to restage it, rather than a physical object.

- <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artists/david-lamelas-8787/time-david-lamelas>







# 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.

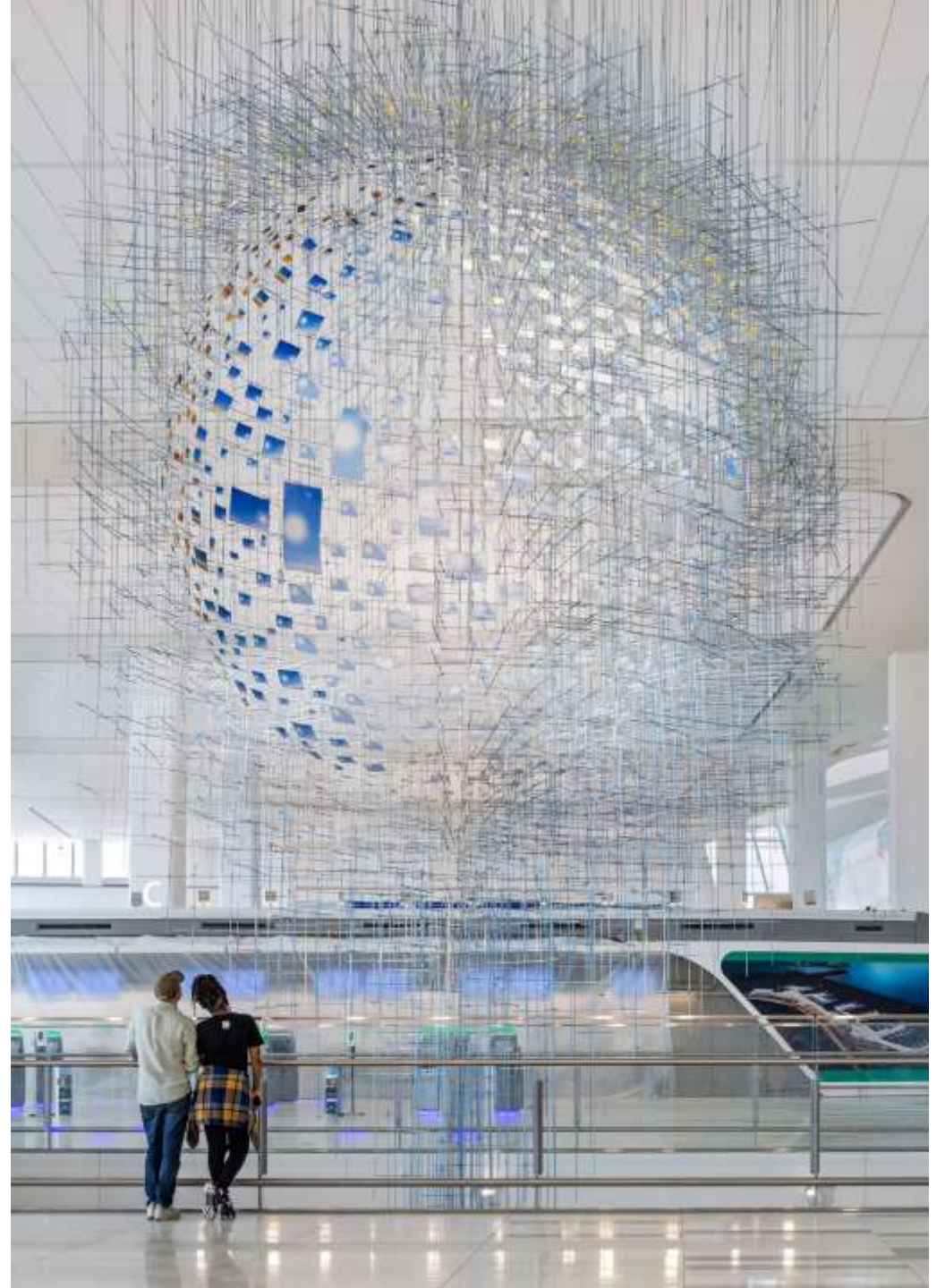
Artist Sarah Sze takes us on a kaleidoscopic journey through her work: immersive installations as tall as buildings, splashed across walls, orbiting through galleries -- blurring the lines between time, memory and space. Explore how we give meaning to objects in this beautiful tour of Sze's experiential, multimedia art.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IEjegKJwIOM&t=47s>



















# Martin Puryear

Martin Puryear was born in Washington, DC, in 1941. In his youth, he studied crafts and learned how to build guitars, furniture, and canoes through practical training and instruction. After earning his BA from Catholic University in Washington DC, Puryear joined the Peace Corps in Sierra Leone, and later attended the Swedish Royal Academy of Art. He received an MFA in sculpture from Yale University in 1971. Puryear's objects and public installations—in wood, stone, tar, wire, and various metals—are a marriage of minimalist logic with traditional ways of making. Puryear's evocative, dreamlike explorations in abstract forms retain vestigial elements of utility from everyday objects found in the world.

In *Ladder for Booker T. Washington*, Puryear built a spindly, meandering ladder out of jointed ash wood. More than thirty-five-feet tall, the ladder narrows toward the top, creating a distorted sense of perspective that evokes an unattainable or illusionary goal.

<https://art21.org/watch/art-in-the-twenty-first-century/s2/time/> (start at 2:21)













# Hannah Lees

Born in Scotland, Hannah Lees was transplanted as a child to the settler-colony of New Zealand. Hannah Lees, a Margate-based artist whose art is deeply influenced by the beauty of nature, its landscapes, discarded treasures and sustainability.

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cYloPpF9HI0>





# Turner Contemporary





# Lee Mingwe

Lee Mingwei creates artworks, often in the form of performances or interactive works, which allow audiences to experience chance encounters and spaces for deep reflection. *Our Labyrinth* creates a space of ritual and sacredness within the museum. It centres on dancers mindfully brushing a mound of rice into labyrinthine patterns. They are guided by rice as they perform for the duration of the museum's opening hours for 21 days.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fwavug2ea94&t=110s>











# Olafur Eliassen

## **Olafur Eliasson: The illusion of stopped movement and time--within an artwork that incorporates actual movement and time**

In a darkened room, there is a pool of water on the floor and water dripping from the ceiling into the pool. This is what you *know* when you step into the room. But it is lit only with strobe light, so all you have are flashes of information as to what you are seeing. The strobe light freezes the movement of the water drops, in an endless variation. It is like seeing time stopped. The effect is mesmerizing and magical. Along with the slight coolness of the room and the scent of cool fresh water, it becomes a transcendent moment.

<https://www.tanyabonakdargallery.com/exhibitions/20-olafur-eliasson-your-strange-certainty-still-kept-tanya-bonakdar-gallery-new-york/>

<https://vimeo.com/336326483>





# Janine Antoni

## Evidence of time in an artwork

*Lick and Lather* reveals the evidence of time passing--the action of the artist--a history contained within each portrait bust. Antoni cast 14 portrait busts of herself out of chocolate and soap. She then began to consume the chocolate busts and bathe the soap busts, in progressive degrees. Antoni had this to say: "I wanted to work with the tradition of self-portraiture but also with the classical bust. I had the idea that I would make a replica of myself in chocolate and in soap, and I would feed myself with my self, and wash myself with my self. Both the licking and the bathing are quite gentle and loving acts, but what's interesting is that I'm slowly erasing myself through the process. So for me it's about that conflict, that love/hate relationship we have with our physical appearance, and the problem I have with looking in the mirror and thinking, 'Is that who I am?'" (as quoted on PBS' Art 21 website) <http://www.pbs.org/art21/slideshow/?slide=142&artindex=44>

<https://art21.org/watch/art-in-the-twenty-first-century/s2/janine-antoni-in-loss-desire-segment/>

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=808142133526896>







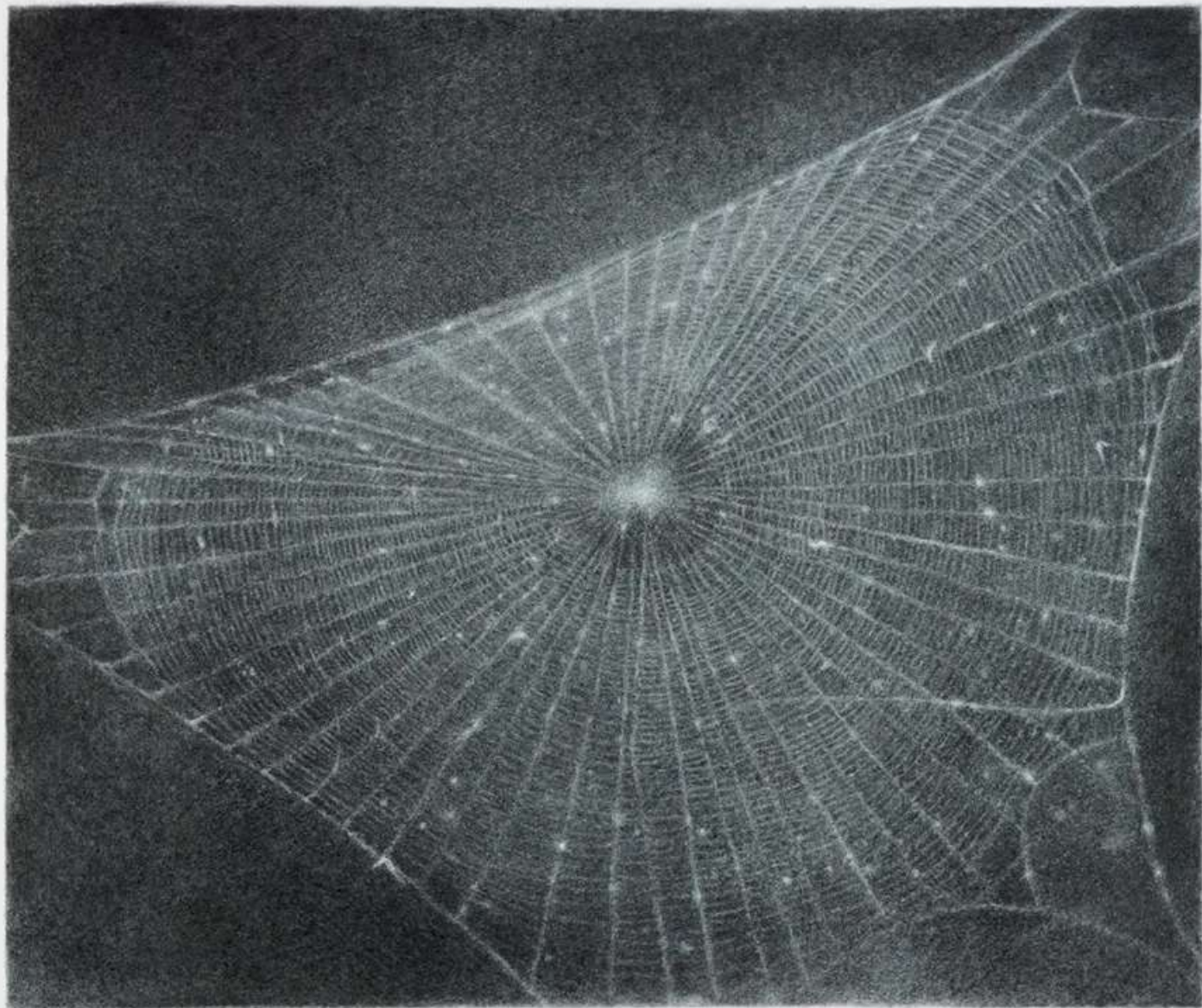
# Vija Celmins

Vija Celmins is a Latvian American visual artist best known for photo-realistic paintings and drawings of natural environments and phenomena such as the ocean, spider webs, star fields, and rocks. Her earlier work included pop sculptures and monochromatic representational paintings.

- <https://art21.org/watch/art-in-the-twenty-first-century/s2/vija-celmins-in-time-segment/>



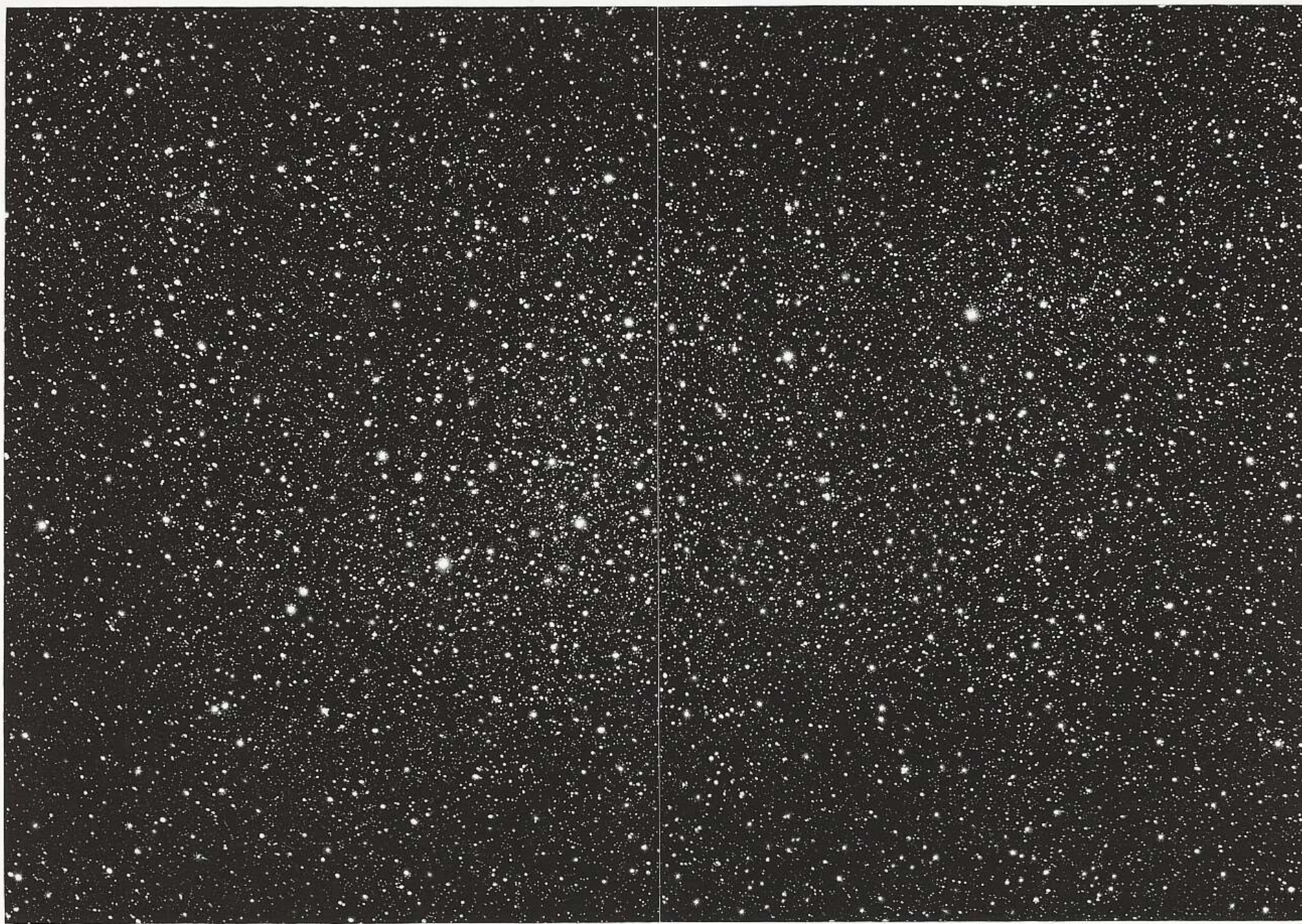
















# The Tempestry Project

[Unprecedented flooding](#) closed Yellowstone National Park for the first time in decades. A combination of heavy rains and temperatures high enough to melt snow spurred [a 14.5-foot rise](#) in the Yellowstone River, and numerous bridges and roads were entirely washed out in the area, stranding residents with little access to drinking water as the high tides damaged infrastructure.

Unfortunately, what should be an extraordinary incident is becoming all the more common as global temperatures rise and we [feel the continual effects](#) of the climate crisis. It can be difficult, though, to grasp the magnitude of the problems we're facing when considering a single, isolated weather event, which is why Asy Connelly and Emily McNeil began [The Tempestry Project](#). At the intersection of craft and activism, the initiative's name is a portmanteau of tapestry and temperature and its goal is to make such large-scale shifts more accessible and relatable through tangible, data-rich works.

<https://www.facebook.com/SUNYGeneseo/posts/3186149328293023/>

<https://verypink.com/2018/05/23/podcast-episode-98-tempestry-project/>











# To Scale: Time

The human conception of time is limited. We often think in hours, days, and years, units of measurement that are comprehensible when considering our lifetimes or those of generations past. Even decades and centuries, though, are only a minuscule fraction in the timeline of the universe and are wholly inadequate when assessing a nearly 14-billion-year history.

A new short by [Alex Gorosh](#) and [Wylie](#) helps to visualize the immensity of cosmic creation beyond the clock and calendar. Four years in the making, “[To Scale: TIME](#)” takes the filmmakers to a 4.3-mile stretch across the arid Mojave Desert, where they install small lights to create a timeline of human civilization and the broader universe. Augmented with visuals of galaxies and historical events, the resulting work captures the magnitude of 13.8 billion years and is an awe-inspiring reminder of how small humans are in both time and space.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nOVvEbH2GC0>



The background of the image is a vast, dark desert landscape under a twilight sky. The horizon is marked by silhouettes of mountains. A dotted line originates from the bottom right and extends diagonally upwards towards the center, where it meets a vertical white line. The text is positioned to the left of this vertical line.

UNIVERSE *Timeline*  
13,800,000,000 *years*  
6.9 *km* (4.3 *mi*)

An aerial photograph of a vast, flat, arid landscape, likely a salt flat or desert. The ground is a mix of light tan and dark brown patches, with some small, dark, scrubby vegetation scattered across the left side. In the far distance, a range of low, hazy mountains is visible under a clear, pale blue sky. Overlaid on the left side of the image is white text in a serif font, with the word 'UNIVERSE' in all caps and 'Timeline' in italics. Below this, the numbers '13,800,000,000' and 'years' are shown, followed by '6.9 km (4.3 mi)' in italics. A thin white vertical line is positioned to the right of the text.

UNIVERSE *Timeline*  
13,800,000,000 years  
6.9 km (4.3 mi)





# Metal Sculptor Shota Suzuki Crafts Exquisitely Detailed Blooms That Express the Passing of Time

Tender stems bear lush blooms and windswept leaves gather around new growth in artist [Shota Suzuki](#)'s delicate metal sculptures. Rendered in painstaking detail, the forms are inspired by flora around his home and studio in Kyoto, such as Japanese maple trees and [dandelions](#) that have gone to seed. "Recently, I have been adding rain and wind to my work," he tells Colossal, sharing that he's inspired by the way nature demonstrates the passing of time. He adds silvery water droplets to ginkgo leaves, ruffles the petals of flowers, or portrays a branch of cherry blossoms as if it has blown from a tree.

An early interest in jewelry led Suzuki to study metalworking, and the exquisite detail of florals and foliage suited his ability to work on a small scale. A wide range of patinas create a life-like appearance, achieved by combining an array of chemicals that produce specific hues and textures, including traditional Japanese copper coloration methods such as [niiro](#). "I don't want to create works in which time stands still," he says. "I want to express a moment in time."

- <https://www.thisiscolossal.com/2022/11/shota-suzuki-metal-flowers/>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ei0dE4Fmt8w>









# In a Daily Sewing Project, Karen Turner Stitches a Visual Diary in Vividly Textured Designs

From [newspaper paintings](#) and [watercolor scenes](#) to [narrative photographs](#) and [wildly handled mugs](#), daily projects have continually grabbed our attention for their ritualistic nature, dedication, and ability to strengthen creative stamina. East Yorkshire-based artist [Karen Turner](#) has spent the last year in the midst of her own routine involving a long strip of vintage fabric and colorful hand-sewn motifs.

Turner began what's become her *Intuitive Daily Stitching* project back in January 2022 when she was hoping to bring more mindfulness into her everyday. The idea was to fill a few inches on a simple, angular grid with whatever motif came to mind, creating a textured patchwork that was also "a visual representation of time passing," she says. "The older I get, the faster time seems to pass, and I wanted to connect with this sense of time rushing by and consciously to notice a few minutes every day."

- <https://www.thisiscolossal.com/2023/04/karen-turner-daily-stitches/>









# Assignment Suggestions...

- Make something inspired by linear time
- Make something inspired by circular time