Chris Natrop
exhibitions & installations
2016-2010

Chris Natrop was born in 1967 in Milwaukee, WI. He received a BFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 1992 with an emphasis in painting. He was an affiliate artist at Headlands Center for the Arts, and a resident at Vermont Studio School. Natrop's major installation projects have been shown at Nancy Toomey Fine Art, Los Angeles Craft and Folk Art Museum, L.A. Municipal Art Gallery, Armory Center for the Arts Pasadena, Holland Papier Bienniale, Winghall Museum, Vincent Price Art Museum, Long Beach City College, Florida State University Museum of Fine Arts, Taylor De Cordoba, MOCA Jacksonville, Chapman University, Sonoma County Museum, BANK, and Overtones. Publications include L.A. Times, Artillery Magazine, Architecture Digest, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, San Francisco Chronicle, BEAUTIFUL/DECAY, Tema Celeste, THE Magazine, New Yorker magazine, New American Painters, and Art in America. Chris Natrop was the 2007 recipient of the Pulse Prize, New York. Commissioned work includes U.S. Consulate in Dubai, Los Angeles International Airport, Harry Winston Jewelers, and Facebook, Inc. Chris lives and works with his family in Los Angeles.

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Silver Sun Afterglow

Nancy Toomey Fine Art, San Francisco 2016

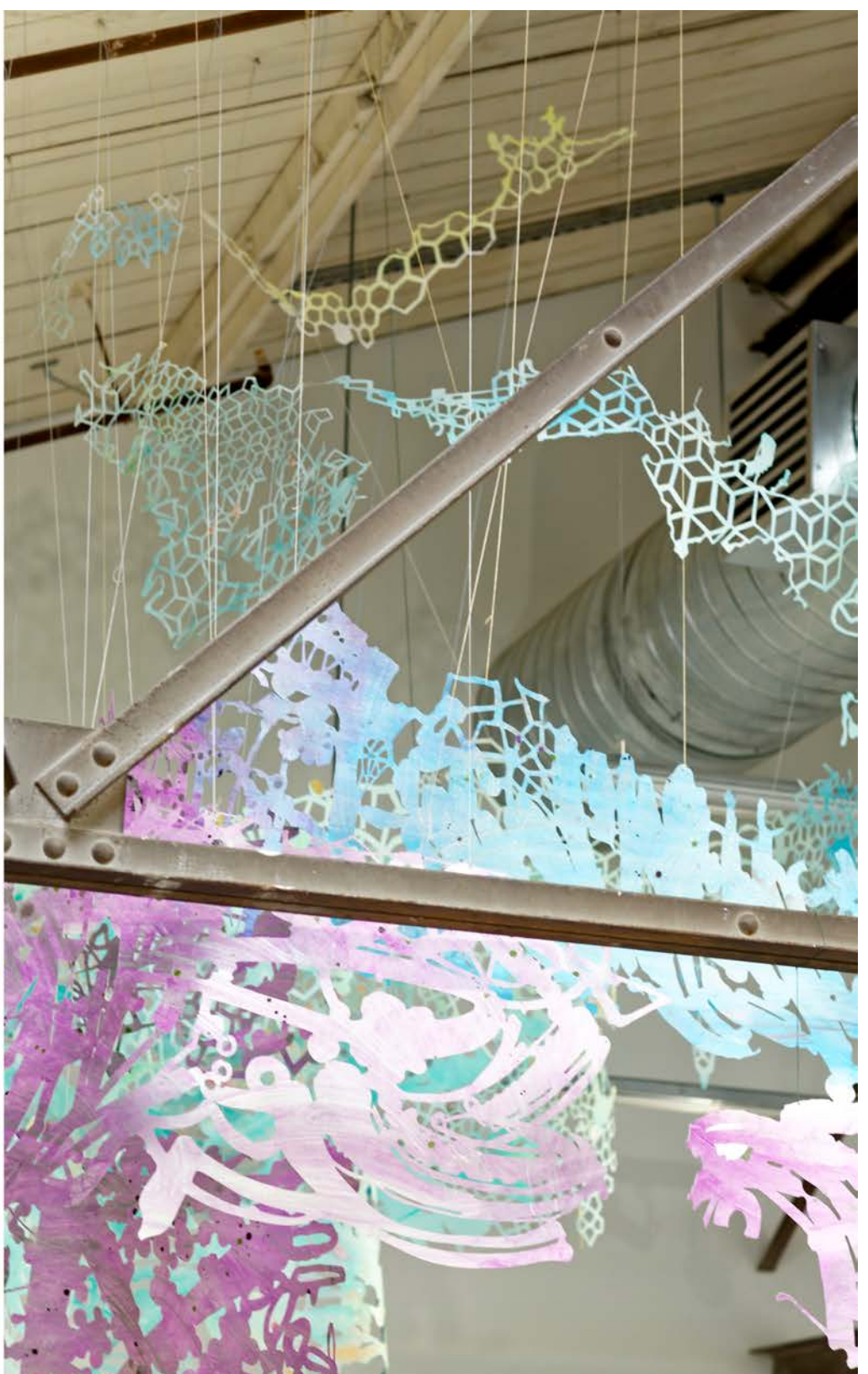
Silver Sun Afterglow transforms the gallery using hand cut paper in a range of painting color patterns and effects. These intricately cut paper silhouettes become a hybrid of natural and synthetic form—a loosely-faceted environment evolving within a fantastical trajectory. This exhibition responds to Natrop's obsession with post-apocalyptic sentiments, specifically his current disillusionment with water resources. The installation takes shape through an array of cut-paper formations: various ceiling-hung conglomerations, site-specific wall reliefs, and interrelated framed works.

Silver Sun Afterglow is an irrepressible tangle of life, a hybrid-world twisting and clinging to its sterile confines: a fractured landscape in the natural process of reconfiguration.

ABOVE – ultra vivid aftermath 1-9 | acrylic, aluminum powder, paper, wood frame | 80x80 | 2016
RIGHT – gold fame citrus redux 1-3 | watercolor, glitter, paper with brass frame, velvet | 33x33 | 2016

CHRIS NATROP
SILVER SUN AFTERGLOW

MAXIMUM
OCCUPANCY
29

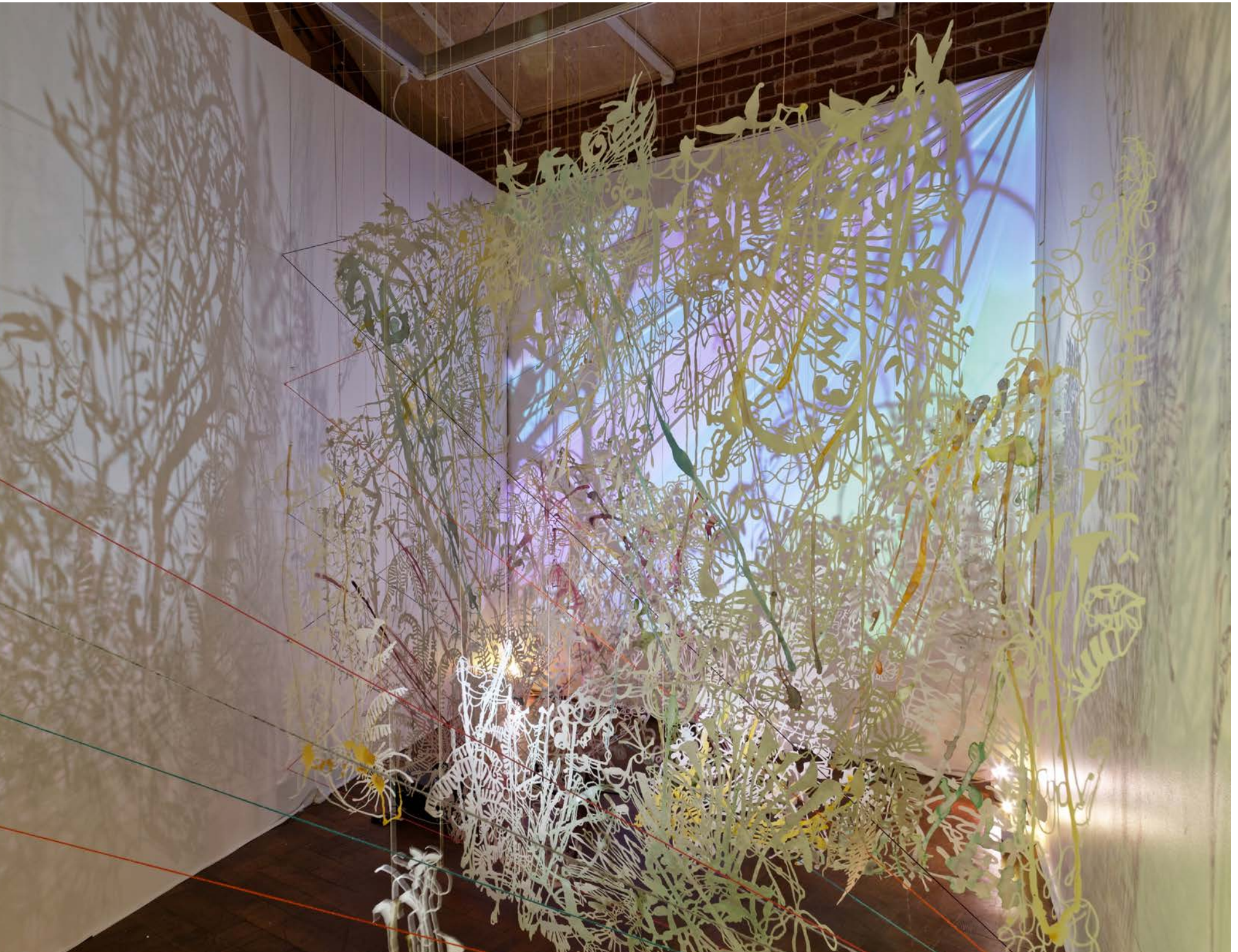


Of Night and Light and the Half Light

Craft and Folk Art Museum, Los Angeles 2015
120 x 216 x 120 | watercolor, metallic powder, glitter on hand-cut paper, string, yarn, projected video, custom lighting | 2015

"The jungle is a magical one, dense with dangling vines and voluminous blossoms awash in green and gold glitter. The foliage sways in the breeze, casting glimmering shadows that dance on a nearby wall to the chorus of crickets chirping, leaves rustling and crows cawing. Chris Natrop's hand-cut paper forest at the Craft & Folk Art Museum is part of the exhibition 'Paperworks,' which features sculptures, collages and large-scale installations by 15 contemporary artists working in unusual ways with paper. Using a somewhat crude box-cutting knife, Natrop carved a 3-D forest that is backed by video from his own garden. The color-washed paper forms, often with rough or frayed edges, dangle from the ceiling and drape along the floor like an overgrown yard, the organic sounds from his garden bringing the installation to life."

— Deborah Vankin, Los Angeles Times, art critic

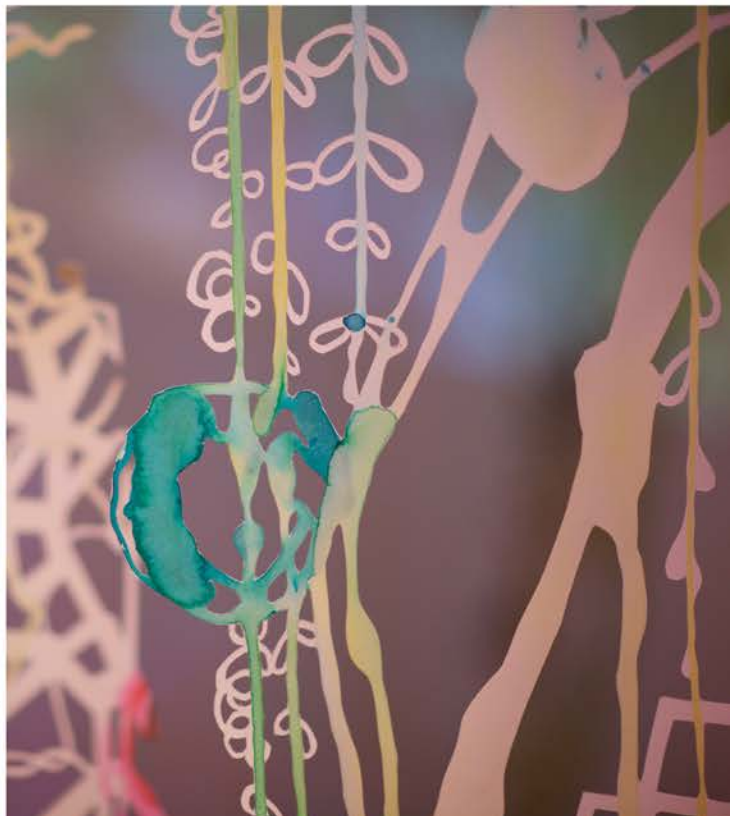


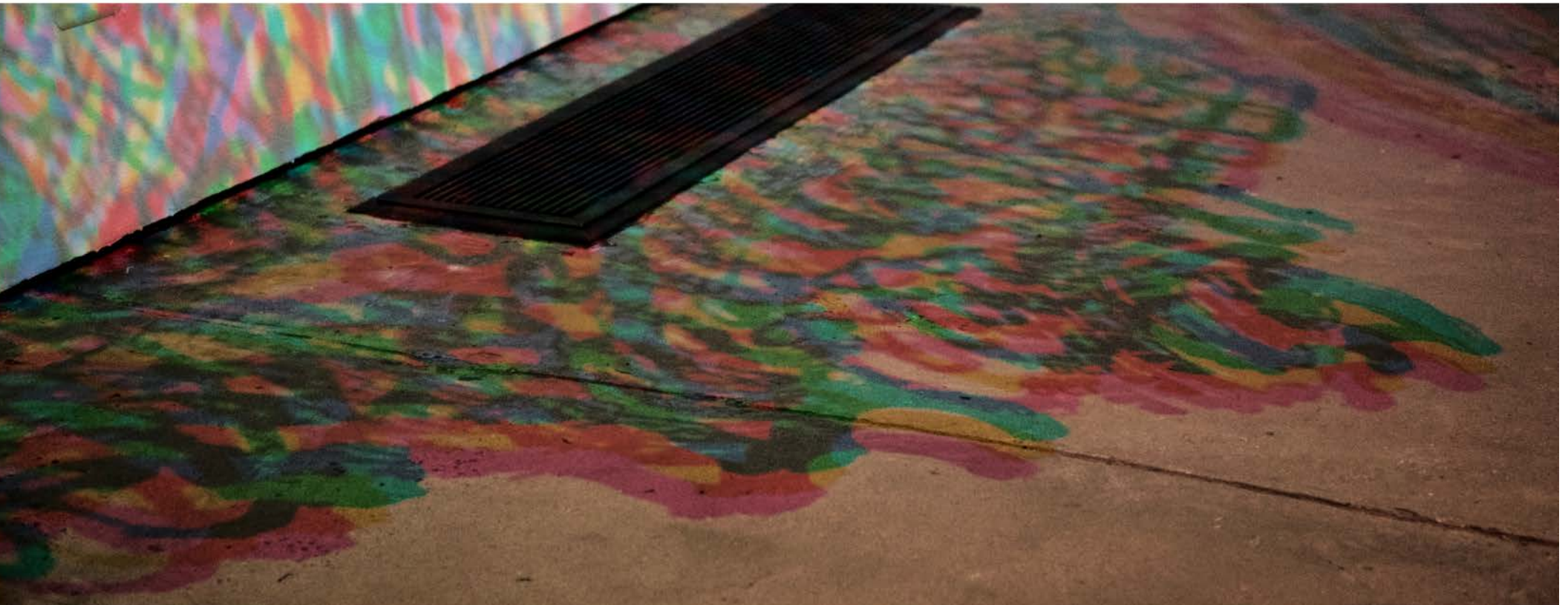
Candy Bowl Meltdown

Fiberlicious, Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery
size variable | watercolor, glitter on hand cut paper, string, 5-channel video projection, gelled lighting | 2015

Candy Bowl Meltdown is a completely immersive installation, the result of a months-long studio practice where numerous color-splashed large-scale cut-paper drawings were produced. These drawings serve as a dense skeletal structure within a body of turbulent nature projections infused by psychedelic color shifts and beset by a tinny soundscape of a child's voice and symphonic Beethoven music.

The viewer instantly becomes participant upon entering the blacked-out room with their figures cast into triads of red, green, and blue shadows byway of gelled overhead lighting. The saturated environment creates a post-disaster atmosphere of suspended belief—both welcoming and unsettling: an emergence of a newly formed, hybridized world, a crosshatching of the senses, an encapsulated art gallery synesthesia.



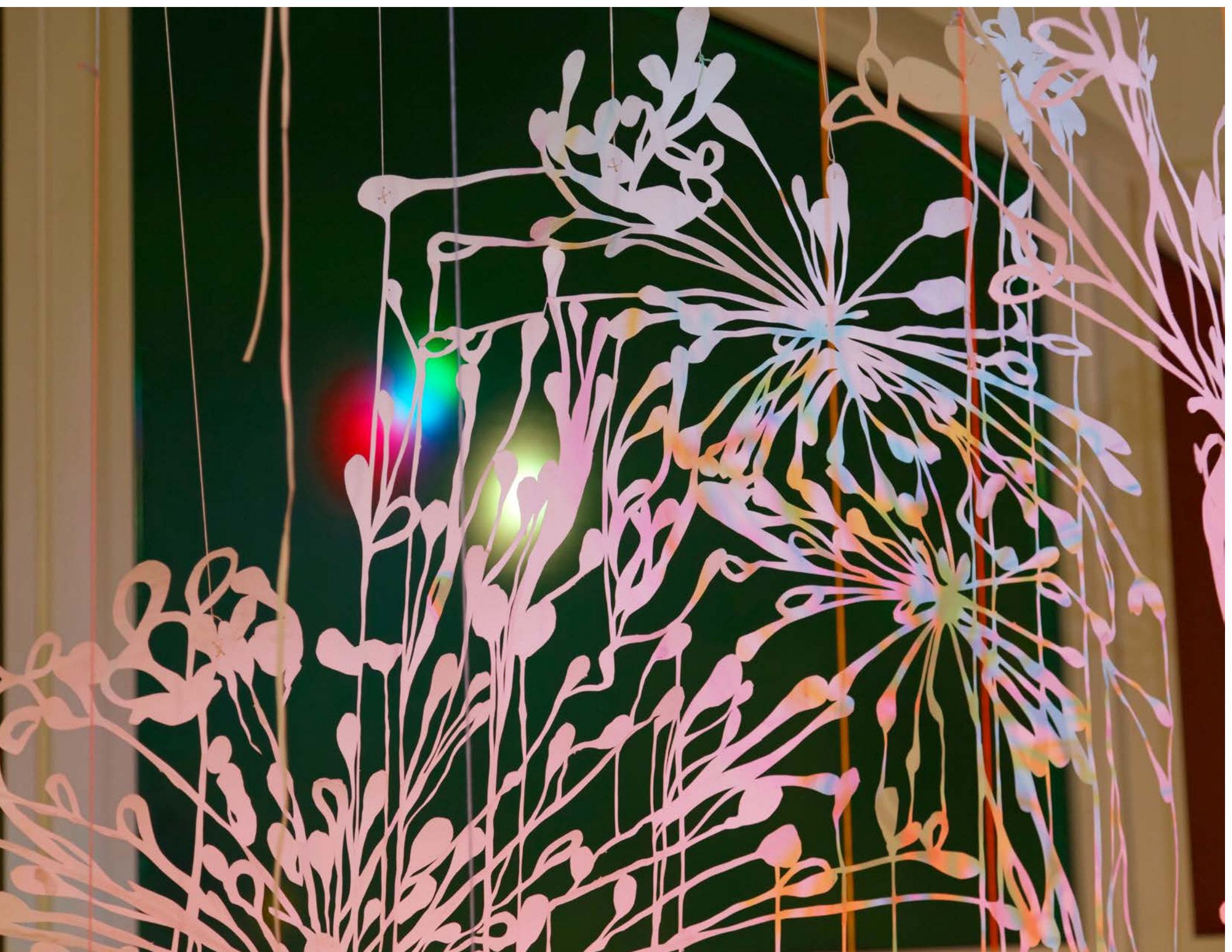


Half Light Singularity

Jolly Night at the Races, The Old Marijuana Factory
12 x 9 x 8 feet | watercolor, glitter, aluminum powder on hand cut paper, salvaged lumber, Mylar sheeting, 1500 watt Edison bulb | 2016

Half Light Singularity is the central art installation—a beacon within *Jolly Night at the Races*, an expansive art happening at an old marijuana factory in downtown Los Angeles curated by Miguel Nelson. A 1500-watt Edison bulb is the bright supernova within a pentagonal structure of large-scale cut-paper artworks suspended in-place by frames of interconnected reclaimed lumber salvaged from the site's demolition undertakings.

Like glancing toward the sun, its allure becomes both beacon and deterrent. Severe contrast between light and form reduce the painted surface of the cut paper into pure darkened silhouettes, casting its shadow-scape throughout—a Moroccan shadow lamp of Gulliverian proportions.



Between Light and Half Light

Thelma Madoff Center for the Arts, Fond du Lac, WI
size variable | watercolor, glitter, aluminum powder on hand cut paper, tape, string, color window clings | 2016

Between Light and Half Light is a delicate conglomeration of previous work from the past decade installed within a cathedral-like gallery. Most light sources were specifically manipulated by gel overlays, infusing the space with colored half-light and ambient shadows. This is an environment for all, a wistful poem to my home-state of Wisconsin.

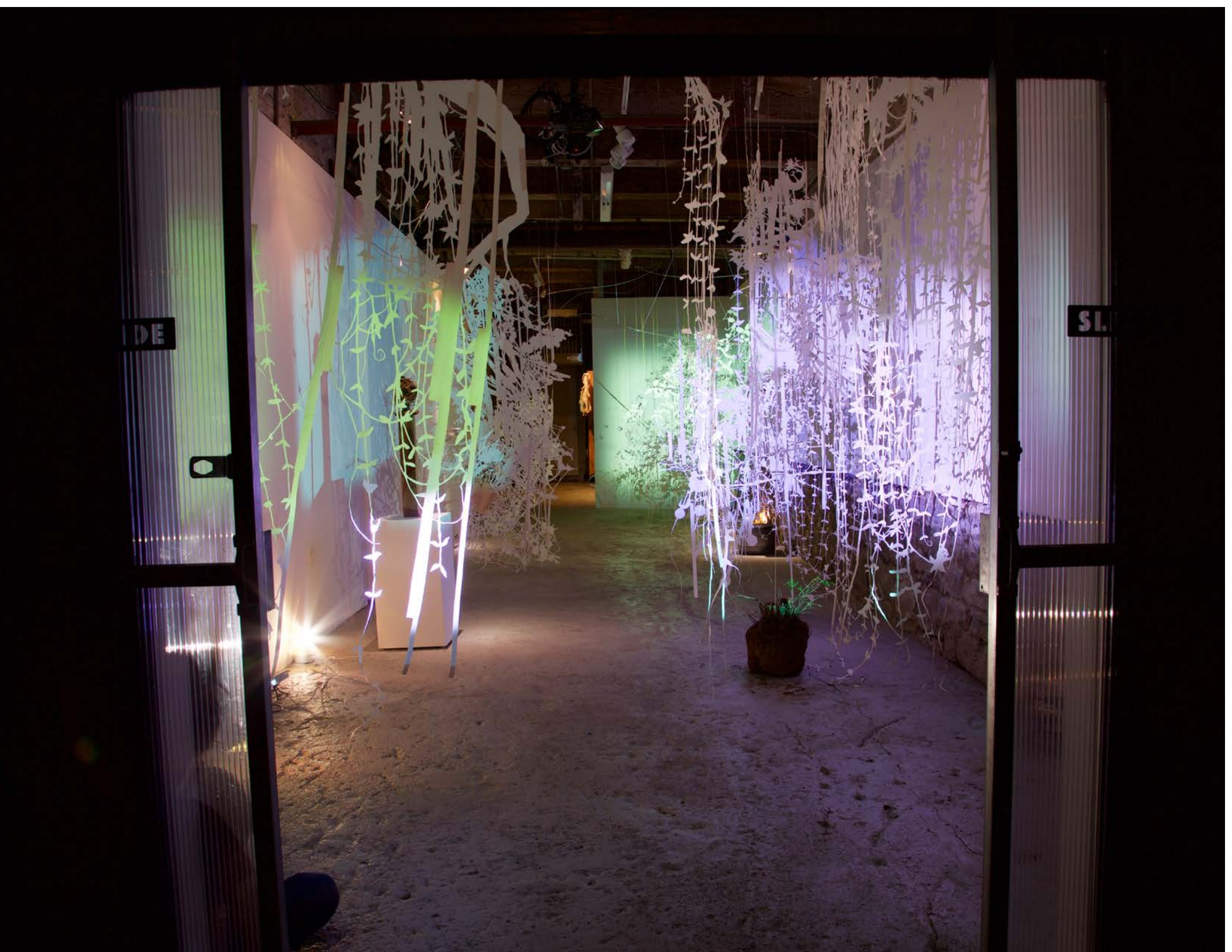
Hopefully It Will Rain

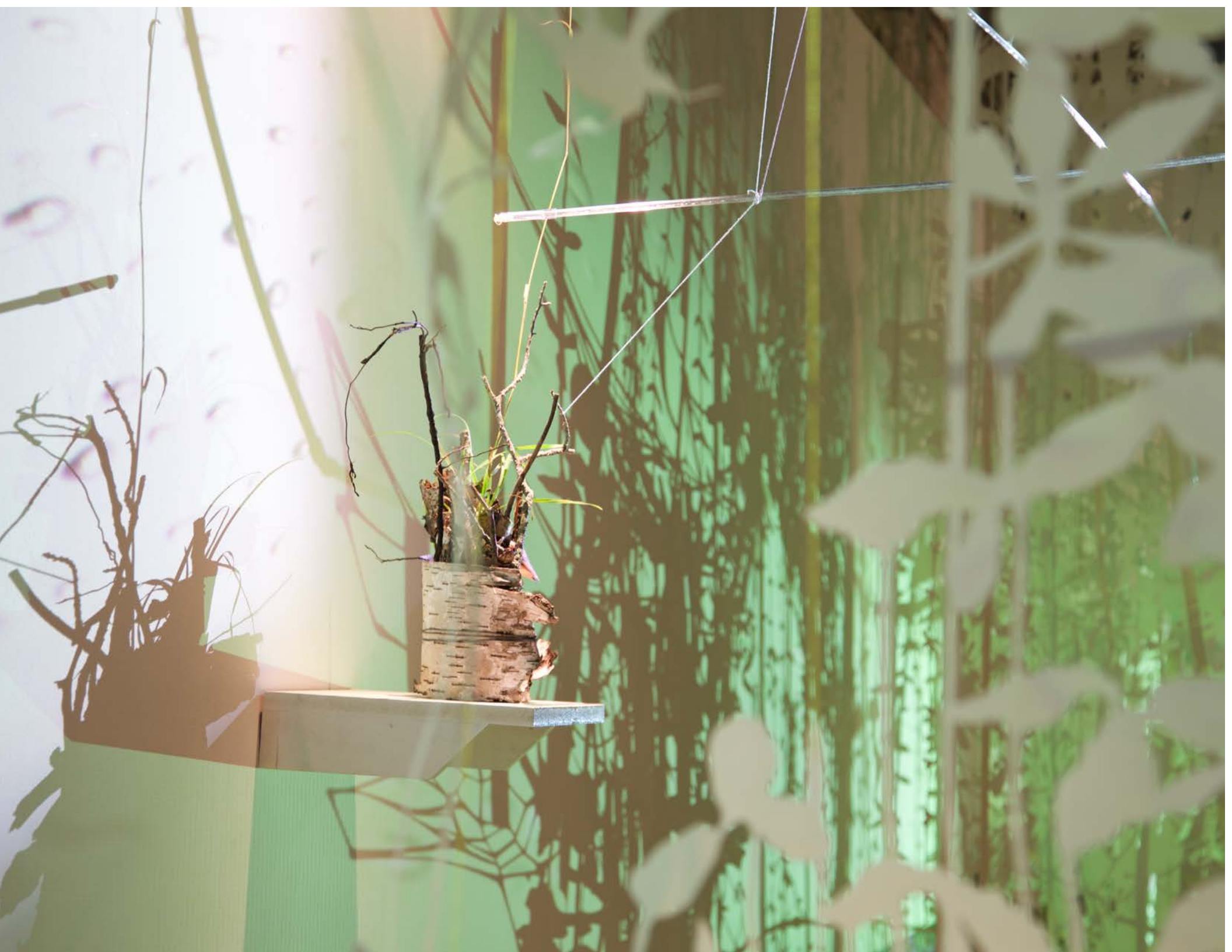
Usable Space, Milwaukee,
size variable | watercolor on hand cut paper, string, video projections, living sculptures, irrigation system | 2015

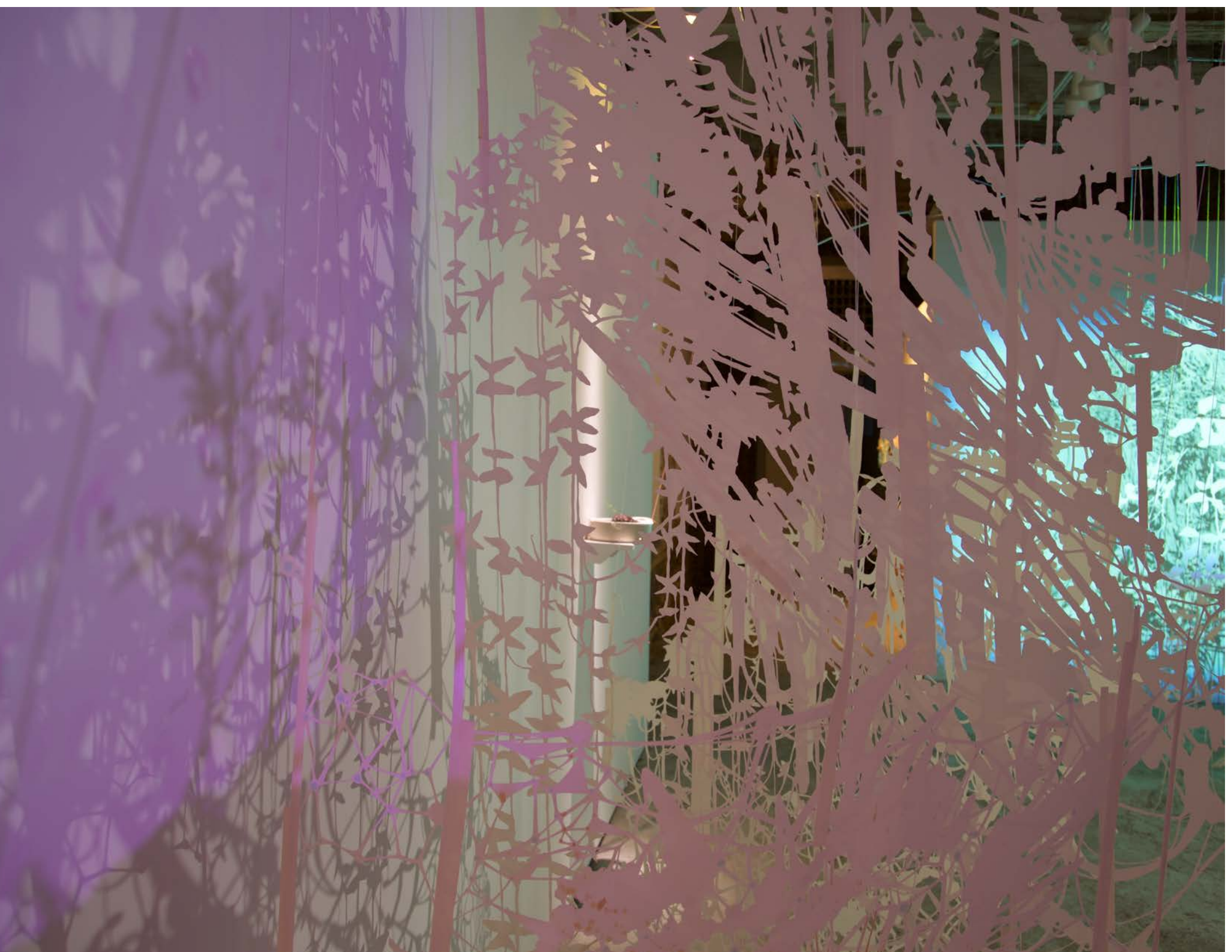
"We are our own mysteries. Is there a greater conundrum than the nature of life itself? What is it? How did it start? Where did it come from? Of all of the things we've been able to collectively cross off the list when it comes to human knowledge, including theories about the origins of the universe, we still have painfully poor answers to these fundamental questions.

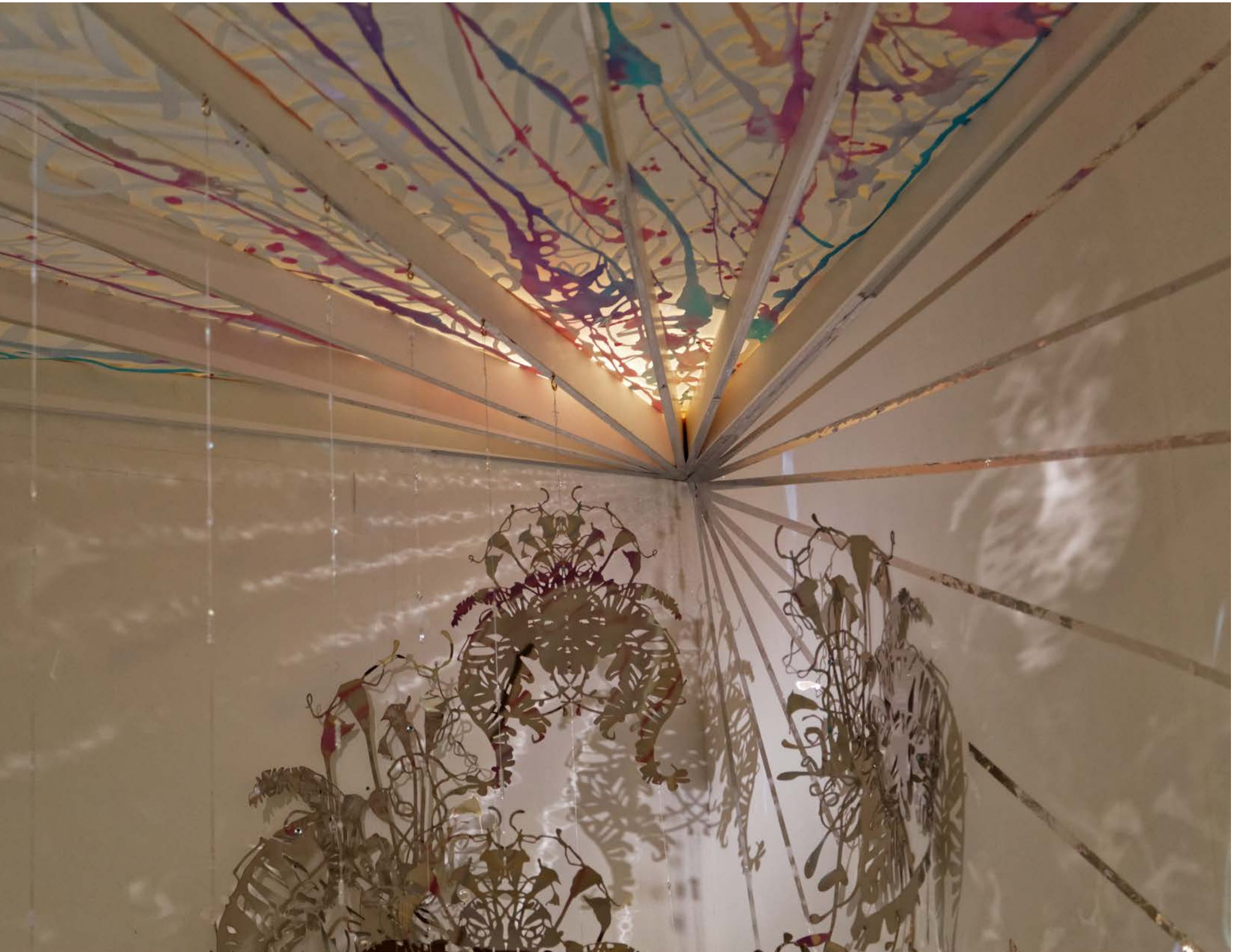
An installation by artists Greg Klassen and Chris Natrop in a Bay View warehouse, a seasonal gallery called Usable Space, isolates the questions and inspires a sense of wonder, too."

— Mary Louise Schumacher, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel's art and architecture critic





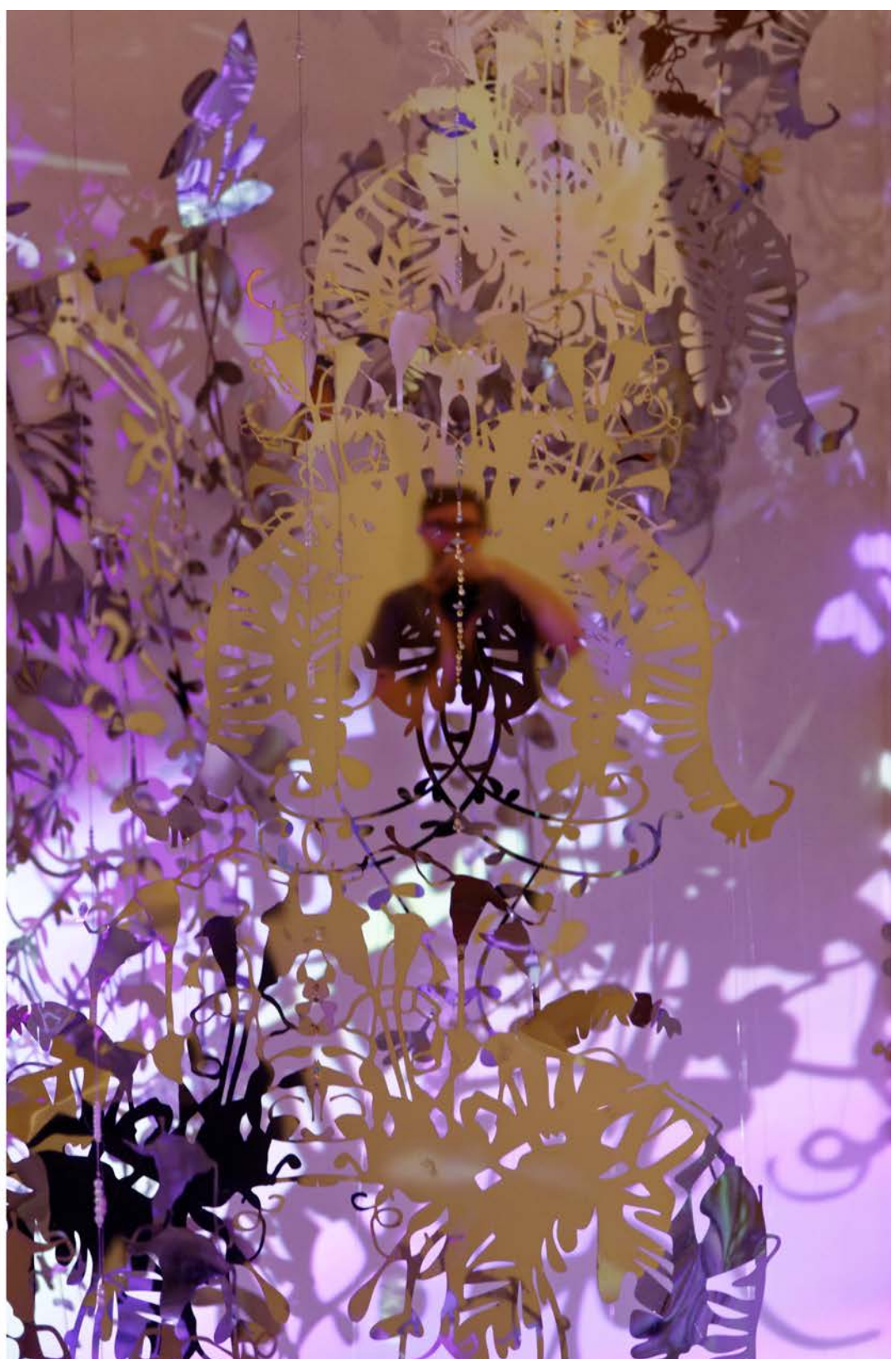


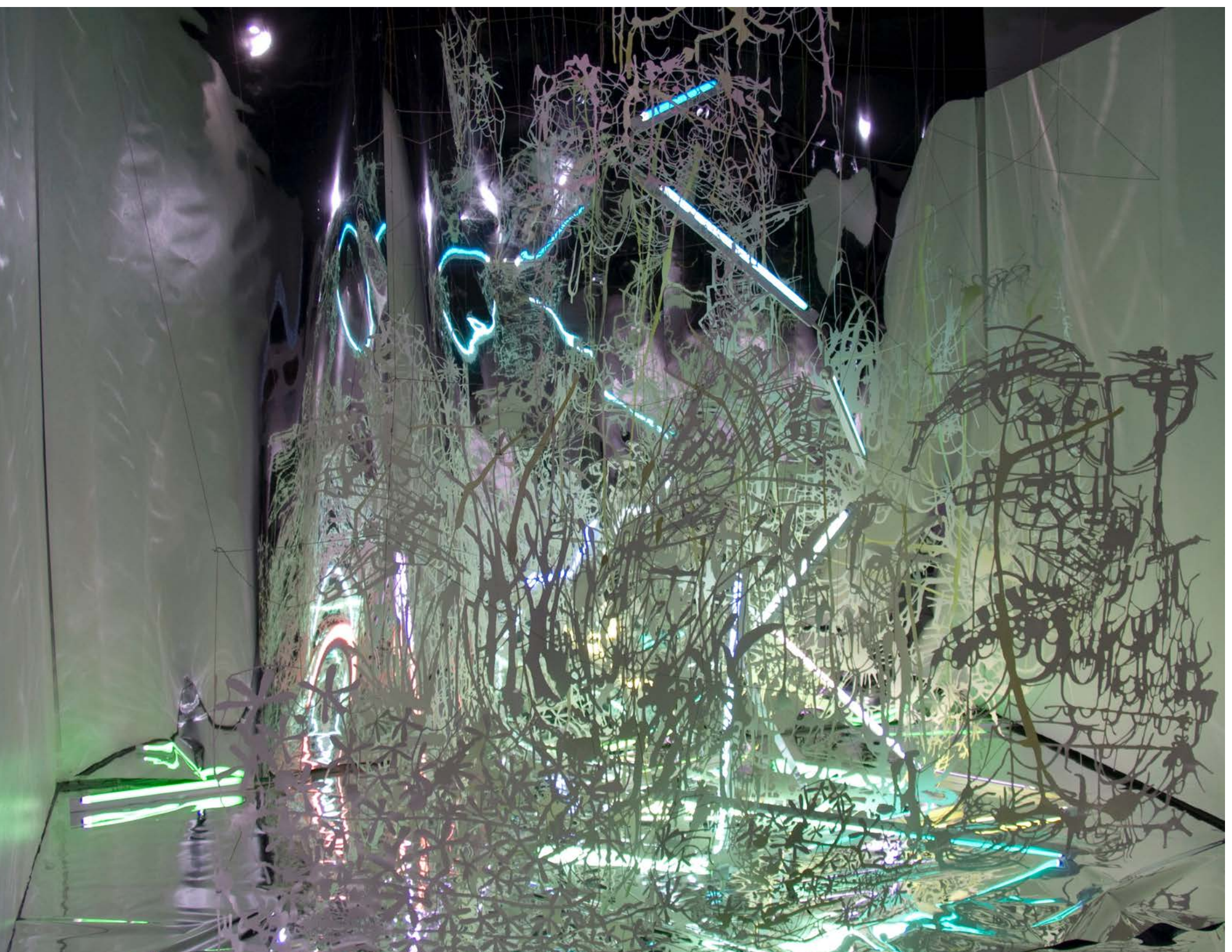


Post Sparkle Apocalypse

Prep School: Prepper & Survivalist Ideologies and Utopian/Dystopian Visions Torrance Museum of Art
108 x 96 x 120 inches | acid cut stainless steel, crystals, wood, watercolor on cut paper, mylar tape,4-channel audio/video projection | 2014

Post Sparkle Apocalypse is a concise, crystalline vision—a phantasmagorical landscape borne from the musings of a reincarnated, post-disaster landscape. Although the work is laser cut stainless steel, the graphical elements are derived from spontaneous cut-paper drawings produced in the studio—a result of a months-long studio practice where I incessantly listen to post-apocalyptic themed audiobooks while working. These intense aural narratives propel the work into a specifically-themed phase: a series based on rebirth after total destruction. This subject matter can perhaps be best described as the final stage of a regenerated post-apocalyptic ecosystem. This newly created realm is literally brought about within the color-field of overlapping projected reflections on the adjacent wall of the installation. The space itself is composed of symmetrically hanging elements of bejeweled polished stainless steel with four separate audio/video projections of colorized mouths narrating the same overlapping passages to the 1987 novel, “Swan Song” by Robert R. McCammon.

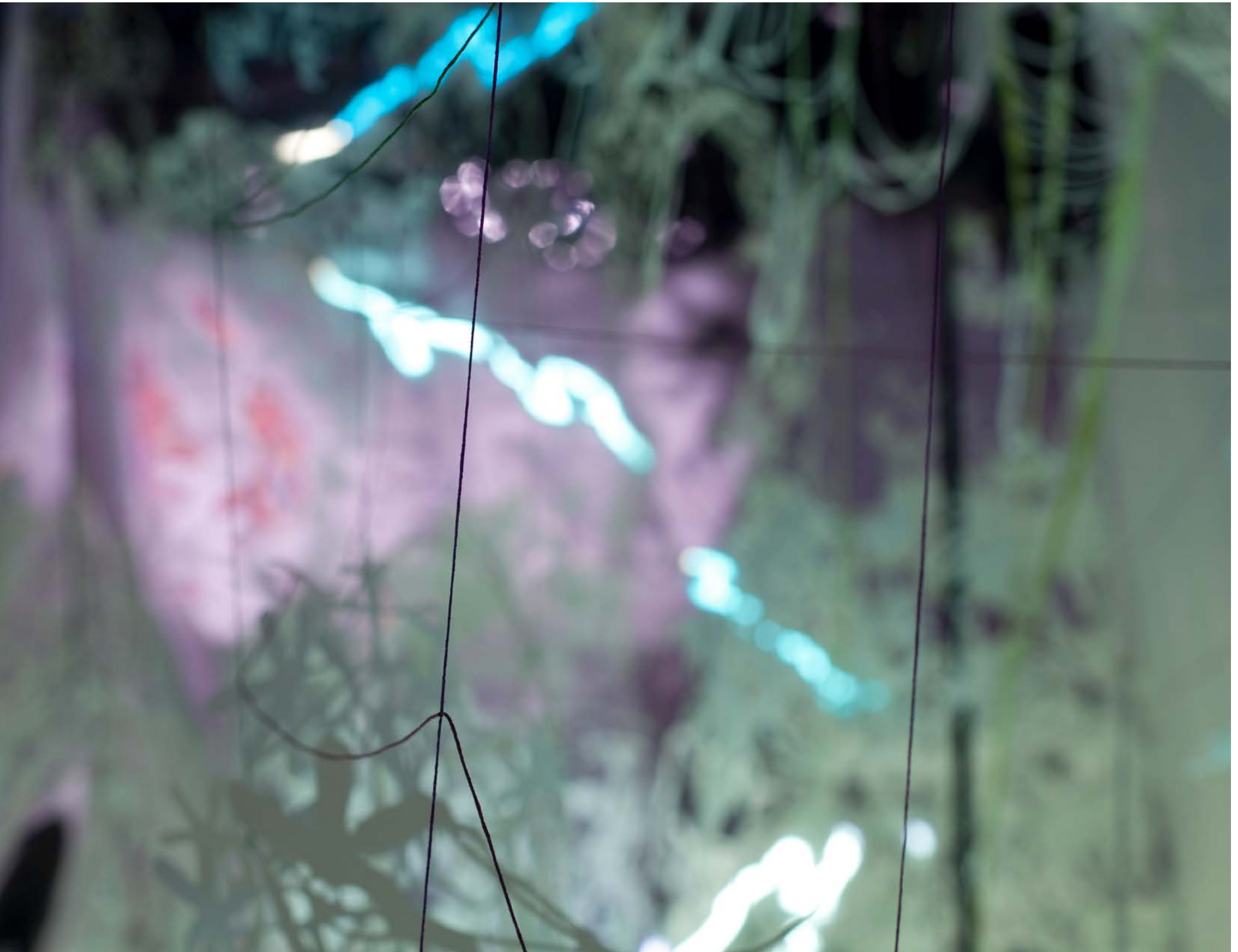




Great River Mashup Redux

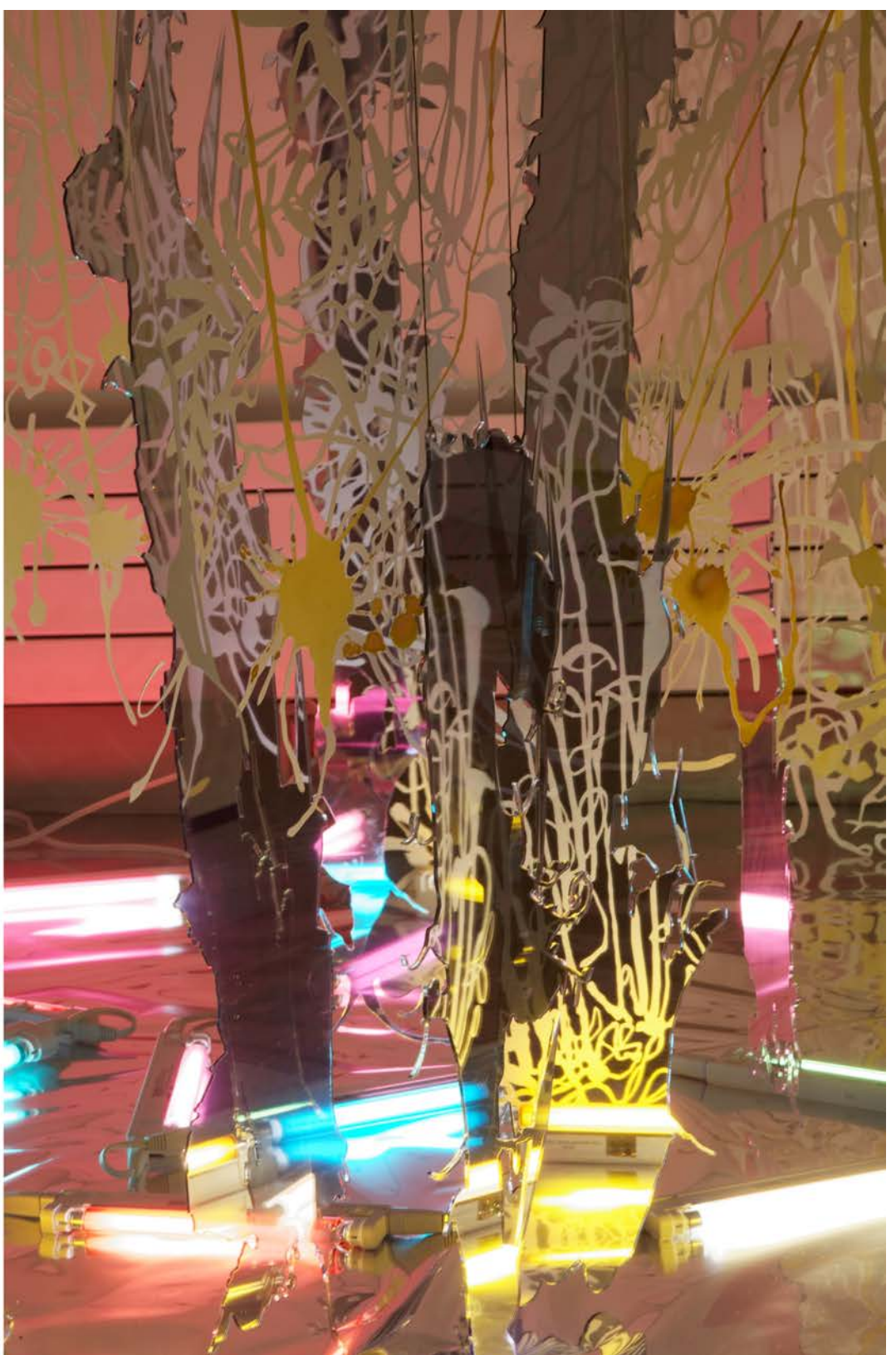
Paper Cuts, Fullerton College Art Gallery
size variable | water color, glitter and iridescent medium on cut paper, magic string, fluorescent lighting fixtures with colored gel overlays, LED light panels, reflective Mylar | 2011

This fishbowl-like installation is a condensed reforming within the *Great River Mashup* series. This version is further intensified within four walls of reflective Mylar sheeting continuously perturbed by hidden fans. The resulting maelstrom of paper silhouettes and floating fluorescent tubing project flittering glints of light in all directions like sun skipping off an eddying waterscape, specifically a fantastical retelling of the makeshift island ecosystems found within the Los Angeles River.



Solo Exhibition, UMaine Art Museum, Bangor, ME
size variable | watercolor on hand cut paper, lighting, thread | 2012

Having had just completed a year long commission for the ultra-elite Harry Winston Jewelers that required thousands of lilies to be hand cut, Natrop found his spontaneity for creating new work tainted by the omnipresent memory of the previous year's commission. Lilies began emerging in his new hand cut paper pieces. Indulging his compulsion, Natrop allowed these lily formations to flourish and meander throughout his new work. However, this time, the lilies become tempered by tangles of leafy vines and spindly armatures. These networks of white-paper silhouettes are further beset by a substructure of evaporated watercolor. These glittering gold streamers meander upwards toward the sky, providing a symbiotic attachment for the adjacent silhouettes. These large pieces of cut paper are suspended from the ceiling by colored thread. The resulting three-dimensional environment is illuminated by colored light fixtures interspersed throughout the installation allowing the multiple paper pieces to inner-relate as a unified whole.



Glitterati Swamp Thing

Salon No. 4, Works 092 - 140, Marine Art Salon, Santa Monica
14 x 10 x 3 feet | watercolor, iridescent medium on cut paper, fluorescent fixtures, color gel overlays | 2010

I was asked to design an installation piece for an elevated space within a Santa Monica home-cum-art gallery. *Glitterati Swamp Thing* is the first in a series of installations influenced by the Los Angeles River, this one becoming a delicate tangle of river vegetation, a small inlet softly glowing overhead.

Myopic Spring Tangle

Solo Exhibition, Tayler De Cordoba, Los Angeles

Myopic Spring Tangle was comprised of several interrelating, site-specific installations based on the much maligned Los Angeles River. Although urban encroachment has long overtaken the original character of the L.A. River as a natural waterway, it still contains pockets of thriving wetlands despite being restrained within the confines of a concrete aqueduct. These island wetlands are a product of mounding silt, urban detritus, and vegetative outgrowths amassed through years of seasonal flood cycles. When the rains come, the resulting water torrent contains floating refuse that becomes ensnared within the throngs of bushes, trees, and towering river grasses. When the water subsides, a tangled mixture of snarled branches and mashed-up bushes is left. To the artist, these formations become living monuments to the persistent battle between nature and urban growth. Natrop uses various landscape-based narratives, such as this, as the basis for much of his work.

Artist's Statement

My studio practice is centered on the act of cutting paper. Executed free form and exclusively with a knife, it has evolved into a stream-of-consciousness drawing technique, a meditation of repetition and reduction. Immediate cutting decisions and the intentional lack of pre-planning allows for the discovery of ambiguous silhouetted imagery that surface as interconnected landscapes.

While specific meanings vary from piece to piece, the underlying thrust of my work is based on the evolving concept of confronting a new type of landscape reborn out of a futuristic vision of an annihilated land. Although I believe the world is a glorious chance-evolution, the pressure placed on it through human intervention puts it in a precarious situation that I fear may force it to unravel. I counter my existential foreboding by offering fantastical visions of future days.

The work is cut paper drawings that either stand alone or are translated into a variety of other rigid materials. Both the original paper cutouts and fabricated objects are arranged in floor to ceiling combinations interrelating as a unified whole. The addition of directed lighting and projected motion graphics transforms these collections into immersive, multifaceted environments. Full-scale installations become complete worlds once the viewer enters the scene.

Chris Natrop

BACK COVER: Fern Space Burst (detail) | size variable | acid cut stainless steel with polished mirror finish, stainless steel wire rope and fittings | 2013

Morrison and Foerster, Aon Center 59-60 floors, Los Angeles

Myopic Spring Tangle, Taylor De Cordoba, 2010