THE NASHER

FALL 2023

TAYLOR CLEVELAND LOGEN CURE **ÁNGEL FAZ** KARLA GARCÍA **PATRICIA JOHANSON** TAMARA JOHNSON **ALICJA KWADE** MARY MISS **LYNN N. RUSHTON REED** DAVID SEARCY **SARAH SZE**

Alice Aycock (b. 1946). *Clay #2*, 1971
Clay mixed with water in wood frame
Modular, each box: 6 x 48 x 48 inches
(15 x 121.9 x 121.9 cm); overall dimensions
variable. Collection 49 Nord 6 est.
– Frac Lorraine, Metz, France
Photo: Maximilian Geuter
© Alice Aycock

Dear Friends,

Framing this issue of *The Nasher* are two exhibitions, *Groundswell: Women of Land Art*, opening in September, and *Sarah Sze*, opening in the spring. In many respects, these projects could not be more different, and those differences offer some measure of the breadth in the Nasher's program.

While *Groundswell* offers a grand survey, bringing together works by 12 artists, *Sarah Sze* hones in on a single artist's practice. *Groundswell*'s purview is historical in scope, addressing work produced in the 1960s, '70s, '80s, and '90s, contextualizing it in terms of the ideas and conditions of the time, whereas *Sarah Sze* presents an installation—produced for the occasion—by a contemporary artist. The two exhibitions offer a striking contrast in materials—the *Groundswell* artists often working with or drawing objects from the land itself, presenting organic material with a minimum of manipulation, while Sarah Sze's installations deploy a dizzying array of contemporary matter—the most humble and common household objects, the flotsam and jetsam of contemporary industrial production, the relatively advanced technology of video projectors. And while *Groundswell* represents a project of historical recuperation, shedding light on artists and a movement that deserve greater recognition, *Sarah Sze* allows a Dallas audience to experience work by one of the most recognized and honored artists of our time, while presenting that artist the opportunity to create work for the unique and distinctive spaces of the Nasher Sculpture Center.

Conceptually, too, the concerns of Sarah Sze's art may seem distant from those of the *Groundswell* artists. Working outdoors, whether in remote, rural landscapes or in urban/suburban settings, the *Groundswell* artists attended to nature and natural rhythms, exploring and revealing places and processes, and suggesting the position and the impact of humans within them. Their work does not so much abjure technology, as to suggest (if only by exclusion) its insufficiency in the face of deeper and more enduring systems and forces.

Most (though by no means all) of Sarah Sze's work is produced for interior spaces, and the dizzying array of manufactured objects contained in her installations are testament at once to human ingenuity and excess. Technology is embraced, if perhaps critiqued, in works which offer magisterial tours de force of the orchestration of mechanical moving parts and digitally captured moving images.

But as distinct as might be the experience of a recent work by Sarah Sze from one of those produced by the 12 artists of *Groundswell*, important threads of meaning and even form connect them. The work of all of these artists proposes that the experience of space and even form is not dependent upon—indeed is more important than—its delineation. And that the experience of space—exterior or interior, cosmic or microscopic—is necessarily connected to the experience of time. Indeed, time and space, mediated or not by human intervention, is a fundamental subject for *Groundswell* artists and Sarah Sze alike.

This issue of *The Nasher* offers some sense of the range of themes and ideas represented in *Groundswell* and *Sarah Sze*, as well as their resonance in the works of other artists nearby. Visitors to the museum this fall and spring will directly encounter these ideas—and many more—in the exhibitions on view, their related collection installations, as well as a wealth of programs generated for the occasion. I've no doubt that discoveries and surprises will abound, occasions for delight and for contemplation. And with that in mind, I invite you now to peruse the pages of this publication, and to visit us at the Nasher Sculpture Center in the months ahead.

Very best,

Jeremy Strick
Director

THE NASHER / FALL 2023

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ON THE COVER:
Sarah Sze (b. 1969). *The Night Sky is Dark Despite the Vast Number of Stars in the Universe* (Detail view), 2003. Acrylic, string, paracord, and wood. 176 x 180 x 41 1/2 inches (447 x 457.2 x 104.1 cm). Image courtesy of the artist. © Sarah Sze

INSIDE FRONT AND BACK COVERS:
Photos: Adrienne Lichliter-Hines

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Nasher Sculpture Center

This issue embarked on its editorial journey with aimless precision—a stream of consciousness arrangement, led by the anticipation of two upcoming exhibitions: *Groundswell: Women of Land Art*, opening this fall, and *Sarah Sze*, opening next spring. Despite a lukewarm approach to structure, clear themes bubbled up, as they always do. And while sitting in the languid, steamy Texas heat, combing through draft essays with my feet dangling in a newly installed, 8-foot stock tank pool (a gesture of survival), the sway of water was undeniable.

Bodies of water flow through these pages, and once you see it, the floodgates open: a lost stream, an extinct ocean, the humanity of a river, a bursting geyser, AI-generated poolscapes, a man-made pond, a groundswell, a fountain—hot damn, even Tamara Johnson's tape is ocean blue!

With this fresh and aqueous state of mind, one conditioned to see with blue-colored lenses, it seems our whole world is framed by the fact of water. Seventy-one percent of the earth and 60 percent of our bodies, the three-atom molecule churns life, shapes land, and carries civilizations. Every earthly thing knows it. And as I picture it rushing or meandering through existence, inevitably sopping into the next thing, I am reminded of Karla García's *La Línea Imaginaria* (page 20). Despite geographic borders, the Chihuahuan Desert, upon which her sculptures rest, resists containment.

Regardless of what themes you find—"we don't need no stinkin' categories" – David Searcy (page 24)—whether you read *The Nasher* front to back or simply flip through for pictures and headlines, I invite you to pour something over ice, watch the condensation bead, and float along.

Categorically yours,

Adrienne Lichliter-Hines
Editor in Chief
alichliter@nashersculpturecenter.org

Photo: Adrienne Lichliter-Hines

Taylor Cleveland

Taylor Cleveland is an artist driven by the fascination and curiosity of technology's effect on the human experience. Working across mediums, his work includes installation, performance, video, viral marketing, code, sound, and paint. Cleveland looks to immerse audiences within spectacles that examine, explore, and exploit ways that technological systems shape our physical, cultural, and individual environments and identities. He received a BFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and is expected to receive an MFA from Southern Methodist University in 2025. His work has been recognized internationally through various exhibitions, collaborations, and partnerships. He has worked for commercial clients including Disney, American Express, and Paramount Studios, and has recently helped win various marketing awards for this work including Webby, Clio, and Shorty Awards.

Logen Cure

Logen Cure is a queer poet and educator. She curates *Inner Moonlight*, the monthly podcast reading series for The Wild Detectives in Dallas. She's an editor for *Voicemail Poems*. She earned her MFA in creative writing from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Her debut full-length poetry collection, *Welcome to Midland* (Deep Vellum Publishing, 2021) was shortlisted for the Reading the West Book Awards.

Ángel Faz

Ángel Faz, an award-winning artist, curator, and writer from Dallas, draws inspiration from their childhood near a superfund site and the Trinity River to explore land and place. They focus on land reclamation and body autonomy, creating spaces of resistance and affirmation through relief printmaking, digital projections, and video art. Ángel's work promotes a world of justice. They've exhibited regionally and internationally, with their print *Collective Care* featured in the Library of Congress' Prints & Photographs Division Online Catalog in 2020. Recently, Ángel participated in the 2023 Changing Climate fellowship at Santa Fe Art Institute and is a member of *Nasher Public: Urban Historical Reclamation and Recognition* collective documenting and interpreting the Tenth Street Historic District Freedman's Town in Oak Cliff.

Karla García

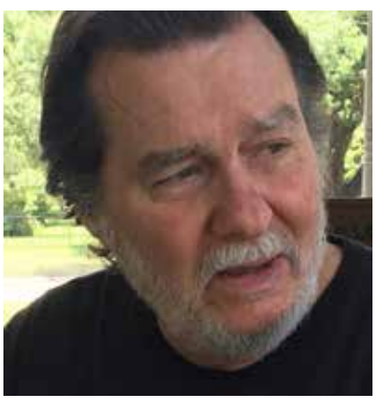
Mexican-born, American-based artist Karla García creates sculptures and installations influenced by her Mexican heritage, Mesoamerican symbols, and philosophy, as well as her life at the Texas-Mexico borderlands. She earned her MFA in ceramics from the University of North Texas in 2019. In 2021 García was an artist resident at Corsicana Artist and Writer Residency. In 2023 she participated in *Soy de Tejas: A Statewide Survey of Latinx Art* at Centro de Artes in San Antonio, and *The Range* at Gallery 12.26 in Dallas. Her solo exhibitions include the *Nasher Windows: Home and Land Project*, *I Carry This Land With Me* at Gallery 12.26, and *La Línea Imaginaria* at the binational Chamizal museums.

Tamara Johnson

Tamara Johnson is an artist, educator, and curator living in Dallas and working primarily in sculpture, installation, and public art. Johnson obtained her BFA from the University of Texas at Austin in 2007 and MFA in sculpture from the Rhode Island School of Design in 2012. Her projects have been exhibited at the Nasher Sculpture Center, the Blanton Museum of Art, Utah Museum of Contemporary Art, Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, Keijsers Koning, Socrates Sculpture Park, CUE Art Foundation, Wave Hill, and Maria Hernandez Park. In 2024, Johnson will install a solo exhibition at the St. Louis Art Museum and a commissioned public project in West Sacramento, California. Johnson has been awarded grants from the Brooklyn Arts Council, the Foundation for Contemporary Arts, The Santo Foundation, 2022 Moss/Chumley Award, and recently, a National Endowment for the Arts project grant for Sweet Pass Sculpture Park.

Lynn N. Rushton Reed

Lynn N. Rushton Reed is the art collection, conservation, and placemaking manager for the City of Dallas Office of Arts and Culture, overseeing a $100 million collection, including Fair Park's art and cultural artifacts. She is an associate producer of the documentary *Rising: The 1936 Hall of Negro Life*, airing on PBS/KERA, and an associate board member of TX-CERA, a statewide emergency response community for the cultural sector. She holds an MA in art education, and is currently writing a book on Fair Park's women artists. She is an artist, working in oil and encaustic, and lives in her native East Dallas.



David Searcy

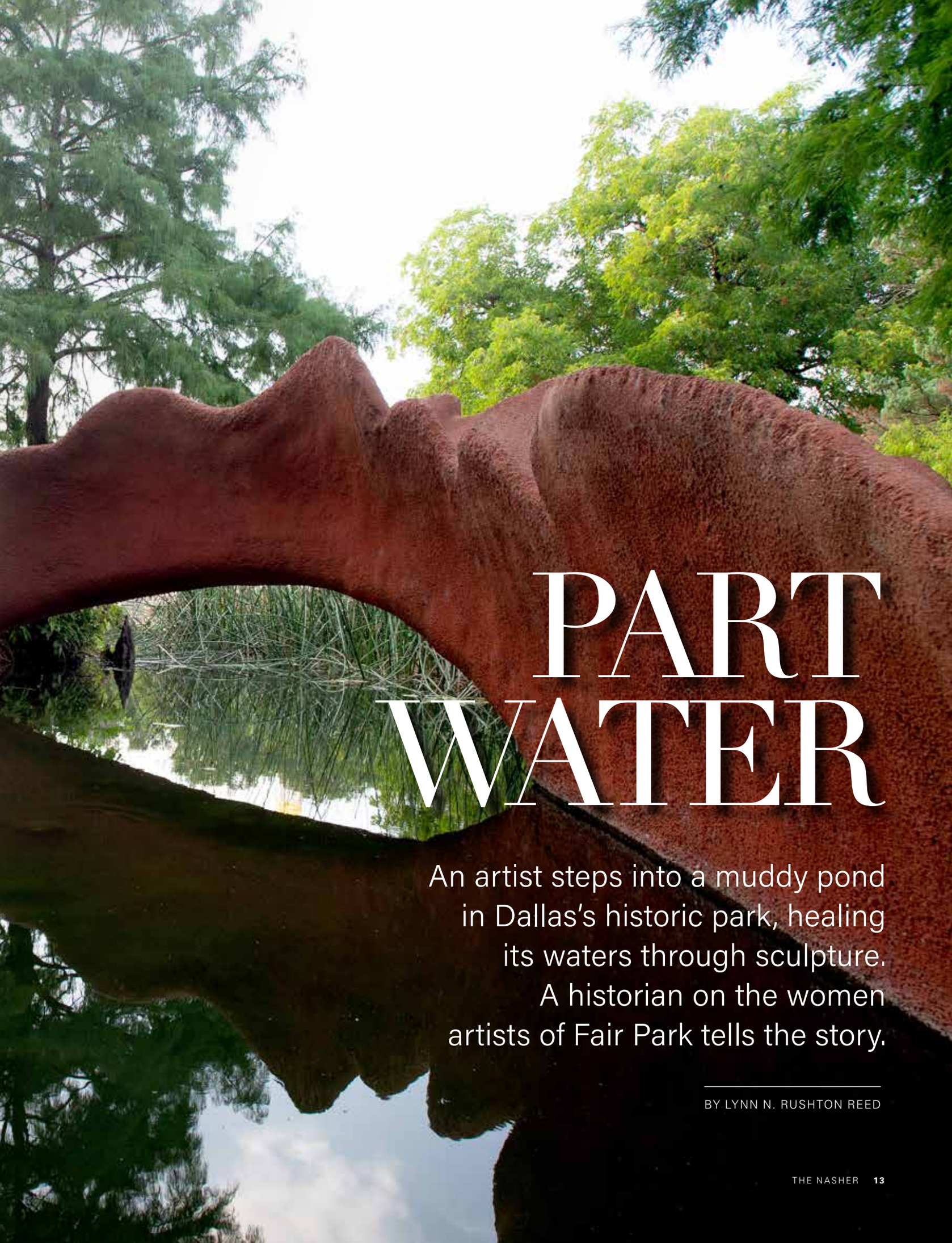
David Searcy is the author of *Ordinary Horror*, *Last Things*, *Shame and Wonder*, and *The Tiny Bee That Hovers at the Center of the World*. He is the recipient of a National Endowment for the Arts grant, and his work has appeared in *Esquire*, *The Paris Review*, *Harpers*, *Granta*, *The Oxford American*, *The New York Times*, and others. He lives in Dallas and Corsicana, Texas.

Mary Miss's studio showing notes and drawings for *Stream Trace: Dallas Branch*
New York, New York, 2023
Photo: Adrienne Lichliter-Hines

A Tale of Patricia Johanson's
Fair Park Lagoon

PART LAND,

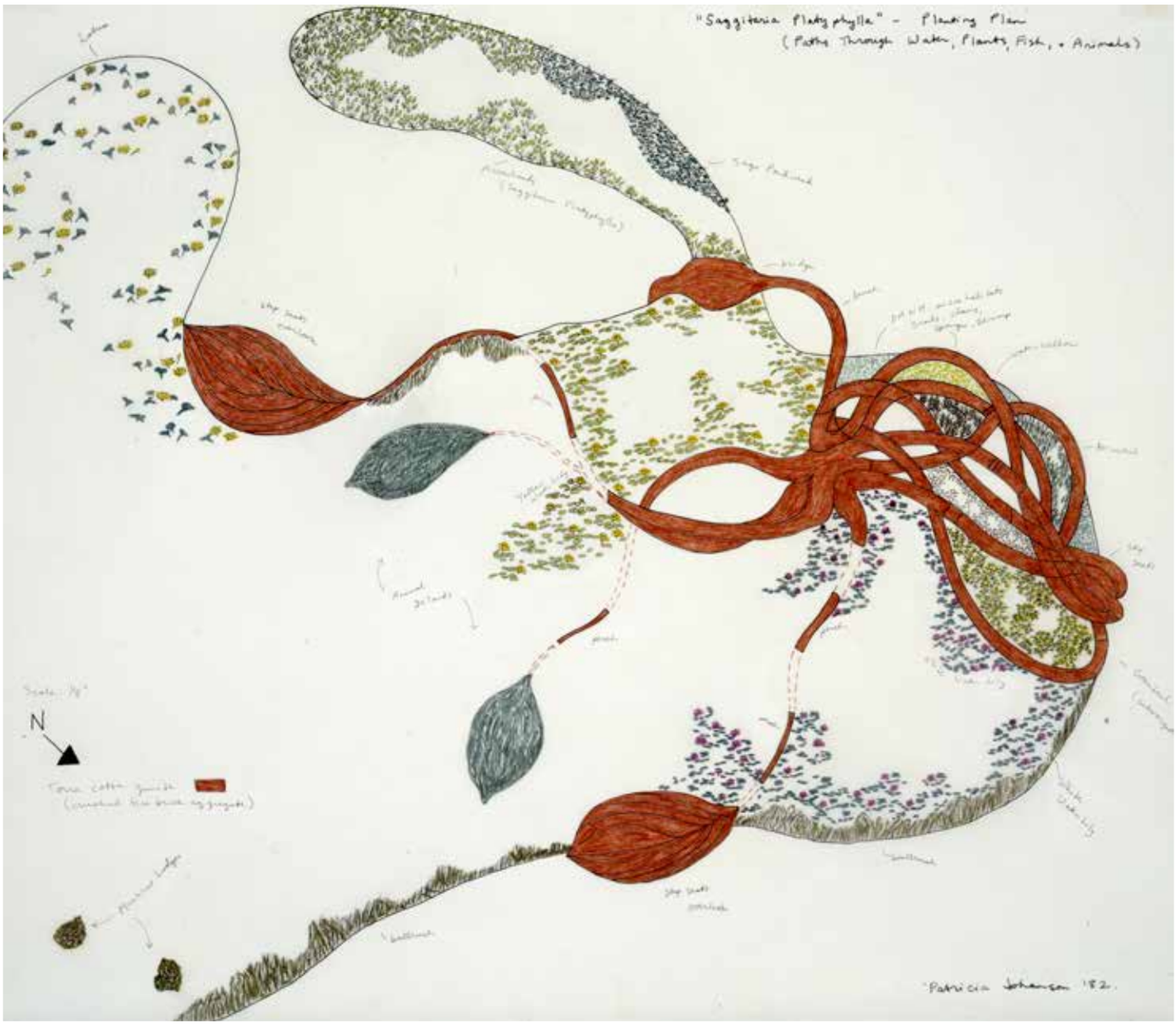
Patricia Johanson (b. 1940)
Fair Park Lagoon, 1981-86
Gunite, native plants and animal species
Funded by For the People, the Meadows Foundation, Communities Foundation of Texas, Texas Commission on the Arts, and their private and corporate donations
Permanently sited in Fair Park, Dallas, Texas
Photo: Benjamin Hines



PART WATER

An artist steps into a muddy pond in Dallas's historic park, healing its waters through sculpture. A historian on the women artists of Fair Park tells the story.

BY LYNN N. RUSHTON REED



A palimpsest is a piece of parchment on which we find multiple layers of writing—a tableau where words and meanings may be erased and written over, but the traces of those remain: some embossed, some emboldened, some wispy as ghosts. I am reminded of this concept when considering the work of Patricia Johanson, and I use it here to reference the many layers of history we find written on a pond situated in the historic Fair Park in South Dallas. It is in this historical mosaic that Johanson embarked on her monumental sculpture—*Fair Park Lagoon*.

Fair Park's lagoon, officially Leonhardt Lagoon, was created in 1936 for the Texas Centennial and World's Fair. In the original design, the lagoon belonged to a series of water features that visually connected different parts of the fairgrounds, featuring a row of waterspouts in a large reflecting pool with a narrow

TOP: Patricia Johanson (b. 1940). *Saggitaria Platyphylla – Planting Plan*, 1982. Conte crayon, ink, and pastel. 30 x 36 inches. Image courtesy of Nathaniel Goossen. ABOVE: *Patricia Johanson's Drawings and Models for Environmental Projects*, 1969-1986, July 6 - September 15, 1987. Image courtesy of Dallas Museum of Art Archives

TOP: Patricia Johanson (b. 1940). *Fair Park Lagoon*, 1981-86. Gunite, native plants and animal species. Funded by For the People, the Meadows Foundation, Communities Foundation of Texas, Texas Commission on the Arts, and their private and corporate donations. Permanently sited in Fair Park, Dallas, Texas. Photo: Adrienne Lichliter-Hines. ABOVE: A '36 Ford Convertible Sedan crossing the bridge over the lagoon, 1936. From the collections of the Dallas History & Archives Division, Dallas Public Library

green verge. Functionally, having been built over lowlands and creeks, it served as a drainage basin, but it was designed as an attraction with a colored light show and a fountain. It was an architectural spectacle with Texas flamboyance.

In the 45 years following the Texas Centennial, however, the lagoon's landscape changed. The original conception of the lagoon imagined it as an Art Deco reflecting pool devoid of organic life. But over the years its banks collapsed, and it became a muddy, overgrown pond, choked with algae.

By 1980, the Dallas Museum of Fine Art (DMFA, now the Dallas Museum of Art) was planning to move from Fair Park to its current location on Harwood Street and wanted to leave a gift. At the same time, the Dallas Museum of Natural History wanted to develop a project rooted in ecology that would reclaim the lagoon's natural

environment and increase biodiversity. Opportunity and creativity dovetailed into a public sculpture grounded in the environment.

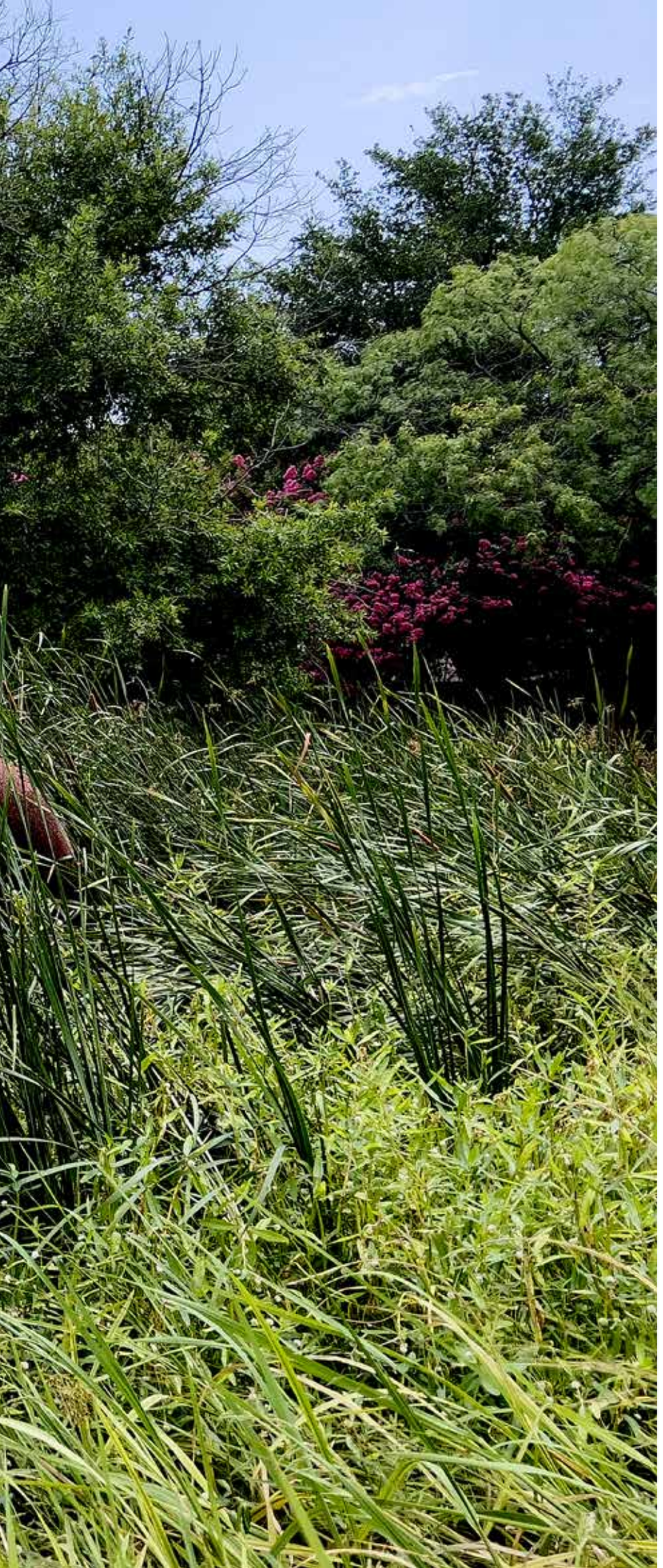
When Johanson first visited Fair Park in 1981, she perceived the lagoon as an obstruction. Rather than connecting the park's features, it separated them, forcing people to walk around the large pond to get from one building to the next. She began to consider both how to frame the lagoon and how to make that frame enhance and protect the site's ecological balance.

She looked to the abundant plant life that thrived along many US waterways and chose two: the delta duck-potato (*Sagitarria platyphylla*), an edible herb commonly known as duckweed whose tubers are a favorite food source for ducks, and the spider brake fern (*Pteris multifida*) whose thin, spiky leaves provide habitat. In her preparatory drawings, seen from above, Johanson clearly defines the tendrils of the fern and the movement of the duckweed as they shape the edges of the land and water.

In 1982, the DMFA exhibited *Patricia Johanson: A Project for the Fair Park Lagoon*, displaying her plans and drawings as a fundraiser for the project. In the DMFA's press release they described Johanson's proposal for an "outdoor sculpture which would restore a functional aquatic and biological community to the lagoon" and "[provide] a living natural history exhibit as well as a contemporary sculpture garden." The scheme was successful and, in 1981, Johanson began her first piece of Land art. It took five years to complete.

She installed two superstructures, both constructed of gunite—a sprayed concrete—over an iron mesh. At the north end of the lagoon, she placed a 225-by-112-foot fernlike sculpture. At the south end, she placed its pendant, a 235-by-175-foot series of duckweed leaves.

TOP: Clyde Giltner Chandler (b. 1879). *Gulf Clouds,* 1916. Bronze and grey granite, 144 x 420 inches (355.6 x 1,066.8 cm). Image courtesy of Fair Park First. FAR LEFT: Dorothy Austin (b. 1911). Doors representing the flora of Texas, 1936. Bronze and aluminum, 171 x 71 x 4 inches (434.4 x 180.3 x 10 cm). 1936 Texas Centennial Exposition. Image courtesy of Fair Park First. LEFT: Madelyn Miller (b. 1907). Doors representing the symbols of various arts, 1936. Bronze and aluminum. 1936 Texas Centennial Exposition. Image courtesy of Fair Park First. RIGHT: Patricia Johanson (b. 1940). *Fair Park Lagoon*, 1981-86. Gunite, native plants and animal species. Funded by For the People, the Meadows Foundation, Communities Foundation of Texas, Texas Commission on the Arts, and their private and corporate donations. Permanently sited in Fair Park, Dallas, Texas. Photo: Benjamin Hines



She chose a terracotta color to contrast the green waters and completed the sculpture in 1986. The works were amphibian, living in the water, but reaching up onto the banks to form seating. A weed became a bridge, and a fern became a turtle crossing.

Johanson at Fair Park not only reinterpreted an environment, but she also joined the ranks of women artists who shaped Fair Park's landscape as early as the 1910s. In *Gulf Clouds*, a 1912 State Fair commission, Clyde Giltner Chandler uses environmental allegory in a large bronze sculpture. Constructed as a fountain, three female figures symbolize the Texas prairies, mountains, and coast. Sheltering them with angelic wings is a fourth figure, symbolizing the winds and rain of the gulf clouds. At the base, Chandler crafted a frieze of Texas fruits and vegetables. Also in the park are bronze, bas-relief screens made by Dorothy Austin and Madelyn Miller in 1936. Miller's screens symbolized the arts through figures of ancient crafts people, while Austin's screen rendered native Texas flora and fauna. Side by side, they hung on the doors to the Dallas Museum of Fine Art, now the visitor center, facing the lagoon. The works of these women artists created a backdrop for Johanson's engagement with the lagoon environment.

Johanson's *Fair Park Lagoon* unites art and science—a monumental sculpture that interacts with and supports the natural world. The biomorphic forms control erosion and create habitats: structures that offer places for turtles to sun or fish to hide. Cypress trees and reeds along the form's edges create shelter for migrating and nesting birds. The undulating bridges and abstracted ferns established a system for plant life to grow and for people to observe and explore. Rather than dominating the landscape, the sculpture marries itself with the land, fostering the ecosystem it was designed to support.

Like a palimpsest, then, *Fair Park Lagoon* overlays many layers: a drainage basin, a reflecting pool, a public attraction, a bridge connecting people and nature, a sculpture, and a science project. Johanson's work unfurls and merges into its environment as if it grew from the waters and root systems it sits within. Thirty-seven years after its completion, among the turtles, minnows, moss, and murky water, it beckons us to reflect, to climb, to learn, to play and, ultimately, to grow alongside the environment it supports.

Johanson's Fair Park Lagoon *is an offsite inclusion in* Groundswell: Women of Land Art, *allowing audiences to experience Land art in the community.*

Patricia Johanson (b. 1940). *Fair Park Lagoon*, 1981-86. Gunite, native plants and animal species. Funded by For the People, the Meadows Foundation, Communities Foundation of Texas, Texas Commission on the Arts, and their private and corporate donations. Permanently sited in Fair Park, Dallas, Texas. Photo: Adrienne Lichliter-Hines

The Nasher's conservator turns to the July sun to rid unwanted organisms from the sculptural materials used in *Groundswell: Women of Land Art*

OUTSIDE IN

BY CLAIRE TAGGART

Nancy Holt (1938–2014). *Pipeline,* 1986. Visual Arts Center of Alaska, Anchorage [permanently closed, 1992]. Steel, oil. Overall dimensions: 30 x 32 x 15 ft. (9.1 x 9.8 x 4.6 m) (indoor section); 26 x 15 x 6 ft. (7.9 x 4.6 x 1.8 m) (outdoor section #1); 10 x 31 x 18 ft. (3 x 9.5 x 5.5 m) (outdoor section #2). © 2023 Holt/Smithson Foundation / Licensed by Artists Rights Society, New York

When planning for an exhibition that brings living—or recently living—materials into gallery spaces, there are preventive steps conservators must take to ensure certain elements of nature are not unwittingly let into the museum.

The artworks featured in *Groundswell: Women of Land Art* have given us the opportunity to employ long-practiced methods while also requiring head-scratching team planning. Confirming the weight capacity of our floors before installing heavy works composed of earth is an example of applying known fundamentals, while controlling the seemingly uncontrolled drip of oil seeping from Nancy Holt's *Pipeline* (1986) took some imagination.

In the months leading up to installation, those of us involved in facilitating the tangibles of an exhibition have been working through exciting puzzles. In many instances, this has been in the re-creation of ephemeral artworks that bring the land inside.

The ecosystems in which land artworks have been conceived rely on thriving flora, fauna, and funga, but we of course cannot invite wood-boring beetles or mold spores into the building. How we weed out invasive elements from complex artworks is nuanced and imperfect, but necessary for the safety of other artworks in the building.

The steps taken when bringing wood (and other organic materials like wool, silk, leather, and bone) into the building include risk assessment, treatment for insects, and inspection for possible biological overgrowth. While it's true that many wood-based artworks at the Nasher go through this process, artworks composed of industrially prepared wood—plywood and other lumber, for example—are pretreated and therefore aren't prone to infestation.

Methods for treating materials usually employ extremes that can cause damage to complex compositions. The most material-friendly (but often cost-prohibitive) pest treatment method is anoxia, or the removal of oxygen from a sealed environment. The most common method is freezing. While less expensive and more accessible, freezing carries risks like moisture build-up unless using a high-quality system. Finally, the least popular method for pest eradication within artwork is through high temperature exposure. This is less common because damage can occur when naturally hydrophilic wood loses moisture quickly and contracts multidirectionally. This can cause wood to split and crack; extreme heat can also damage other materials used in a complex composition.

Sourcing materials to re-create Maren Hassinger's *Blanket of Branches*, originally made in 1986, was a

delightfully local process; branches were initially set aside by the Nasher's facilities team after tree maintenance in the sculpture garden. Using freshly sourced materials meant considering the precautions mentioned above. However, because the collected branches were needed only temporarily for an installation, I considered broader methods to ensure the branches were pest-free.

In a presentation I attended at a recent conference, a conservator smartly explored "baking" wood materials she had sourced for a similar, temporary artwork. Wrapped in black plastic, the materials inside of the package crept over 100˚F sitting in the sun—in Pittsburgh. When compared to the two weeks needed when freezing materials, just a few minutes at 120˚F can eradicate wood-boring insects like beetles, carpenter ants, and termites. In Dallas we can easily reach this temperature within personal vehicles. By bagging our branches and setting them in the sun, we can quickly treat the large amount needed for this expansive artwork.

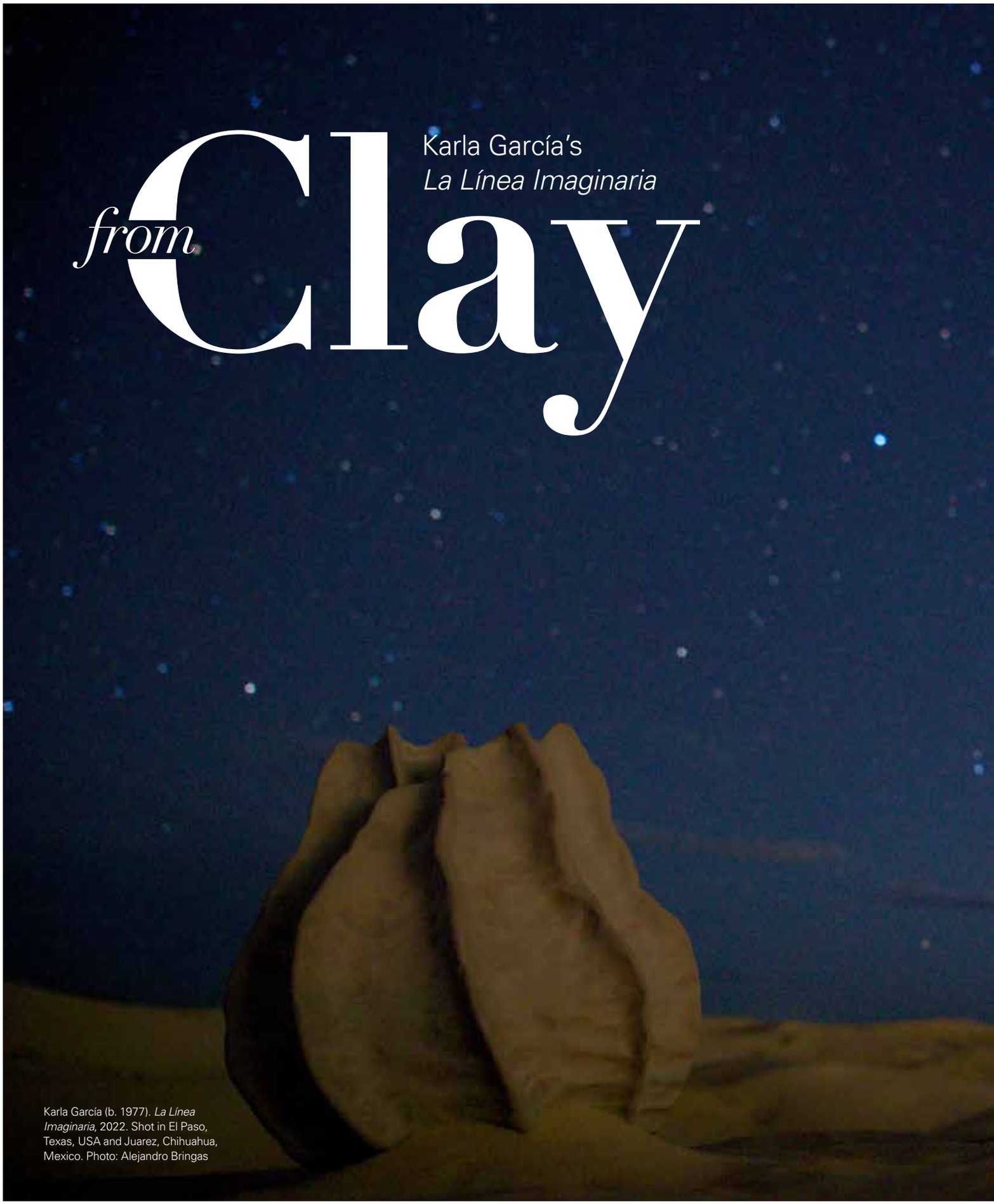
I never would have guessed that the Dallas heat could be a welcome tool in my arsenal, nor that I would be anticipating hot summer days for artwork preparation outside.

Editor's note: As an extra precaution, the Dallas Museum of Art let us freeze the sticks in their walk-in freezer.

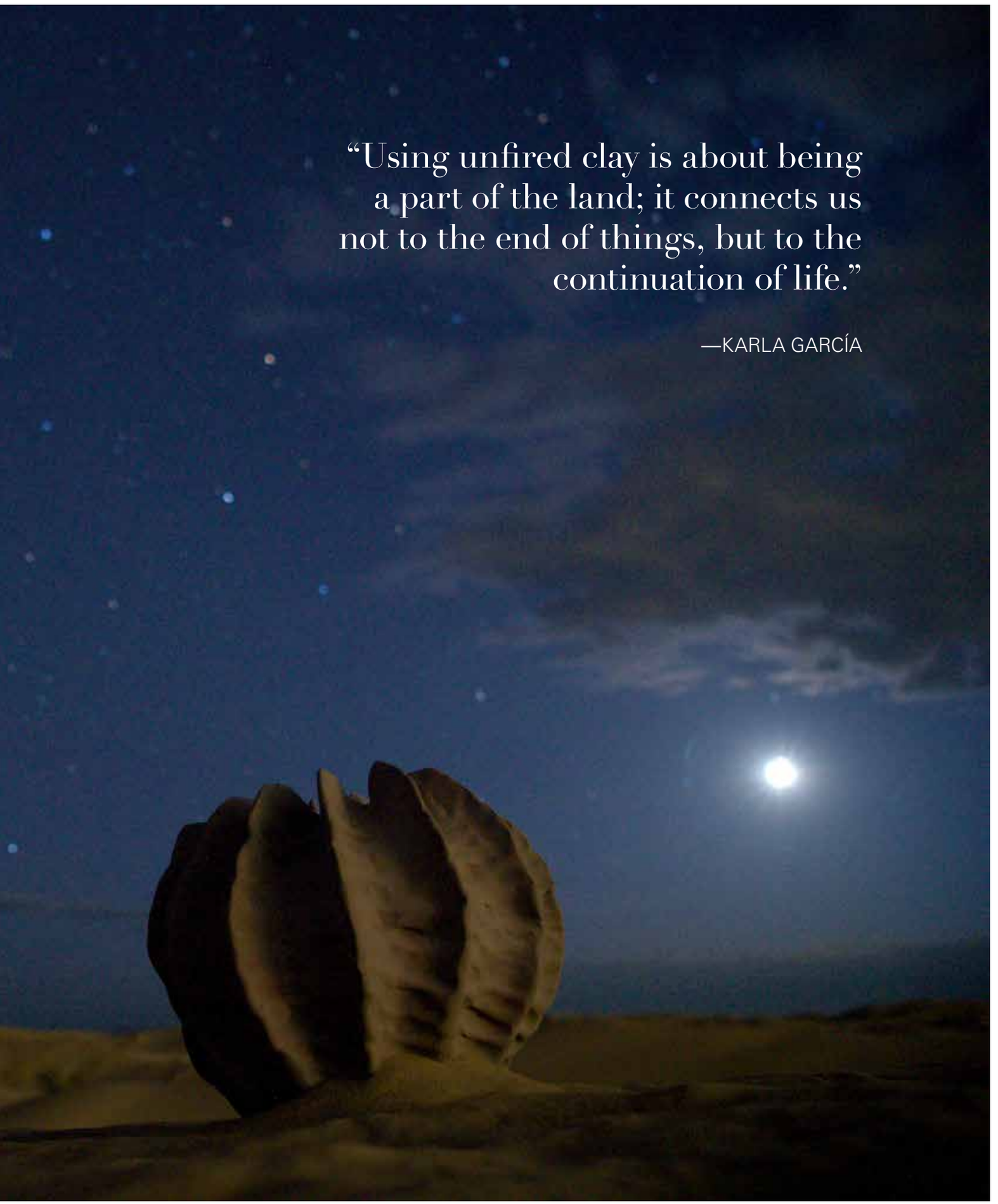
TOP: Photo of collected sticks that were found unusable due to the presence of termites. Photo: Adrienne Lichliter-Hines. LEFT: Photos of branches collected and stored for Maren Hassinger's *Blanket of Branches* (1986). Photos: Adrienne Lichliter-Hines

from Clay

Karla García's *La Línea Imaginaria*



Karla García (b. 1977). *La Línea Imaginaria*, 2022. Shot in El Paso, Texas, USA and Juarez, Chihuahua, Mexico. Photo: Alejandro Bringas



“Using unfired clay is about being a part of the land; it connects us not to the end of things, but to the continuation of life.”

—KARLA GARCÍA

A Nasher museum guide contemplates Karla García's *La Línea Imaginaria*

BY EMMA S. AHMAD

Amid the sultry August heat, Karla García journeyed back and forth across the US-Mexico border, a pilgrimage that is not at all uncommon for those who live on the borderlands. But on this occasion, she was installing her latest binational exhibition, a site-specific installation which stretched along the border wall separating the sister cities of El Paso, Texas, and Juarez, Chihuahua, Mexico.

An alchemist at her craft, García's material of choice is raw terracotta clay. With bare hands, she molds, pinches, and guides the clay to its next form: sculptures of cactus. These cacti sculptures were then carefully placed among the indigenous flora of the desert terrain, paying homage to the cultural history of the land and the people who inhabited it.

The 30-foot-tall border wall physically draws a harsh line through the sublime Chihuahuan Desert, cutting through a sensitive and biodiverse ecosystem. Even so, the land remains whole, just as it always was. García tenderly underlines this unity by using her sculptures to connect the seemingly divided spaces.

Without their protective spines, the cacti are left hollow and exposed—but perhaps that embodies the very nature of ephemeral art. As weeks turn into months, the faux cacti morph into their environment. And as each indentation in the clay captures the shape of García's palms and fingertips she, too, becomes part of the desert landscape for that brief, transient moment.

Karla García (b. 1977). *La Línea Imaginaria,* 2022. Shot in El Paso, Texas, USA and Juarez, Chihuahua, Mexico. Photo: Alejandro Bringas

Un guía de museo del Nasher contempla *La Línea Imaginaria* de Karla García

DE EMMA S. AHMAD
TRADUCCIÓN DE GUSTAVO CARVAJAL

En el calor sofocante de agosto, Karla García realizó el viaje de ida y vuelta a través de la frontera entre México y los Estados Unidos, un peregrinaje que no resulta nada extraño para quienes habitan la zona de frontera. Sin embargo, en esta ocasión, se encontraba allí instalando su más reciente exhibición binacional, una instalación específica para el sitio, la cual se extiende a lo largo del muro fronterizo que separa las ciudades hermanas del Paso, Texas y Ciudad Juárez en Chihuahua, México.

Una alquimista en su oficio, García ha escogido arcilla de terracota cruda como su material de trabajo. Con sus propias manos ella moldea, pellizca y guía la arcilla hasta que alcanza su nueva forma: el cactus. Estas esculturas de cactus fueron cuidadosamente colocadas entre la flora nativa del terreno desértico, rindiendo homenaje a la historia cultural de la tierra y las personas que la habitaron.

El muro de treinta pies de alto que divide la frontera, traza una severa línea física a lo largo del sublime desierto de Chihuahua, cortando en medio de un ecosistema sensible y biodiverso. A pesar de ello la tierra se mantiene unida, como siempre lo ha estado. García resalta con afecto esta unidad utilizando sus esculturas para conectar los dos espacios aparentemente divididos.

Desprovistos de sus espinas protectoras, los cactus son dejados allí, huecos y expuestos, acaso encarnando la naturaleza misma del arte efímero. En cuanto las semanas se convierten en meses, los cactus artificiales se mezclan con el ambiente y se incorporan a él. Y dado que cada hendidura en la arcilla captura la forma de las palmas y las yemas de los dedos de García, ella también se vuelve parte del paisaje desértico durante ese momento breve y pasajero.

Karla García (b. 1977). *La Línea Imaginaria*, 2022. Fotografiado en El Paso, Texas, USA and Juarez, Chihuahua, Mexico. Foto: Alejandro Bringas

LISTEN HERE...

Scan this QR code to hear David Searcy read his essay.

THE BURIED STREAM *within us*

Beneath the concrete, flirting with the sewage, and out into where a river once was, Mary Miss asks us to imagine a running stream.

BY DAVID SEARCY

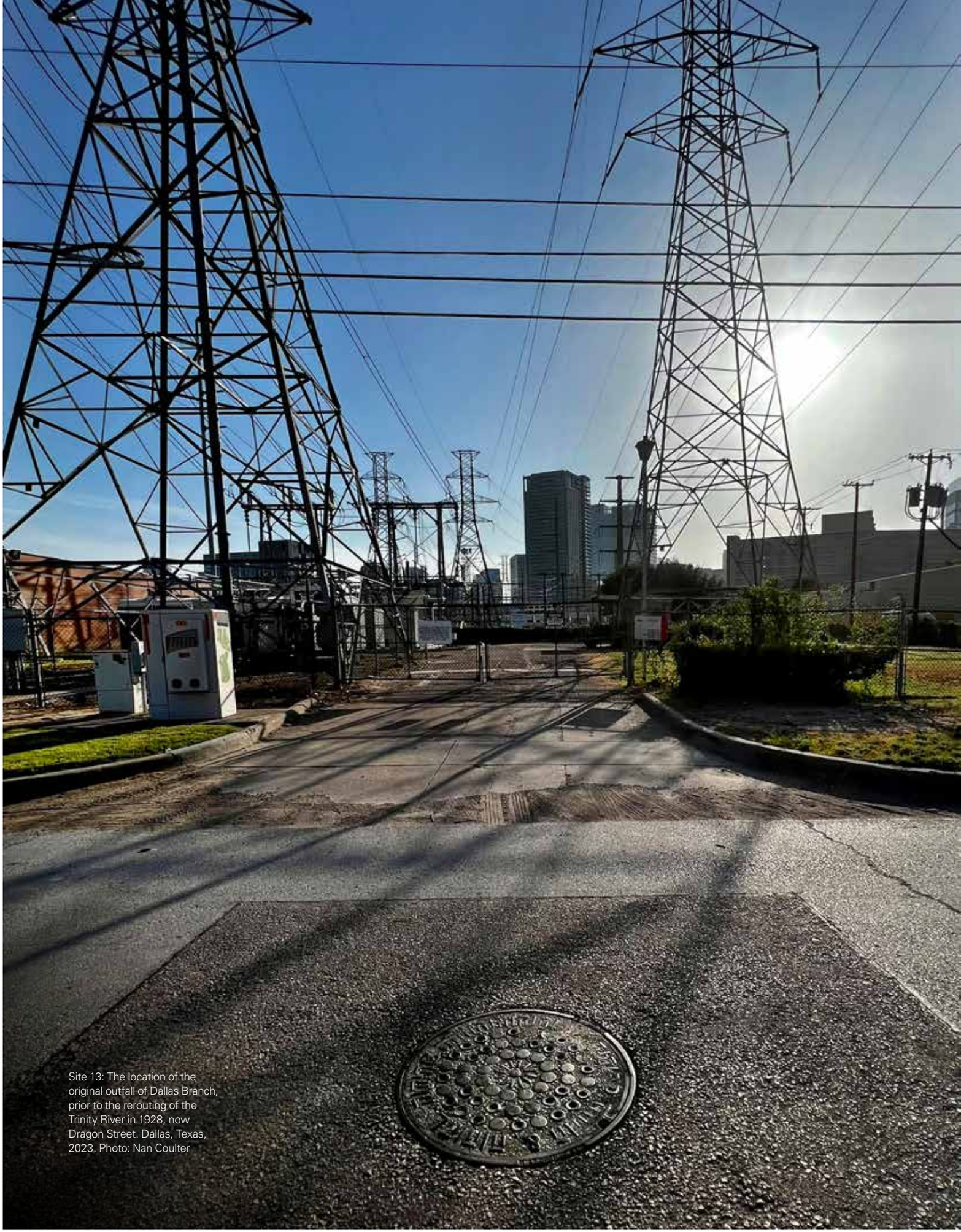
Running water always beckons. And then bears our thoughts away. And I suspect the only difference in this regard between the Ganges, say, and temporary rivulets of rainwater along the curb is the depth and breadth of thoughts transported. Those of children, I imagine, in the latter case. Who, drawn to kneel too close to the street, will watch the leaves like boats and sense their tiny selves departing. Look, oh look, where does it go? And that's the question. Or the riddle. Who can say? And even with the water gone—evaporated, buried—there remains that question. Once your leaf goes out of sight, it may go anywhere.

A drawing by Mary Miss photographed in her studio. New York, New York, 2023.
Photo: Adrienne Lichliter-Hines

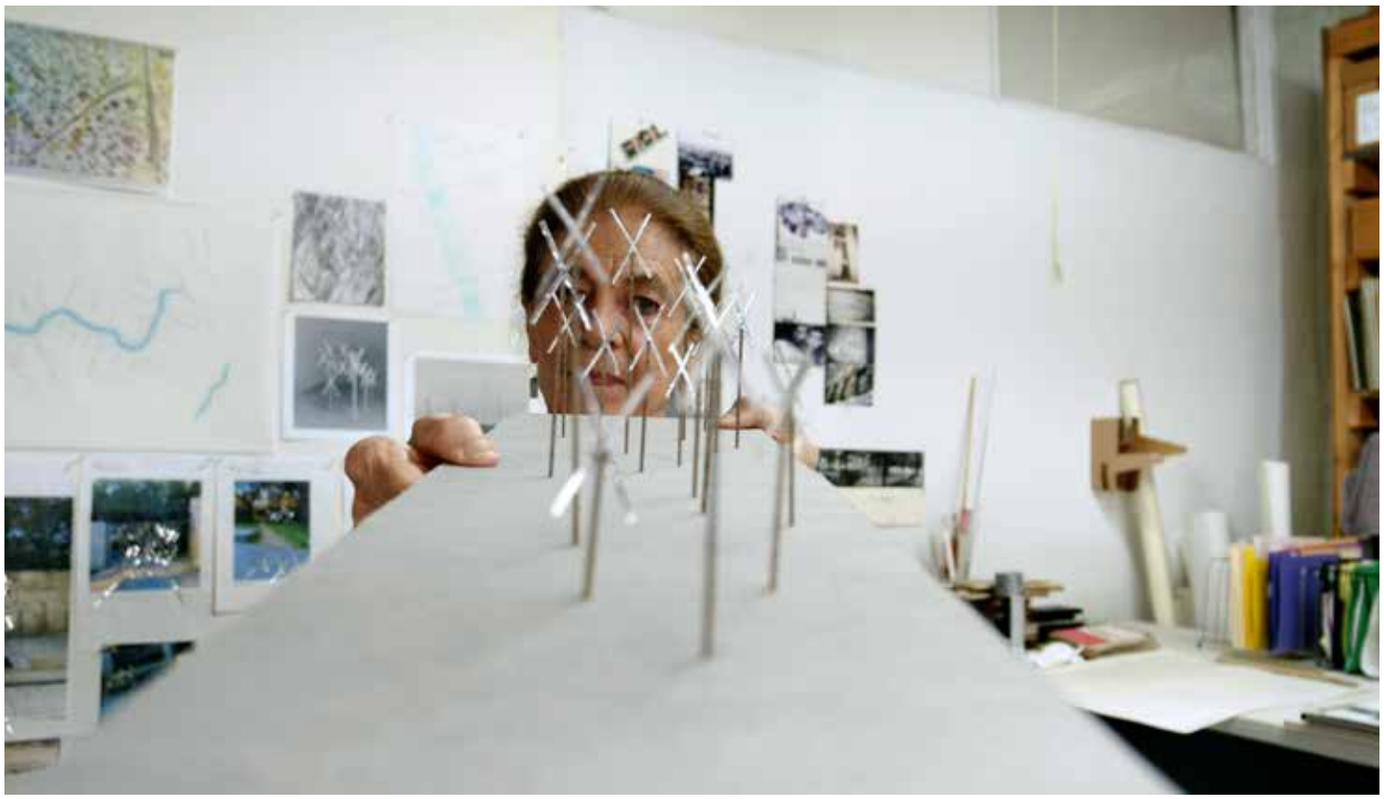
Site 12: Dallas Branch's outfall into the current Trinity River. Dallas, Texas, 2023. Photo: Nan Coulter

Such small exhilarations must have floated down the creek once called the Dallas Branch, now buried, flowing under the Nasher Sculpture Garden and much of downtown Dallas. Dark and culverted and thoughtless. How peculiar: just as famously unwanted high-rise-mirrored light glares down onto the premises, this unremembered darkness flows beneath. We ought to think about it. First of all—although it might seem trivial—to note how, unlike poetry, music, painting, which are weightless, sculpture tends to hold its ground. At least in principle. It fastens on the world in a sort of compromise. Without the separation that's required to present that broader reimagining. That altering of the air of our experience that even the simplest grade school landscape can achieve. Of course, of course, there are and always have been mixings, violations—we don't need no stinkin' categories. Yet they've always been there and are meaningful. Sometimes those Paleolithic cave wall paintings take advantage of a happy undulation in the rock to bring some spectral creature out to us. It startles. And you see what's gained and lost—to our eyes anyway. It's breathing our air now. The slightest sculptural inflection joins our world and leaves that other.

TOP: Mary Miss in her studio. New York, New York, 2023. Photo: Oresti Tsonopoulos. LEFT: 1899 Insurance Map of Dallas, by Sandborn-Perris Map Co., Title Page and Sheet 41. Image courtesy of the University of Texas Libraries, The University of Texas at Austin



Site 13: The location of the original outfall of Dallas Branch, prior to the rerouting of the Trinity River in 1928, now Dragon Street. Dallas, Texas, 2023. Photo: Nan Coulter



TOP: Mary Miss in her studio holding a model of *Stream Trace: Dallas Branch.* New York, New York, 2023. Photo: Oresti Tsonopoulos. BOTTOM: Mary Miss in her studio showing drawings and maps in preparation for her installation at the Nasher. New York, New York, 2023. Photo: Adrienne Lichliter-Hines

Is there something to be made, then, of the Nasher Sculpture Garden with a blind creek running under and a blinding light above? Sounds pretty sweet, you must admit. I suggest it serves to emphasize how captured, how discovered, we are here upon the surface of the world. Among the sculptures, how like sculptures (think George Segal) of ourselves. How stopped. How paused within the moment as if waiting here beside the buried stream that runs within us.

Running water seems to beckon Mary Miss like no one else, I think. The day we met at the Nasher for lunch, she'd already been out afoot and alone, without bearers, guides, or provisions, to trace the buried course of the Dallas Branch to its rumored emergence (its "outfall") into the Trinity River. She's been engaged to make some sculptural sense of this. But how to peer down through the accretions of a century to discern the deeper facts? Old Sanborn fire insurance maps, if old enough, will show a sinuous band of blue through ghostly outlined, mostly vanished combustible structures. By the 20s it is vanishing as well. By 1950, barely a trace. But off she goes, pretty much by feel for the topography, she says, which I find somewhat mystifying. (I imagine Mary striding through the lobbies of those massive office towers—in one door and out the other like a ghost, herself.) At some point she abandons topographic intuition just to make it under the highway toward the Trinity by whatever rectilinear route presents itself to bring her, after an hour and a half, to a place behind some building where she might ascend to the top of the levee and discover—as Cortez, "with a wild surmise"—a clear and narrow sweep of water flowing away to the greater stream. And, dang, if it didn't turn out to be it. The hydrological authorities confirmed. The buried, blinded Dallas Branch flowing out of oblivion into the light. And all before lunch.

She has arranged to have erected a wooden mock-up of the stainless-steel procession, tracing the vanished course of the stream across the garden. Twenty-one poles surmounted by oblique Xs. Stations, as they seem, in some strange ritual or game. She seems to play—as a child, in the very best sense—with the physical facts of the earth. Like Smithson and Goldsworthy, in the sandbox of the world to shove it about and see what's there. Oh, look: here's consciousness and memory and loss.

I ask if we might see that drain or whatever it was—some kind of opening she mentioned having noticed during earlier explorations, in the corner of the deepest level of a parking garage in the Arts District. Way at the bottom there was water. I had read about London's buried tributaries. And how, lost to the surface since medieval or even Roman times, one still may glimpse through certain ancient grates in streets or basements, ancient waters, ancient process running through. So off we go—my wife, the artist Nancy Rebal, Mary and I.

So many levels. Such a promising descent into an unlocatable sound of rushing air and a high-pitched squeal. A number of scary movies come to mind. Who parks down here? Ahead is a concrete wall emblazoned with broad, diagonal black and yellow stripes. At one end of which, in the corner, attended by vertical structures of obscure electrical function, is the hole. The drain. The pit. Whatever. The entire arrangement rather like some grim Tom Sachs construction. I suspect this is the terminus. The point where art grades into something else. It is a complicated hole. Protected by two halves of a 4- or 5-foot disk of steel tread plate—one half dragged somewhat to the side so we can see down in where a plastic pipe, steel chains, and cables drop into the agitated water maybe 15 feet below. The mating edges of the tread plate have these bites torched out to accommodate the plastic pipe and all that dangly business. What in the world is being addressed down there? Or appeased? Here Mary worries me—she's bending so far over for a picture of the water. In those movies, we all know what happens next. The rush of air. The constant squeal. Okay, we're done.

Mary wants to expand the piece, the idea of the piece, beyond the sculpture garden. To bring the whole extent of the buried creek into it. She's returned to New York but has emailed me a current map of the area overlain by the course of the stream with 13 circled points along it where she imagines some sort of markers might be placed to encourage pause and contemplation. Maybe a QR code as well, to access others' contemplations on the matter.

So, what is the matter? Just the dazzle, I suppose. Of the concrete moment. Even a buried stream still beckons—but you have to squint through so much glare to find it. Lean precariously, like Mary, over the edge to think your way down to it. Then allow your thoughts to float along it in the dark toward a larger thought, perhaps, of history. Beneath these modern town homes, well beneath (sites 1 through 4), are weeds and mud and grassy banks, mosquitoes—quite a few of those, I'm told—all sorts of frogs and insects, all the natural croaks and buzzings you'd expect along the creek to mingle with the gentle clatter of domesticity nearby. And in the city, of all places—the unmediated, impolite contingency of life through open windows to impinge in subtle ways upon the general mood, the quality of dreams, the feel of sheets.

Let us imagine—even passing beneath the freeway, as we must—a *Wind in the Willows* population. In those days before the blinding present moment, river creatures had the gift of speech, you know. So pause and listen as we arrive in the vicinity of the Nasher itself (sites 5 and 6). Be still as statues. Close your eyes and listen for, or attempt to sense at least, past all the traffic noise and such, the water moving and the creatures that would surely have inhabited, more clearly and immediately than now, the stories told a hundred years ago to children in their beds.

The older maps—those marvelous Sanborn fire insurance maps that through the years so colorfully plat our life in terms of its combustibility—have it simply marked as "shallow stream" (1899) or "small creek" (1905). By 1921 it's the "Dallas Branch." In any case, in size somewhere between the Ganges and that trickle by the curb. It really doesn't take too much to let the wilderness, the impolite contingency, pass through. Be felt to pass. Especially as the city starts to gather into itself and mostly frame (combustible) homes press in. A thin riparian order holds: your cedar elm and cottonwood, hackberry, willow, sycamore. Your Cherokee sedge and switch grass, prairie cord grass (oh, be careful walking through bare-legged), and marsh fleabane (aromatic, purple-flowered). Fish. All kinds of edible fish. And audible frogs. Can you imagine in the spring and summer evenings through those screened but open windows—kitchen windows, bedroom windows—cricket frogs that sound like marbles clicking together, leopard frogs' repetitive croak, the chorus frogs like raking your thumb across a comb, and eastern narrow-mouth toads that sound like bleating lambs, like little lost lambs out there somewhere. And all out there somewhere. That "out there somewhere" running through like that, so close.

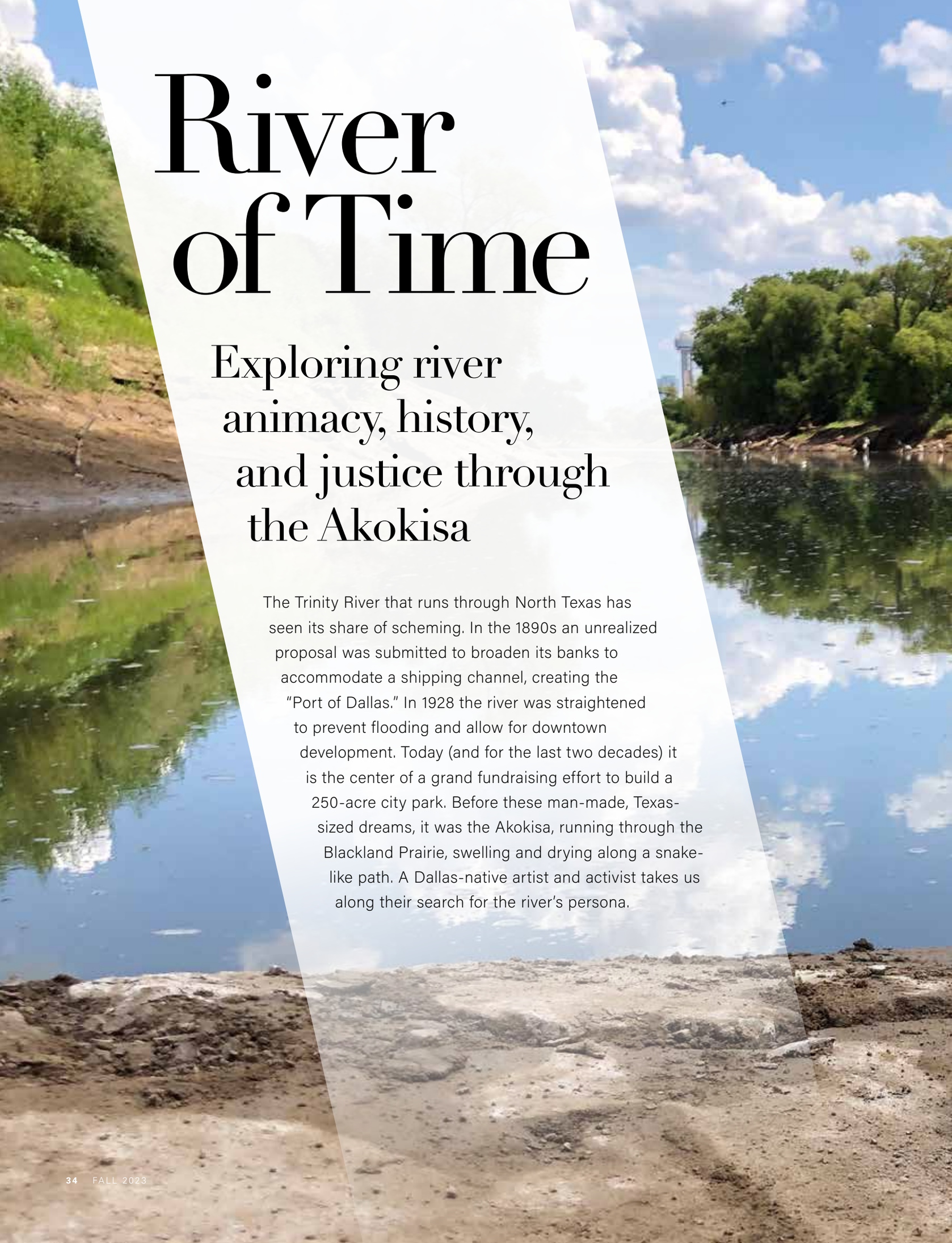
That's what we need to think about, proceeding west on Field Street and back under Woodall Rodgers toward the American Airlines Center, all those parking lots and parking lots to come (sites 7 through 10), how "out there somewhere" still runs somewhere under parking lots—in some sense worth considering, regretting. Then down—you feel it tending down—into that district once "Industrial," now "Design" with shops and galleries (sites 11 and 12), to Levee Street, from which, along in here somewhere, she made ascent to her discovery.

Then back to the south 3,000 feet or so to an address on Dragon Street which, it has somehow been determined, is the point (site number 13) where the Dallas Branch and all its floating leaves, that represent our tiny selves, once emptied into the Trinity River, in its earlier course before the great rerouting, flowing southeast to the Gulf, whose bathwater-gray receives us all in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, at last.

WATCH THIS...

Scan this QR code to see an interview with Mary Miss in her New York studio discussing *Stream Trace: Dallas Branch.*

A portal to water in an underground parking garage, discovered by Mary Miss while tracing the path of the buried Dallas Branch. Dallas, Texas, 2023. Photo: Nan Coulter



River of Time

Exploring river animacy, history, and justice through the Akokisa

The Trinity River that runs through North Texas has seen its share of scheming. In the 1890s an unrealized proposal was submitted to broaden its banks to accommodate a shipping channel, creating the "Port of Dallas." In 1928 the river was straightened to prevent flooding and allow for downtown development. Today (and for the last two decades) it is the center of a grand fundraising effort to build a 250-acre city park. Before these man-made, Texas-sized dreams, it was the Akokisa, running through the Blackland Prairie, swelling and drying along a snake-like path. A Dallas-native artist and activist takes us along their search for the river's persona.

Water collected from the Trinity River. Dallas, Texas, 2021. Image courtesy of Àngel Faz

Ángel Faz, *Flowing Patterns: Gallon Jugs Mapping Water Samples Along the River*, 2021. Installation, dimensions variable.

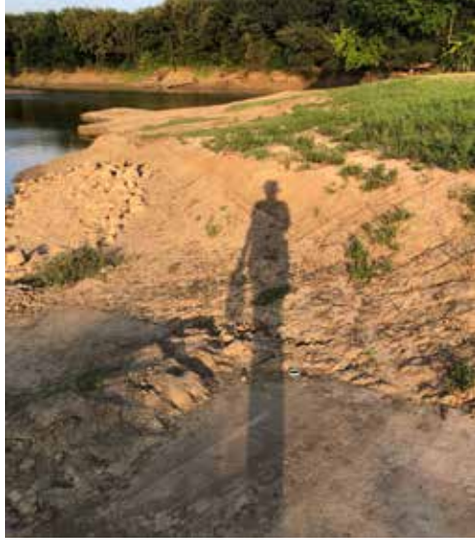
BY ÁNGEL FAZ

DALLAS is Apache, Comanche, Kiowa, Kiikaapoi, Tawakoni, and Wichita land, among others.

Growing up, my family shared captivating tales about the Trinity River. My grandparents migrated to Eagle Ford (known locally as Ledbetter) in the 1940s, leaving Lockhart and Waco, Texas, behind. They spoke of unpaved roads, a tight-knit community, and how salamanders would gather under streetlamps. During the 1950s, the West Dallas salamanders reigned over the nocturnal streets, and the Texas prairie crawfish were plentiful, occasionally finding their way onto dinner tables. Yet, by the 1980s, I spotted only one blue crawfish in the Trinity River, and since then, they have almost vanished completely. Alongside Afrika Bambaataa's "Planet Rock" playing on the neighborhood boomboxes, the nighttime symphony belonged to the Gulf Coast toads. The summer nights were filled with a warm breeze and their chorus, but sadly their sounds have mostly been displaced over time.

Flowing through Dallas, the Trinity is Texas's longest river, spanning 710 miles. In 2018, efforts to revive the indigenous name Akokisa began, aiming to engage the community and dispel colonial myths. Jerry Hawkins of Dallas Truth, Racial Healing & Transformation uncovered the correct indigenous name, "Arkikosa," previously attributed to the Caddo Nation. However, in October 2022, Dr. Timothy K. Perttula and Alaina Tahlate of the Caddo Nation provided a report that clarified that the term "Arkikosa" was not used by the Caddo people. Instead, it was a misspelling or corruption of the word "Akokisa" (or "Orcoquisa"). The word translates to "river people" in the language of the Atakapa tribe, who used to live near the Gulf of Mexico and are currently seeking federal recognition.

Once I learned the River's name, my connection with our natural surroundings continued to evolve, leading me to investigate communities that won personhood for water—a legal designation that bestows a river with rights such as the right to flow, or the right to sue. The Whanganui River, Ganges River, Klamath River, and Vilcabamba River, and more have won legal personhood, with many more seeking the status. This movement led me to pursue a first-person narrative with the Akokisa.



FROM TOP: Àngel Faz's shadow against the bank at Birds Fort Trail Park, Irving, Texas (Elm Fork Trinity River); water collection from River Legacy Park, Arlington, Texas, (West Fork Trinity River); water collection from Santa Fe Trestle Trail, Dallas, Texas (Trinity River); Design District, Dallas, Texas, (Trinity River). All 2021. Images courtesy of the artist

“All water has a perfect memory and is forever trying to get back to where it was.”

—TONI MORRISON

To connect with the water and their personhood, I began kayaking their path through Fort Worth, Arlington, Irving, and downtown Dallas, mapping the waterways[1]. While visiting the River to listen, questions arose: *Who embodies the essence of water? If water could speak, what stories would they share? What memories might the West Fork and Clear Fork River bodies carry when they meet the grand Akokisa River in Dallas?* I read about the Dallas floods and how Akokisa had been moved three times to accommodate growth. I was reminded of a 1986 talk at the New York Public Library where novelist Toni Morrison describes how the Mississippi River was straightened out to make room for housing. She remarks, “Occasionally the river floods these places. ‘Floods’ is the word they use, but in fact it is not flooding; it is remembering. Remembering where it used to be. All water has a perfect memory and is forever trying to get back to where it was.” I wanted to investigate these memories.

In 2021 I began working on a collection of artworks that would tell the story of the Akokisa, focusing on their personification through visuals and sounds of the River. Accompanied by writing, historical timelines, relief prints, sculptures, and video, I created an installation of jugs filled with river water, titled *The Grammar of Animacy*.

In this project, I conducted simple water quality tests to explore the River’s overall wellness as a body of water, collecting water samples from seven different areas in Dallas. Stored in glass gallon jugs and installed on the wall in a cascading pattern, each specimen’s clarity revealed various degrees of coloring based on the water’s location, but from a distance, and in photography, they appear clear and innocuous, requiring close inspection and further reading. Alongside the jugs I provided a map with a QR code to encourage curiosity in fellow river people.

Like much of my work, the installation of jugs served as a tangible way to activate facts of local water memories, but the finished work is a mere piece of the larger art of searching.

For the past five years, I have closely observed and listened to the River, paying attention to their movements, stillness, fluidity, and reflections. The mutable nature of water as a transconsciousness permeates my work, and it has inspired me to delve deeper into exploring the fluidity of water and the body as an autonomous being. The solutions to today’s problems are coded into the adaptability of nature if we can perceive beyond our human-centered supremacy.

The Akokisa welcomes you to their banks with open arms.

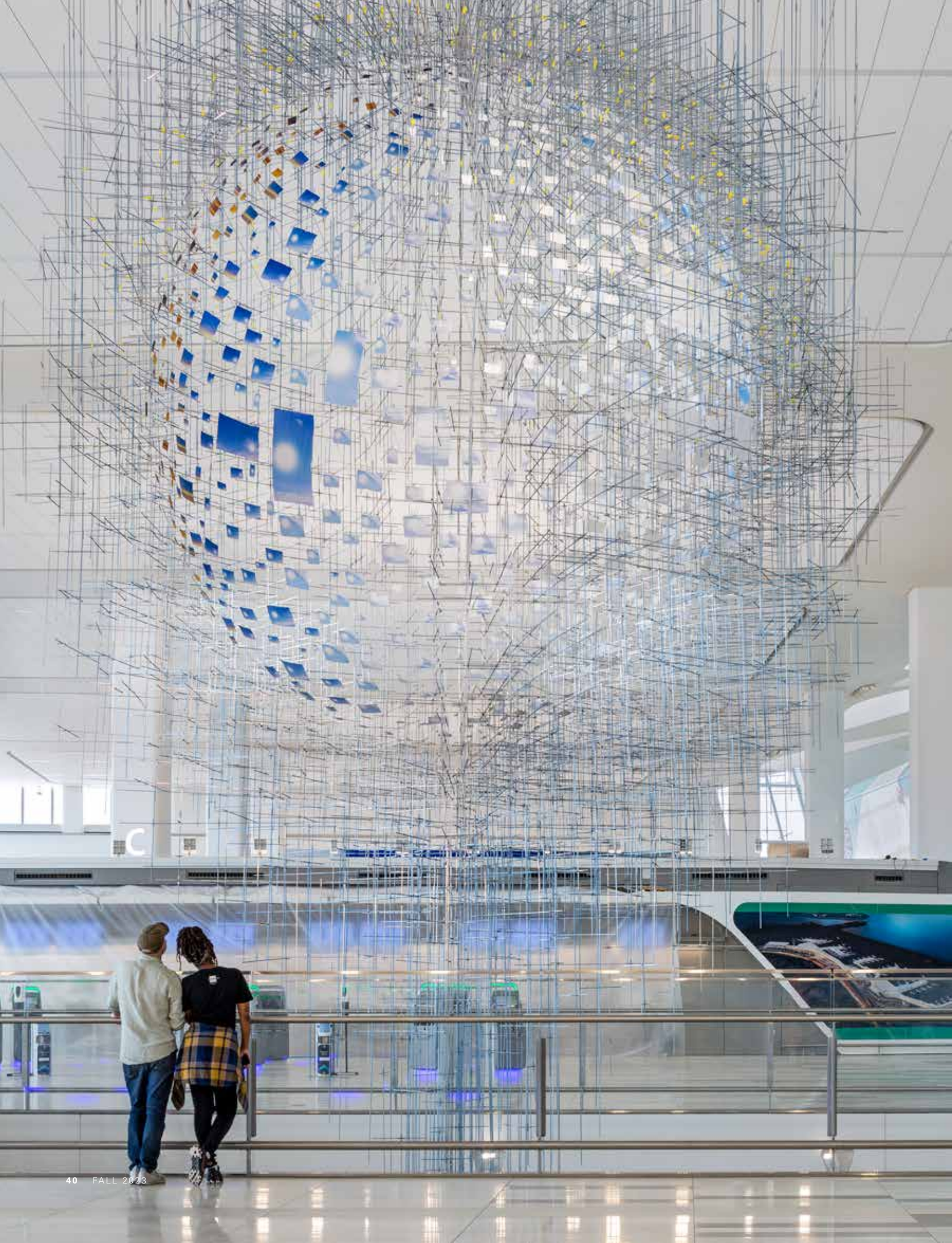
Editor’s note: The Akokisa project has become a citywide movement, blending immersive art forms to connect with natural ecologies and history. Indigenous leaders have been included in the efforts to rename and acknowledge the Akokisa, moving beyond land acknowledgments and toward sovereignty in Dallas.

1. When speaking of the River, I use pronouns that reflect the movement of water without assigning a gender, using “they/them” to explore their fluidity and animacy—a shift inspired by Robin Wall Kimmerer’s *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants*. Kimmerer, a scientist and enrolled member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation, explores how the English language lacks the adequate vocabulary to respect the animacy, or sentience, of nonhuman beings. She writes, “In Potawatomi 101, rocks are animate, as are mountains and water and fire and places. Beings that are imbued with spirit, our sacred medicines, our songs, drums, and even stories, are all animate.” In English, our grammar reduces a nonhuman being to an “it,” or we assign gender inappropriately as he or she. Where are our words for the existence of another living being?

WATCH THIS...

Scan this QR code to watch *Water has a memory/ Remembering* by Ángel Faz, made in 2021 for *New Stories: New Futures* at Pioneer Tower at Will Rogers Memorial Center.

Àngel Faz. Sandbranch, Texas, 2021.
Image courtesy of the artist



GRASPING AT STILLNESS

An emerging new media artist reflects on the surprising stillness in Sarah Sze's installations, inspiring his own distortion of contemporary reality.

BY TAYLOR CLEVELAND

Everything, everywhere, all at once—not the movie.

In our modern world, the ability to rewind, fast forward, skip through, speed up, and slow time feels like natural and tangible concepts. We overlay timelines and narratives, we edit and alter our memories, and we use various interfaces to create, engage, like, follow, and share our experiences with the world around us. Technology has enabled our minds to process information at quantum rates, giving us control to break through time, space, and dimension. Yet, more than ever, society has an instinctual urge to pause, take a breath, and grasp at stillness.

The underlying anxieties created through the struggle to evolve with rapidly new advancements in technology are overwhelming to say the least. The frenzied day-to-day lives of a globalized people rush by, blurring every image that forms. In this blurred formless metaphor of the everyday commotion, there are elements that break through—focused and sharp. These things can appear intentionally through ritual, performance, or contemplation, or unintentionally, by accident, or at random.

To me, Sarah Sze's practice deals with this condition, seeking intimacy in moments where the anxieties of the technological sublime exit, and the power of now enters. In her cyclical alchemy of image to object, object to space, space to memory, and memory back to image—the work emerges from chaos as tranquil, undisturbed pockets of time and space.

Through sculpture, installation, paint, video projection, sound, and various media, Sze's spatial interventions force reflection and contemplation with the busied physical, technologic, and conceptual realities within which we co-exist. Meticulously (de)constructed, the concepts laid out in these manifested blueprints feel intentionally architectural—poetically calling attention to their own material self-awareness while constructing spectacle out of the deceptive illusions and perspectives of time, memory, and fragility.

In her work *Shorter than the Day* (2019-2020), the role of scale transcends aesthetic, assuming a functional relationship with its audience. As bustling travelers move through Terminal B in New York City's LaGuardia Airport, their journey is met with an awe-inspiring spectacle mounted in midair. This monumental two-level installation, exploding with material prowess, creates a gravitational pull beckoning audiences closer. As viewers draw nearer, the facade of the intersection of art and technology crumbles, giving way to an intimate and human experience: thousands of lo-fi photographs, each capturing a fragment of the New York City sky at different times of the day, converge as nodes within the mesmerizing wireframe of a spherical structure. I am drawn to this piece because its subversion of expectation in an environmental context that assumes such corporate rigidity and commercial priority—it creates a sense of nostalgia, personal connection, and an emergence of heightened self-awareness.

In an *Architectural Digest* article about the piece, Sze is quoted saying, "An airport is a portal into the displacement of time and space." Within this liminal

Sarah Sze (b. 1969). *Shorter than the Day,* 2020. Powder-coated aluminum and steel 48 × 30 × 30 feet (14.6 × 9.1 × 9.1 m). Commissioned by La Guardia Gateway Partners in partnership with Public Art Fund. Image courtesy of the artist. © Sarah Sze

space, her art becomes a conduit, a portal through which viewers navigate the boundaries of their own temporal and spatial existence.

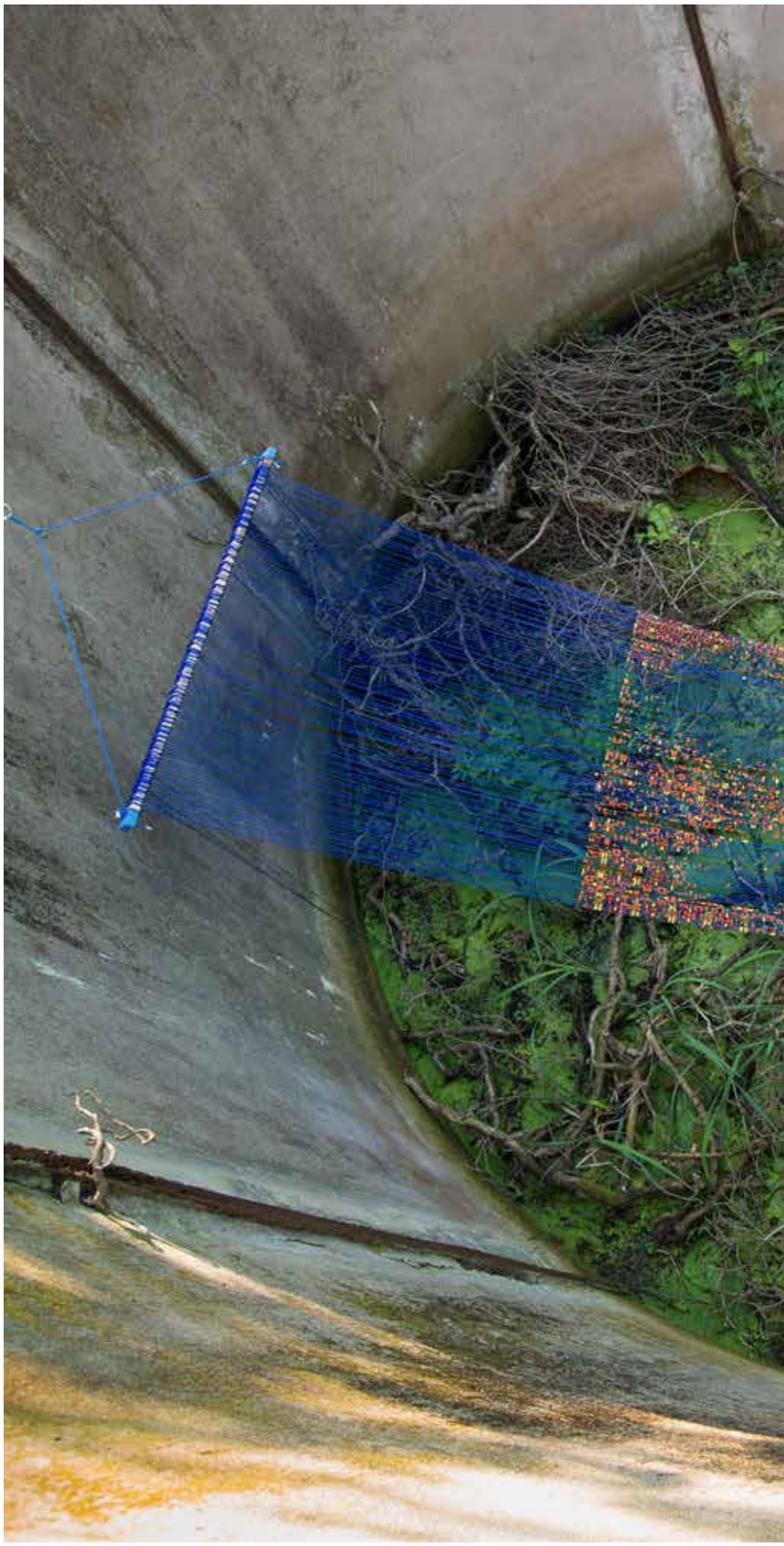
The Last Garden (2015) was an installation hidden within a Venetian courtyard garden. When speaking about the objects in the piece, Sze refers to them as a means to feel absence. They're framing devices used to orient viewers to non-physical material like time, space, fragility, and reflection. As audiences delicately tiptoe around these assemblages, they discover seeded artifacts like a hammock made of yarn, strategically positioned mirrors, and branches that have been altered with painter's tape and adhesive. Time surrenders, space expands, and specific shades of internal stillness are revealed.

In *Things Caused to Happen (Oculus)* (2023), the same rules seem to apply. Time, space, material, and form are locked in a state of transformation that is being used as a medium. Integrating digital video and projection, Sze fragments the past onto torn pieces of paper, many not much larger than an inch long, calling out a technological perspective, our ever-evolving relationships with artifacts of memory, and subsequently the time and space around it. In this gesture, she not only highlights the malleability of our connections to objects and images but also delves into the complexities of our contemporary digital existence.

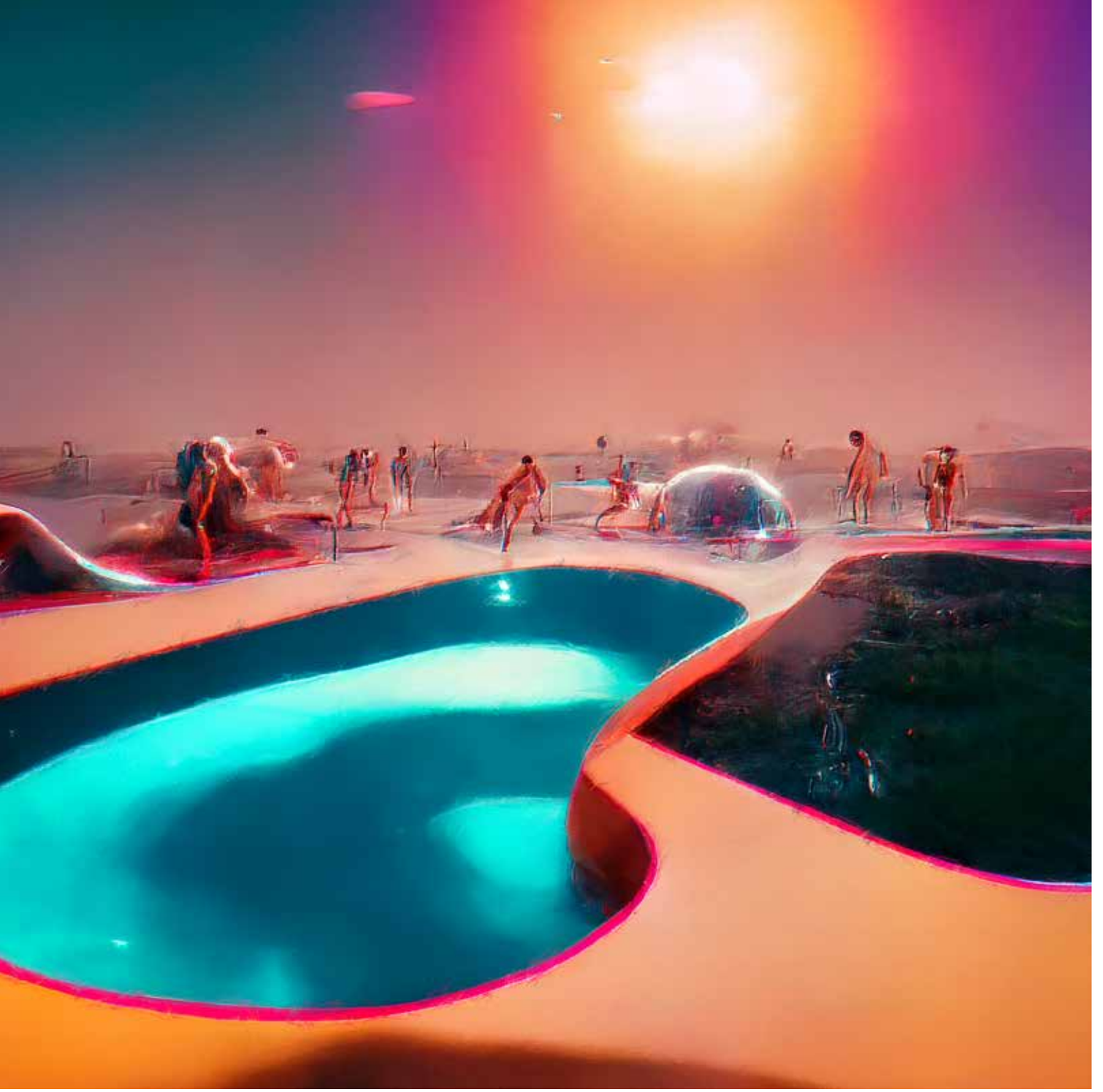
In my own artistic practice, I spend a lot of time thinking about life in mixed realities. More specifically, I look to find ways to question and challenge assumptions about a world that is becoming more reliant on technologies that are getting harder to understand. As our lives speed up and require us to jump across more applications, channels, and interfaces, I want to slow down and have deeper contemplations of our relationships with reality.

"Aesthetics of Real," an ongoing body of work I've been producing since 2013, explores technologies like artificial intelligence (AI), augmented/virtual reality, projection mapping amongst other interactive and immersive experiences and performances, investigating multiple platforms and meanings of contemporary reality. Though mediated through technology and fiction, the artworks and their various dimensions subvert their way into feeling real—or at least real enough to spark some critical conversation.

Nested within "Aesthetics of Real" is a series called *Water Wars* (2022). *Water Wars* is a machine learning/



Sarah Sze (b. 1969). *The Last Garden (Landscape of Events Suspended Indefinitely) (Hammock)*, 2015. Acrylic, string, cord, metal, stone, and photograph, 115 x 190 x 42 inches (292.9 x 482.6 x 106.6 cm). Image courtesy of the artist. © Sarah Sze



AI-driven art piece created from a trained model of digitally painted and generated images. The algorithm transforms itself into various compositions, directed by prompts that unveil a sense of luxury, menace, beauty, and artifice. I've presented the generated results in different forms, from prints framed by neon acrylic to video projections that morph across varied aspect ratios, and interactive installations.

Conceptually, *Water Wars* grapples with the profound impact of technology on the environment, as it pertains to society's instinctual fixation on superficial beauty and leisure. Inspired by the elegant yet distorted painting style of Francis Bacon, the subjects in these desert landscapes appear to melt within pools of plastic being fueled by the process that rendered them. The iterations each present a new technology that is flooding everyday life, but with a nuance and depth not associated with AI generated work.

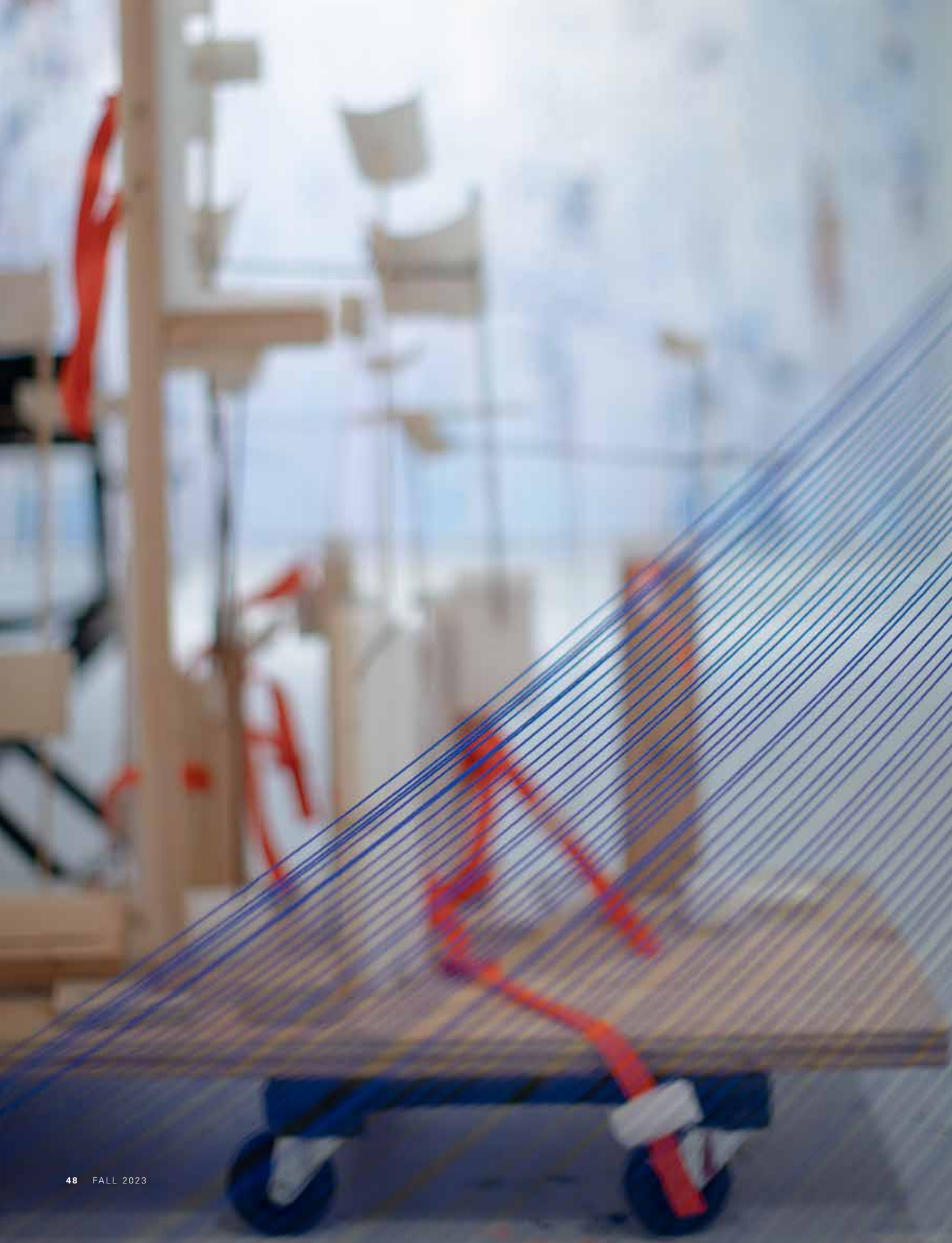
As I reflect on Sarah Sze's work, I am inspired by the seamless relationship between objects, time, and space, and how they collectively impact our lived realities. Within the sanctuaries she creates, audiences may find visions, memories, and heightened awareness. The boundaries between the past, present, and future dissolve around intricate assemblages of objects and projections, and the distractions of the external world are presented with such density that they may even slip out of focus.

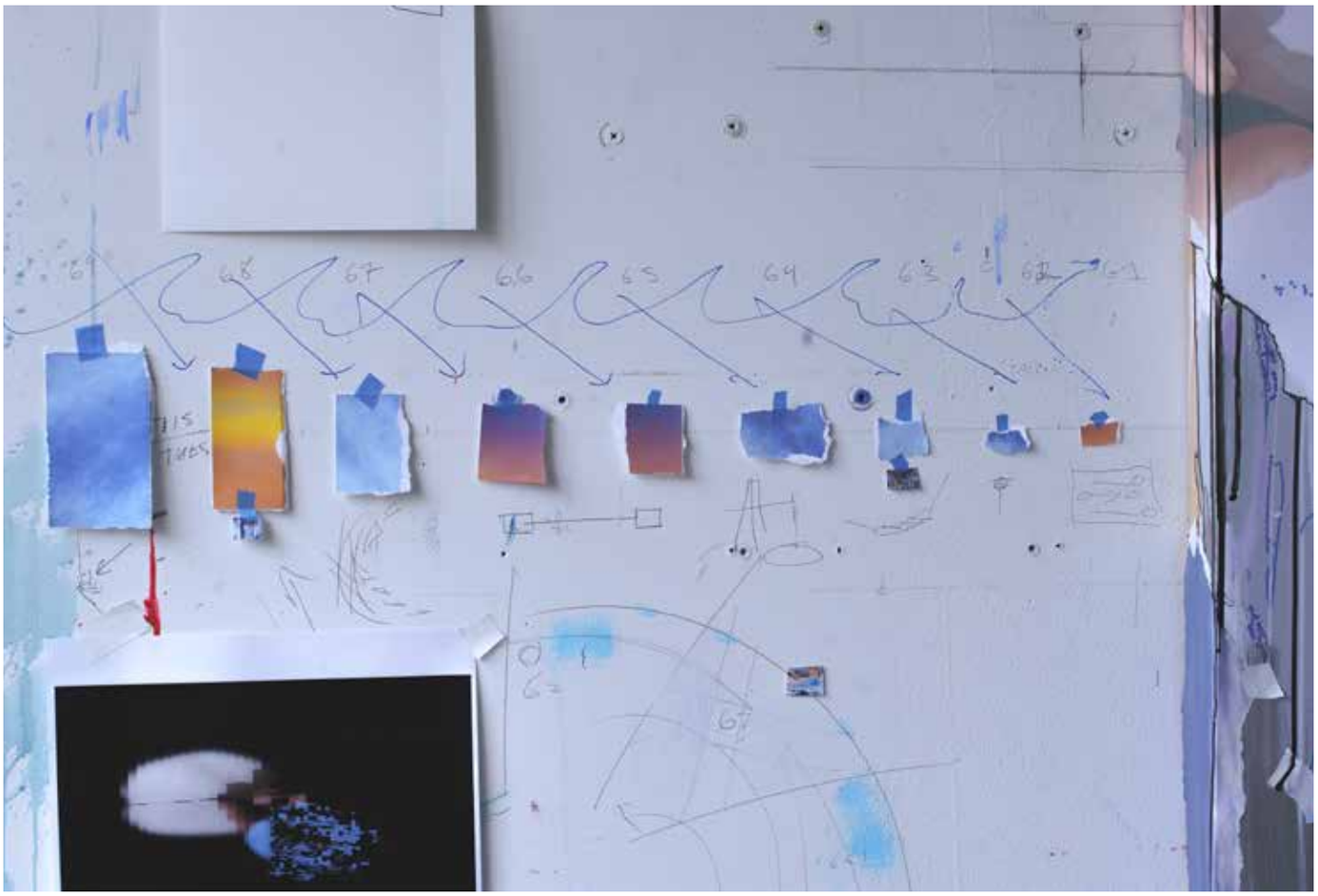
Her installations invite us to consider our shifting relationship with the present moment and the objects that create it, while revealing the world through a hyperactive, media-drenched vantage point. As an artist working in new and emerging media, I am awed by how her work amplifies the chaos of our mental and physical existence, beckoning curiosity and acceptance of our maximalist realities, while simultaneously fostering environments of solace and critical introspection.

FROM LEFT: Taylor Cleveland (b. 1992). *Water Wars #010, #011,* and *#007,* 2022. Digital render, dimensions variable. *Water Wars* (Lumia Festival). Multi-channel video. Merrill Ellis Intermedia Theater at University of North Texas. Images courtesy of the artist. © Taylor Cleveland

Image detail from Sarah Sze *Slice* (2023) Photo: Adrienne Lichliter-Hines

A PERSONAL HISTORY OF TIME WITH SARAH SZE





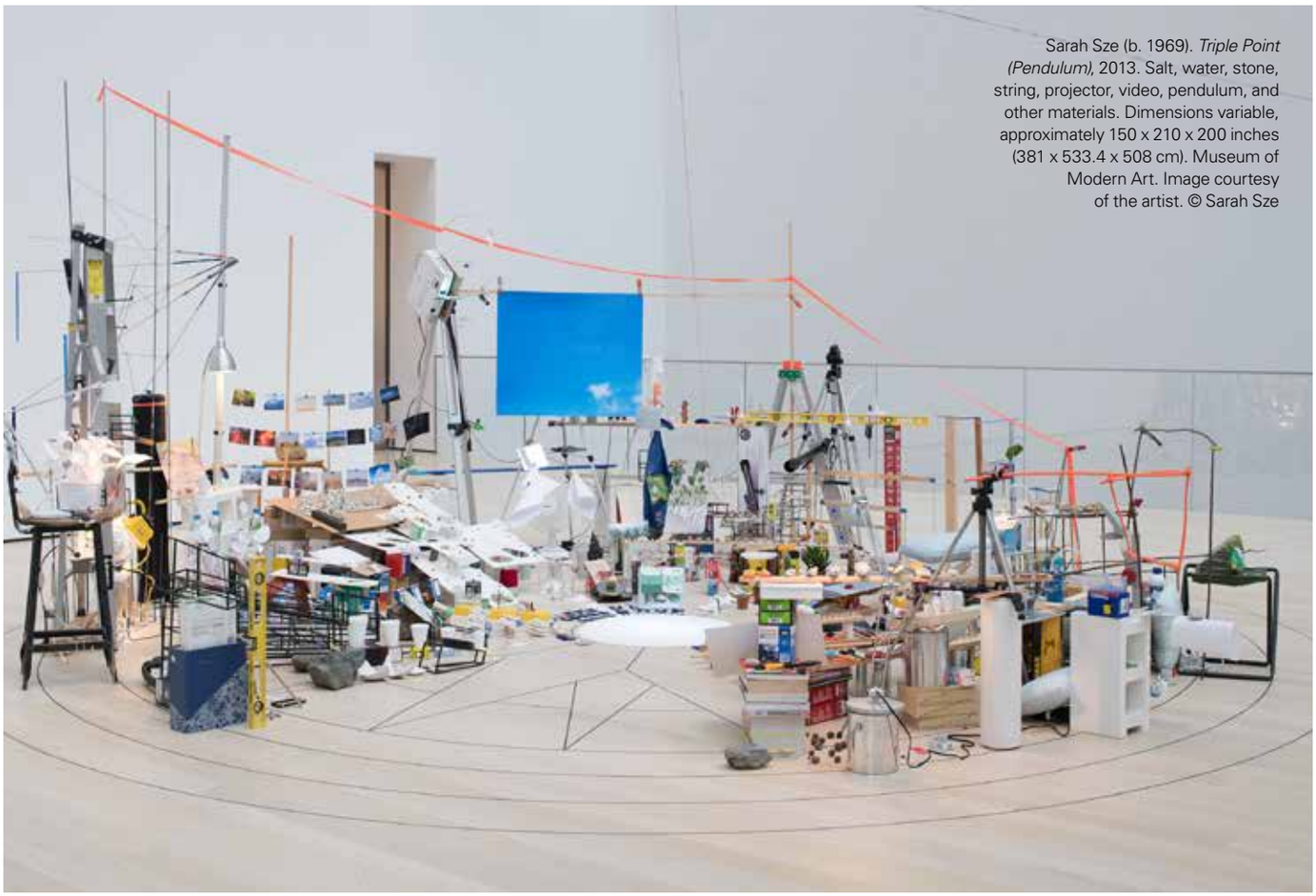
OPPOSITE AND ABOVE: Sarah Sze. Studio images, 2023. Images courtesy of the artist. © Sarah Sze

In the spring of 2024, Sarah Sze's intricate installations will spill across the Nasher. Ahead of that moment, the show's curator reflects on his evolving impression of the artist's work, alongside rarely shared images from inside her studio.

BY JED MORSE

Time is a slippery thing. As much as humans have attempted to define it, capture it, measure it in tranches from the infinitesimal to the immense, it still manages to elude simple quantification or understanding. Left to our five senses, our experience of time is even more fallible, seeming to expand and contract in unpredictable ways.

This is also true of the work of Sarah Sze. My first encounter with it occurred over 20 years ago. It was 2001. I was a curatorial assistant at the Dallas Museum of Art, in San Francisco installing at the Legion of Honor, a Henry Moore retrospective I had helped DMA curator Dorothy Kosinski organize. In a break from installing, I ventured downtown to SFMOMA where I encountered Sze's *Things Fall Apart* (2001), a temporary work of art the museum had commissioned, which they later made permanent. It was as unlike a sculpture by Henry Moore as one could imagine. It enjoyed a pride of place of sorts, not standing solidly on the ground floor like a monumental Moore or floating ethereally from the



Sarah Sze (b. 1969). *Triple Point (Pendulum)*, 2013. Salt, water, stone, string, projector, video, pendulum, and other materials. Dimensions variable, approximately 150 x 210 x 200 inches (381 x 533.4 x 508 cm). Museum of Modern Art. Image courtesy of the artist. © Sarah Sze

The fact that one could not understand the work in its entirety at a single glance, or even physically access all of it, but only glean information as one moved through the space and encountered it from different vantage points, only added to its mystery and dynamism.

ceiling like some grand Alexander Calder mobile, but cascading down several levels of the grand staircase. Its materials—a wild mélange of commonplace objects including parts of a car body, lamps, and strips of plastic and wood—were dispersed over two floors of stairwell landings and cantilevered out into the atrium, connected by taut strings, wires, and looping metal ribbons. The experience was at once grand in its engagement with the stairwell and atrium and intimate in the intricacy of details; mechanistic like an exploded diagram of another dimension yet organic in its dispersion; monumental in scope yet understated in its expression of scale. The fact that one could not understand the work in its entirety at a single glance, or even physically access all of it, but only glean information as one moved through the space and encountered it from different vantage points, only added to its mystery and dynamism. The work itself also seemed to be about time, evoking the slipstream vortex we sometimes experience in deja vú or premonitions, when it seems past and future connect in the present.

Fast forward to 2016. Sze has exhibited widely, been named a MacArthur Foundation Fellow (2003), and represented the United States at the Venice Biennale (2013), and I've been curator at the Nasher for 13

years, when the Nasher and University of North Texas invite the artist to lecture at both institutions in 2016. I learn then that she communicates as cogently, expansively, and poetically in person as in her work. We have a conversation about possibly working together on an exhibition at the Nasher. Past and future converge in the present. Time passes. I meet the artist in New York at the Museum of Modern Art where one of her installations from Venice, *Triple Point (Pendulum)* (2013) is now in the collection and on view. We discuss ideas, consult calendars, and target dates for a presentation. Then, the COVID pandemic—a real-life experiment in warping time—reshapes everyone's schedules and compels us to recognize how much we exchange direct experience for glimpses of the real world through our internet-enabled devices.

This year, at the end of May, I saw Sze's exhibition at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York, *Timelapse*. The works there further honed her recent investigations, begun before the pandemic, of how the surfeit of imagery that inundates our daily lives shapes our experience of time and space. They incorporate both printed and projected imagery in ramshackle structures of materials that make up the artist's everyday studio environment: wooden

TOP: Sarah Sze. Photo: Thierry Bal. ABOVE: Sarah Sze (b. 1969). *Things Fall Apart*, 2001. Mixed media installation with vehicle, dimensions variable. SFMOMA. Image courtesy of the artist. © Sarah Sze

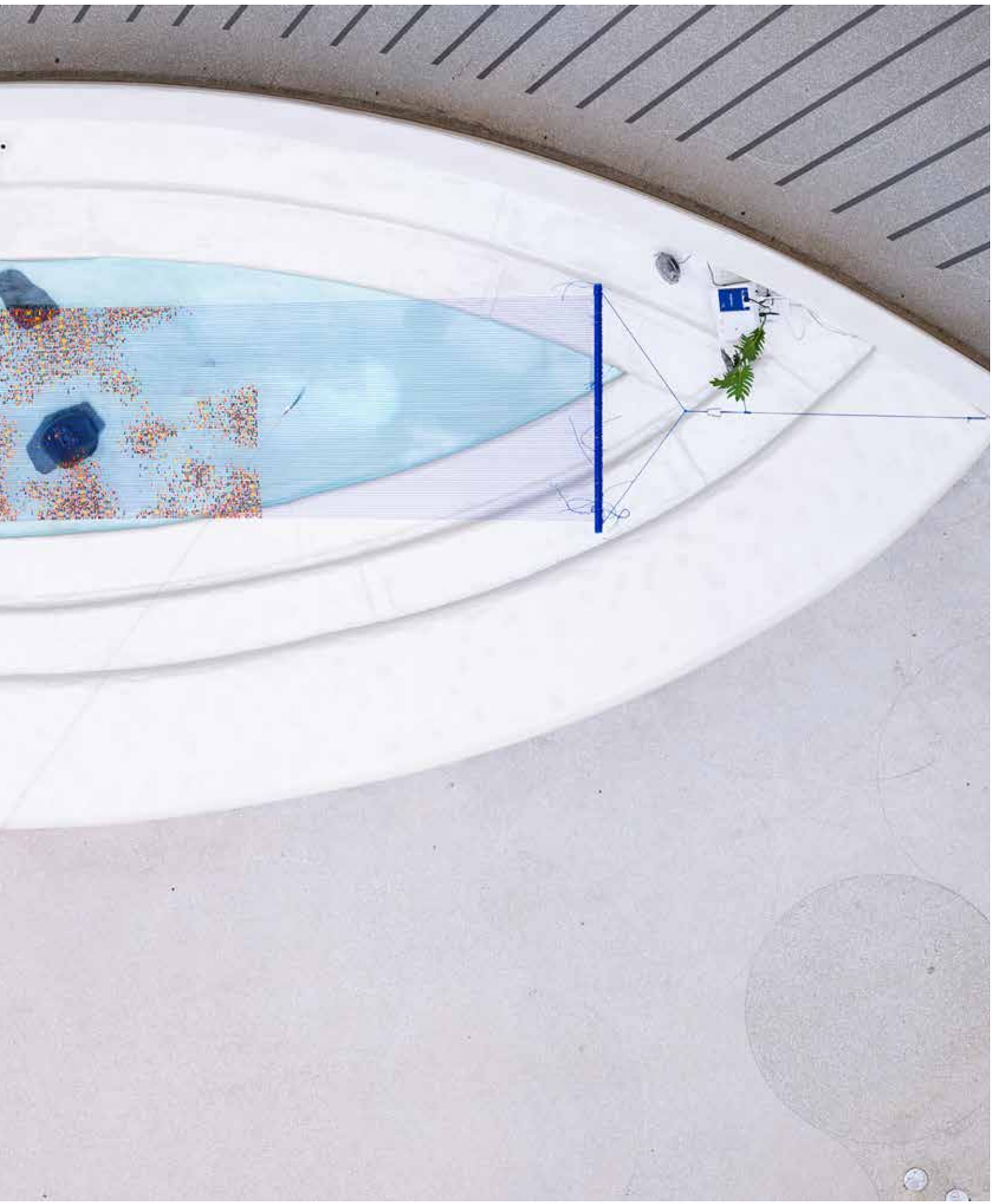
dowels, spring clamps, paper, string, paint, lamps, tape measures, and ladders, along with paintings, collages, and models of previous sculptures. The images define and dematerialize the structures, suffusing, caressing, and extending the works to the limits of the spaces that house them. Like many of Sze's exhibitions, the work is conceived with the site in mind; collaborations with architecture are irresistible for Sze, a daughter of an architect and former architecture student herself. At the Guggenheim, the works occupy the uppermost loop of Frank Lloyd Wright's spiral ramp, interconnected by a stream of projected imagery that flows through them all as well as a plumb bob on a string that runs through them, reaches up to the Art Deco skylight, and hangs down the base of the rotunda, skimming the water of the fountain at the bottom of the ramp.

Shortly after I visited the Guggenheim exhibition, Nasher Director Jeremy Strick was in London where Sze had created an installation for the Artangel Trust at Peckham Rye Station in a waiting room that had been abandoned for 50 years. He texted me a short video of the experience. Even flattened on my iPhone screen, the installation, *The Waiting Room* (2023), was operatic, as if all the sublime beauty of the world had been secreted away in a disused room in a 19th century London train station and quietly opened decades later to remind us of the glories of the world beyond its walls.

Next January, Sze will install new work in the Renzo Piano-designed spaces at the Nasher Sculpture Center. With each new opportunity, Sze builds on the previous ones. Although the installations are meticulously planned, the artist always leaves room for responding to the space and the circumstances in the moment. I can't wait to see what transpires this time.

LEFT: Sarah Sze. Studio image, 2023. Image courtesy of the artist.
BELOW: Sarah Sze, *Metronome*, 2023. "The Waiting Room," Peckham Rye Station, London. Commissioned by Artangel. Photo: Thierry Bal

Sarah Sze (b. 1969). *The Night Sky is Dark Despite the Vast Number of Stars in the Universe*, 2023. Acrylic, string, paracord, and wood. 176 x 180 x 41 1/2 inches (447 x 457.2 x 104.1 cm). Image courtesy of the artist. © Sarah Sze



FOREVER

BLUE TAPE

BY TAMARA JOHNSON

Editor's note: What if a Sarah Sze installation listed every material object? I've tried and gave up pages of notes in. However, one item seemed to reappear with special repetition: blue painter's tape. In her materially dense compositions, you'll find it attaching pictures to things, things to things, balled up on the ground as if discarded, and in its original rolled form, serving as a prop, a stand, or an object in and of itself. I don't know what draws Sarah Sze to Blue Tape—I hope to ask her—but I know she's not the only one stuck on it.

The junk drawer, the garage, on the closet shelf with a random assortment of painting supplies. Blue Tape is often found in places of utility. Its purpose is simple yet multifaceted; it keeps areas paint free, it demarcates a spot on the wall or floor, and sometimes, in a pinch, you can use it to wrap a gift. Blue Tape is familiar and unpretentious. A common household workhorse; dependable, accessible, and yet temporary.

Adhesive Tape is U.S. Patent No. 1,760,820. In 1925, Richard Drew, a lab technician at 3M, was on route delivering trial batches of sandpaper to automotive shops when he noticed the need for a tape that would allow painters to easily mask off car parts without stripping existing paint. It needed to be both sturdy and removable. Drew began prototyping a tape using cabinetmaker's glue and crepe paper. Scotch® Masking Tape was born. Five years later, Drew developed a transparent cellophane tape, and it quickly became a major asset for quick repairs during the Great Depression from book pages to glass windows. It wasn't until 1988 that 3M's Scotch Blue Painter's Tape entered the scene as a handy companion for professional and DIY painters in residential and

Tamara Johnson (b. 1984). *Forever Blue Tape* (in studio), 2023. Tyvek paper, gouache, acrylic. Dimensions variable. Image courtesy of the artist

Many of my sculptures replicate domestic items possessing myriad functions sink sponges, water hoses, bobby pins, colanders. These mimetic moments stem from a desire to pause time, holding a precise and banal action in perpetuity.

commercial applications. Blue Tape's adhesive is a medium tack acrylic compound that can be removed residue-free within 14 days.

In my studio, Blue Tape is the ultimate tool; it demarcates places on the wall for anchoring, it adheres brown paper to my worktable. It helps me hold down a piece of Owens Corning Foamular 150 insulation foam on a Smooth-On Rebound 25 rubber mold so it doesn't float to the top.

Many of my sculptures replicate domestic items possessing myriad functions—sink sponges, water hoses, bobby pins, colanders. These mimetic moments stem from a desire to pause time, holding a precise and banal action in perpetuity. I use a wide range of materials to explore a personal terrain, unraveling the functions of household items while highlighting nuances in landscapes both interior and exterior. The meticulous care I have for overlooked fragments is extraordinary, some might think unnecessary, but it slows down the viewer's eye, focusing on familiar metaphors and collective experiences. A paper plate becomes a head, a saltine cracker transforms into a filtering kidney. Each object I fabricate, sculpt, and faux finish attempts to hold the flux of sensuality, vulnerability, and humor tightly together, creating a slippage simultaneously solid and effervescent.

So naturally, I had to find a way to replicate Blue Tape. I needed a material that was thin, paperlike, but strong enough not to tear apart. I turned to a small roll of Tyvek® I had in the studio, which I used previously to make a bouquet of cilantro leaves in 2020. In 1955, a DuPont researcher discovered "white fluff" blowing out of an air vent in an experimental textile lab, obtained a patent for the polyethylene fibers, and now Tyvek® can be found everywhere from construction sites to FedEx envelopes. From 1986-1999 New Zealand used Tyvek®

Tamara Johnson (b. 1984). *Cracker* (in process), 2023. Pewter, oil-based paint, 2 x 2 x 1/4 inches (5 x 5 x .6 cm). Image courtesy of the artist


WINSOR & NEWTON
DRYING LINSEED OIL
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TRANSON

for their driver's licenses and, in 2011, American Apparel sold a pair of white Tyvek® shorts for $24.

The first challenge is the texture. Blue Tape isn't smooth like its fellow Scotch® brand Packaging or Magic Tape—it has a subtle, irregular surface, like plant cells under a microscope. Using a jumbo wooden craft stick (a fancy name for a tongue depressor), I score the Tyvek® back and forth, embossing a weave pattern, mimicking Blue Tape's terrain. Then there is the color— "Blue Tape blue"—a hue married to its material, only found in other examples on my daughter's Baby Einstein piano or a 7-Eleven Blue Raspberry Slurpee. This isn't a straight-from-the-tube blue. Cerulean isn't right and cobalt is too dark. This color matching game is my favorite studio activity. I've color matched rust on an I-beam, the yolk of deviled eggs, and the crumble crust of a dump cake. I mix Golden brand Titanium White, Reeves brand Ultramarine Blue Gouache, and a touch of Blue Lake Gouache with a little water. Real Blue Tape is almost translucent, like when you peel off a piece of sunburned skin, so I brush my blue wash mix on the Tyvek® with a fan brush—a happy little bush à la Bob Ross. When I'm done, I have a few scraps of Blue Tape that will last forever—real Blue Tape tears easily, my forever Blue Tape must be cut with a box cutter blade.

I glue my fragments of forever Blue Tape to other sculptures in my studio using archival LINECO Neutral pH Adhesive. One piece placed on a gypsum colander, a few positioned on a cast concrete fence post, and one on my studio wall, each blending in with their real counterparts. My forever Blue Tape is quiet, a copy-paste of the real and might even be mistaken for the thing you will use, peel off, and throw away within 14 days.

Tamara Johnson (b. 1984). CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: *Colander with Sponge and Clip*, 2021. Hydrocal gypsum, silver leaf, resin, fiberglass, acrylic paint. 4 x 12 x 10 inches (10 x 30.4 x 25.4 cm)

Colander with Cilantro, 2021. Hydrocal gypsum, fiberglass, wire, Tyvek, enamel and acrylic paint. 4 x 9 1/2 x 9 1/2 inches (10 x 24 x 24 cm)

Rock City Mug with Cilantro Bouquet, 2020. PVC pipe, rope, resin, woven aluminum wire, pigmented resin, epoxy putty. 52 x 35 x 2 inches (132 x 88.9 x 5 cm). Part of solo exhibition, *How to fold a fitted sheet*, ex ovo gallery, Dallas, Texas

Forever Blue Tape (in studio). Tyvek paper, gouache, acrylic. Dimensions varied

All images courtesy of the artist

Tamara Johnson (b. 1984). *Forever Blue Tape* (in studio). Tyvek paper, gouache, acrylic. Dimensions varied. Image courtesy of the artist

A resting place for planets

Nasher curators introduce an Alicja Kwade sculpture, both celestial and grounded, showing with works from our permanent collection this fall

BY DR. LEIGH ARNOLD AND JED MORSE

Alicja Kwade investigates concepts of time, space, particle physics, and the limitations of knowledge in a diverse practice that manifests as sculptural objects, video, and photography. *Les Sièges des Mondes* comprises eight common chairs cast in bronze intersected at different elevations by spheres of various natural stones. The French title translates to "seats of the worlds," while informal titles for each chair and sphere pairing refer to the eight planets of our solar system (Earth, Venus, Mars, etc.), suggesting a correlation between celestial and corporeal bodies.

This elision of planets and domestic furniture further emphasizes the notion that we all consist of the same atomic particles—from the massive planets, moons, and stars floating in space, down to the chairs that humans occupy on Earth. Kwade elaborated on these ideas in her 2017 short essay for *Art in America*, writing,

"At present, by my estimation, I myself am a constellation of 5.5 x 1027 ancient atoms (as I am thirty-eight years old) with lots of electrons that are moving at almost five million miles per hour."

To complement temporary exhibitions at the Nasher, a group of works from the permanent collection is selected and shown in the adjacent gallery under the exhibition series title, *Foundations*. This September *Les Sièges des Mondes* is on view for the first time, on long-term loan, installed among those permanent collection sculptures chosen for their dialogue with *Groundswell: Women of Land Art* (September 23, 2023 – January 7, 2024). Kwade's interest in astronomy as a means of understanding our place in the universe aligns with that of many Land artists, including those participating in *Groundswell*, such as Lita Albuquerque, Nancy Holt, and Michelle Stuart, who each created works throughout their respective careers that endeavored to bring the contents of the sky down to the terrestrial plane.

Alicja Kwade (b. 1979). *Les Sièges des Mondes*, 2022. Bronze, Grey Filetto marble, Simil Cipollino marble, Green Amazonia granite, Rosa Portogallo marble, Red Breccia marble, Cloudy Palissandro marble, Azul Macaubus marble, Alps Green marble. Dimensions variable. Image courtesy of Scot Cohen

Permian Sea

BY LOGEN CURE

My father told me
once all this desert was vast inland sea:
all mollusks and trilobites,
amphibians bigger than my imagination.
He pointed westward,
explained the Guadalupe Mountains
are an enormous ancient reef.
All this, he said,
everything was water.
Then the sea stagnated,
temperature skyrocketed,
acid rained from the sky,
everything died:
the most massive extinction
in recorded history.
All those fossils,
oil now. Of course.
I was born here,
to the pasture,
spiny mesquites,
cracked red earth.
I imagined being born underwater,
born a suggestion
of what's to come,
something so basic
it could survive
when earth starts over,
a nautilus, maybe,
all tentacles, no memory.
I dreamed of it, the sea
before its horrific death,
before millions of years
sun blazed over lifeless desert.
Sometimes, waking I thought
I heard the waves.

Logen Cure (b. 1986). "Permian Sea" in *Welcome to Midland,* 2021, Deep Vellum Publishing. © Logen Cure