

Raphael Shirley

Selected Works (2006-2019)

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Octane

Neon, birch plywood.

2019

115" H x 86" W x 15" D'

In ***Octane*** the neon is affixed to two half circle tiered birch plywood set on the ground and leaning on the wall. The name ***Octane*** refers to velocity, dynamic force, high energy. In this work Shirley seeks to project these elements into the viewing space whilst maintaining quietness and even vulnerability. The piece lies exposed in all its parts and in a state of offering to the viewer, leaning discretely against the wall inviting the viewer to observe and share majestic force without imposing or overwhelming him or her. The rhythms of the tiered wood reveal light density and point towards minimalist language in painting and sculpture. Consistent with Shirley's previous work, she explores variations on simple forms, whilst simultaneously referring to explorations of cosmology and theology.





**12.6 *Black Star***

Neon, paint.

2014

13' diameter

In *12.6 Black Star* the neon is affixed directly to the supporting wall, a 13' black disk painted beneath the neon and directly on the wall. The black disk, although completely two-dimensional, combined with the adjacent light gives a perceptual impression of depth. Depending on the placement of the viewer the piece appears volumetric or flat, full or empty. The artwork, with exceptional minimal means transcends into the sublime and engulfs the viewer into another dimension.





12.6 *Lyrae/ Le Chiffre*

Neon. Looped Surround Sound/ Live performance (audio composition by Algis Kizys)
2017

Immersive environment variable size installation

12.6 *Lyrae* is an immersive light and sound installation with looped audio composition by Algis Kizys.

The **12.6 *Lyrae*** installation centers on Shirley's sculpture titled **12.6 *Black Star***. This work consists of a 12'6" diameter white neon circle mounted below an 4" aluminium ring. The neon circle and paired metal ring hang on a 30 degree angle above the viewer's head.

The white light of the neon circle, dims to darkness and brightens to full intensity in a slow gradual loop. The approximately 5 minute loop is run by an automated fader. Along with the slow pulse of the light, a set of hazers set at the mid-height of the ring send occasional bursts of "fog" towards the ceiling. The effect of the haze, erases the ceiling and seems to suspend the light ring in a void.

Following the slow appearance and erasure of the ring, Algis Kizys audio work, ***Halo Companion***, chimes and breathes with the light. Using a 4.1 surround sound with speakers arranged in a circle oriented under the sculpture, Kizys' 15 minute looped composition engulfs and rotates around the audience.



6.6 and 4

Neon, laminate plywoods (cherry, walnut, birch, oak), painted aluminium
2015-2017
79 3/4" diameter

Raphael Shirley's sculpture **6.6 and 4** is comprised of a concentric wooden ringed structure that expands outwards from the wall in a concave quarter sphere, a silver aluminium disk and neon. The wood is left bare frontally, gold leafed on its back and is backlit with a white neon strip. The whole is set by a silver metal disk hung on the wall behind. The central wood rings expand in diameter outward to build a shallow bowl shape.

Light, both in absence and abundance, pushes against the ripple-like structure of the central ring. Viewed frontally, there is an optical phenomenon akin to an eclipse, a dark celestial body dramatically lit in a solar glow.

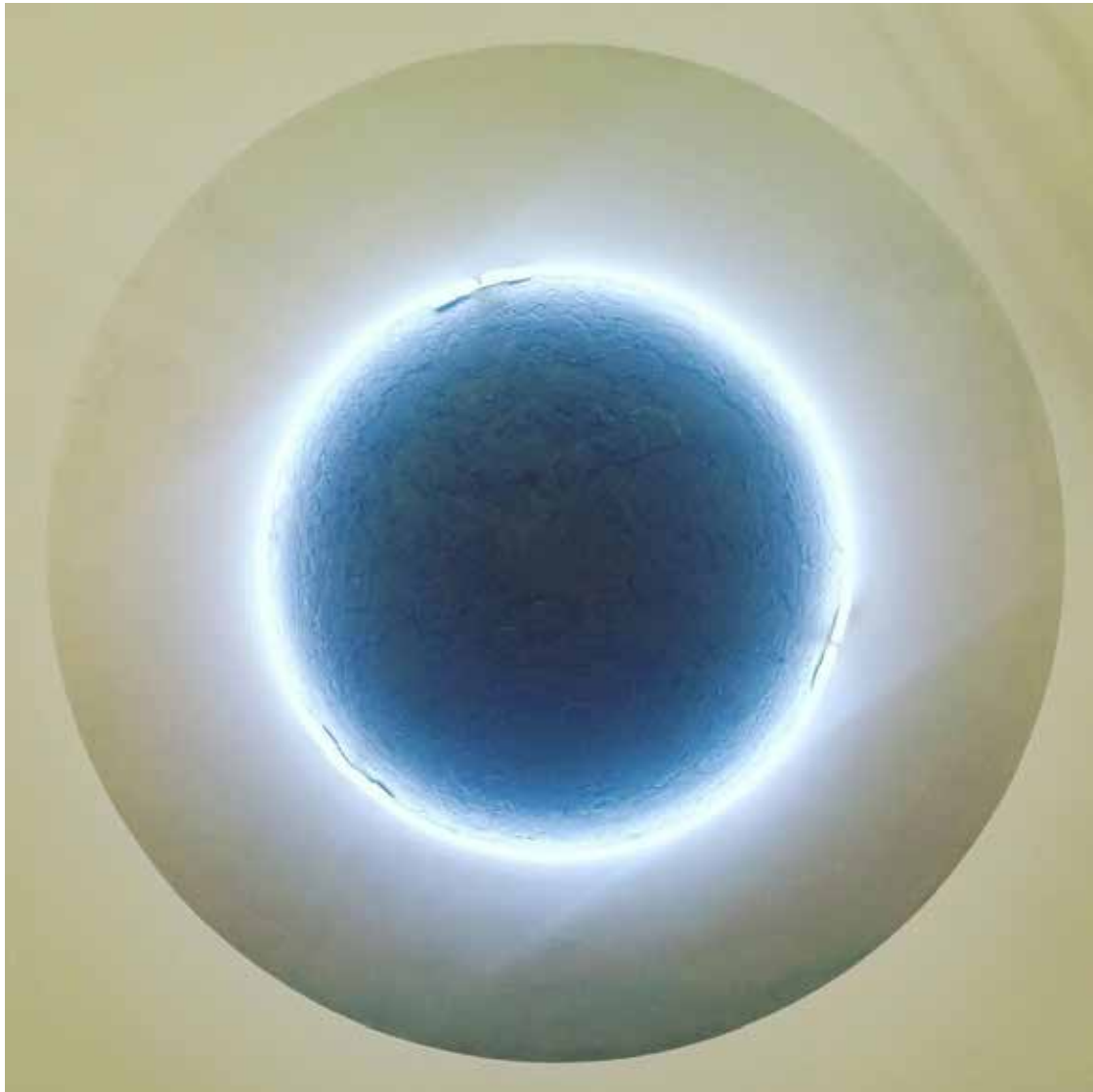
The work resonates with the ambient room appearing as texture, rhythm in the day and, as the light fades, as a presence from the beyond, dark, glowing and unknown. The artwork engages the surrounding space and viewer, propelling contemplations of meaning about the concept of 'totality' whether it be in art, religion and/or science.

6.6 and 4 is part of Shirley's light sculpture series inspired by the painting "The Creation of the World and the Expulsion from Paradise" by Giovanni di Paolo (1445).

In this series Shirley explores the relationship between the concept of totality or "the Universe" and how it can be represented in form and colour. By extracting the circular orb of di Paolo's painting, and playing with alternate colours; an original representation of a Ptolemaic Universe (where the earth is at the center of all) **6.6 and 4** begins to drift towards Eastern notions of the "whole" or "absolute" found in Zen Buddhism for example, or symbologies related to the form of the circle.





**67. *Double***

Neon, birch plywood, painted aluminium

2015-2017

79 3/4" diameter

67. *Double* is a combination of an outer aluminium disk and a second low-relief wood painted with a neon ring affixed to its face. The whole is perceptually concave or convex, dark or reflective depending on the viewing angle and ambient lighting. In this work the accumulated paint on the front surface is reminiscent of lunar craters or refers to abstractions of the Colour Field movement. The crisp white light and shimmering silver of the background evoke the sublime.







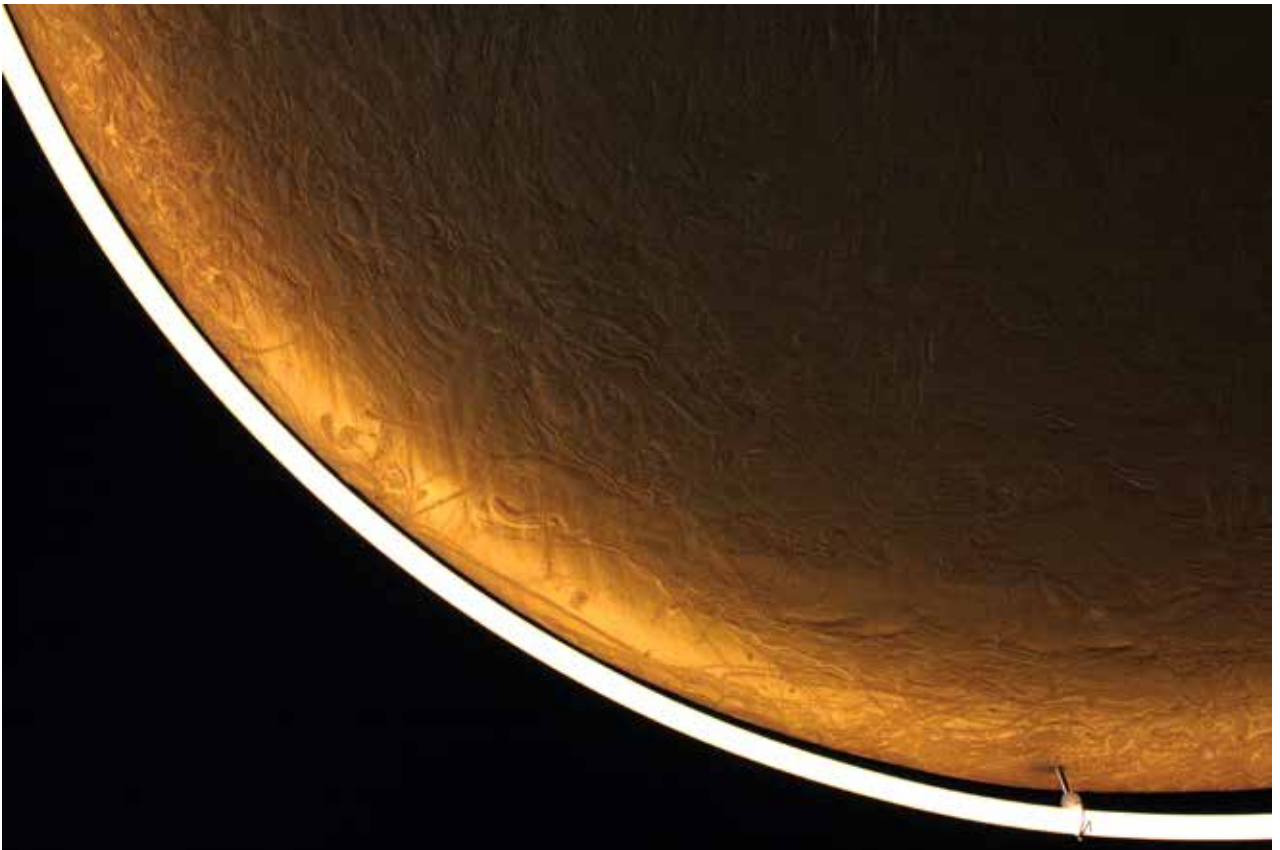
4 and 6 double

Neon, painted plywood, painted aluminium

2015-2017

79 3/4" diameter

Raphaela Shirley's sculpture, ***4 and 6 double*** is comprised of two flat painted disks and a circular exposed neon ring, playing with the dynamic tension of the two juxtaposed mediums of painting and sculpture. This low-relief work, quasi two-dimensional, and presented within a simplicity of means, such as "poured gold paint, neon, wood, dark flat paint" resonates into space as a suspended object of unfathomable dimensions, appearing as a floating orb in an infinitely dark sky. The work also plays between the perception of representation and abstraction as its visual language points in the direction of cosmology as well as towards the genre of minimal abstract paintings from 60's or 70's. In this way, by means of simplicity, Shirley sets into motion a dialogue between multiple opposites. The work, altered by ambient light, is a graceful, ever-evolving investigation in resonance.





***183 Double Eclipse***

Neon, birch plywood, paint

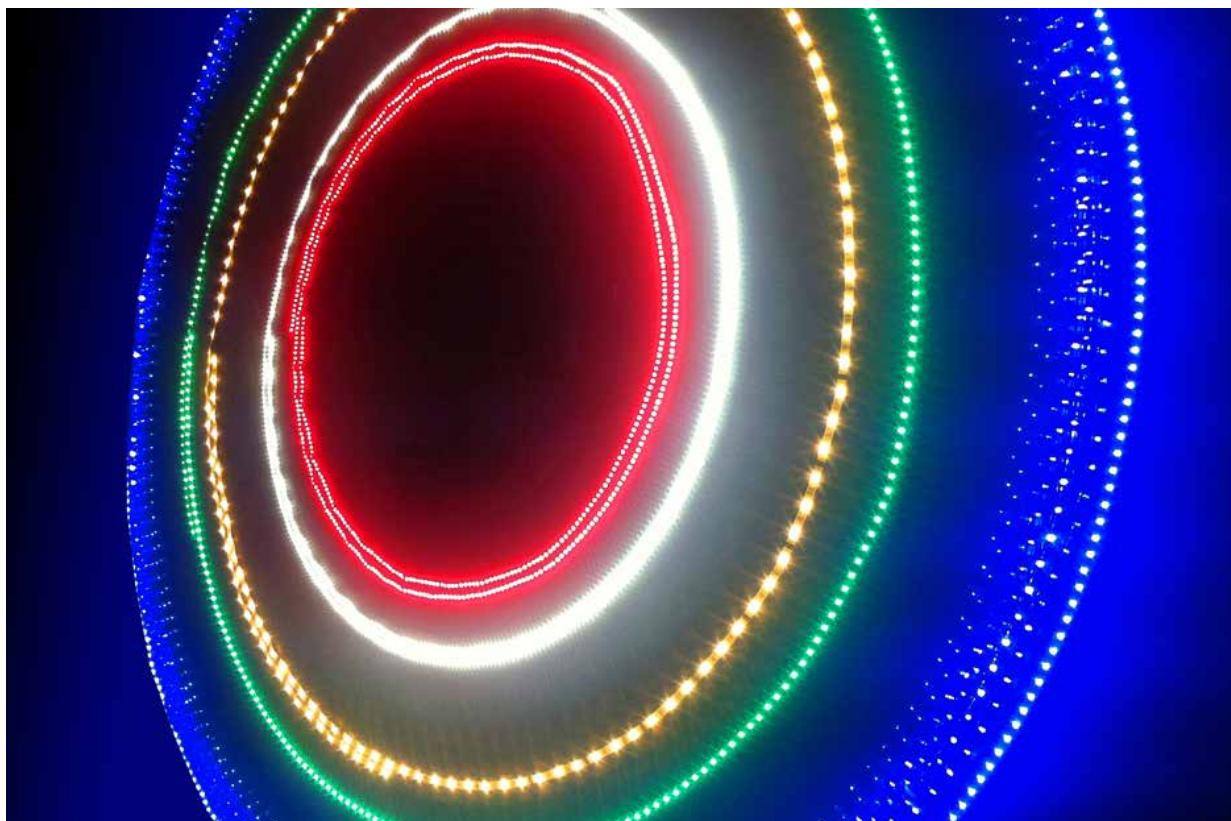
2014

6' diameter

(Private collection)

183 Double Eclipse is perceptually concave or convex, dark or reflective depending on the angle of view and ambient lighting. Within the artwork's setting, surrounding glass windows, reflects the piece, delivering multiples of itself suspended and interposed against the swiss landscape in the background. The double disk, and its iridescent silver and waxed wood surface, shifts according to the environmental light. This work is part of the series neon wall sculptures addressing cosmology, religion and minimal art.



***Light Shot on a Bender***

Waterproof LED strips, Pine plywood, water misting system.

2011

7' diameter

Light Shot on a Bender is the first of a series of works based on the painting by Giovanni di Paolo "The Creation of the World and the Expulsion From Paradise" 1445. *Light Shot on a Bender* translates the "universe" element of Giovanni's painting, (a Pre-Copernican representation), into a contemporary light vortex. The architectural LED lights have been installed and arranged by hand, evoking embroidery or Masai jewellery. The surrounding cloud of mist fluctuates blurring and revealing the work's light patterns according to the wind.



Shooting Stair

Low Powered Lasers, Fibreglass encasement, water misting system

2009

25' W x 4'H x 4'D

Installation consisting of four red, two green and one blue low powered lasers mounted in a 3'x 1'x 3 1/3' waterproofed fibreglass enclosure; high-pressure water fogging system (pumps, hoses, nozzles with a water source); and one glass light-target. ***Shooting Stair*** is activated in low or evening light and projects six light beams through a cloud of mist, sculpting a master three-tiered ephemeral stairway in space. Depending on weather conditions and the viewers' position related to the sculpture, the piece shifts in shape, intensity, and color. Working within a minimalist visual vocabulary, ***Shooting Stair*** draws on artistic and scientific traditions to examine perspective and perception of space. Shooting Stair's presence within a garden or outdoor space brings representations of mystery and paradise of medieval and renaissance paintings into a present day context and into a live space with contemporary technology.



Jewels of Kvinesdal

Xenon light, cement, resin silicone, stainless steel

2009-2011

120' H x 30' W

Public Art installation commissioned by the Norwegian Arts Council and the Utsikten Art Center Kvinesdal, Norway

Jewels of Kvinesdal is a multi-media sculpture set on the Utsikten Kunstsenter's outdoor arena, overlooking the Vest-Agder fjord in the south of Norway. The installation was composed of handcrafted cast resin, silicone, cement, and clay sculptures of variable sizes (from 40 cm to 5 cm high and wide), a heated 9 meter diameter stainless steel mirror-base and a "sky-beam" placed on the center's roof encompassing the whole of the Kunstsenter as part of the art work. The piece can be seen from afar appearing as a minimal light sculpture, and then, up close, reveals a figurative installation depicting a miniature abandoned city, exposed under an unearthly bright light.

***Spinning Cloud/Shooting Circle***

Architectural lights, water misting system

2013-2015

40' diameter

Spinning Cloud/Shooting Circle is an immersive land and light sculpture first shown during the Flint Public art Festival “Free City” at the Chevy in the Hole site in Flint, then again in Callicoon, New York for the Art walk 2015. Comprised of 1000’ of lights arranged on the ground in form of a spiral, a 12’ diameter mist cloud at the center, it invites the viewer to enter from the “finish point”/ outer ring of the spiral. The path of lights lead to a grounded mist cloud at the center, the wind pushing it as a veil.



Arctic Light Series

C-print mounted on aluminium/ archival inkjet prints

2009-2010

Dimensions variable

Arctic Lights documents Raphaele's 14 day expedition on a sail boat to the Arctic Circle, October 2009. During her voyage, Shirley transposed the idea of the light sculpture - first used in *Shooting Stair, 2009* - to the icy, nighttime Arctic waterscape using a makeshift "light brush" manned by an operator on a zodiac boat. While stationed on the expedition's vessel, Raphaele used time-lapse photography to capture the movements of the light as it sculpted across the surface of the water, forming three-dimensional structures such as disks, squares and circles of various sizes.

Seven photographs from the resulting documentation have been shown at Dorfman Projects in New York city, produced as an edition of 7 prints each at 50"x33" C-Prints mounted on aluminium.



Elevation in Time

C-Prints, speakers, cherry plywood, amplifiers, edison light bulbs, media player, mylar.

2007

8' Hx 4'W x 4'D

Elevation in Time is a two channel sound and light sculpture.

Configured externally as a three sided polished wood box, the fourth side reveals an entrance to the art work. Mini speakers and lights hang from a mirrored inner ceiling in a whimsical yet shimmering array, a marble floor links three digital C-prints that cover the inner walls of the sculpture.

The photographs, intentionally playing on perception and perspectives, give the impression that space is folding inwards within the artwork, both 3 dimensional and 2 dimensional in their appearance, one has a double take in order to confirm what one is looking at, actual steps of a roman bath or amphitheatre or a two dimensional Escher type environment?

As the viewer enters the artwork to get a closer look, he/she finds himself entering into a seemingly private space, visually and audibly isolated from the outer exhibition space. The viewer is then immersed in an environment of yellow light and complex interweaving analogue and digital sounds, all which seem to have quasi transportational qualities.

As one's references are de-stabilized and slowly reset to the inner logic of the artwork, a surprising white light is triggered on/off by the viewer's movements, upsetting perceptual space and expectations further, propelling more questions. Is this a time machine, a mediation room, a loudspeaker for the afterlife or a new type of conceptual shower?

The artwork transports the viewer without he/she having to move creating a sanctuary for reflection and play.





***E-in-T2***

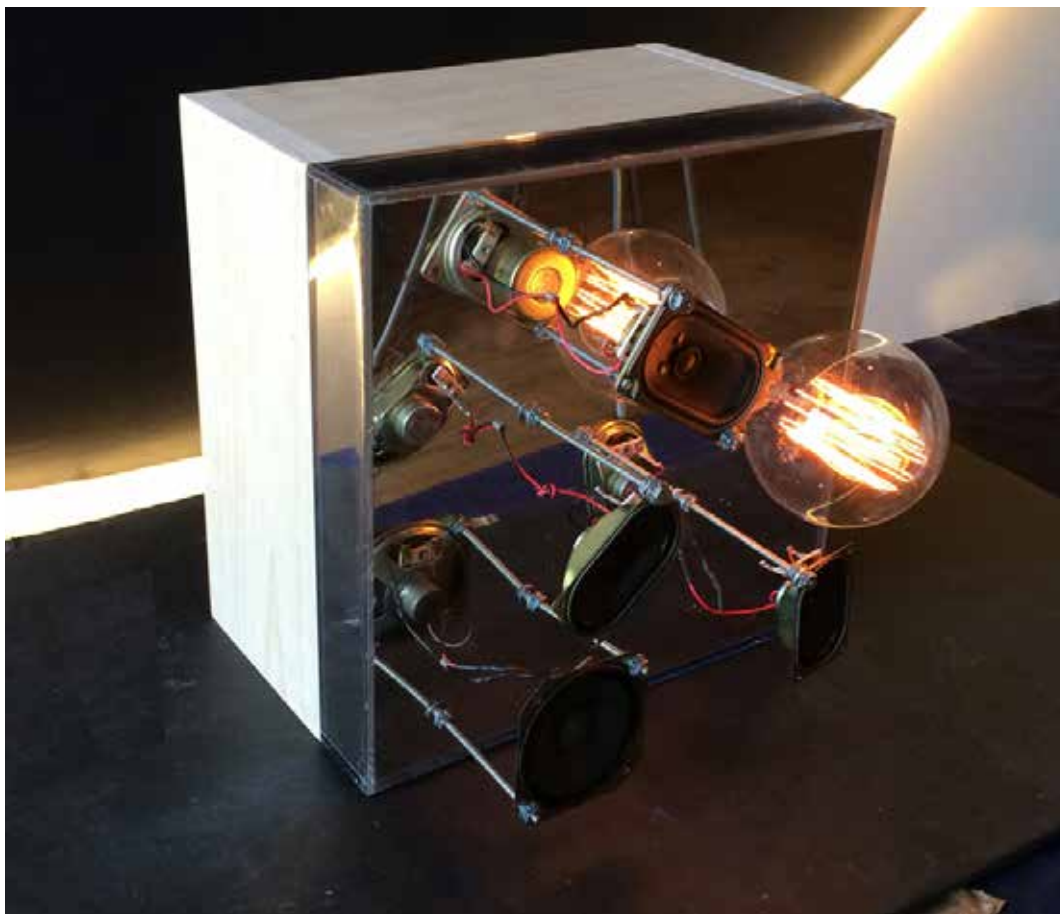
Speakers, wood, amplifiers, edison light bulbs, media players, mylar.

2013

40"H x 40"W x 4"D

E-in-T2 is a two channel light and sound sculpture. The channels are divided between two tracks emitting to two groups of speakers. The sound-tracks loop and are of different lengths, overlapping randomly. Track one is composed of a mix of scholars and artists recorded from Youtube. This includes, Arthur C. Clark, James Joyce, Jorge Luis Borges, Carl Jung, Ai Wei Wei, Naom Chomsky and Julian Assange. On the other track light piano mixes with stretches of silence, excerpts from a recording of a Nam June Paik piano performance.

As a whole the sculpture projects itself into the space in which it resides and reflects the environment back into itself (mirror). As such *E-in-T2* reads as a incongruous instrument generating indeterminate compositions and feedback through a transmissional blend of chance sound and light wave lengths.

***E-in-T3***

Speakers, wood, amplifiers, edison light bulbs, media player, mylar. 2014

12"H x 12"W x 4"D

(Private collection)

E-in-T3 is a single channel light and sound sculpture. Composed of analogue technology, a household light bulb, simple mini speakers, an amplifier and a looped sound track, its unusual association of materials and auditory quality transgress the space of the everyday.

Seemingly providing a utilitarian function (lighting), quiet whispering of voices and sounds draw the viewer into the work for further investigation. Quasi inaudible, the sounds and voices seem to emanate from some otherworldly space, the mirror box acting as a channel for otherwise imperceptible communications.

**100 Pink Smoke Flares**

100 - 200 smoke flares, wood, fuse

2015 - Present

Dimensions variable

A series of ephemeral outdoor installations consisting of 100 to 200 smoke flares lit simultaneously, temporarily masking the landscape behind it. The ephemeral color mass created upon full ignition of all the flares marks the appearance and disappearance of natural and urban settings as they are affected by man's hand and societal changes. In these installations Shirley reflects on landscapes in distress, nature's beauty and timelessness and general states of emergency in the age of Anthropocene. The fluidity of the work, incorporating the site in which it exists, weather conditions, as well as the audience and its reaction, adds indeterminacy to each intervention augmenting the tension and poignancy of the experience.

The work consisting of the event and installation itself; video and photographic documentation become an extension of the live experience. In this way **100 Pink Smoke Flares** refers both to landscape painting (J.M.W. Turner, Monet) as well as to site specific interventions (Robert Smithson, Andy Goldsworthy, Roman Signer).

100 Pink smoke flares has been realized in New York at Hunter's Point South (2015), at the Queens museum for the "Chance Ecologies" exhibition (2016), in Narrowsburg, New York in the forest on private property (2016), in Flint, Michigan for the Flint Public Art Festival (2017) and finally in Callicoon, New York for "Activating Callicoon--Algorithmic Landscapes of the Western Catskills" (2018).

Above the installation in 2016 at Hunter's Point South, Long Island City for "Chance Ecology" site specific interventions.



Above the installation at the Queens Museum for "Chance Ecologies" exhibition (2016)



Above the installation in Narrowsburg, New York (2016)



Above video stills from drone documentation of the installation for the "Free City" exhibition in Flint, Michigan (2017)



/e-media-c\

Two 6' diameter (1.8m) Parabolic Mirrors. Flash Lights

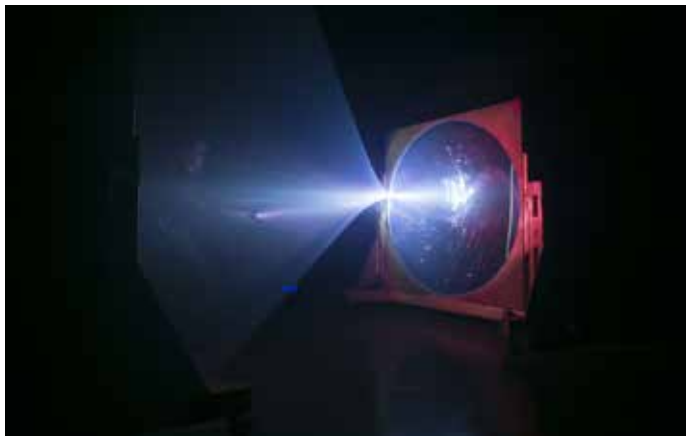
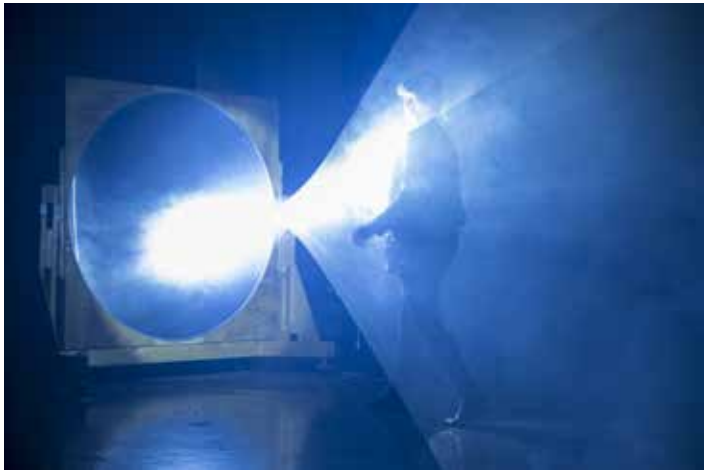
Live performance in collaboration with David Watson (bagpipes), Peter Zummo (trombone) and Kevin Shea (drums)

2018

Minimalism plus a whole lot more"

P. Zummo resonance, response, reflection.

In a new collaborative work titled /e-media-c\, four artists, Raphael Shirley, David Watson, Kevin Shea and Peter Zummo, perform with the physicality of sound, light and time. The live work is set in the bracketed space of two mirrored parabolic disks. The large rotating parabolics function as set and sculpture as well as lo-fi speakers and projectors. With the parabolics as the fulcrum and the artist's respective instruments as levers, Shirley, Watson and Zummo move space with percussive light and looping harmonics that leap across the performance hall. They shift sound and light in thick resonance within an economy of means. Each artist performs with basic tools: bagpipes for David Watson, a trombone for Peter Zummo, drums for Kevin Shea and light for Raphael Shirley. Using analogue approaches to media and in the lineage of La Monte Young, John Cage, Robert Irwin and Elaine Summers, the group seeks experimentation and unpredictably.





Cracked Arena

Birch plywood. 2013-2017

7' diameter

Cracked Arena is an interactive modular artwork.

Conceived with the concept of the “Ptolemaic Universe” in mind, a Universe where the planets, stars and sun rotate around the Earth, Raphaele refers in this to work to the change in cultural, religious and scientific representations of the world from ancient times to the present.

The piece assembled into one unit is reminiscent of a stadium or arena, a primary space for human gathering throughout the ages. In separated parts, civilized space is ruptured, opened up, standing as a fracture in the fabric of time and culture.

As our society becomes unhinged by industrial progress, our values re configure. As science opens up new horizons, traditions alter in irreversible ways, new forms and new perspectives unfold, keeping knowledge still of things past.



Modular

Acrylic Gesso on canvas

2006

18' W x 14' H / 21 interchangeable panels

Modular consists of 20 canvases assembled into one composition of variable layouts.

Inspired by the process of Chinese zen calligraphy, game aesthetics and the idea of space, each panel was created with a single-stroke gesture, painted horizontally on the floor and then raised to join the group of other similar paintings. Hung vertically and adjacent to each other on a wall these form a larger tableau of assembled singular pieces. The final composition like an open-ended puzzle, is subject to variable arrangements.

Using a lead pencil for lines (limits, border, breaks) and a large brush with black gesso for pictorial planes (areas), the transposition of the diverse visual languages or signs on the canvas generate a perceptual tension, an interplay of delineations of space, positive and negative.

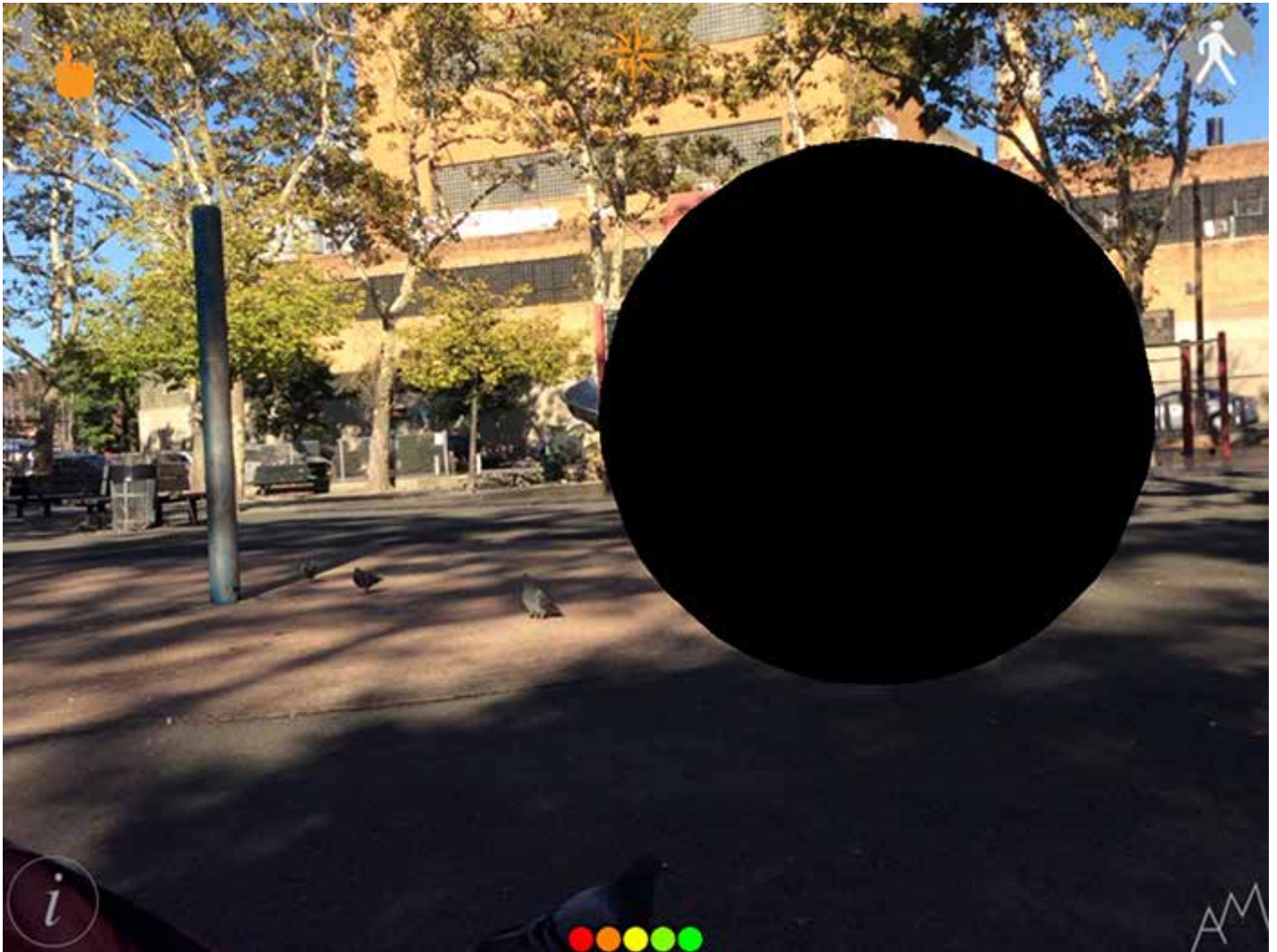
***Bains Romains***

Bronze

2007

8" x 4" x 4" (20cm x 10cm x 10cm)

Bains Romains is part of a series of bronze sculptures Shirley produced in 2007. Generated from collected Styrofoam packaging, the pieces were made using the Styrofoam as a positive mold. The resulting solid bronze objects deceive as they appear at first as painted theatrical props but upon closer observation a perceptual shift occurs. The extreme weight of the bronze is in sharp contrast with the source material, Styrofoam, the shape now divorced from it's original purpose of weightless form. The transition from styrofoam to bronze leads to a formal reconsideration, the object having shifted from packaging to architectural model, abstract sculpture with an emphasis on space and scale.



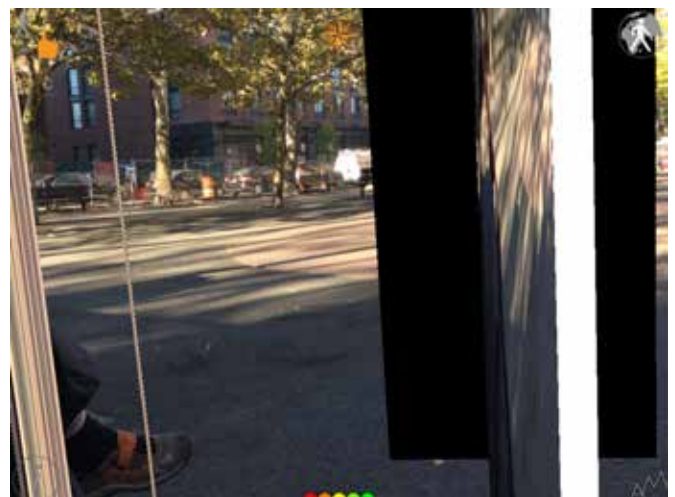
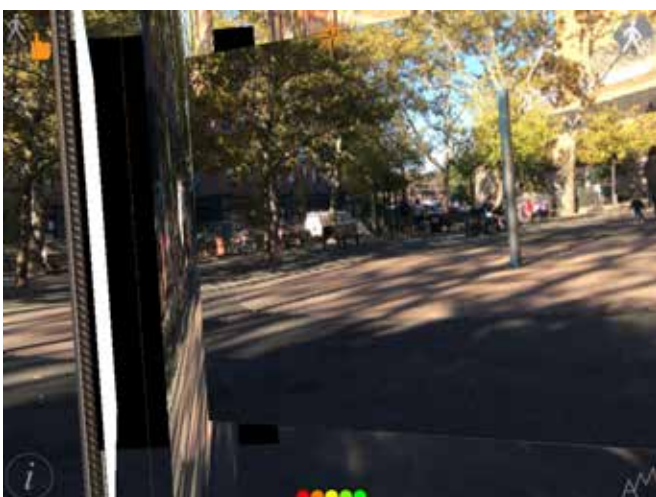
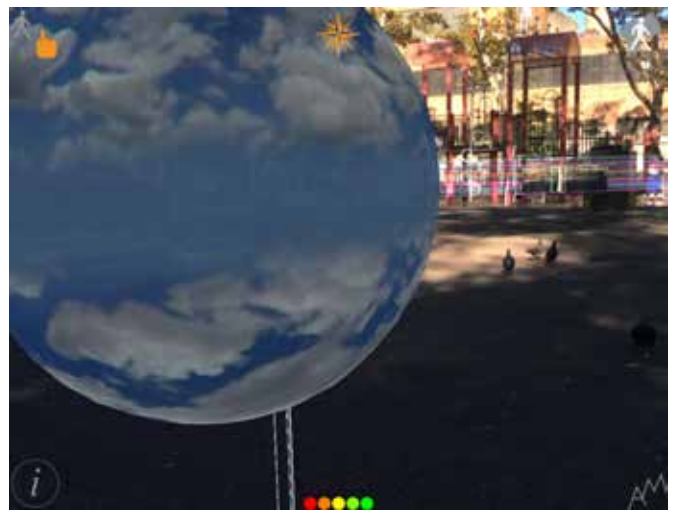
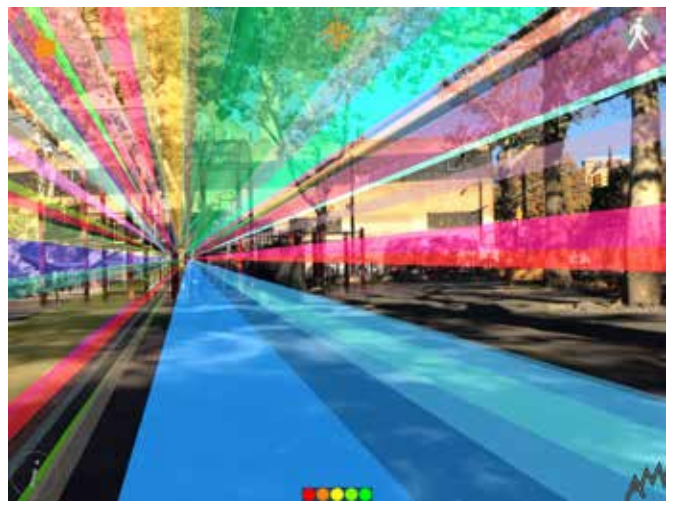
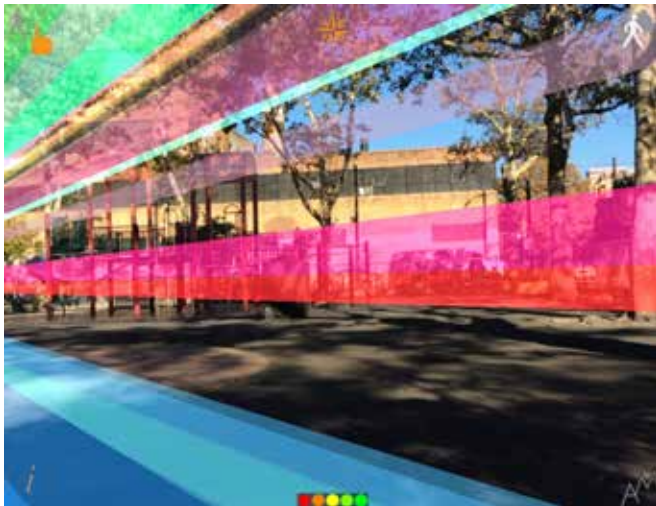
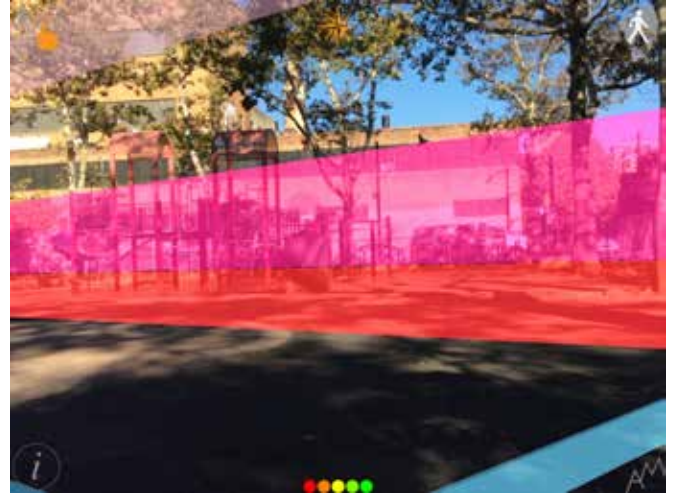
Infinite Structures

iPhone/ iPad application

2012-2017

size variable

Infinite Structures is an immersive augmented reality (AR) architectural sculpture exhibition spread out over the area a city public square. This “solo exhibition: of Shirley’s imaginary large-scale artworks exists assisted through the vehicle of technology in a material world and can be transposed to any location. The viewer using an iPad or iPhone can explore the sculpture exhibition by walking in actual space and interacting with the works, walking into them, looking up or down at them in space and listening to their eerie sounds created by Algis Kizys. With ***Infinite Structures*** one can discover infinite possibilities with playing with virtual monumental sculptures that can be minupulated by the tip of one’s hands, crossed through or entered into. Go on a treasure hunt in the city or in nature or re-discover all the rooms in your house overlaid with luminous virtual creations.



Above screen shots of the application in action.



Stargaze In Sandnes

HD Video

2010

14mins

Edition of 5 + 1 AP

Commissioned by the Norwegian Arts Council for the 3 person exhibition Sandnes 2160 curated by Per Platou.

In this work Raphaele explores architecture, scale and time-references in a cinematic context by combining original 8mm and 16mm films from the families of Sandnes, Norway, topographical maps sourced from surveys of the region and a virtual “superstructure” drawn from her own sculptures. Shirley superimposes these elements by means of digital collage, merging moments of the past, present and future and compressing, through editing and animation techniques, their original family histories into an eclectic universe. Here living characters navigate in part-real / part-fictitious settings, leading the viewer through a charged yet indeterminate narrative.

*Collaborators for this project include **NewMan's Land** (Norway, for animation), Julius Kowlowski and Joel Beck (New York, for sound and art direction).*





Raphaele Shirley is a French-American multi-media artist. She lives and works in New York City. She studied fine arts at the Beaux Arts of Aix-en-Provence, France and then moved to New York City in 1993. Her practice ranges includes painting, photography, immersive audio-visual and light installations, public art, social interventions, collaborative works and performance.

Shirley's solo exhibitions include: **12.6 Lyrae**, The Chimney, New York (2016) **0910 Light Shots**, Chelsea Art Museum, New York (2010); **Arctic Lights**, Dorfman Projects, New York (2010); **Jewels of Kvinesdal**, Kvinesdal, Norway (2009); **Sunken City**, Marc de Puechredon Gallery, Basel, Switzerland (2008); **Sunken City Episode II**, Emily Harvey Foundation, New York, NY (2008); **Video Art in the Age of the Internet**, Chelsea Art Museum (2007).

Shirley's work has been featured in group exhibitions including: **Chance Ecologies**, Queens Museum (2016); **Free City**, Flint Public Art Project, Flint, Michigan (2017/2013); **The Luminous Surface**, Salisbury University, Maryland, USA (2015); **Magnetic North: Artists of the Arctic Circle**, UBS Art Gallery, New York, NY (2014); **Sandnes 2160**, Museum of Moving Image, Queens, NY (2013); **[PAM] Cyland Festival**, Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, Russia (2009); **Drift**, National Center for Contemporary Art, Moscow, Russia (2008); New York; **Video As Urban Condition**, Museum of Modern Art Linz, Linz, Austria (2007).

Selected fairs and biennials include: Context New York (2017); Featured Project /Scope, New York and Miami (2005-2009); Docks Art fair/ Lyon (2009); The Dark Fair/Swiss Institute (2008); Mykonos Biennale (2015/2013); Erased Walls, Mediations Biennale, Berlin, Germany (2010); 12th International Media Art Biennale WRO 07, National Museum, Wroclaw, Poland (2008); Art Basel/Miami (2006); Waterways, Independents / 51st Venice Biennale; Venice, Italy (2005).

She has also been a founding member of several collaborative projects including The New York International Fringe Festival (1997-2000) and [Pam] Perpetual Art Machine (2005-2010)

Shirley has been the recipient of grants from the Norwegian Arts Council for commissioned works in Norway (2009/2010). In 2009 and 2010 she was selected to be one of the participants of the sailboat residency "The Arctic Circle" run by the Farm Foundation. In 2016 she was a one-year resident with her collaborative project 3by3by3 (with Rhys Chatham and GH Hovagimyan) at HarvestWorks in New York.