

PHASE GALLERY

Kristin Posehn *Echo's Loom*

01/04/24 - 02/16/24

Opening Reception: January 4th, 6-9pm

Phase Gallery
1718 Albion Street
Los Angeles, CA 90031



Phase Gallery is pleased to present *Echo's Loom*, an exhibition of new works by Los Angeles-based artist Kristin Posehn. *Echo's Loom* continues Posehn's exploration of the history of lace and its links to early forms of computing, digital art, and the Light and Space movement.

Lace is broadly defined as an open, web-like fabric, and its origins can be traced to the ancient practice of creating nets. As early examples of lace, Egyptian paintings depict garments of a fine net mesh, Homer describes veils of net made from gold, and Isaiah mentions "they that work in fine flax and they that weave networks." Because handmade lace is exceptionally labor intensive to produce, more than any other form of weaving, it is a network not just of thread, but of time, attention, and value.

The histories of weaving and computing are deeply intertwined. Ada Lovelace famously stated that her Analytical Engine—an early prototype of the computer—"weaves algebraic patterns." Lace patterns are algorithmic meshes, and their extraordinary delicacy and increasing dematerialization prior to the Industrial Revolution can be seen as an early anticipation of the ever-widening nets yet to come—the Internet, the cartographic enmeshment of the globe in GPS, and today's neural nets.

Echo's Loom also references and recasts the Greek myth of Echo. In the author Longus' account, Pan—the rowdy, lustful, half-man and half-goat god of the Arcadian wilderness—envied the nymph Echo's musical ability and fell in love with her. When Echo rebuffed his advances, he sent shepherds in pursuit of her, who transformed her into a virtual, ever-present voice that carpets the Earth. Many commentators have regarded Echo negatively, and focus primarily on the figures with which she was most often linked, Pan and Narcissus. But one could also venture that she made a leap that neither Pan nor Narcissus were capable of following—the leap into a reflective, vibratory, and dematerialized consciousness. Her unique capacity to exist as sound, a wave, perhaps in some sense foreshadowed discoveries and developments of the 20th century, such as quantum physics, mirror neurons, and the information age in which we are immersed.

At the center of the exhibition is an architectural installation composed of thousands of individually cut pieces of mirror woven into lace. Suspended from the gallery's rafter and beam structure, the work echoes its environment in an ever-shifting choreography.

Echo's Loom references historical forms of lace-making, including *punto de aria*, a form of 17th century geometric lace so delicate and insubstantial that it translates to *stitches in the air*. Here the structure of lace is simplified to a binary—alternating hooks and loops. Instead of traditional lace patterns, the work's dangling strands of reflective hooks and loops rhythmically increase and decrease in both size and complexity, algorithmically encoding waves.

A new series of paintings accompany the installation, and are reflected and activated by it. Each is composed of a combination of historical lace patterns, AI generated lace, and algorithmic ASCII image-to-text processing. Delicate waves of mesh lace seem to float above a gradient ground, as if to both conceal and reveal screens of diaphanous color.



Kristin Posehn is a Los Angeles-based artist working between conceptual sculpture, architecture, writing, and painting. She received a Ph.D. in Sculpture from the Winchester School of Art, Winchester, UK, and held a two-year residency at the Van Eyck, Maastricht, NL. Her work has been commissioned and exhibited by institutions internationally, including the MAK Center for Art and Architecture, CA, Bonnefanten Museum, NL, Netwerk Center for Contemporary Art, BE, Museum De Paviljoens, NL, Aspex, UK, Kunstmuseum Luxembourg, LU, Brooklyn Historical Society, NY, and other venues. The Center for Art + Environment at the Nevada Museum of Art maintains a collection of materials from her architectural installations. She has taught at Oxford University, Woodbury University, Winchester School of Art, and Duke University.

Posehn's short stories and essays have been published in literary journals including *The White Review* and *Conjunctions*. *Reclamation*, her first book, is a novella about an artwork. Her *Substack* was recently selected as a 2024 Featured Publication.

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