

**Jonathan
Bruce Williams**
*Let's All
Abandon Reality
Together*

Sept 12–Oct 25, 2025
Kai Matsumiya
264 Canal St # 5E
New York, NY 10013

Let's
*All
Abandon
Reality*
Together



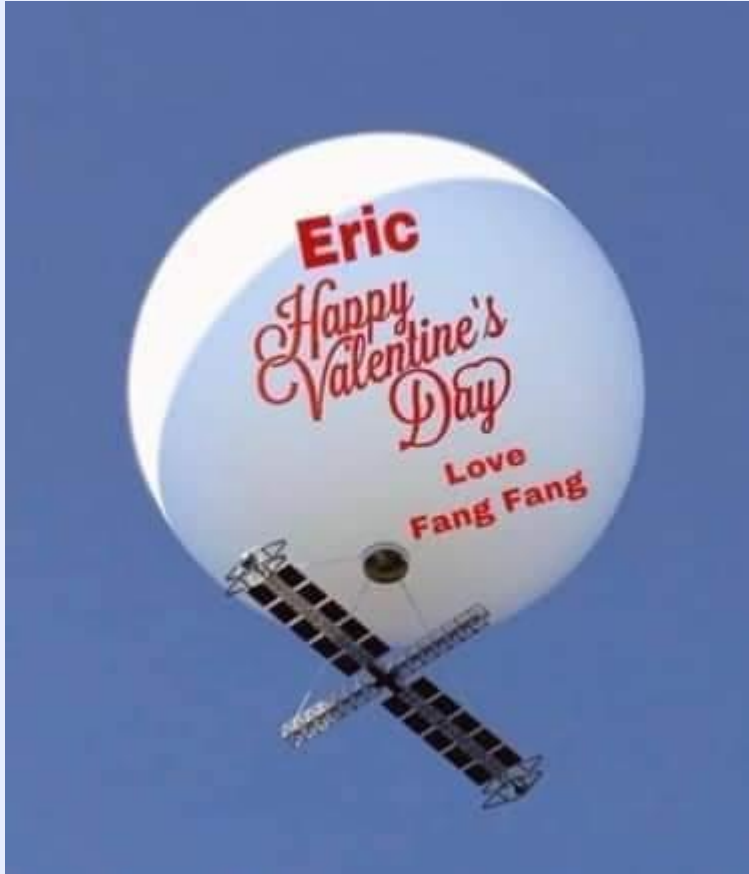
Dept of
Transformation

Kai Matsumiya





Let's All Abandon Reality Together, 2024
73.7 × 61.7 × 10.6 cm
(29 × 24.3 × 4 in.)



The artwork *Let's All Abandon Reality Together* appropriates a meme that circulated in early 2023 during what became known as the “Chinese spy balloon incident.” The slow drift of a Chinese surveillance balloon across U.S. airspace—its exact purpose still undisclosed—further unsettled an already fractured nation in the wake of COVID-19. Right-wing media and MAGA-aligned figures quickly seized on the episode as evidence of President Joe Biden’s weakness, attempting to weaponize online culture as political ammunition.

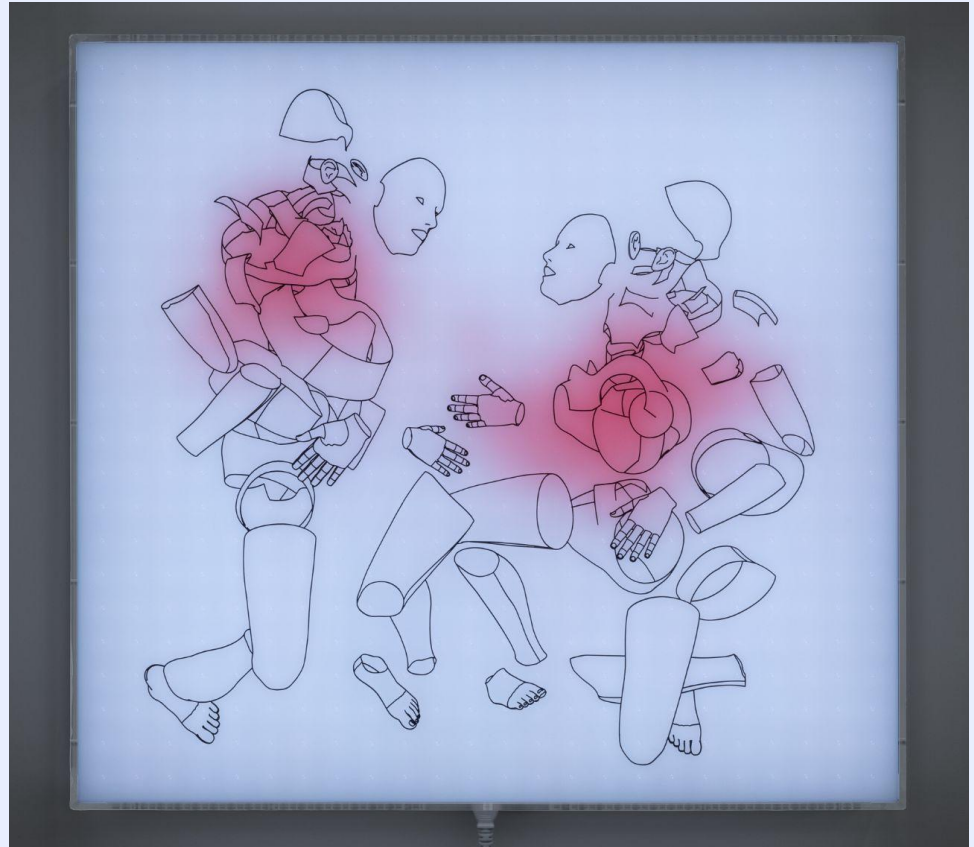
In the original meme, “Eric” refers to Eric Swalwell, the Democratic congressman from California, and “Fang Fang” to Christine Fang, a suspected Chinese intelligence operative with whom he had earlier ties. At the time the balloon was shot down in February 2023, Swalwell was still under House Ethics Committee review over this matter. The meme was amplified by Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene, a figure known for theatrical distortions of reality. The Ethics Committee ultimately closed its inquiry a few months later, finding no evidence of misconduct.

The artwork re-configures the meme through the use of an artist made 3D model of the balloon and its suspended surveillance rig, assembled from reference images, with the text of the meme replaced by the show’s title ‘Let’s All Abandon Reality Together’. Serving as a cover image, it reframes the meme as a contemporary recollection of the Wizard of Oz—an invitation to arrive into and also depart the confusing, alternate realities that have been inhabited by us all.

Together Apart is the final outcome of an early composition made by the artist while prototyping the lightbox system at the beginning of 2024. This prototype was made at a much smaller scale than the final work; the resonance and meaning of this composition warranted a larger version. It shows two figures in a shared state of collapse, attraction, repulsion, confusion, and perhaps a potential embrace. The animation evokes a pulsation, like a heartbeat or emotional overwhelm, that feels disjointed and uncoordinated at moments and synchronous and harmonious at others.

The second piece sequentially on view in the exhibition, it emphasizes the aspect of being “Together” in the overarching show title *Let’s All Abandon Reality Together*. Contemporary relationships, both personal and professional, have acquired a new quality of uncertainty and fragmentation in the midst of our unstable world. This image was composed to evoke that kind of interpersonal instability, while also trying to suggest a feeling of intimacy, connection, and hope.

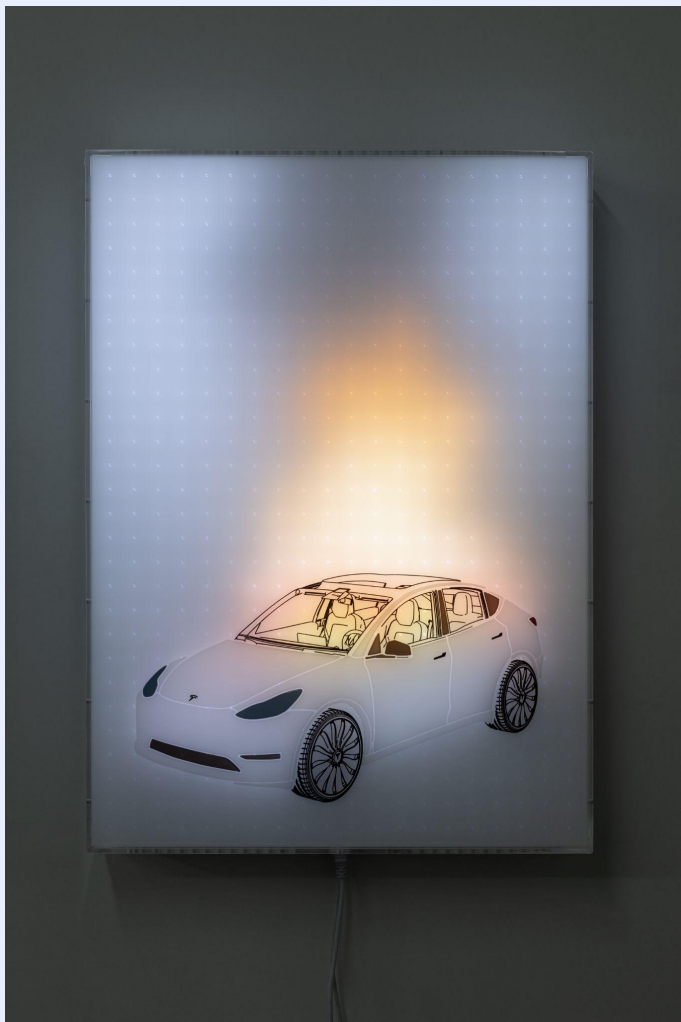
The title *Together Apart* was chosen after considering its reversal, *Apart Together*. Either phrasing seems to outline the qualities of living in a socially mediated world, where physical and emotional proximity and distance have collapsed into a universally unstable state. There are no reference materials or specific compositional sources for this image; it was composed in a 3D modeling program and processed using the artist's content algorithm.



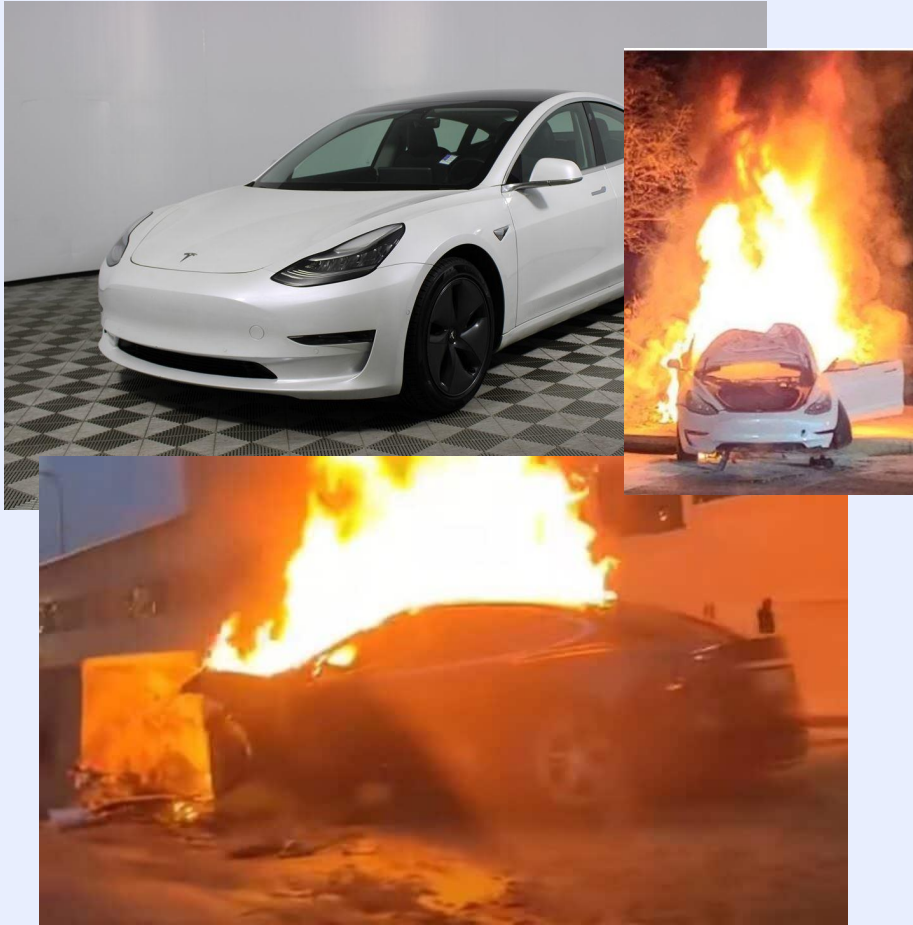
Above: *Together Apart*, 2025

87.8 × 73.8 × 10.2 cm

(26.7 × 29 × 4 in.)



Tesla On Fire, 2025
85.8 × 61.8 × 10.7 cm
(33.8 × 24.3 × 4.2 in.)



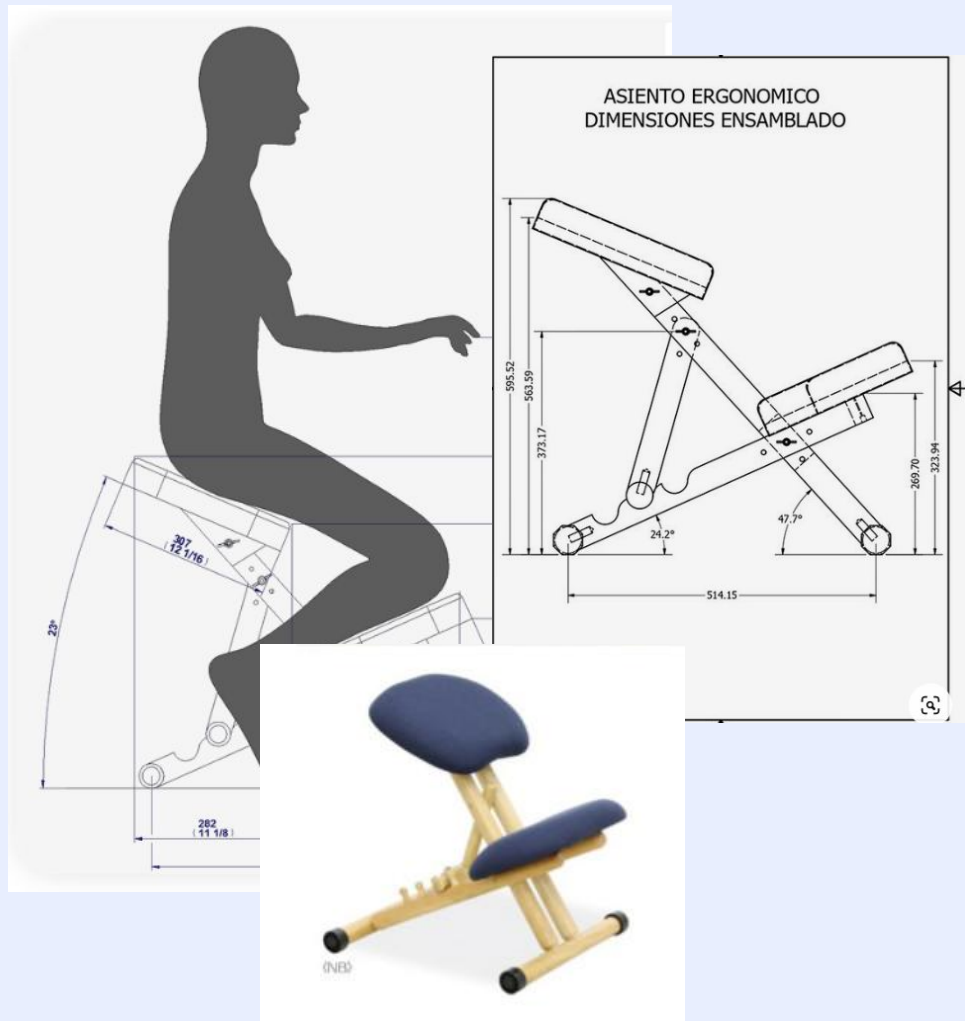
Tesla On Fire depicts exactly that, a 2020's era Tesla model 3 that has simply been set ablaze. In the lightbox animation, flames flicker and fume before becoming acrid electronic smoke. The burning car is an iconic image of the 2020's decade, the frequency of their immolation skyrocketed amidst the protests of 2020, as well as during Elon Musk's directorship of the absurd Department of Government Efficiency in 2025. As news coverage of these spectacles abated, the artist started to ask why these flames ever had to be extinguished. Could an image of them not just be alight in perpetuity, a kind of eternal flame?

The composition of the work differs from the reference images gathered while the piece was being researched, as pictures and videos depicting teslas on fire typically show them in strange circumstances, locations or in the aftermath of intentional vandalism. A decision was made to compose the image in a way more akin to a glossy magazine advertisement, showing the car in a three-quarters view as if it were still capable of being sold. It is easy to forget that over the last ten years, Tesla ownership was a sign of progressivism and environmentalism amongst liberal elite, even including Alexandria Ocasio Cortez. All it took for this symbolism to erode was for Elon Musk to change his politics.

This work has a paradoxically soothing quality, the flicker of the flames evoke a feeling like being at rest in front of the safety and warmth of a controlled fire in a fireplace. A power switch on the work allows the user to easily turn it on an off as desired, sublimating potential rage at the modern moment into a safe, soothing alternative, all without making a molotov cocktail. Amongst other works with more obvious therapeutic intentions, the artist considers *Tesla On Fire* to be the most cathartic work in the show.



Pain Body, 2024
109.9 x 73.7 x 10.5cm
(43.25 x 29 x 4 in.)



Pain Body is another image of a collapsing figure, related to the composition *Together Apart*. It shows a figure in a state of overwhelm and confusion, attempting to manage the outward explosion of an internal creative force—something guttural and innate being manifested on its own. It is a primary image of the artist's creative experience, one of intuition, technology, and intensity. A kind of self-portrait, *Pain Body* was the first work made for the show that sought to reflect the artist's internal state.

The title is borrowed from Eckhart Tolle, the widely popular writer of Oprah-adjacent spiritual self-help manuals. Tolle describes the Pain Body as “an energy field, almost like an entity, that has become temporarily lodged in your inner space. It is life energy that has become trapped, energy that is no longer flowing. Of course, the pain-body is there because of certain things that happened in the past. It is the living past in you, and if you identify with it, you identify with the past.”

This new-age concept relates to the integration of traumatic experiences and management of PTSD, and for the artist, the work of making a piece like *Pain Body* aligns with the process of living with these personal afflictions. Rather than repressing such an image out of confusion or a lack of understanding of what it might mean, the artist's intuitive image practice allows the picture to emerge, almost involuntarily.

For this work, a 3D model was made of the kneeling chair he uses when working on various tasks at the computer or in his studio, such as designing, soldering, or assembling. The kneeling chair was originally designed in 1979 as a core-strengthening strategy, requiring the user to rely on their abdominal muscles for upright seating instead of the back support of a conventional chair. These chairs are often prescribed for chronic back pain.

Stereoscope, 2025
97.7 × 49.8 × 10.5 cm
(38.5 × 19.5 × 4 in.)



Stereoscope is a still life composition constructed entirely from original 3D models made by the artist, assembled from reference images. It depicts a Victorian-era end table adorned with objects that suggest illusion, reflection, séance, and the power of inner vision. At the center of the scene is a tabletop stereoscope on a stand—contrasting with the more familiar handheld variety of the device. This version implies an aristocratic user, one disinclined to employ their own hands even for the simplest of tasks, such as holding a stereoscope.

In place of a conventional stereo card, the stereoscope here presents two candles as its subject. This unusual substitution recalls a meditative technique the artist has long practiced: sustained focus on a candle flame as a means of disciplining attention. Seen through the stereoscope, the duplicated flames hover in a state of superimposition, becoming both an object of optical trickery and a symbol of contemplative concentration. The work collapses the boundaries between entertainment, ritual, and spiritual exercise, highlighting how tools of vision have long oscillated between scientific curiosity and metaphysical pursuit.

Jonathan Crary, in his seminal text *Techniques of the Observer*, describes how the 19th century marked a fundamental shift in the conditions of vision, with devices like the stereoscope mediating perception and training new ways of seeing. *Stereoscope* directly engages this lineage, underscoring how vision is never neutral but historically and technologically conditioned. The work suggests that even within the most rationalized apparatus of modern optics, the viewer remains entangled with inner vision, subjectivity, and the persistence of illusion. In this sense, the artist's light boxes as a whole can be seen as contemporary successors to these early technologies of vision—encouraging their capacity to try to shape perception.





***Drishti*, 2025**

97.7 × 97.7 × 10.5 cm

(38.4 × 38.4 × 4 in.)

Drishti is a Sanskrit word often used in the context of physical and meditative yoga practice. The word itself means “view,” “gaze,” or “point of focus.” Finding one’s drishti in a balancing asana, or pose, is a method of aligning body and mind in order to cultivate a more focused, stable state—one that supports the ability to sustain difficult postures.

This work provides the viewer with an illuminated drishti: a pinpoint LED that stands apart from the color-shifting field surrounding it. Conceived as a visual aid for seated meditation, *Drishti* undulates in purple, yellow, and occasional moments of white, producing a trance-inducing concentric wave. Its looping rhythm is difficult to track, and its ambiguous stimuli invite each viewer to define their own subjective state in response.

This was the first lightbox work by the artist that was purely optical—seemingly empty, ethereal, and immersive. In dialogue with the California Light and Space movement, and artists such as Robert Irwin and James Turrell, these optical explorations attempt to trace new perceptual boundaries and effects, inhabiting a liminal space between the artist’s intention and the viewer’s experience. The piece asserts a technological update to that lineage, using algorithmically generated light and programmable hardware to create phenomena that feel both timeless and unmistakably of the present.

By offering a focal point that is simple and stable, *Drishti* positions itself as a meditation on attention itself. The work quietly suggests that perception is never fixed—that clarity, distraction, focus, and drift all coexist in the act of looking. In this way, the artwork does not prescribe an experience, but instead opens a space where viewers can notice the shifting quality of their own awareness.



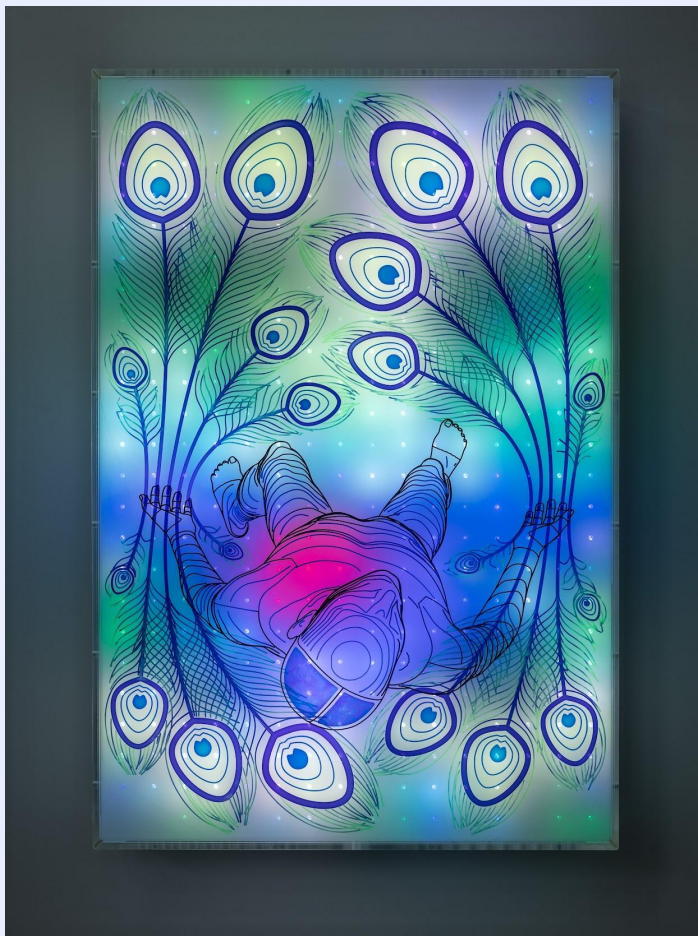
Reality Test, 2024
49.6 x 49.6 x 10.5cm
(19.5 x 19.5 x 4 in.)

Reality Test depicts a technique for lucid dreaming in which the subject repeatedly attempts to push an index finger through their opposite palm during waking hours—spontaneously, obsessively, and without warning. The intention is that such a habit, practiced often enough, will carry over into the dream state. In the dream, the finger would in theory pass straight through the palm, revealing to the dreamer that they are indeed dreaming—this breakdown in the laws of physics leading to dream awareness and lucidity.

Reports of this technique's success are varied. The artist conceived of *Reality Test* as an alternative approach: a sign, a marker that a would-be lucid dreamer could live with daily, serving as both a waking reminder and potential symbol that might later surface within a dream.

The artist frequently dreams of artworks, often perceived in the dream as being made by others and having deep emotional resonance and meaning. The absurdity of this is revealed by the recognition that such imagined works are, in fact, his own dream-constructions—with illusions of outside authorship created by the unconscious. Lucid dreaming techniques have, at times, enabled the recognition of this truth, leading to clearer recollections and more vivid returns of the ideas themselves. *Reality Test* is offered to others who may wish to experiment with their own creative unconscious, suggesting that the boundary between waking life and dream life is more porous than we allow ourselves to believe.



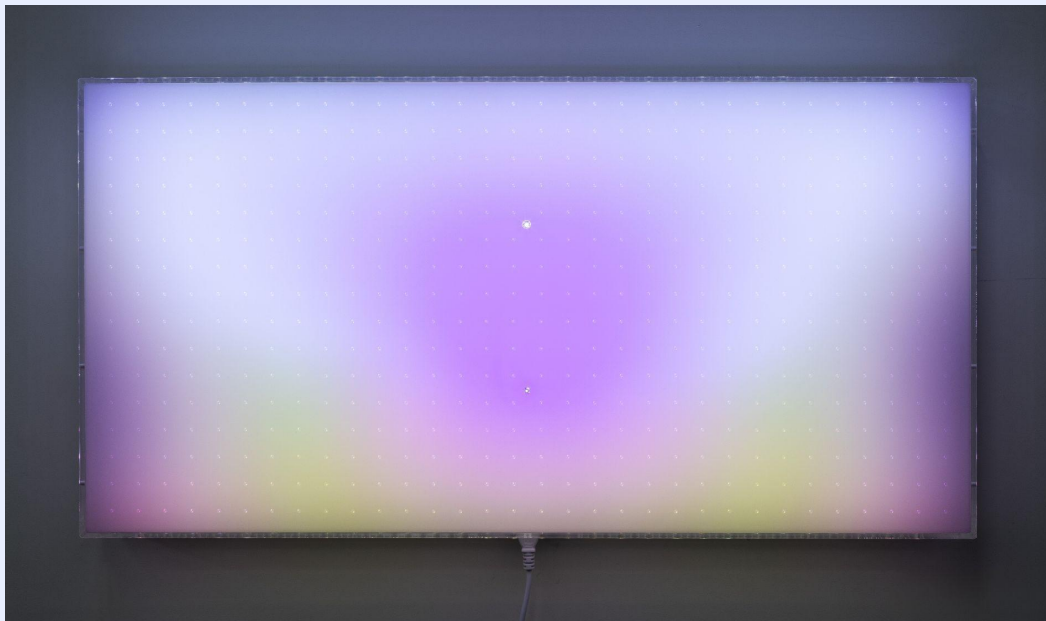


Feathery Serpent, 2024
73.4 × 49.4 × 10.5cm
(29 × 19.5 × 4 in.)

Feathery Serpent is the third completed lightbox artwork produced by the artist, finished in August 2024. It shows a body defined by its contours and enveloped with peacock feathers. The lightbox animation unfolds as an atmospheric sequence of an overnight, dreamlike experience, concluding with dawn and daylight. The cycle is punctuated by a pulsing heartbeat, evoking the intensity of a deeply somatic encounter.

The piece was composed after the artist participated in an ayahuasca ceremony in rural Costa Rica, where the sacrament is legal in certain contexts. Ayahuasca is traditionally prepared from the Banisteriopsis caapi vine combined with the leaves of Psychotria viridis, which contains the psychoactive compound N,N-Dimethyltryptamine (DMT). The vine provides monoamine oxidase inhibitors (MAOIs) that make the DMT orally active, extending the visionary state into an hours-long journey. The work depicts a brief but profound moment from this experience—an encounter with a presence that felt at once powerful, generous, and divine. The imagery suggests a “heart opening,” a shift of perception and feeling that the piece can only gesture toward rather than fully reproduce.

Ayahuasca occupies a contested space between science and spirituality. Advocates frequently frame its effects in terms of “energy work,” “soul retrieval,” or “ancestral healing”—language that resonates for many participants but is purely subjective. The artwork acknowledges this tension: while the physiological action of N,N-Dimethyltryptamine and MAOIs is scientifically understood, the meanings derived from such states often move into the realm of myth, metaphor, and belief. *Feathery Serpent* reflects this ambiguity, holding open a space where personal transformation, cultural symbolism, and pseudoscientific narratives overlap; a place where art can serve as a record of inner experience.



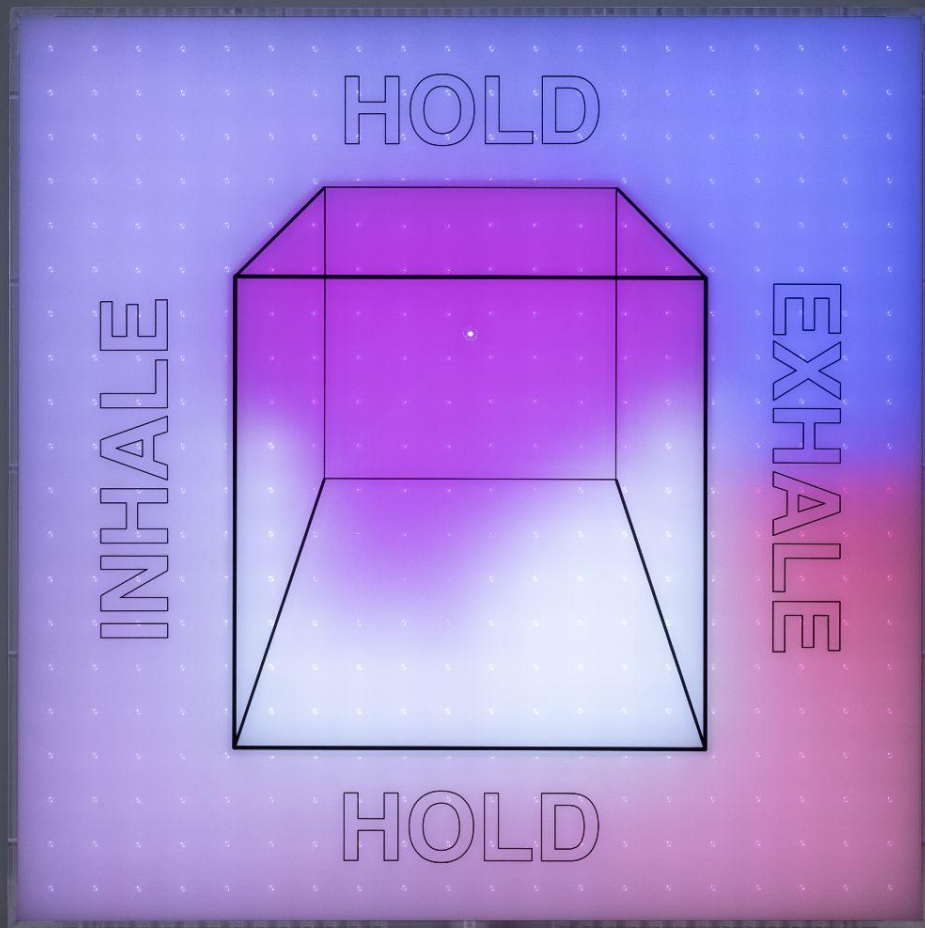
***Bifocal*, 2025**

**49.7 × 97.8 × 10.6 cm
(19.5 × 38.5 × 4 in.)**

Bifocal is an optical work that closely follows the structure and palette of *Drishti*, an experience that is openly defined by the viewer should they choose to view it, on those terms. Its wider, horizontal format more directly evokes the span of human vision, while the over-under configuration of pinpoint white drishtis—whose intensity shifts in tandem with the animation of the surrounding color field—suggests the function of bifocal lenses, used for seeing both near and distant subjects interchangeably. The composition invokes the duality of perception itself: a layered field in which focus is constantly adjusting, splitting, and recombining.

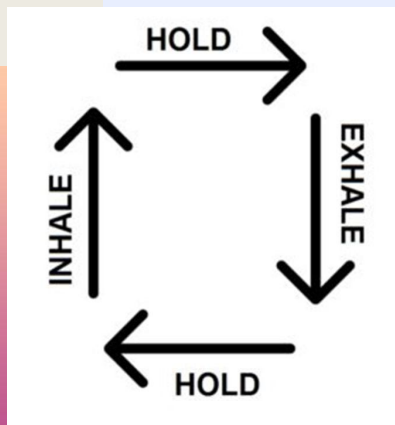
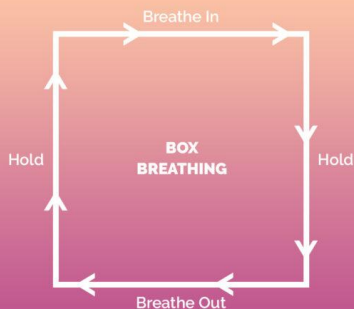
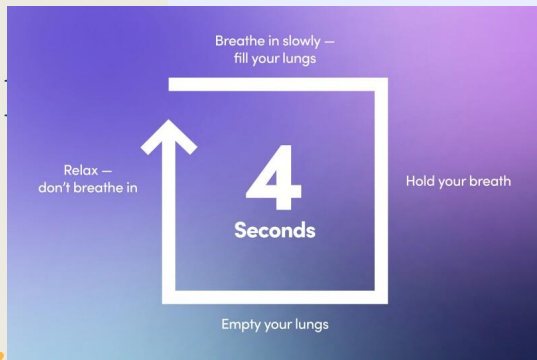
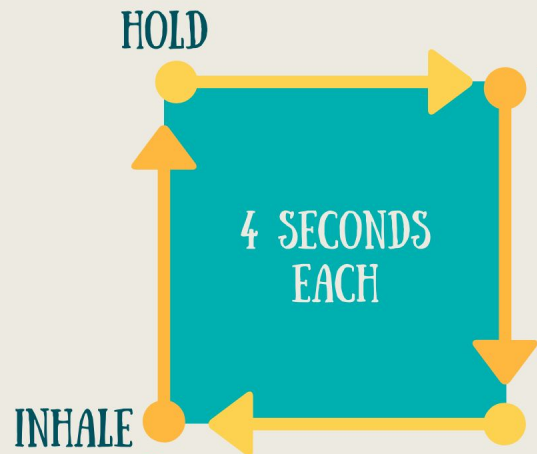
As in *Drishti*, the shifting hues and quality of the animation were inspired by the artist's perception of closed-eye visual phenomena encountered during meditation. What first appeared as disorienting and difficult to interpret gradually revealed itself as part of the natural terrain of inner vision. In sharing these optical works, the artist has encountered viewers who recognize and affirm such experiences from their own meditative practice. This offers a kind of reassurance, suggesting that these subtle appearances are not anomalies but integral aspects of contemplative awareness.

Where *Drishti* offers a singular focal point, *Bifocal* complicates the act of attention. Its doubled structure insists on division and simultaneity, requiring the viewer to negotiate between two points at once. In doing so, the work becomes less about stillness and more about the instability of vision itself—how perception constantly flickers between inner and outer registers, between clarity and blur. The lightbox thus becomes a training ground for contemporary seeing, reflecting the fractured, multitasking quality of life in a world where our attention is perpetually split.



Box Breather, 2025
61.8 × 61.8 × 97 cm
24.3 × 24.3 × 3.8 in.

BOX BREATHING

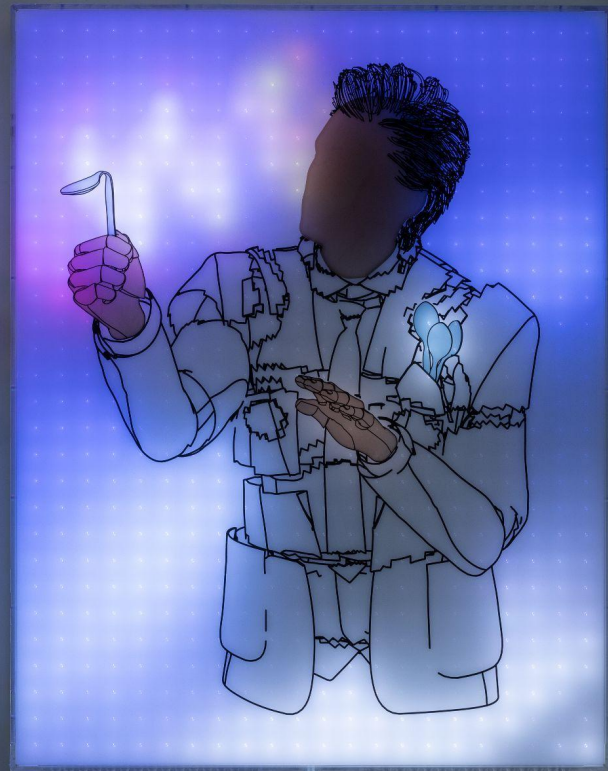


Box Breather is conceived as a living diagram, an instructional device that a viewer can literally breathe with in real time to find relief from anxiety, depression, or general malaise. It draws on the well-known breathwork method commonly called “box breathing” or “4-4-4-4 breathing,” in which the practitioner inhales, holds, exhales, and holds again for equal counts of four. The technique has roots in both ancient yogic pranayama practices and in modern clinical and tactical applications. It was popularized in recent decades by the U.S. Navy SEALs as a way to maintain calm and clarity under extreme pressure, and it has since been adopted in therapeutic, athletic, and wellness contexts as a practical tool for regulating the nervous system.

The artwork reduces this process to a simple, stripped-down set of instructions: inhale, hold, exhale, hold. These phases are emphasized through synchronous animation and a drishti-like focal point that helps orient attention and provide a fixed anchor during moments of panic, confusion, or lack of insight. By breathing along with the animation, the viewer is guided toward stabilizing their own rhythm, gradually internalizing the technique and eventually shifting focus to the quality and frequency of their breath, without the aid of the device.

Box Breather takes on the clarity and immediacy of a design object—something closer to a tool than a picture. Its function is straightforward, even literal, yet what it reflects is less simple: a world so saturated with stress and distraction that basic survival strategies must be externalized and made visible in order to be remembered. It offers a genuine utility—a breathing aid, a momentary reprieve—while simultaneously asking what it means that such tools must be sought through artmaking. In this way, Box Breather becomes both a device for navigating individual anxiety and a quiet commentary on the collective conditions that make its presence necessary.

Portrait of Uri Geller, 2025
85.8 × 67.8 × 10 cm
(26.7 × 33.8 × 4 in.)



Portrait of Uri Geller depicts the famous Israeli psychic and showman—long rumored to have cooperated with intelligence agencies such as Mossad and the CIA—in the midst of his trademark feat: bending a metal spoon with the apparent force of his mind. Rising to prominence in the early 1970s, a period of political upheaval in the Levant and global fascination with the paranormal, Geller blurred the line between stage magic, genuine belief, and state interest. His performances secured him both celebrity status and controversy as a figure at the intersection of entertainment, geopolitics, and the cultural imagination of psychic power.

In *Let's All Abandon Reality Together*, Geller's presence reframes his legacy as both showman and symbol of state supremacy. His spoon-bending was more than a trick—it functioned as propaganda, casting Israel as a nation so powerful it could train its citizens to bend metal with their minds. As a cultural export, Geller's feats amplified state influence through spectacle, illusion, and the machinery of persuasion.

He stands as an emblem of how showmanship and trickery can serve political ends, dazzling audiences while masking deeper realities. Just as a magician relies on misdirection, states use charismatic figures and staged displays to shape perception and reinforce authority.





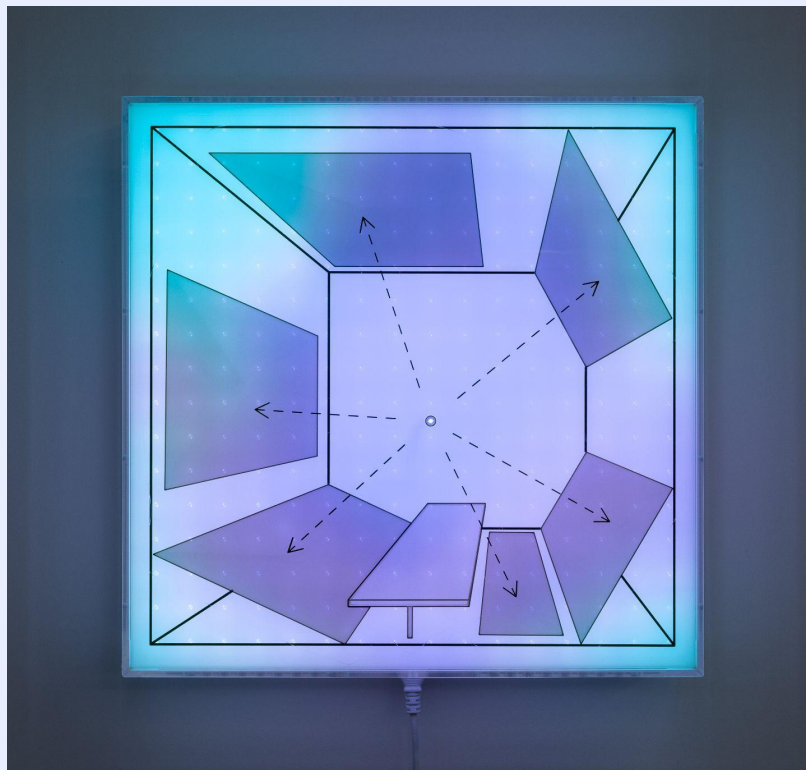
Peace Lily, 2024
73.3 × 61.3 × 10.6 cm
(29 × 24 × 4 in.)



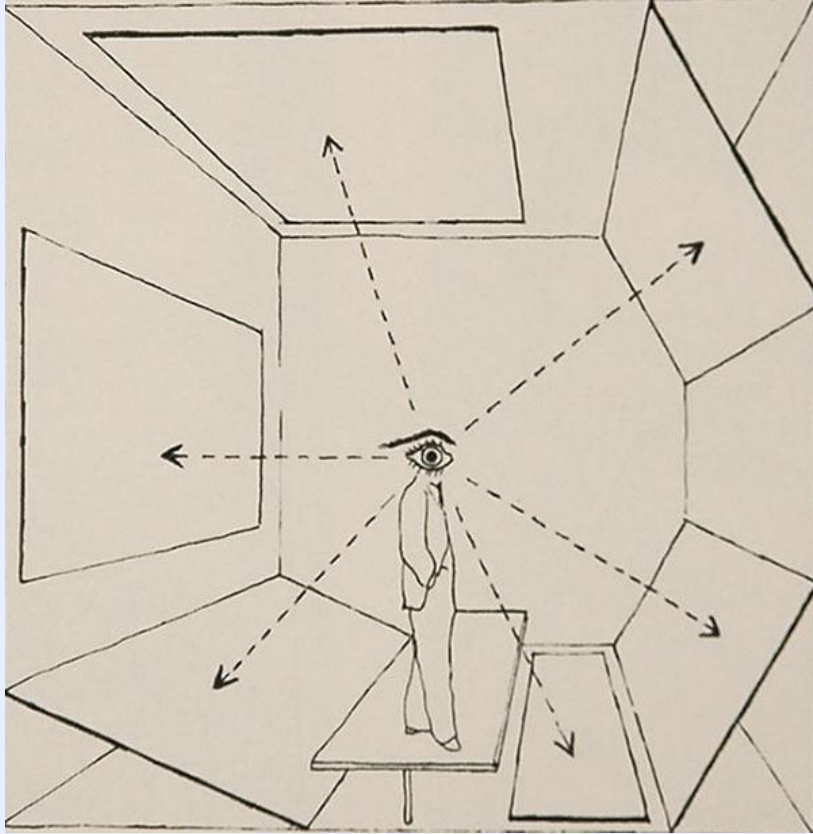
Peace Lily is a portrait of the artist's houseplant, acquired shortly after the visionary encounter depicted in *Feathery Serpent*. Where that earlier work channeled divine revelation, *Peace Lily* turns its focus inward, toward the domestic and familiar. In the composition, the blooms of this tropical plant radiate a quiet, improbable vitality, their forms emanating a kind of spiritual energy. The animation shimmers with optimism, suggesting an enthusiasm for being that is at once humble and elevated.

This aura, however, seems subtly mediated by technology. The plant appears to be wired into the same kind of wall current that powers the light boxes themselves, its vitality made luminous through artificial circuitry rather than photosynthesis alone. In this sense, the Peace Lily becomes something more than a botanical subject: it is both a portrait of a living companion and an emblem of the sense of spectacle designed into the light boxes themselves.

Peace Lily reflects on our tendency to project meaning onto the everyday, to find in a houseplant not just decoration or companionship but an unlikely vessel for renewal and presence. If *Feathery Serpent* grappled with overwhelming visions of divinity, *Peace Lily* suggests that transcendence might just as readily be encountered in the ordinary.



Extended Vision, 2025
49.8 × 49.8 × 11.2 cm
(19.6 × 19.6 × 4.4 in.)



Extended Vision is a recreation of Herbert Bayer's 1935 'Diagram of Extended Vision', remade without its most iconic element. In Bayer's original, a sharply dressed figure appears with his head replaced by a vast, all-seeing eye—an emblem of modernity's dream of expanded perception. In this reimagining, the figure is absent; the monumental eye has been collapsed into a single pinpoint white drishti, linking the work to other optical investigations in the exhibition such as *Drishti* and *Bifocal*. The enveloping, totalistic environment that Bayer drew has been replaced with a new rendering from 3D modeling space, connecting his exhibition design strategies to those shaping *Let's All Abandon Reality Together*.

The animation is subtle, nearly imperceptible until a viewer's gaze rests on the drishti point long enough for the field to shift and ripple into view. This effect unfolds only through patience and attentiveness, transforming Bayer's rational diagram of totalized vision into something contemplative, meditative, and bodily. In this way, the piece asks the viewer not simply to look, but to inhabit an altered mode of seeing.

Bayer, a Bauhaus-trained designer, painter, and exhibition architect, created *Diagram of Extended Vision* as a speculative image of modern perception, proposing that art and design could reshape how people see. By reworking the diagram, the artist acknowledges this utopian ambition while reframing it for the present. Where Bayer sought clarity and universality, *Extended Vision* instead reflects the instability of attention in an age of fractured perception. It offers not an all-seeing eye but a flickering point of focus, a reminder that abandoning reality together may not mean seeing more, but learning how to see differently.

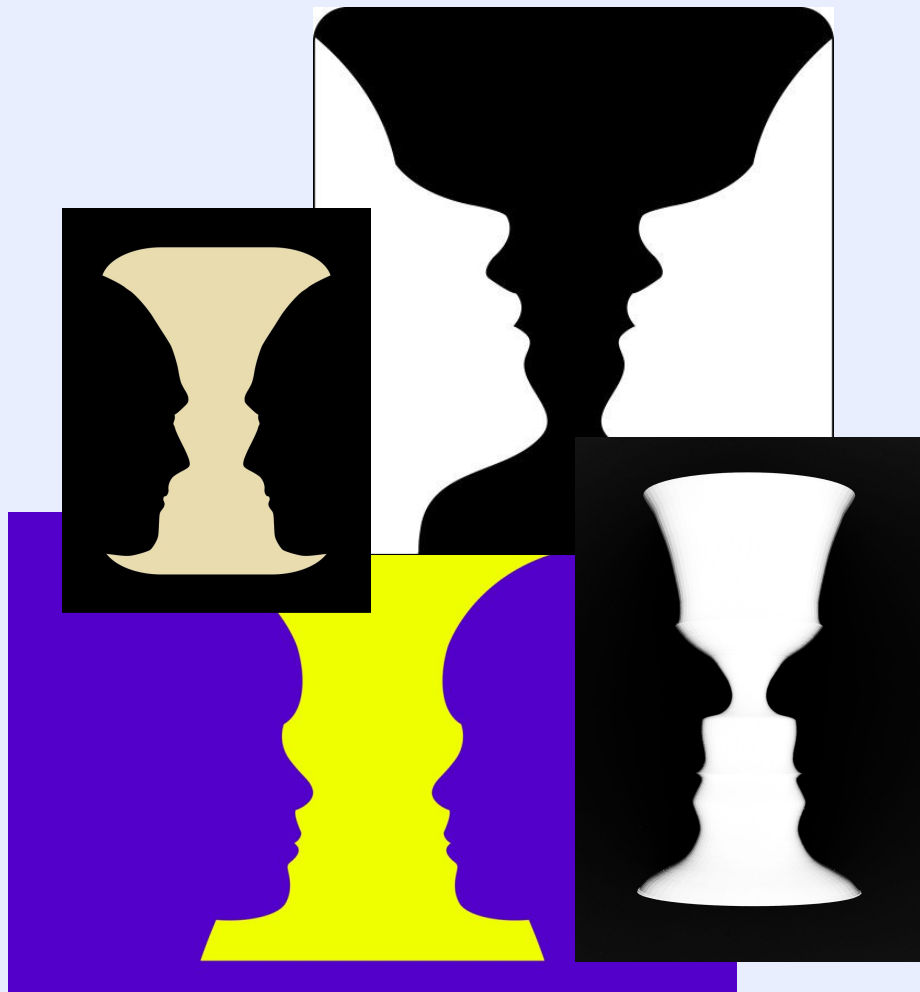


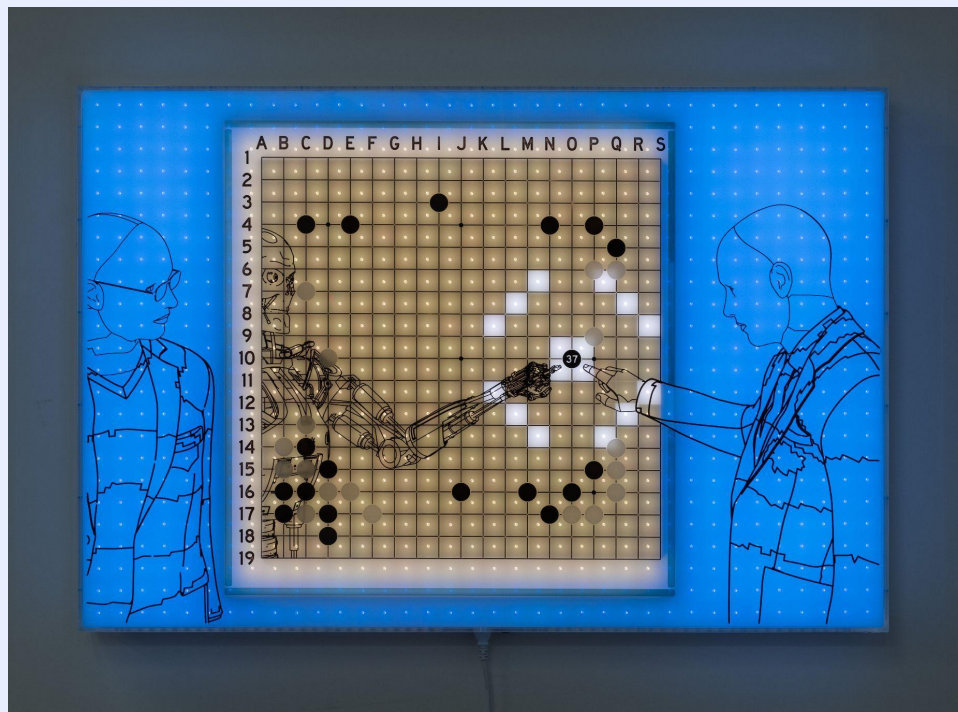
Rubin Vase, 2025
37.8 × 49.8 × 10 cm
(14.9 × 19.6 × 4 in.)

Rubin Vase is the artist's reworking of a classic optical illusion: two silhouetted profiles facing one another, their outlines forming the contour of a vase or goblet. First described in 1915 by Danish psychologist Edgar Rubin, the illusion has long served as a demonstration of figure-ground ambiguity, a bi-stable image that oscillates between two interpretations without ever fully settling into one. Commonly displayed in science museums as a curiosity of visual perception, it points to the instability at the core of seeing itself—that what we perceive as “objective” is often subject to competing frames of interpretation.

In this adaptation, the artist emphasizes the subjective differences through which viewers encounter the same stimulus. One person may see two faces in dialogue, another may perceive only the vessel that separates and binds them. The illusion becomes a metaphor for the power of narrative in shaping perception: whether we focus on the confrontation of two figures, the empty vessel, or the shared boundary that generates both. The drishti points embedded in the lightbox, along with the animation, guides the viewer's attention, drawing awareness to the act of choosing where to look and, in turn, what to believe.

At stake is not only the mechanics of perception but also the social and emotional dynamics it encodes. The two figures, defined only by their negative space, seem locked in a state of togetherness and apartness—simultaneously intimate and estranged, dependent on each other for definition. In this way, *Rubin Vase* resonates with the larger concept of the exhibition, inviting viewers to reflect on how vision is never neutral, but always mediated by focus, attention, and the stories we bring to what we see. It suggests that to “abandon reality” is not to leave the world behind, but to recognize that even the simplest images contain multiple truths, coexisting in fragile balance.



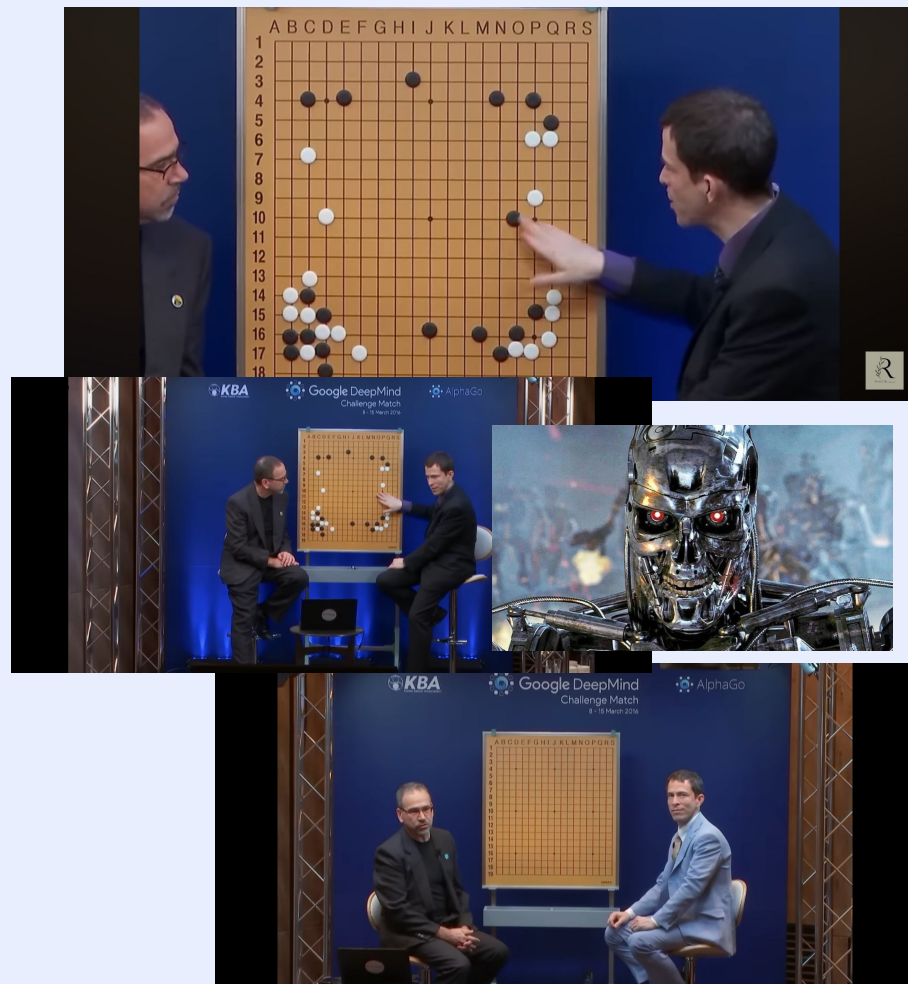


Move 37, 2024
73.3 × 109.3 × 10.6 cm
(29 × 43 × 4 in.)

Move 37 endlessly iterates John Conway's Game of Life (1970) behind a Go board depicting the 37th move played by Google's AlphaGo against Lee Sedol in 2016. Initially dismissed as an error, the move proved decisive—a turning point in the history of artificial intelligence. In the artist's hands, it becomes a conceptual fulcrum: an infinite loop where the match is no longer between man and machine but between collapsing worldviews—logic versus intuition, pattern recognition versus unpredictability, control dissolving into surrender. Framed by schematic drawings of human and robotic figures, the flickering board becomes an unstable arena, a haunted matrix of digital aberration.

The work points to an evolutionary arc in computation: from Conway's deceptively simple cellular automata, with its emergent forms and playful echoes of organic life, to the towering scale of today's machine-learning systems. Along this arc, the technologically quaint dystopias of the late twentieth century—The Terminator's humanoid assassins, for instance—appear almost charming compared to the uncanny reach of GPT models and other generative systems that now operate less visibly but with far greater influence over language, image, and perception itself. What once seemed like science fiction spectacle has given way to something subtler, more integrated, and far more destabilizing.

In the wings of the composition, the human figures appear strangely diminished, schematic outlines of quiet sadness, as though aware that the rules of the game are shifting beyond their comprehension. Yet the tone remains comic as much as tragic: a tongue-in-cheek tableau that stages the clash of man and machine as both monumental and absurd. In staging *Move 37* against the infinite churn of the Game of Life, the artwork makes the history of AI into both spectacle and parody—a recursive joke about progress and a meditation on the fragility of human presence in the glow of our own inventions.



Overwing Exit, 2025
109.8 × 49.8 × 10.7 cm
(43.2 × 19.6 × 4.2 in.)





Overwing Exit is the artist's rendering of an emergency exit door leading out over the wing of a Boeing 737 MAX, a model infamous for catastrophic failures tied to its design and software. Once a symbol of American ingenuity and manufacturing might, Boeing has in recent years come to embody the decline of U.S. industrial reliability on the global stage. A machine that once carried the projection of American empire across the world has become, in its newest iteration, a liability—an emblem of negligence, corporate short-termism, and preventable tragedy.

In the competitive race with Airbus, Boeing rushed the 737 MAX into service as a stopgap measure, retrofitting an aging fuselage to accommodate larger, more fuel-efficient engines. This alteration disrupted the plane's aerodynamics, making it prone to pitching upward. To mask this instability, Boeing introduced the Maneuvering Characteristics Augmentation System (MCAS), an automated program designed to push the nose of the aircraft down when sensors detected too steep an angle of ascent. Crucially, Boeing downplayed the existence of MCAS, excluding it from pilot manuals and training in order to avoid costly certification delays. When faulty sensor readings repeatedly triggered MCAS on flights such as Lion Air Flight 610 (2018) and Ethiopian Airlines Flight 302 (2019), pilots—unaware of the system's behavior—struggled against it, resulting in crashes that killed 346 people.

The 737 MAX stands as a grim parable of automation in contemporary life: systems built to protect us, if only from human error, and concealed from our knowledge, capable of turning against us, fatally. Overwing Exit captures this imbalance through the flickering animation of flames threatening catastrophe, contrasted with the calm glow of a nearly cloudless sky, just out the window. The image crystallizes a cruel paradox: a portal of supposed safety that can only become a marker of fear and loss. In this way, the work offers more than a history of this case in aviation—it becomes a poetic indictment of the larger systems we entrust with our lives, as they reveal themselves to be opaque, unstable, and totally beyond our control.



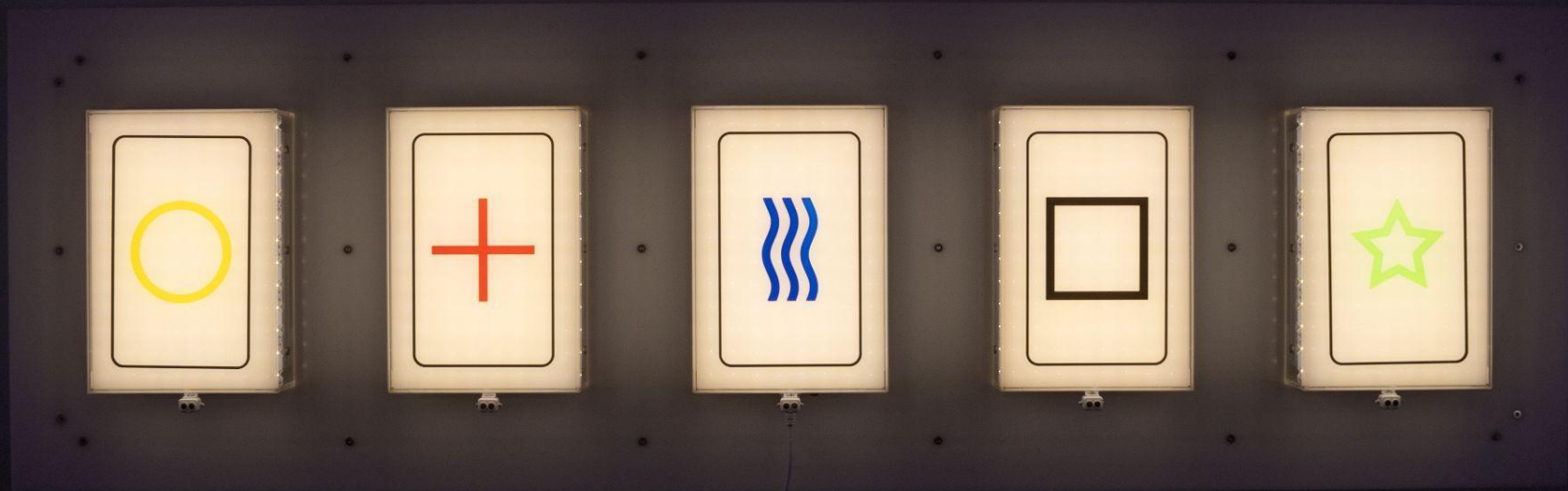
Concealed Person, 2025
49.7 × 109.6 × 10.5 cm
(19.5 × 43 × 4 in.)

The Concealed Person borrows its title from one of character collectively known as “the dead” in Susanna Clarke’s 2020 novel Piranesi. The book tells the story of a man trapped in an immense labyrinth, disoriented by his ever-shifting surroundings, afflicted with memory loss, and misunderstandings of the nature of his strange world. He tends to “the dead,” whose scattered remains are among the only evidence of other human life within the halls. “The Concealed Person” is perhaps the most enigmatic of these figures: a body lodged in a narrow crevasse between two walls, its sex and identity impossible to determine.

Published at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, Piranesi resonated widely as a parable of isolation, disorientation, and fragile hope. Its psychological weight was especially felt by the artist, who drew from the novel’s atmosphere not by replicating its imagery, but by channeling its emotional tenor and reinterpreting it through personal experience.

In the artwork, the collapsed body of *The Concealed Person* has become the ground for a garden of daffodils—a flower of the genus *Narcissus*—that the artist observed throughout New York City in the spring of 2025. Their sudden appearance recalled the spring of 2021, when the city’s annual tulip bloom was met with heightened public notice, as though these familiar flowers were being seen for the first time. This estrangement of the ordinary—something known, yet newly unfamiliar—was linked to the collective grief and perceptual shift brought on by the pandemic. In the work, the daffodils stand as both an elegy and renewal, echoing how unprecedented loss continues to reshape perception, memory, and the fragile ways we locate beauty in the world.

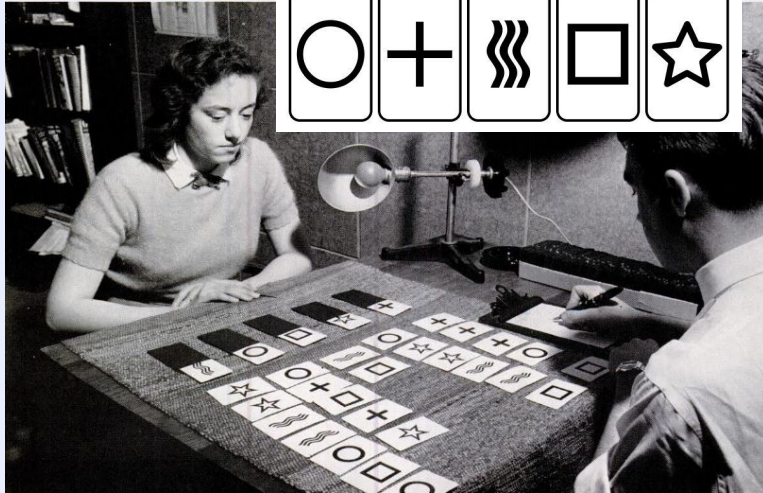
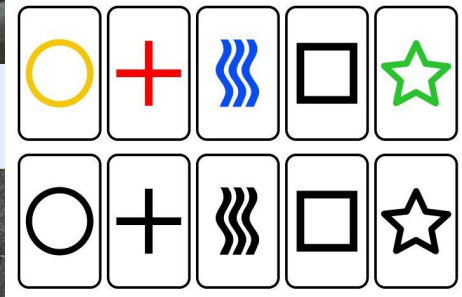
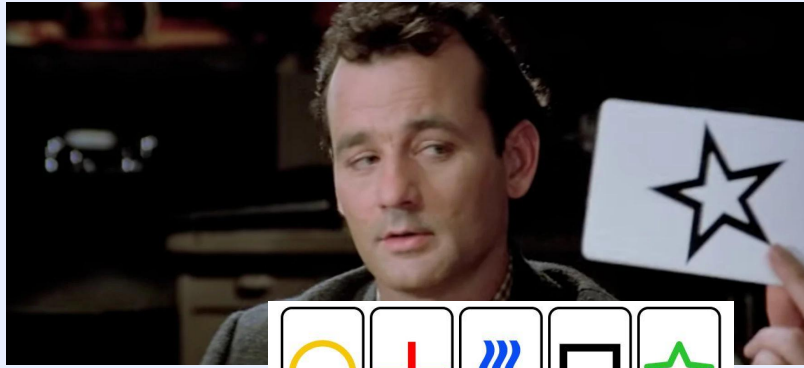




Concentrate And Pick A Card, 2025

214.3 × 66.3 x 15.4 cm

84.3 × 26.1 × 6 in.



Concentrate and Pick A Card takes its title as a prompt to the viewer, though without any explicit instructions for how they should respond. A sequence of five cards, each bearing a generic shape, flicker and flash in reaction to the lateral position of the viewer's body. After a period of watching, the viewer is drawn into making a guess—perhaps unwittingly—caught in the naive act of trying to read the “mind” of the computer that governs the interaction.

The five symbols are known as Zener Cards, introduced in the 1930s by American psychologist Karl Zener as a standardized tool for experiments in extrasensory perception. In such trials, one subject served as the transmitter and another as the receiver, with the cards functioning as test signals to gauge the accuracy of telepathy. Widely mocked and discredited—famously including astronaut Edgar Mitchell's attempt to send psychic messages from Apollo 14 in 1971—the cards have endured as icons of pseudoscience, sitting at the curious intersection of psychology, entertainment, and parapsychology.

By reanimating this imagery, the artwork embraces the liberties taken by the artist to enter a gray zone where pseudoscience, creative interpretation, and satire meet. Computer and machine vision systems already possess complete capabilities to “read” human minds—not in the mystical sense, but through the exhaustive tracking of attention, movement, and behavior. *Concentrate and Pick A Card* proposes a role reversal: perhaps it is we who should practice the art of reading computer minds, in return. The work stages this encounter with a light, tongue-in-cheek tone, yet it also underscores the dire nature of the power asymmetries between us and our technologies—we make desperate guesses against a system that already knows far more about us than we realize.

Tania, 2024
97.3 × 73.3 × 10.6 cm
(38.5 × 28.9 × 4 in.)

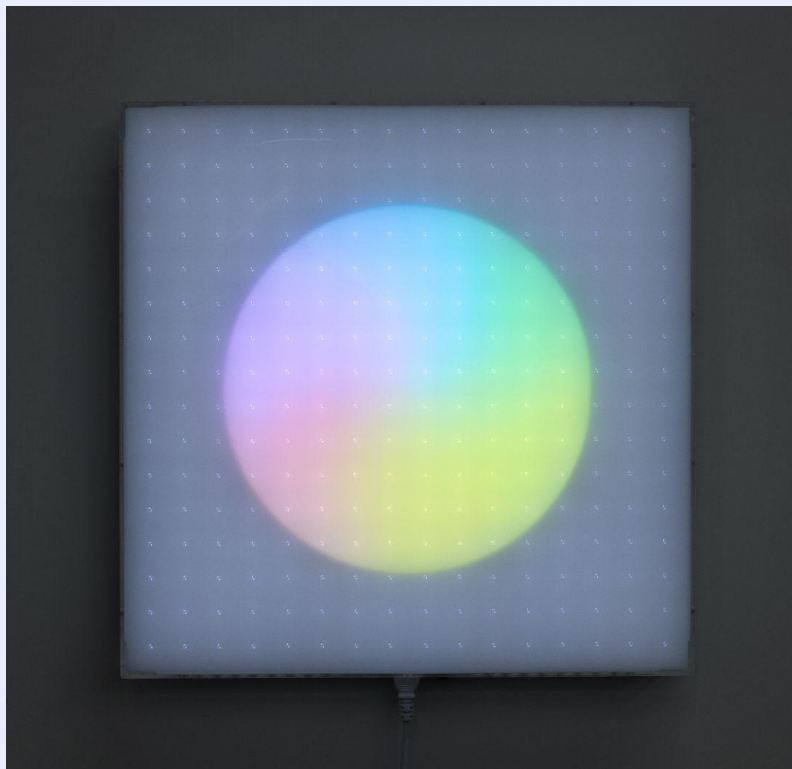


Tania is an enlarged, remastered, and reinterpreted version of an iconic image from 1974. What began as a small, propagandistic photograph here becomes an illuminated “living poster” of politics, parody, brainwashing, and historical intrigue. The work reframes the story of Patty Hearst—heiress, media spectacle, and eventual militant—whose kidnapping by the Symbionese Liberation Army, a ragtag group of far-left radicals who made sweeping socialist demands, remains one of the most bizarre and contested episodes of 1970s American culture.

Responses to the work tend to divide generationally. Older observers often recognize the image instantly, recalling the drama of Hearst’s transformation into “Tania” and the menacing insignia of the SLA’s seven-headed cobra. Younger audiences, by contrast, are frequently unfamiliar with the story, left to puzzle over the visual cues without the anchoring of lived memory. This discrepancy echoes broader gaps between generations: the distance between those who adopted computers and social media as adults and those who have never known life without them. These differences in awareness, behavior, and interpretive frameworks underscore how cultural memory and complicity fractures over time.

Inserting *Tania* into Let’s All Abandon Reality Together foregrounds a conversation about ideological pressure and the mechanics of persuasion. Hearst’s transformation becomes a mirror for the ways that recent liberal elites, and more broadly anyone enmeshed in online and peer-driven discourse, are compelled to perform alignment with the “right side of history.” The replacement of Hearst’s blank expression with the glowing red eyes and skull of the Terminator, punctuates this tension. It satirizes how a mob mentality—whether in radical politics or the algorithmic echo chambers of social media—conditions behavior through spectacle, fear, and the promise of belonging.





Left: *Pinwheel of Death*, 2025
49.8 × 49.8 × 93 cm
(19.6 × 19.6 × 3.6 in.)



Right: *Blue Circle of Death*, 2025
49.8 × 49.8 × 93 cm
(19.6 × 19.6 × 3.6 in.)



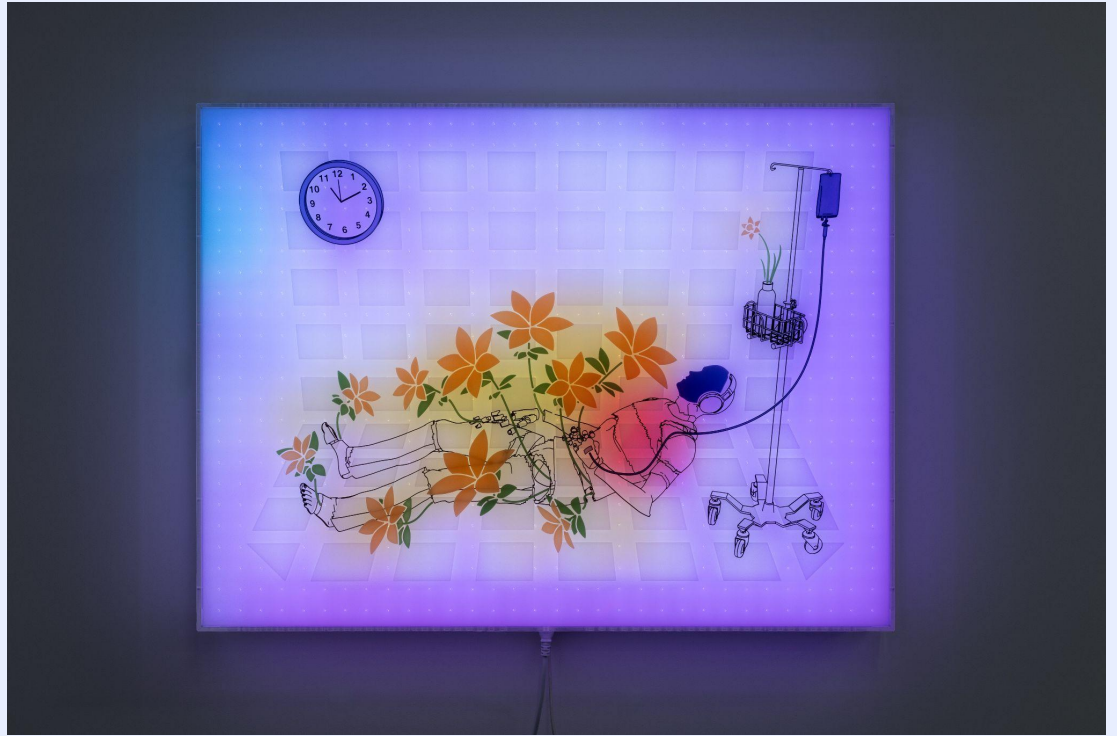
Pinwheel of Death and *Blue Circle of Death* are examples of so-called “throbbers,” animated icons from competing computer operating systems that replace the user’s cursor when a process is underway. In their ordinary contexts, these icons appear as the embodiment of frustration: the moment when control is taken away, leaving the individual suspended, waiting for a mysterious, invisible task to resolve—or not. Time stretches, agency evaporates, and the user is left to contemplate a system that operates behind an opaque veil of computation.

These icons are immediately familiar to anyone who has used a computer in the last two decades. The *Pinwheel of Death*—Apple’s hypnotic rainbow spiral—is recognized quickly by contemporary users of desktop machines, reflecting Apple’s enduring hold on personal and workplace computing. Microsoft’s *Blue Circle of Death*, though less celebrated, is just as persistent, more often encountered by those who work in the interstices of software and code—designers, programmers, and, in this case, the artist himself. Both stand as competitive emblems of processing, symbols of the invisible machinery that runs beneath the surface of our daily interactions.

In these lightboxes, what was once loathsome is reimagined with uncanny beauty. The original animations, extracted directly from the back end of the operating systems, are scaled up, remastered, and illuminated until they transcend their initial purpose. Instead of frustration, they produce optical pleasure: glowing mandalas of pause and consideration. They become meditations on the experience of waiting for something that never arrives, a state that defines much of life with digital technology. In this transformation, the works suggest that even the most mundane artifacts of computation—markers of powerlessness and lost time—contain within them the possibility of reflection, beauty, and altered understanding.



Left: *Call Bell*, 2025
49.8 × 37.8 × 10.7 cm
(19.6 × 14.9 × 4.2 in.)



Right: *In The Upper Room*, 2025
73.8 × 97.8 × 10.7 cm
(29 × 38.5 × 4.2 in.)

In *The Upper Room* depicts the artist's encounter with a novel therapeutic intervention for chronic depression: a series of ketamine infusions administered in sub-anesthetic doses. Long familiar to field surgeons, veterinarians, and club-goers, ketamine has in recent years become the focus of psychiatric research for its rapid, if temporary, alleviation of depressive symptoms. Legal in this off-label use, it remains the subject of hope, hype, controversy and stigma—hailed in clinical trials for its effectiveness in treatment-resistant cases, but overshadowed by the risks of dissociation, dependency, and uneven access. The therapy has also attracted public scrutiny, particularly following the highly publicized death of actor Matthew Perry in 2023, which brought new attention to the drug's complex cultural status.

The title is borrowed from 'In the Upper Room', the 1987 collaboration between composer Philip Glass and choreographer Twyla Tharp. Glass's pulsing, minimalist score served as the typical soundtrack to the artist's hallucinatory experience in an otherwise sterile, clinical environment, underscoring the strangeness of finding visionary states induced not by ritual or chance, but by IV drip and medical supervision. The juxtaposition of institutional space and transcendent sensation seats the work in a tension between psychopharmacology and transformative experience.

A smaller work, *Call Bell*, depicts the medical-grade button given to patients during ketamine infusion therapy, a device meant to summon staff if the experience becomes overwhelming. At once banal and uncanny, it condenses the strangeness of the treatment into a symbol of summoning, conjuring, agency, and control. Within the framework of *Let's All Abandon Reality Together*, *Call Bell* becomes less of an escape than a threshold—pushing it is to signal that perhaps this has all become too much.





***Lemniscate*, 2025**

49.7 × 109.8 × 10.6 cm

(19.5 × 43 × 4 in.)

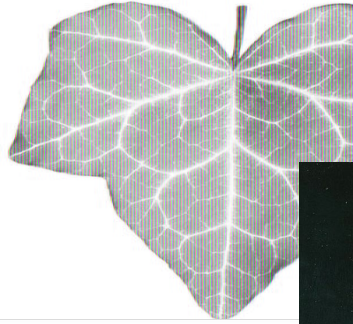
Lemniscate, the concluding optical work in the exhibition, departs from the palette and animation quality of *Drishti* and *Bifocal* and is perhaps the most difficult to describe. Shifting fields of color are drawn toward and repelled from two drishti-like focal points that switch on and off in coordination with the movement, while a looping moment in the animation reveals this ethereal body entering and exiting the frame. Almost imperceptible within the composition, a lemniscate—more commonly known as the figure eight or infinity symbol—hovers faintly, requiring patience and sustained focus to discover. Its slow disclosure mirrors the work's own hypnotic pull, rewarding persistence with the emergence of a hidden form.

The intentionally softened appearance of the gridded LEDs sets *Lemniscate* apart from the other optical works, its light feels diffused and atmospheric rather than sharp or pointillist. A cycle lasting only sixty seconds can dilate into the sensation of hours, its evasive qualities amplifying the perception of time stretched and reshaped. What first appears elusive becomes strangely encompassing, enfolding the observer into its rhythm of cycles pulling a viewer's focus left, then right, and then returning to the origin.

As a conclusive work in the show, *Lemniscate* carries a symbolic weight: the infinity loop as a gesture toward continuity, recurrence, and dissolution. It ties the optical investigations of the exhibition into a meditative coda, suggesting that perception itself is never fixed but perpetually circling back. In its quiet ambiguity, the work positions the act of looking as both endless and inexhaustible—a reminder that even in abstraction, the simplest forms can carry vast reservoirs of meaning.



Hourglass, 2025
97.7 × 49.7 × 10.6 cm
(38.5 × 19.5 × 4 in.)



Hourglass is a still life composition, built from a combination of custom and pre-existing 3D models, that revives the long tradition of the memento mori—a reminder to the observer that life is finite, and death inevitable. This subject, familiar throughout art history, is reprised here in the luminous medium of the lightbox, where illumination itself evokes breath, movement, and the semblance of living presence. Atop the large hourglass, the candle and skull—classic symbols of life and death—stand as sentinels, while the falling sands of time are replaced by an illuminated substance that resembles ectoplasm or water, a spectral fluid that resists stable interpretation.

In an unconventional turn, when the substance has fully elapsed, the animation reverses: the flow defies gravity, climbing back upward as though time itself might be undone. This moment gestures toward renewal, eternal return, or the fantasy of everlasting life. In an era captivated by the promise of defeating death—whether through technologically accelerated medical interventions or the more common pursuit of immortality through one's image, reputation, or art—*Hourglass* reopens an old question with a contemporary edge: why must we die, and why are we so desperate to resist the fact?

The presence of a potted English ivy plant within the composition roots the work in another temporality altogether: slow, incremental growth, an organic persistence that unfolds outside the frame of human urgency. Ivy, with its ability to survive across seasons and cling to surfaces for generations, introduces a counterpoint to the drama of the hourglass. It suggests that continuity may not lie in the reversal of time or the conquest of mortality, but in quieter forms of endurance—those that persist without spectacle, adapting and weaving themselves into the fabric of the world. In this way, *Hourglass* balances the luminous seduction of immortality with the humble, grounded resilience of life as it is lived.



The Third Person is conceived as the spiritual successor to the earlier work *Pain Body*, created approximately nine months after its completion. Where *Pain Body* depicted a figure in collapse, this composition presents a body in a seemingly more stable state—tentatively grounded yet still incomplete, a form with missing pieces. It projects a kind of cautious confidence while concealing its full appearance behind a conveniently placed bouquet of flowers. The reprise of the daffodil raises questions about the symbolic weight of this particular bloom: a flower of the genus *Narcissus*, tied etymologically to the myth of self-love and, by extension, to the contemporary affliction of narcissism—an obsession with one's image that, in its extremes, can lead to public unraveling or catastrophic demise.

The figure leans against a fractured plinth, its surface splintering and unstable, a structure that seems barely held together. This precarious support suggests both the artist's dependence on external systems and the tenuous nature of those supports—fragile, improvised, insufficient. The column, long a symbol of order, permanence, and civic authority in Western art and architecture, is here compromised, reduced to a temporary prop in a scene that questions what forms of stability are truly reliable.

The Third Person situates itself within a lineage of artworks that use allegorical form to wrestle with mortality, identity, and instability. It functions as another archetypal self-portrait, not in the literal sense but as a psychic one: a record of the artist negotiating uncertainty, risk, and the pressures of public presentation. In its unstable balance of concealment and exposure, confidence and collapse, the work underscores how the self is always constructed in fragments—at once performed, questioned, and precariously propped up.

The Third Person, 2025

97.8 × 49.8 × 10.7 cm

(38.5 × 19.6 × 4.2 in.)



Every Minute is Midnight, 2025

85.8 × 73.7 × 10 cm

(33.8 × 29 × 4 in.)

The conclusive work in the show, *Every Minute Is Midnight*, takes the iconic design of the Doomsday Clock—a graphic symbol devised by the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists—to make a decisive statement about peril, brinkmanship, inevitability, and subjective dread in the contemporary moment. Each year, figureheads of the Bulletin unveil their beloved clock from bubble-wrapped storage, stage a press conference, and dramatically announce how much closer we have come to midnight after the previous year's tensions and world events. The artist responds to this farce with the title itself, declaring that midnight has already struck, that the world is already ending, and that everyone is merely catching up.

The piece employs a sensor to detect the proximity of the observer, mapping this distance onto the movement of the clock's minute hand. This allows each participant to set their own subjective sense of how near we are to the apocalypse, encouraging the delusional optimism that time—at least in this catastrophic sense—might move backward, or be repositioned to suit the emotional convenience of the moment. The work operates as a dark comedy, a joke about something unbearably serious, reflecting the absurd socio-political theater in which we live.

Every Minute Is Midnight makes the final statement of Let's All Abandon Reality Together, underscoring the overarching truth of our time. It could all end in an instant—a flicker of nuclear annihilation—and yet even under the weight of that unbearable recognition, we continue, and decide to keep living.



