

# GUGGENHEIM

## PRESS RELEASE

### **The Guggenheim Museum Presents *Sarah Sze: Timelapse***

**Sze’s site-specific installations transform the iconic Guggenheim architecture into a tool for timekeeping and a meditation on the multitude of ways that we mark and experience the passage of time.**

**Exhibition:** *Sarah Sze: Timelapse*

**Venue:** Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 1071 Fifth Avenue, New York

**Location:** Rotunda Level 6, Tower Level 7, Museum Exterior

**Date:** March 31, 2023–September 10, 2023

(NEW YORK, NY—March 31, 2023) The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum presents a solo exhibition of Sarah Sze (b. 1969, Boston) featuring a series of site-specific installations by the acclaimed New York-based artist. *Sarah Sze: Timelapse* unravels a trail of discovery through multiple spaces of the iconic Frank Lloyd Wright building, from the exterior of the museum to the sixth level of the rotunda and the adjacent tower level gallery. The exhibition explores Sze’s ongoing reflection on how our experience of time and place is continuously reshaped in relationship to the constant stream of objects, images, and information in today’s digitally and materially saturated world.

Sze creates across multiple mediums employing painting, sculpture, drawing, printmaking, video, and installation. She is well known for her intricate constructions using a myriad of both fabricated and found objects and images. Whether an intimately scaled sculpture or a large, permanent public commission, her works possess a generative quality—as though in a cycle of growth and decay—and dynamically engage with the spaces they occupy.

Visitors and passersby will first encounter *Sarah Sze: Timelapse* outside the museum where the presentation spills into the public sphere. At street level an uninterrupted flow of images trace the contours of the building’s exterior, while a projection on the rotunda’s circular facade mirrors in real time the cycle of the moon over the course of the exhibition. In Sze’s reimagination, the Guggenheim’s iconic, UNESCO World Heritage architecture becomes a public timekeeper in a reminder that timelines are built through shared experience and memory. In the words of the artist, “Like the collective efforts used by humans over centuries to communally mark time, to measure and mark it in physical form—ranging from Jantar Mantar, to the Prime Meridian line, to ubiquitous minarets, clock towers, and

animated or astronomical clocks around the world—the museum building will become a site to explore the idea of a public clock, and an experiment in collective timekeeping that all in the city can experience.”

Inside the museum, quiet gestures, such as a single pendulum hovering above the fountain on the rotunda floor and a small sculptural installation tucked into an interstitial space in front of the freight elevator, demonstrate Sze’s distinct engagement with unexpected spaces. As visitors ascend to the sixth, uppermost level of the rotunda, they enter an immersive environment: a panoramic sequence of eight bays occupied by a new series of works comprising painting, sculpture, video, drawing, and sound. These are connected by a river of videos—seen earlier on the building’s street-level facade—which slowly travels up the spiral expanse of the building’s interior, creating a horizon line of moving images. As it travels across, above, and behind the works on view, visitors are absorbed into a generative experience, continually re-orienting themselves temporally and spatially.

Bookending the new installation on Rotunda Level 6 are two key works from the Guggenheim’s collection, both on view for the first time in New York. The installation begins with Sze’s first artwork to incorporate video, *Untitled (Media Lab)* (1998), which captures her signature ability to fuse found objects and video. The exhibition continues into Tower Level 7, culminating in the artist’s monumental work *Timekeeper* (2016). *Timekeeper* is a multisensory, multimedia installation that has at its center an artist’s desk filled with quotidian objects. An overflow of still and moving images are projected in cascades from the desk onto the surrounding walls: a bird in flight, fire burning in a trash can, a child sleeping, a hand drawing a line, static noise on a screen. Digital clocks indicating the actual time from different zones around the world are also embedded within, underscoring how the ubiquitous nature of technology has reframed our understanding of time and place. Time, as it is shown unfolding in the ensemble of works gathered for this exhibition, is a collection of lived and remembered experiences. *Sarah Sze: Timelapse* is, as Sze puts it, “a contemplation on how we mark time and how time marks us.”

The exhibition will be accompanied by a special, 152-page publication with contributions by curator Kyung An and writers Hilton Als and Molly Nesbit. Conceived in close collaboration with the artist’s studio and designed by Neil Donnelly, it will include installation views from the exhibition, a testament to Sze’s singular approach to materials and space.

*Sarah Sze: Timelapse* is organized by Kyung An, Associate Curator, Asian Art, and was initiated and contributed to by Nancy Spector, former Jennifer and David Stockman Chief Curator.

## Funders

Major support for *Sarah Sze: Timelapse* is provided by Gagosian.

Exhibition technology is generously provided by LG.

The Leadership Committee for this exhibition is gratefully acknowledged for its generosity, with special thanks to Edlis-Neeson Foundation, The Anna-Maria and Stephen Kellen Foundation, Barbara and Andrew Gundlach, Melanie and Alvaro Leal, Victoria Miro Gallery, Charlotte Feng Ford, Amy and John Griffin, The Peter Norton Family Foundation, Ed Cohen and Dillon Cohen, Janet Benton, Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, Angelo K H Chan and Frederick Wertheim, Martin and Rebecca Eisenberg, Katherine Farley and Jerry I. Speyer, Joanne Gold and Andrew Stern, Agnes Gund, Jenny F. Mullen, Takeo Obayashi, Laurie M. Tisch, The Evelyn Toll Family Foundation, James Keith Brown and Eric Diefenbach, Miyoung Lee and Neil Simpkins, and those who wish to remain anonymous.

Support is also generously provided by Girlfriend Fund, The Robert Lehman Foundation, and The Sidney E. Frank Foundation.

Additional funding is provided by the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum's International Director's Council and Photography Council.

## About the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation

The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation was established in 1937 and is dedicated to promoting the understanding and appreciation of modern and contemporary art through exhibitions, education programs, research initiatives, and publications. The international constellation of museums includes the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; the Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice; the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao; and the future Guggenheim Abu Dhabi. An architectural icon and “temple of spirit” where radical art and architecture meet, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum is now among a group of eight Frank Lloyd Wright structures in the United States recently designated as a UNESCO World Heritage site. To learn more about the museum and the Guggenheim's activities around the world, visit [guggenheim.org](http://guggenheim.org).

#SarahSzeTimelapse  
@Guggenheim  
[guggenheim.org/social](http://guggenheim.org/social)

For press image requests, contact [pressoffice@guggenheim.org](mailto:pressoffice@guggenheim.org).

Updated March 31, 2023

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## Sarah Sze: Timelapse Working Checklist (24 March 2023)

### Sarah Sze

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (Friday, March 31, 2023 – Sunday, September 10, 2023)

#### Exterior

Sarah Sze

*Wider than the Sky*

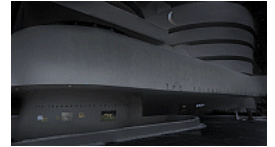
2023

Color video projection, silent, various durations

Dimensions variable

Collection of the artist

X.2021.592



Sarah Sze

*The Moon's Gravity Causes the Oceans' Tides*

2023

Five-channel color video projection, silent, various durations

Dimensions variable

Collection of the artist

X.2021.593



#### Ramp 6

Sarah Sze

*River of Images*

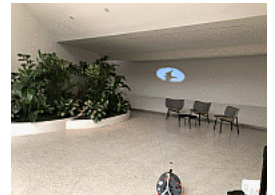
2023

Thirty-five-channel color video projection, with sound, various durations

Dimensions variable

Collection of the artist

X.2021.527



#### Ramp 6, Freight Wall

Sarah Sze

*Untitled (Media Lab)*

1998

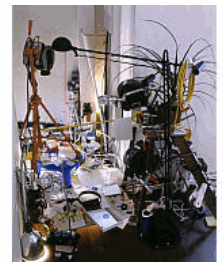
Mixed media

dimensions variable

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York

Gift, Adam and Lenore Sender, 2004

2004.118.1-2



#### Ramp 6, Bay 68

**Sarah Sze**

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (Friday, March 31, 2023 – Sunday, September 10, 2023)

**Ramp 6, Bay 68**

Sarah Sze

*Travelers Among Streams and Cascades*

2023

Oil paint, acrylic paint, inkjet prints, acrylic polymers, string, and ink on Diabond, aluminum, wood and paper

114 × 245 × 3 inches (289.6 × 622.3 × 7.6 cm)

114 × 38 1/2 × 2 inches (289.6 × 97.8 × 5.1 cm) (Panel 1)

114 × 24 × 2 1/2 inches (289.6 × 61 × 6.4 cm) (Panel 2)

114 × 44 × 3 inches (289.6 × 111.8 × 7.6 cm) (Panel 3)

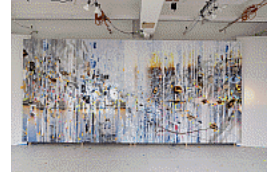
114 × 50 1/4 × 2 1/2 inches (289.6 × 127.6 × 6.4 cm) (Panel 4)

114 × 49 1/4 × 2 inches (289.6 × 125.1 × 5.1 cm) (Panel 5)

114 inches × 39 inches × 2 1/2 inches (289.6 × 99.1 × 6.4 cm) (Panel 6)

Collection of the artist

X.2021.529



**Ramp 6, Bay 67**

Sarah Sze

*Slice*

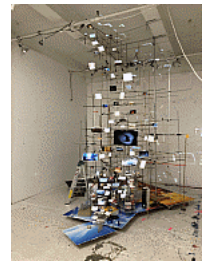
2023

Multimedia installation, including two-channel video projection, with sound, various durations; video projectors; wood; stainless steel; acrylic; inkjet prints, ceramic; tape and paper

11 feet 10 inches x 21 feet x 11 feet 1 inches (360.7 × 640.1 × 337.8 cm)

Collection of the artist

X.2021.530



**Ramp 6, Bay 66**

Sarah Sze

*Diver*

2023

Part one of two: Multimedia installation, including color video projection, silent, various durations; video projector; metal pendulum; string; Tyvek; ink; jeans; and tripod

Part two of two:

Multimedia installation, including color video projection, with sound, various durations; video projectors; water; monofilament; and metal plumb bob

Water container: 14 3/16 × 23 5/8 × 47 3/8 inches (36 × 60 × 120.3 cm)

Dimensions variable overall

Collection of the artist

X.2021.531



# Sarah Sze: Timelapse Working Checklist (24 March 2023)

Loan objects with status: pending-high

## Sarah Sze

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (Friday, March 31, 2023 – Sunday, September 10, 2023)

### **Ramp 6, Bay 66**

Sarah Sze

*Images that Images Beget*

2023

Oil paint, acrylic paint, inkjet prints, acrylic polymers, and ink on

Diabond, aluminum, wood and paper

103 1/4 × 129 × 3 inches (262.3 × 327.7 × 7.6 cm)

103 1/4 × 43 × 2 inches (262.3 × 109.2 × 5.1 cm) (Panel A)

103 1/4 × 43 1/2 × 2 1/2 inches (262.3 × 110.5 × 6.4 cm) (Panel B)

103 1/4 × 42 1/2 inches (262.3 × 108 cm) (Panel C)

Collection of the artist

X.2023.169



### **Ramp 6, Bay 65**

Sarah Sze

*Times Zero*

2023

Oil paint, acrylic paint, inkjet prints, acrylic polymers, and ink on

Diabond, aluminum, wood and paper

97 × 120 1/2 × 3 inches (246.4 × 306.1 × 5.1 cm)

97 × 41 1/4 × 2 inches (246.4 × 104.8 × 5.1 cm) (Panel A)

97 × 44 1/2 × 2 1/2 inches (246.4 × 113 × 6.4 cm) (Panel B)

97 × 34 3/4 × 3 inches (246.4 × 88.3 × 7.6 cm) (Panel C)

Collection of the artist

X.2021.532



### **Ramp 6, Bay 64**

Sarah Sze

*A Certain Slant*

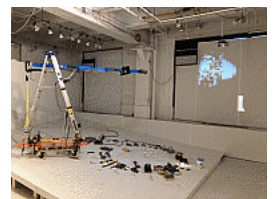
2023

Multimedia installation, including two-channel color video projection, with sound, various durations; video projectors; inkjet prints; and metal pendulum

Dimensions variable

Collection of the artist

X.2021.533



### **Ramp 6, Bay 63**

**Sarah Sze**

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (Friday, March 31, 2023 – Sunday, September 10, 2023)

**Ramp 6, Bay 63**

Sarah Sze

*The Night Sky is Dark Despite the Vast Number of Stars in the Universe*

2023

Acrylic, string, paracord, and wood

Each 176 x 180 x 41 1/2 inches (447 x 457.2 x 105.4 cm)

Collection of the artist

X.2021.534



Sarah Sze

*Last Impression*

Oil paint, acrylic paint, inkjet prints, acrylic polymers, and ink on

Diabond, aluminum, wood and paper

84 x 56 1/4 x 2 inches (213.4 x 142.9 x 5.1 cm)

Collection of the artist

X.2023.165



**Ramp 6, Bay 62**

Sarah Sze

*Things Caused to Happen (Oculus)*

2023

Multimedia installation, including color video projection, with sound, various durations; video projectors; wood; stainless steel; inkjet prints; toothpicks; clamps; ruler; and tripods

Dimensions variable

Collection of the artist

X.2021.535



**Tower 7**

Sarah Sze

*Timekeeper*

2016

Mixed media, mirrors, wood, stainless steel, archival pigment prints, projectors, lamps, desk, stools, stone  
dimensions variable

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York

Purchased with funds contributed by the International Director's Council, with additional funds contributed by Ann Ames and Janet Hershaft, 2017  
2017.74



14 artworks

For over three decades, Sarah Sze (b. 1969, Boston) has developed a distinct visual language that boldly traverses sculpture, painting, installation, video, drawing, printmaking, and sound. Employing everyday objects and images, she explores how value is ascribed and behavior is formed in a world that embraces both the physical and the digital. For this exhibition, Sze has created a constellation of site-specific works that weave a path of discovery throughout the Guggenheim’s Frank Lloyd Wright–designed building. Altogether, the presentation sensorially and spatially investigates how the experience of time, place, and memory is continuously reshaped in relation to the constant stream and saturation of objects, images, and information today.

The exhibition begins outside, by tracing the passage of time on the museum’s exterior. There, a river of videos runs across the architecture at street level while a projection high on the building’s curved facade reflects the current phase of the moon’s cycle. Inside the museum, a series of unexpected encounters awaits, starting on the rotunda floor with a pendulum suspended from the oculus that hovers gently above the fountain. It leads visitors to the top level of the rotunda, where an immersive, panoramic environment stretches across the entire floor. Here, images of subjects suspended in action and in time, or captured in a moment of material transformation—a hand molding clay, a child sleeping, a volcano erupting—recur, collide, and interlace with and within precariously balanced installations. Sze’s works thus inherently possess a mutable quality, as though their existence resides in a fragile state between growth and decay. Moving across, above, and among these installations and the visitors, the same river of videos that circles the building’s exterior also travels up along the walls of the spiral, echoing the outpouring of images that surround us daily.

All works have been newly conceived for this presentation, save for two pivotal installations from the Guggenheim’s collection: *Untitled (Media Lab)* (1998), Sze’s first sculpture to incorporate video, and *Timekeeper* (2016), the multisensory installation on view in this floor’s adjoining gallery. Spanning twenty years of the artist’s career, these two works are exhibited for the first time in New York. Bookending this

rotunda level, the pairing demonstrates how the relationship between image and object, and the analog and the digital, has evolved from coexistence to conflation and even confusion in both contemporary life and Sze’s own practice.

Sze often speaks about the experience of time—itself, an accumulation of moments—in terms of splicing, editing, and collecting. The exhibition’s title refers to a technique in photography and film by which a succession of images is taken at intervals to record change over a given period, resulting in a simultaneously accelerated and collapsed sense of time. For the artist, *Sarah Sze: Timelapse* is a collection of precise, ephemeral moments and a contemplation on the significance of all those in between. In her words, it considers “how we mark and measure time—constructing our own personal timelines of memory through images and fragments of experiences that are constantly evolving.”

*Sarah Sze: Timelapse* is organized by Kyung An, Associate Curator, Asian Art.

The presentation continues into the adjoining gallery at the top of this level, and extends to the rotunda fountain and the building’s exterior.

The curator and the artist wish to thank the Guggenheim team members who worked to give shape to this exhibition.

Major support for *Sarah Sze: Timelapse* is provided by

**GAGOSIAN**

Exhibition technology is generously provided by



The Leadership Committee for this exhibition is gratefully acknowledged for its generosity, with special thanks to Edlis-Neeson Foundation, The Anna-Maria and Stephen Kellen Foundation, Barbara and Andrew Gundlach, Melanie and Alvaro Leal, Victoria Miro Gallery, Charlotte Feng Ford, Amy and John Griffin, The Peter Norton Family Foundation, Ed Cohen and Dillon Cohen, Janet Benton, Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, Angelo K H Chan and Frederick Wertheim, Martin and Rebecca Eisenberg, Katherine Farley and Jerry I. Speyer, Joanne Gold and Andrew Stern, Agnes Gund, Jenny F. Mullen, Takeo Obayashi, Laurie M. Tisch, The Evelyn Toll Family Foundation, James Keith Brown and Eric Diefenbach, Miyoung Lee and Neil Simpkins, and those who wish to remain anonymous.

Support is also generously provided by Girlfriend Fund, The Robert Lehman Foundation, and The Sidney E. Frank Foundation.

Additional funding is provided by the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum’s International Director’s Council and Photography Council.

Learn about the exhibition from the conversation with Sarah Sze on the Guggenheim Digital Guide, available for free on the Bloomberg Connects app. Content about this exhibition is available in English, Español, and 普通话.

Sarah Sze

b. 1969, Boston

*The Night Sky is Dark Despite the Vast Number  
of Stars in the Universe*

2023

Second of two parts

Acrylic paint, string, paracord, and wood

Collection of the artist

Sarah Sze  
b. 1969, Boston

*Diver*  
2023

First of two parts

Multimedia installation, including color video projection, silent, various durations; video projector; metal pendulum; string; Tyvek; ink; and tripod

Collection of the artist

*The Night Sky is Dark Despite the Vast Number of Stars in the Universe*  
2023

First of two parts

Acrylic paint, string, paracord, and wood

Collection of the artist

*Diver* and *The Night Sky is Dark Despite the Vast Number of Stars in the Universe* are exhibited as part of *Sarah Sze: Timelapse*, which extends to the building's exterior and continues on Ramp Level 6 and Tower Level 7.

According to the artist Sarah Sze, the Guggenheim's "void is an incredible piece of non-architecture," and the seedpod-shaped fountain at its center allows for a moment of intimacy in a sublime negative space, bringing together nature, architecture, and the visitors. Inside the fountain, there is an arrangement of rocks and a hammock that "reads like a landscape from afar." Sze elucidates, "I often use found objects because they are scaled to me, like a compass for my own body."

A video of Sze's finger poking into a bowl of rippling water flickers under the fountain's surface and a plumb bob dances above. This pendulum hangs from a thin blue thread connecting the pool to the oculus high overhead, building anticipation for what awaits at the top of the museum. In the words of the artist, "There is fragility in drawing a line through space; with this one simple powerful gesture, you can occupy an entire space."

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Discover more from the conversation with Sze on the Digital Guide.

Sarah Sze

b. 1969, Boston

*Last Impression*

2023

Oil paint, acrylic paint, inkjet prints, acrylic polymers,  
and ink on Diabond, aluminum, wood, and paper

Collection of the artist

Sarah Sze  
b. 1969, Boston

Above:

*Wider than the Sky*

2023

Color video projection, silent, various durations

Collection of the artist

Street level:

*River of Images*

2023

First of two parts

Five-channel color video projection, silent,  
various durations

Collection of the artist

*Wider than the Sky* and *River of Images* are exhibited as part of *Sarah Sze: Timelapse*, which continues inside the museum.

For her solo exhibition, New York–based artist Sarah Sze has transformed the Guggenheim building into a public work of art and a tool for communal timekeeping. At street level, a river of videos flows across the architecture—invoking the scrolling debris of images that we encounter daily in today’s digitally and materially saturated world. On top of the museum’s curvilinear facade, a projected moon appears every night, its shape changing over time to reflect the current phase of the actual moon. “There is a back-and-forth between a digital timeline and nature’s timeline,” Sze explains. “All the while, the works interact with the natural environment, picking up and collecting the world around it.”

🔗 308 📍 525

Discover more from the museum’s conversation with Sarah Sze and access a slow-looking exercise related to these works on the Guggenheim Digital Guide, available for free on the Bloomberg Connects app. Scan here to download:



Sarah Sze

b. 1969, Boston

*Untitled (Media Lab)*

1998

Four-channel color video, silent, various durations; media players; video projectors; ladder; tripods; lamps; fans; alarm clock; transformer; plants; and various found objects

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, Gift, Adam and Lenore Sender 2004.118

*Untitled (Media Lab)* was the first work by Sze to incorporate video into sculpture. In what the artist terms as a “self-supporting life system,” physical objects culled from quotidian life—a spoon, a potted plant, a floppy disk—catch projected scenes of tussling couples, a dog chasing its own tail, a dancing figure. Constructed on a dolly, the work is, as Sze puts it, “vagabond, and becomes site-specific wherever it goes. You can move it and roll it down the ramp, making the work feel less stuck in time or space.”

 310  526

Discover more from the conversation with Sze on the Digital Guide, and access a slow-looking exercise related to this work.

*Sarah Sze: Timelapse* continues on Ramp Level 6 and Tower Level 7.

Sarah Sze

b. 1969, Boston

*Untitled (Media Lab)*

1998

Four-channel color video, silent, various durations; media players; video projectors; ladder; tripods; lamps; fans; alarm clock; transformer; plants; and various found objects

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York,  
Gift, Adam and Lenore Sender 2004.118

*Untitled (Media Lab)* was the first work by Sze to incorporate video into sculpture. In what the artist terms as a “self-supporting life system,” physical objects culled from quotidian life—a spoon, a potted plant, a floppy disk—catch projected scenes of tussling couples, a dog chasing its own tail, a dancing figure. Constructed on a dolly, the work is, as Sze puts it, “vagabond, and becomes site-specific wherever it goes. You can move it and roll it down the ramp, making the work feel less stuck in time or space.”

 310    526

Discover more from the conversation with Sze on the Digital Guide, and access a slow-looking exercise related to this work.

Sarah Sze

b. 1969, Boston

*Tell it Slant*

2023

Oil paint, acrylic paint, inkjet prints, acrylic  
polymers, and ink on Diabond, aluminum, wood,  
and paper

Collection of the artist

Sarah Sze

b. 1969, Boston

*River of Images*

2023

Second of two parts

Thirty-five-channel color video projection,  
with sound, various durations

Collection of the artist

The videos in *River of Images*, which also encircle the building's exterior, travel across the concave, spiraling walls of this level. They are diverse in subject matter, ranging from a hand drawing a line and a cheetah running, to raindrops falling onto a puddle and cells under a microscope. No image is repeated and each moves at its own pace. In what the artist terms a “live moment of collision,” the images, which share the same source as those used in the sculptures and paintings on view, break away from the frame and move across, above, and behind the other artworks and the visitors. After reaching the top of the museum ramp, “all of the images in the river crash and die, becoming a kind of a digital dust.” Sze adds, “I wanted to remind you that the digital is actually physical. I think the most powerful effect of the digital is to invoke longing. You always are left with a sense of wanting more.”

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Access a slow-looking exercise related to this work.

Sarah Sze

b. 1969, Boston

*Travelers Among Streams and Cascades*

2023

Oil paint, acrylic paint, inkjet prints, acrylic polymers, string, and ink on Diabond, aluminum, wood, and paper

Collection of the artist

The paintings that are interspersed throughout the rotunda's sixth level extend an imaginary horizon line across the building's expanse. These "apertures," in Sze's own words, are like telescopes. Their dramatic sense of depth creates a window into the architecture, and extends into a new dimension beyond the wall. Images of hands—molding a lump of clay, shuffling a deck of cards, drawing, resting, running through sand—recur, roaming amid a floating pastiche of sleeping figures and burning flames. Hovering between fragmentation and wholeness, familiarity and strangeness, a painting is, for the artist, "always interesting because you can transport yourself into it."

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Access a slow-looking exercise related to this work.

Sarah Sze

b. 1969, Boston

*Slice*

2023

Multimedia installation, including two-channel video projection, with sound, various durations; video projectors; wood; stainless steel; acrylic; inkjet prints, ceramic; tape; and paper

Collection of the artist

On approach, *Slice* appears as though it has grown out of the Frank Lloyd Wright architecture. Walking around the large, nestled structure, the viewer is invited to turn and face a multitude of screens backlit against the natural light that streams through the Guggenheim's oculus. The work teems with vibrating images of things poetic and pedestrian, all captured in moments of transition. "You imagine how the work was made and how it will fall apart. Those are indicators that you're looking at something live in the moment," Sze contends. "I think for me, this idea of fragility, of things being in flux, is one of potential."

Sarah Sze  
b. 1969, Boston

*Diver*  
2023

Second of two parts

Multimedia installation, including color video projection, with sound, various durations; video projectors; water; monofilament; and metal plumb bob

Collection of the artist

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Discover more from the conversation with Sze on the Digital Guide.

Sze once remarked: “At the Guggenheim, perception is always being turned on its head. You’re always being disoriented and reoriented. Even the paintings are hung at an angle that the museum has found feels right to the viewer, but is somewhere in between being square to the earth and square to the slope of the building’s ramp. I am interested in a state of teetering—this feeling that you’re always rebalancing—because the notion that something is unstable and constantly changing signals the ephemerality and fragility of knowledge and experience.”

The artist invokes this condition in *Diver*, which presents a pendulum skimming the surface of water that has leveled itself even as its container is stationed parallel to the sloping floor. The work also elicits a moment of epiphany as the viewer realizes that the pendulum’s blue string continues up to the oculus before extending down to the plumb bob above the rotunda fountain. With this one gesture, Sze distills the immensity and fragility of the exhibition, and our existence within it, into a single point.

Sarah Sze  
b. 1969, Boston

*Times Zero*

2023

Oil paint, acrylic paint, inkjet prints, acrylic polymers,  
and ink on Diabond, aluminum, wood, and paper

Collection of the artist

To make *Times Zero*, Sze replicated the architecture of this bay in her studio at 1:1 scale. As she worked, she noticed how paint dripped at an angle down the slanted platform that connects the bay's back wall to the floor of the museum. She later photographed the finished painting and digitally distorted its image in perspective to the incline. The resulting full-scale print was then ripped and the shards arranged below the painting itself—like a reflection in water or an imprint—while the debris was left to overflow at the edge like liquid. As the viewer approaches this bay, the torn papers slowly come into view, like a mirage of the painting that hangs above. With this fragmentation, Sze explores “how the experience of viewing an image can be one of piecing it back together.”

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Access a slow-looking exercise related to this work.

Sarah Sze

b. 1969, Boston

*A Certain Slant*

2023

Multimedia installation, including two-channel color video projection, with sound, various durations; video projectors; inkjet prints; and metal pendulum  
Collection of the artist

By turning to the pendulum—an age-old instrument that relies on gravity to measure time—in the guise of a plumb bob—an object used by humans for millennia to orient themselves in space—Sze plays with the idea of an artwork as a tool for locating ourselves not only in time and history, but also in place. In *A Certain Slant*, the pendulum hangs from a carefully balanced ladder, perched on a dolly and leveled using shims. Here the artist asks: “What is a tool for seeing, what is a tool for building, what is a tool for making?” The plumb bob interlopes with a projection of the moon on the floor, an incandescent speck dancing in a loop. “You can’t help but think they’re magnetically reacting to another,” Sze remarks. “This disorientation between what is the cause and what is the effect, what is digital and what is analog, is a metaphor threading through all the works on view.”

Sarah Sze

b. 1969, Boston

*Things Caused to Happen (Oculus)*

2023

Multimedia installation, including color video projection, with sound, various durations; video projectors; wood; stainless steel; inkjet prints; toothpicks; clamps; ruler; and tripods

Collection of the artist

*Things Caused to Happen (Oculus)* beckons the viewer to peer into a spherical void constructed from the negative space between densely latticed aluminum rods. Its plethora of tiny embedded screens brims with images that are familiar yet poetic at this intimate scale. These images cast cascades of shadows onto the arced wall behind the structure, attesting to a material nature beyond their digital existence. Sze has long expressed an interest in the blurring of the barrier between art and daily life, and “in people recognizing things in the work.” She elaborates, “I want to create a kind of intimacy in the work, where you feel like, ‘I know that, I’ve seen that in my own life.’”

Sarah Sze  
b. 1969, Boston

*Timekeeper*

2016

Thirty-eight-channel color and black-and-white video, silent, various durations; three-channel audio, various durations; computers; interactive networked code (HTML, JavaScript); video projectors; mirrors; wood; stainless steel; inkjet prints; lamps; desks; stools; stone; ceramic; water; and various found objects

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York,  
Purchased with funds contributed by the  
International Director's Council, with additional  
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2017.74

Sze began her ongoing series of immersive multimedia installations titled *Timekeepers* “by questioning how we make sense of images when we are getting them from various sources—personal, impersonal, high, low—all in a state of constant flux.” In these works, she combines everyday objects with whirling video projections of things in motion. Multisensory and kaleidoscopic, *Timekeeper*, presented in the adjoining gallery, was the first in the series to incorporate its environment by allowing the video projections to flow out onto the surrounding architecture. The installation thus marks a significant shift in the mid-career artist’s practice.

Sze observes of *Timekeeper*, “You feel as though you are standing in the middle of a constructed world, similar to being inside a planetarium.” The chance convergences between objects—a table from Sze’s studio, scraps of paper, shards of mirrored glass, potted plants—and images in the work invoke the tension and confusion between the tactile and the digital inherent in the present age. Also embedded in this living scaffolding of experience and memory are clocks that indicate times around the world. Ultimately, the artist questions, “How can an artwork become a timekeeper? How do we track the flow of time through experiences, places, and objects? How is this complicated by the plethora of images through which we now experience the world? Finally, how is a confusion of both the tactile and the digital being merged into a new language—at a pace beyond our capability to comprehend?”

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Discover more from the conversation with Sze on the Digital Guide.

Sarah Sze

b. 1969, Boston

*Images That Images Beget*

2023

Oil paint, acrylic paint, inkjet prints, acrylic  
polymers, and ink on Diabond, aluminum, wood,  
and paper

Collection of the artist