



STAIR-GAZING: RHIA HURT

On view in the Art Center's Main Staircase
January 19 - March 19, 2017

Rhia Hurt

Star Bursts, 2016

Acrylic on canvas and synthetic silk over wire
Dimensions variable

Rhia Hurt composed this site-specific installation responding to the space in the Art Center stairwell. Inspired by nature, materials in her studio and color field paintings that originated in the 1950s, she creates multiple elements by stretching canvas over three-dimensional wire forms. Defying the conventional rectangular canvas, Hurt's colorful organic shapes can be considered both painting and sculpture. She uses improvisational techniques to construct and apply color to her work, often soaking the canvas in kiddie pools to blend the pigments. The artist commented about this process, "There is an element of surprise and discovery that is captivating."

These organically shaped canvases seem familiar—suggesting images of sea anemones, flowers or starbursts—but they are abstract forms. Hurt has a personal connection to nature that centers her. She comments, "You can have a connection to nature no matter what is going on—no matter how challenging—no one can take that away from you. There is a lot of strength in that."

Currently based in New York City, Hurt received her MFA in Painting at the San Francisco Art Institute in 2009. She has shown her art in California, New York, Berlin, and Toronto. Her work is in private collections throughout the United States. In addition to her studio art practice, Hurt is the Executive Director of Brooklyn Art Space & Trestle Gallery, an arts organization in Brooklyn, NY.

Stair-gazing is a series curated by Katherine Murdock located in the Visual Art Center of New Jersey's Main stairwell. The series highlights a single work by one artist.

Visual Arts Center of New Jersey

68 Elm Street | Summit, NJ 07901 | 908.273.9121 | www.artcenternj.org

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