



# GRIFFITH OBSERVER

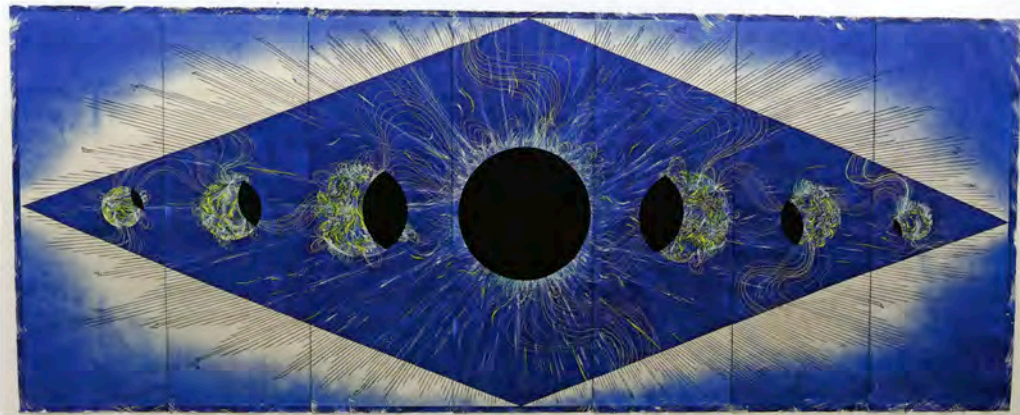
VOL. 85, Nº 10 • OCTOBER 2021 • \$2<sup>50</sup>





## Blue Blazes

Dr. E.C. Krupp  
Griffith Observatory



Eclipsed under the sun in 2017, Lia Halloran later put time into space with sequential occultation of the tangled photosphere by the moon's dark disk in *The Sun Burns My Eyes Like Moons (Positive)* (cyanotype on paper from painted negative, acrylic, and ink). These eclipses usually occur in clear blue sky, but here some mysterious luminosity emerges from the diamond of sky on which the spectacle transpires. That light beyond the sky is reminiscent of the coronal surprise delivered by totality. (photograph E.C. Krupp)

Last summer, artist Lia Halloran dropped out of the blue in the industrial district of downtown Los Angeles with monumental graphics and celestial themes at Jesus De Luis Los Angeles gallery (1110 Mateo Street).

Ms. Halloran's 2017 show, *Your Body Is a Space That Sees*, transformed the astronomical images on Harvard College Observatory historic photograph plates into fine art with the giant cyanotypes, or blueprints, that are Ms. Halloran's specialty. The installation, which reworked galaxies, globular clusters, comets, nebulae, and more, was documented in "Cosmic Blueprints," in the September, 2017, *Griffith Observer*, and two of her cyanotypes featuring the Horsehead nebula in Orion accompanied an article in last month's issue. That article outlined the early history of astronomical photography and so covered the contributions of John Herschel, who invented the cyanotype.

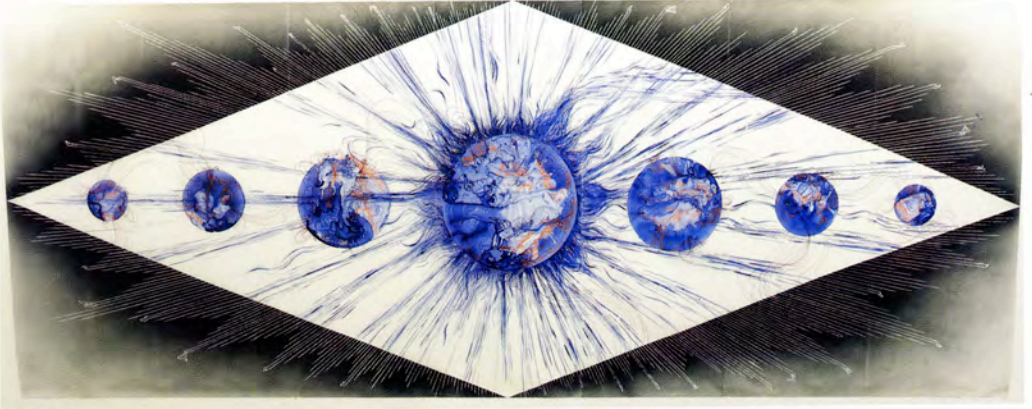
Lia Halloran incorporated a total solar

eclipse into her blueprints after she witnessed the All-American Transcontinental Total Solar Eclipse of 21 August 2017. Her initial piece of eclipse art, *Eclipse after Anna Palmer Draper*, was included in an eclipse merchandising pictorial, "Shadow Merchants," in the December, 2017, *Griffith Observer*.

Unwilling to walk away from the eclipse path, Ms. Halloran immersed herself in the experiences of nineteenth-century women who participated in solar eclipse expeditions, examined the archives of Mount Wilson Observatory, which pioneered high-end solar research, and embraced the astrophysical intricacy of contemporary multi-wavelength satellite observations of the sun. The consequences of her investigation comprise the four colossal pieces—one for each wall—in her most recent show, *The Sun Burns My Eyes Like Moons*. Two of the works are cyanotypes on paper from painted negative, acrylic, and

ink, and two are ink on two layers of drafting film. All four are rich in texture, detail, and visual impact.

Lia Halloran is represented by Luis De Jesus Los Angeles. She is also Associate Professor at Chapman University.



Here free of the moon, the sun make its own rhapsody in blue in *The Sun Burns My Eyes Like Moons (Negative)* (cyanotype on paper from painted negative, acrylic, and ink). (photograph E.C. Krupp)



Lia Halloran turned four walls into a wild blue yonder at Jesus De Luis Los Angeles. The two walls seen here are leveraged into the blue by *The Sun Burns My Eyes Like Moons (Positive)* (left wall) and *Solar (Negative)* (far wall). (photograph E.C. Krupp)

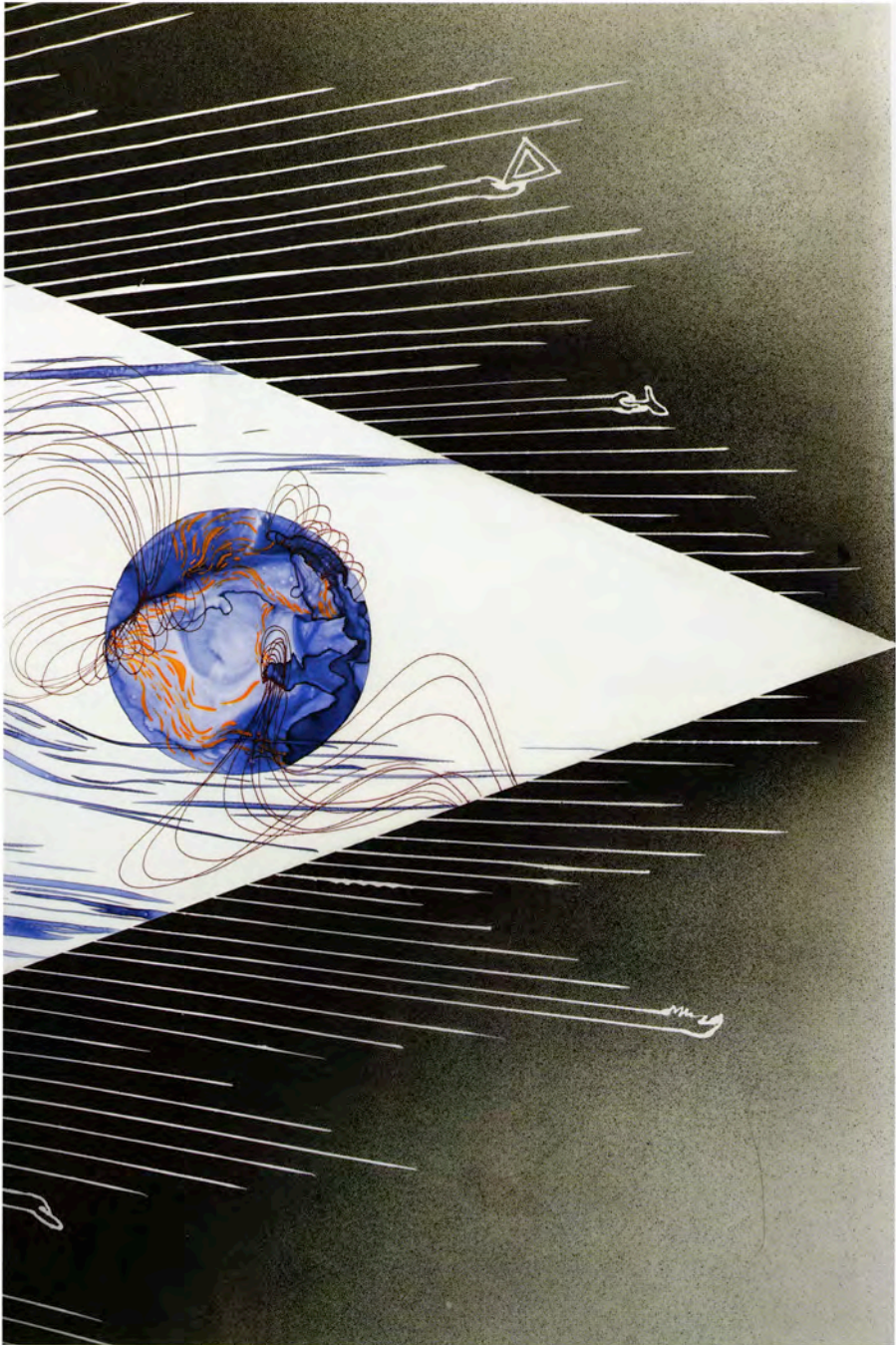




*Solar (Positive)* takes a cue from the magnetic fields that put an odd kind of order into the furious outer layers of the sun. Here Lia Halloran makes the surface boil while glowing helmets of diffuse gas reach into space. (ink and acrylic of Dura-Lar). (photograph E.C. Krupp)

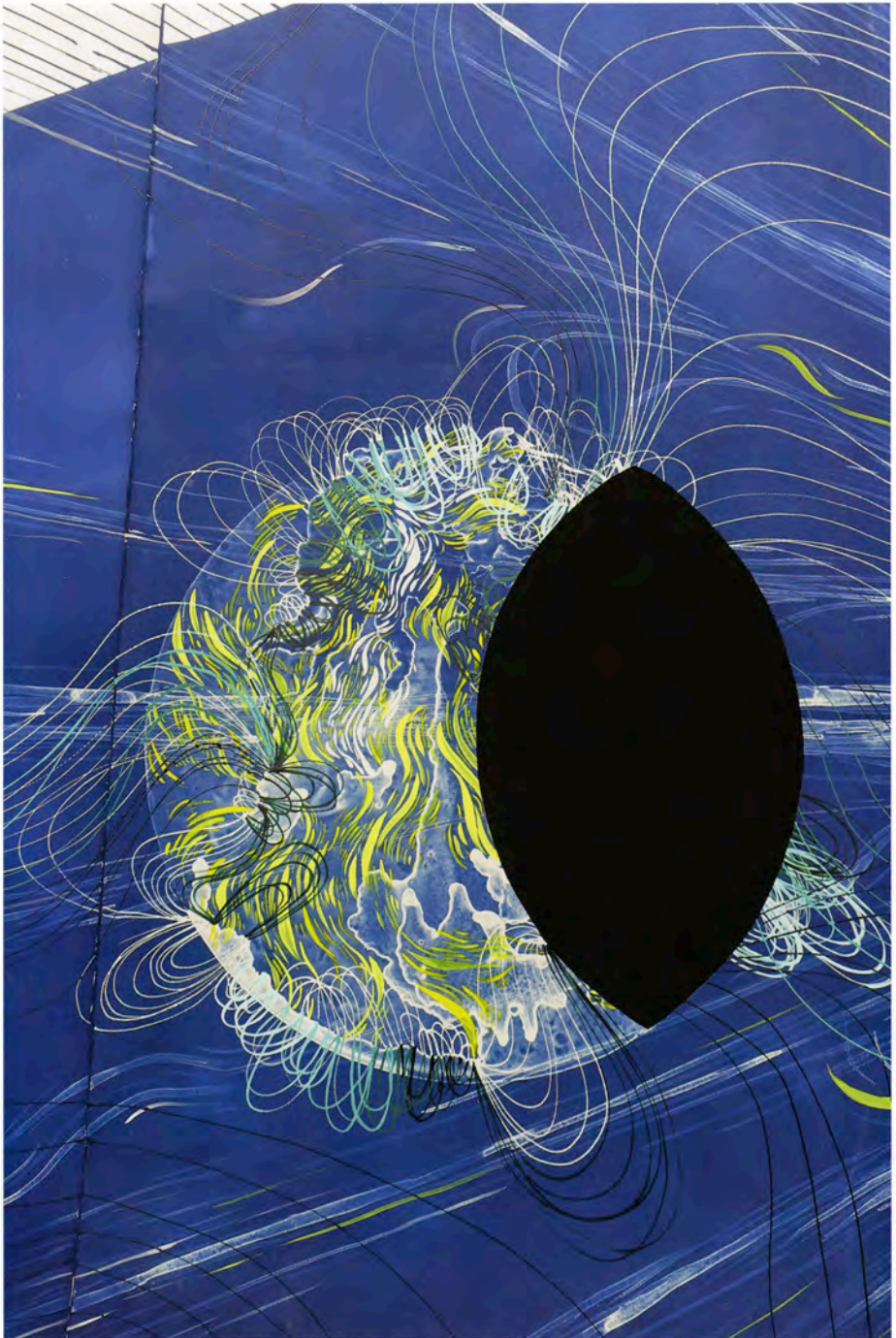


The disk of the sun is too bright for the gaze of the eye, but a glance always suggests the sun's surface is smooth and perfectly round. Astronomical instruments and techniques reveal a different story, and Lia Halloran's *Solar (Negative)* (ink on two layers of drafting film) suggests complexity of that seething landscape. (photograph E.C. Krupp)



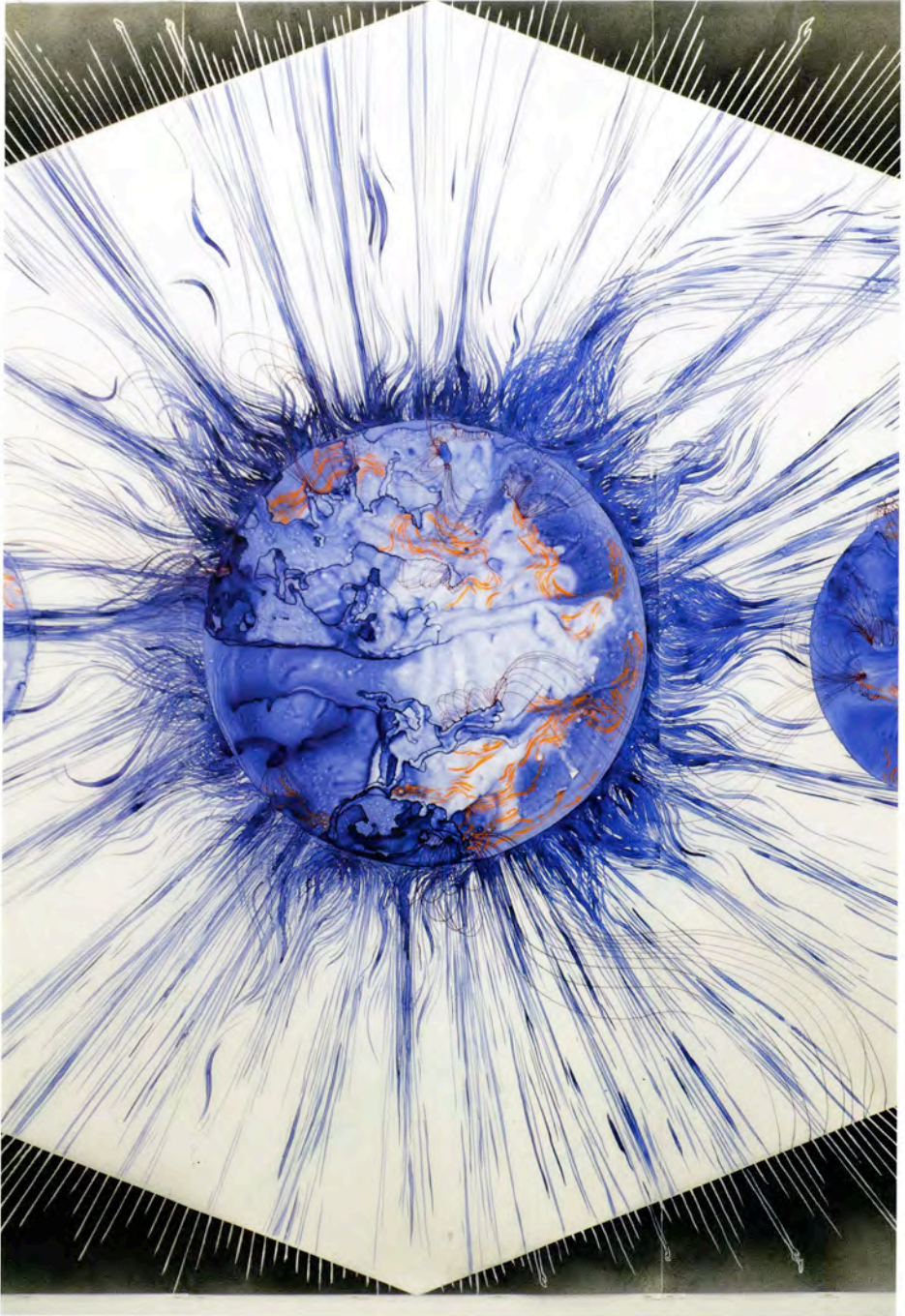
Some of the sun's rays in *The Sun Burns My Eyes Like Moons (Negative)* have hands like the rays of the sun in Egyptian art of during the reign of the pharaoh Akhenaten. In the Amarna period, the actual disk of the sun, and not mythic personification, was the focus of solar worship. (photograph E.C. Krupp)





A detail of *The Sun Burns My Eyes Like Moons (Positive)* suggests the sun's dynamic reach into interplanetary space. (photograph E.C. Krupp)





Lia Halloran catches us here between the diamond of daylight and the deep blue sun. (detail *The Sun Burns My Eyes Like Moons (Negative)*) (photograph E.C. Krupp)