

Haegue Yang Venetian Blind Sculptures

2008–2022
Installations

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In *Sol LeWitt Upside Down onto Wall – Modular Wall Structure, Expanded 20 Times*, Haegue Yang employs Venetian blinds, one of her signature materials, to domesticate the white, open cube sculptures of conceptual artist Sol LeWitt (1928–2007). This installation joins a larger series that “traces” LeWitt’s modular composition from in the 1960s: expands or reduces their size, upends their orientation, suspends them from the ceiling or mounts them on the wall. Filling the spaces LeWitt had left open in his sculptures, the sterile white blinds become a permeable monochrome that plays with density and lightness, opacity and transparency. Yang’s blind structures channel these canonic examples of conceptual art, but the artist seeks to restore that movement’s “spiritual aspect” by striving for what she considers a certain “freedom within a narrative freighted with symbolism.”

Mounted in the lobby of the SMART Museum, Chicago, the arrangement of the blinds is contingent and fleeting as they simultaneously reveal and obscure a bright blue wall. Per the artist’s specifications for this installation of the artwork, the exhibition team voted on a selection of blues available at the Museum’s local paint supplier to choose the shade most similar to French artist Yves Klein’s patented International Klein Blue. Centered on what Yang calls “quasi-Yves Klein Blue,” the quasi-empirical survey—both absurd and precarious—contests Klein’s individualistic legacy to offer a more collective set of relations between artists, museum professionals, and the history of art. This absurdist take on historical precedent extends to Yang’s treatment of LeWitt’s Modular Wall Structure (1968), which is flipped on its head but appears to stay the same due to its quadrilateral format. Complicating notions of originality, “quasi” is an artistic strategy to relativize the Western canon, to turn it “upside down.” Yang’s layers of citation, expansion, and overturning at once oppose and honour the art historical narratives the West long took for granted.

***Sol LeWitt Upside Down onto Wall –
Modular Wall Structure, Expanded 20 Times***

2022

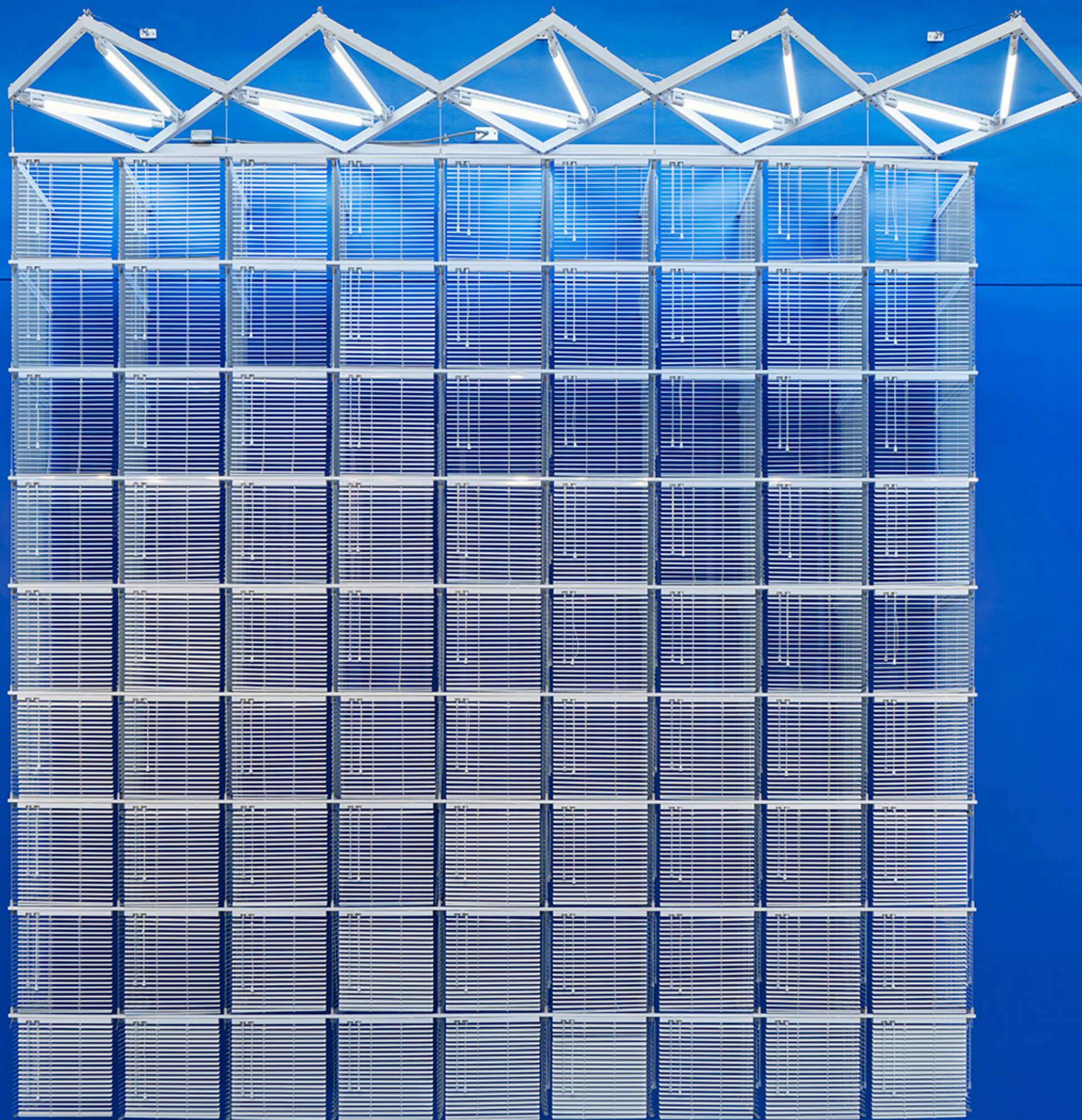
Aluminum venetian blinds, powder-coated aluminum hanging structure, steel wire rope, LED tubes, cable
500 × 504 × 104 cm

Installation *Haegue Yang: Quasi-Legit*,
Smart Museum at the University of Chicago, USA

Exhibition Video

[youtube.com/watch?v=a-oGZ8vldkM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a-oGZ8vldkM)







Silo of Silence – Clicked Core

2017

Aluminum venetian blinds, powder-coated aluminum and steel hanging structure, steel wire rope, revolving stage, LED tubes, cable
Aluminiumjalousien, pulverbeschichtete Aluminium- und Stahl-
Hängestruktur, Stahlseil, Drehbühne, LED-Röhren, Kabel

Dimensions variable / Dimensionen variabel

Kindl, 2017: 1572 × 780 × 780 cm; MMCA, 2020: 1654 × 780 × 780 cm;

SMK, 2022: 1654 × 780 × 780 cm

Requires a ceiling height of at least 15 meters for installation

Benötigt zur Installation eine Deckenhöhe von mindestens 15 meter

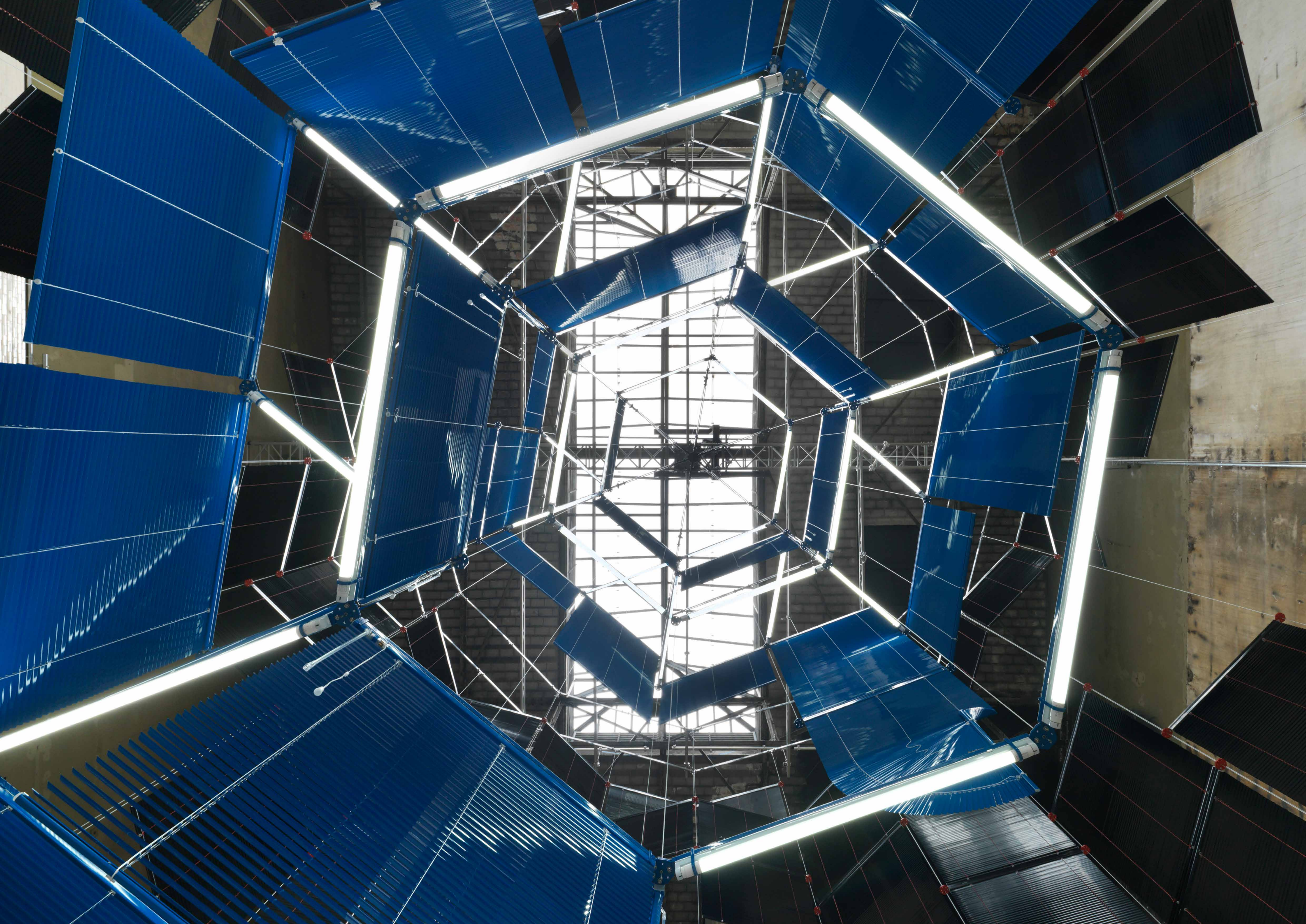
Installation *Haegue Yang: Silo of Silence - Clicked Core*, Kesselhaus,

KINDL – Zentrum für zeitgenössische Kunst, Berlin, 2017-2018

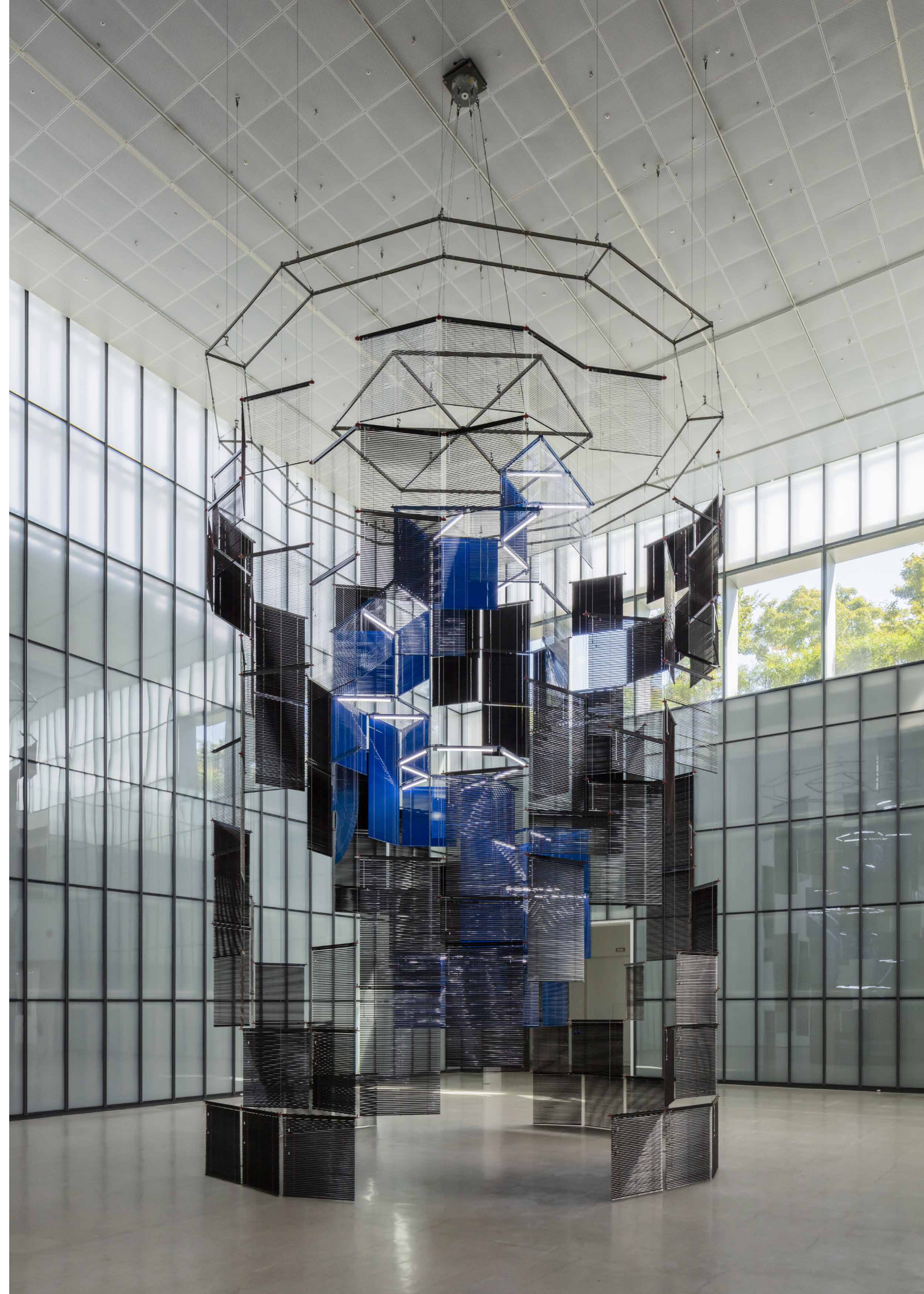
Video: vimeo.com/268562243







Comprising 154 venetian blinds, *Silo of Silence – Clicked Core* is 16 metres in height. The suspended cylinder-shaped sculpture has two layers – the outer is made of black blinds, while the inner 'core' is constructed out of cobalt blue blinds with lighting tubes. Rotating at a speed that corresponds to a walking pace, the inner core does not appear to move when the spectator is walking in the same direction as the rotation. Inside the silo, the hypnotising rotational movement generates an imagery of kaleidoscopic geometry. Yang has used industrially manufactured, aluminium venetian blinds in her works for the past fifteen years. Easily purchased in the nearest curtain shop or hardware store, blinds are by no means exclusive items and as such, exemplify Yang's interest in ordinary domestic objects, similar to her frequent use of drying racks. The venetian blinds speak to our memories of densely inhabited urban areas, in which curtains or blinds are used to protect our privacy and mark the border between the outside and the inside while regulating the penetration and covering of views and lights. Yang has spoken about her 'problem of choosing colour', a situation often circumnavigated by leaving room for a colour to emerge by itself. For instance, the blinds' cobalt blue colour in this installation is rooted in the long conception period in 3D computer simulation. When a graphic element is clicked, it turns blue, indicating that it is activated and can be moved, modified or deleted. In *Silo of Silence – Clicked Core*, the blue colour thus directly references its own digital conception process. Our digital everyday life, with an infinite number of blue hyperlinks that prompt us to further action on-screen are, in fact, imbued with this particular colour. In this work, the blue (core) thus forms the active part.







Installation *Haegue Yang: Double Soul*,
Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen, 2022

The major venetian blind installation, *Three Folds and Multiple Twists* 2013 was first shown in Glasgow Sculpture Studios. It was hanging from the ceiling of the central gallery, the blinds fold around the gallery's columns, as the title suggests, engulfing them within its maze like structure. Yang's interest in blinds stem in part from their limited function – they are made to simply conceal and to reveal – and yet she continually finds new ways to experiment with their configuration. In this installation a number of the lower blinds subtly twist in accordance with a choreographed programme. This presents a sensory experience for the viewer, as their perspective is altered as they encounter the work from various positions within the gallery. These twisting blinds further develops Yang's interest in the mechanical movement of blinds, which was first seen in her major installation *Approaching: Choreography Engineered in Never-Past Tense* 2012 at last year's dOCUMENTA (13) in Kassel, Germany. At GSS however, the movement is minimal, delicate and intimate, reflecting upon the environment of the white gallery space as opposed to a hard-edged industrial setting.

Three Folds and Multiple Twists

2013

Aluminum venetian blinds, powdercoated aluminum hanging structure, mild steel, steel wire rope, ABS filament, 3D print, programmed electronics
Aluminiumjalousien, pulverbeschichtete Aluminiumhängestruktur, Baustahl, Stahlseil, ABS-Filament, 3D-Druck, programmierte Elektronik

296 × 566 × 734 cm

Installation *Haegue Yang: Journal of Boubal/kiki*, Glasgow Sculpture Studios, 2013





Installation *Fit for Purpose*, Kunsthaus Glarus, 2015





Lethal Love

2008 / 2018

Aluminum venetian blinds, powder-coated aluminum hanging structure, steel wire rope, free-standing mirror wall, moving spotlights, scent emitters (Wildflower, Gunpowder)

Aluminiumjalousien, pulverbeschichtete Aluminiumhängestruktur, Stahlseil, freistehende Spiegelwand, bewegliche Scheinwerfer, Geruchsmaschinen (Wildflower, Gunpowder)

232 × 911 × 587 cm

Installation *Super position: Equilibrium & Engagement*, 21st Biennale of Sydney, 2018

Video: <https://vimeo.com/276470508> (01:30 – 02:30)





Lethal Love

Andrew Bonacinas

Afterall online Magazine, 15th April 2008

For two weeks in June 2003 a large-scale sculpture appeared without ceremony in Paris's Quartier de l'Horloge, in Beaubourg. While its generic modernist style aspired to that of a public monument, its lack of any visible dedication rendered it, over the course of its short-lived occupancy, into a temporary extension of the area's anonymous architecture. Its blank surfaces encouraged the creation of an inadvertent public, who recorded moments of engagement with the sculpture through random mark-making and graffiti. Haegue Yang's *Accidental Monument*, which was fabricated according to purposely basic instructions issued by the artist and by technicians unknown to her, functioned in the way that many of Yang's works do, delicately coalescing fleeting communities through eclectic arrangements of everyday objects and almost imperceptible adjustments to the familiar.

While the monument, or any notion of monumentality, is seemingly at odds with Yang's practice, her salvaging of transitory moments, places and traces from the clamour of urban life pays tribute to the significance of personal gesture. The articulation of private values within the heavily mediated public sphere demonstrates the potential political import of a personal act, and casts light on contemporary characterisations of community that are distinguished by mutual otherness.

Yang's installation at London's Cubitt is just one of a group to be hosted by a number of international institutions over the coming year. This body of work offers a mode of counter-monumentality, established in a series of abstract portraits of radically minded individuals whose public personas are closely interwoven with the remarkable narratives of their personal lives. *Lethal Love* (2008) elaborates upon the life of Petra Kelly, an influential German activist and one of the founders of Germany's Green Party who was shot in her sleep by her long-term lover Gert Bastian, an ex-army general and fellow party member. The irreconcilability of her public image as an advocate of pacifism with her strained and violent private existence suggests a state of unknowability that distinguishes each and every member of a community of individuals; accordingly, Yang's enigmatic installations invite an indefinite number of viewpoints, shifting between transparency and opacity, object and architecture. Formally, *Lethal Love* develops an aesthetic vocabulary established in earlier works such as *Series of Vulnerable Arrangements* (2006) and takes the form of a deftly balanced assemblage of domestic objects, including metallic blinds, mirrors and spotlights, interspersed with movement-activated scent dispensers which here fill the air with invisible clouds of gunpowder and flowers. Cutting across the space, the suspended blinds form both a barrier and a viewing mechanism, the searching spotlights which traverse the space at regular intervals momentarily illuminate visitors' faces, pausing conversations and heightening the sense of others' presence.

Lethal Love, like the earlier work *Mountains of Encounter* (2007) – another portrait piece inspired by the professional relationship between Korean communist Kim San and his biographer, the American journalist Nym Wales – presents us with an abstracted space of encounter, one that is structured in terms of difference and absence. The absent protagonist is a familiar feature in Yang's work; objects often come to evoke a presence or narrative, or trace alternative modes of exchange and communication. In *Illiterate Leftovers* (2004) projected slides show nearly empty sheets of fax paper bearing only the transmission information and the occasional visual mechanical trace. Here an 'act of speech' is rendered silent, exploring the possibility of communication that remains unregistered in visible records. In *Traces of anonymous pupil authors* (2001) Yang presents the marks and notations made by students in their schoolbooks in isolation from the text on which they were made, singling out and suggesting the importance of alternative and subjective readings of given structures. In other projects objects suggest a space for potential engagement: for example, in *Social Conditions of Sitting Tables* (2001), hundreds of photographs document the crude handmade tables or benches that often mark the entrance to Korean shops or restaurants. These slipshod structures become abstract portraits of their makers; in their functionality they also provide a notional structure for the chance meetings of strangers in the public sphere.

In his writings on the subject of community, Jean-Luc Nancy asks, 'How can the community without essence (the community that is neither "people" nor "nation", neither "destiny" nor "generic humanity", etc.) be presented as such? ... How can we be receptive to the meaning of our multiple, dispersed, mortally fragmented existences, which nonetheless only make sense by existing in common?' Nancy argues that the decentred nature of community is what binds it together – through each member's cognisance of their lack of identity – and that the anxiety this engenders can only be quelled through an experience of mortality, an understanding that 'draws us beyond ourselves' into a social space of others and of strangers. The spectre of death hangs heavy in the air in *Lethal Love*, a portrait of irreconcilable individuals cast in the form of lovers – a universal image characterised by proximity yet one riven with the insistent possibility of the other's immanent absence.

Lethal Love thus conjures a fractured space in which intangibles – light, scent and vision – come together to form a portrait of the unstable notion of community that emerges in Yang's work, creating 'an uncanny but '(in)common' setting where the somewhat fragile and vulnerable idea of the "community of absence" can be performed'. Permeated with the tragic circumstances of a private encounter, *Lethal Love* is not so much a monument to individual existences as to the uncertain space between them.









Bathroom Radiator / Badezimmerheizung: 60 × 81 × 12 cm



Living Room Radiators / Wohnzimmerheizungen: each / je: 60 × 81 × 12 cm



Kitchen Boiler / Küchenboiler: 80 × 44 × 32 cm
Kitchen Radiator / Küchenheizung: 91 × 51 × 12 cm

Jahnstraße 5

2017

Aluminum venetian blinds, powder-coated aluminum frame, powder-coated perforated aluminum plates, light bulbs, cable, zip ties, terminal strips, 5 parts

Aluminiumjalousien, pulverbeschichtetes Aluminiumgestell, pulverbeschichtete perforierte

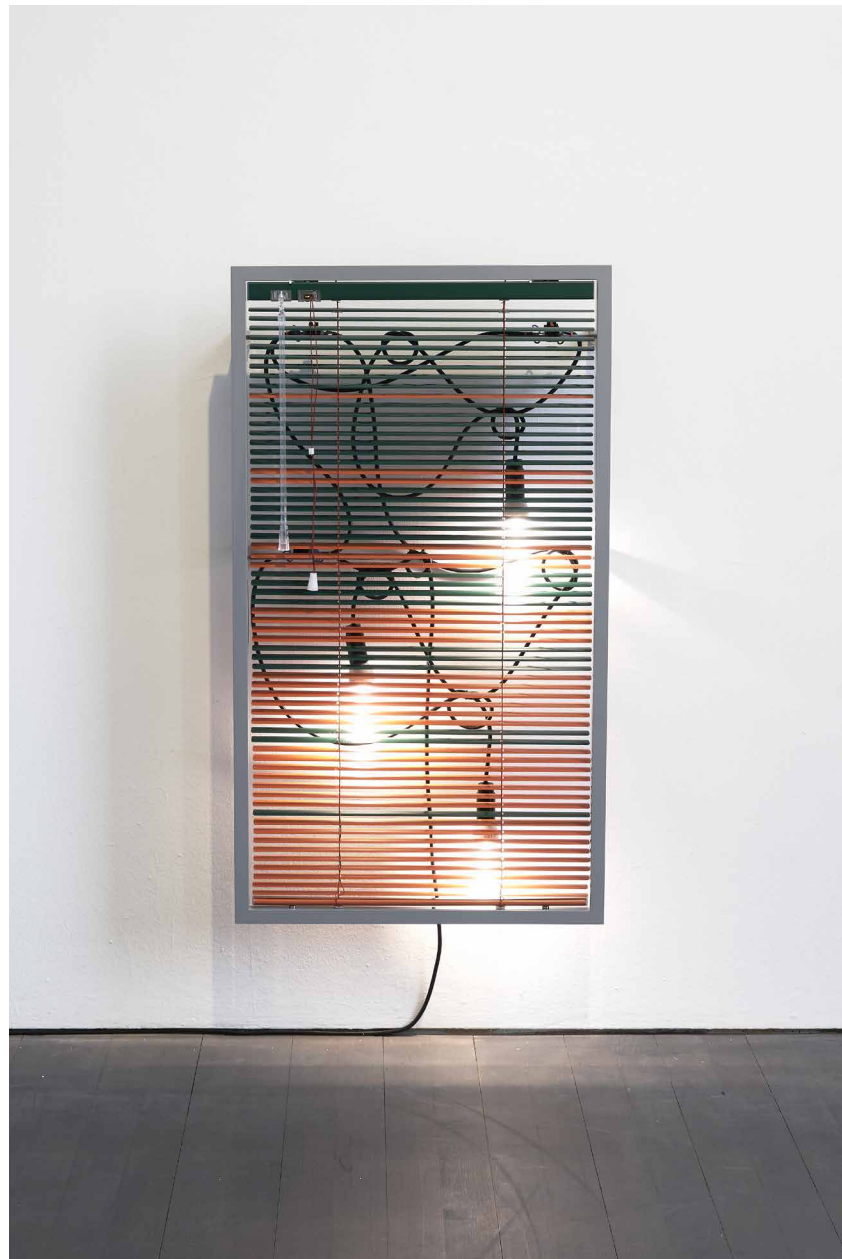
Aluminiumplatten, Glühbirnen, Kabel, Kabelbinder, Lüsterklemmen, 5-teilig

Dimensions / Maße variable

Edition 2/5 (+ 2 A.P.)



Jahnstraße 5 (Edition 2/5)
Installation *Hidden Beauty*, Kunsthalle Nürnberg, 2017

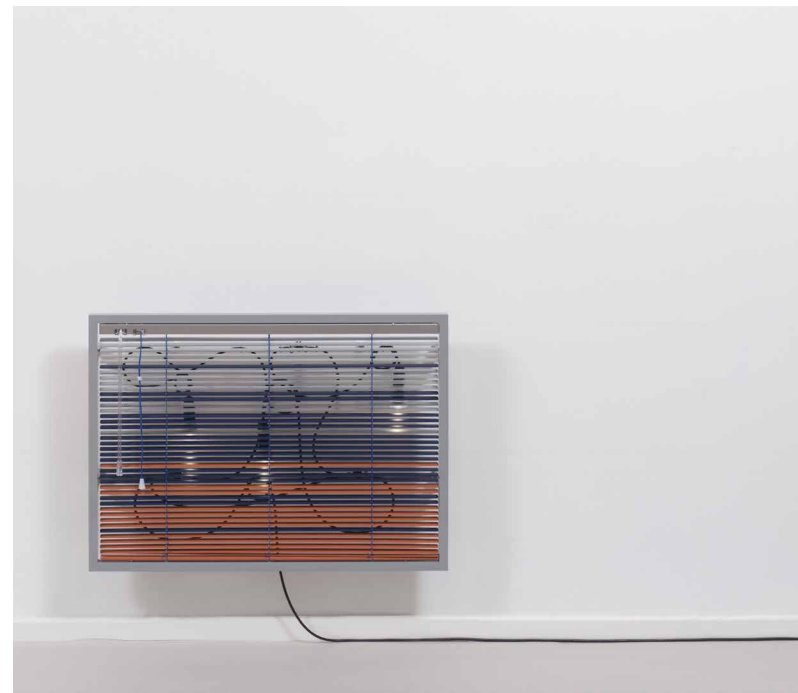


Jahnstraße 5 (Edition 2/5)
 Installation *Haegue Yang: Several Reenactments*, S.M.A.K., Ghent, 2023





Kitchen Boiler / Küchenboiler: 80 × 44 × 32 cm
Kitchen Radiator / Küchenheizung: 91 × 51 × 12 cm



Bathroom Radiator / Badezimmerheizung: 60 × 81 × 12 cm



Living Room Radiators / Wohnzimmerheizungen: each / je: 60 × 81 × 12 cm

Jahnstraße 5

2017

Aluminum venetian blinds, powder-coated aluminum frame, powder-coated perforated aluminum plates, light bulbs, cable, zip ties, terminal strips, 5 parts

Aluminiumjalousien, pulverbeschichtetes Aluminiumgestell, pulverbeschichtete perforierte Aluminiumplatten, Glühbirnen, Kabel, Kabelbinder, Lüsterklemmen, 5-teilig

Dimensions / Maße variable

Edition 5/5 (+ 2 A.P.)



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Jahnstraße 5 (Edition 5/5)
Installation art berlin, Galerie Barbara Wien, Berlin, 2017

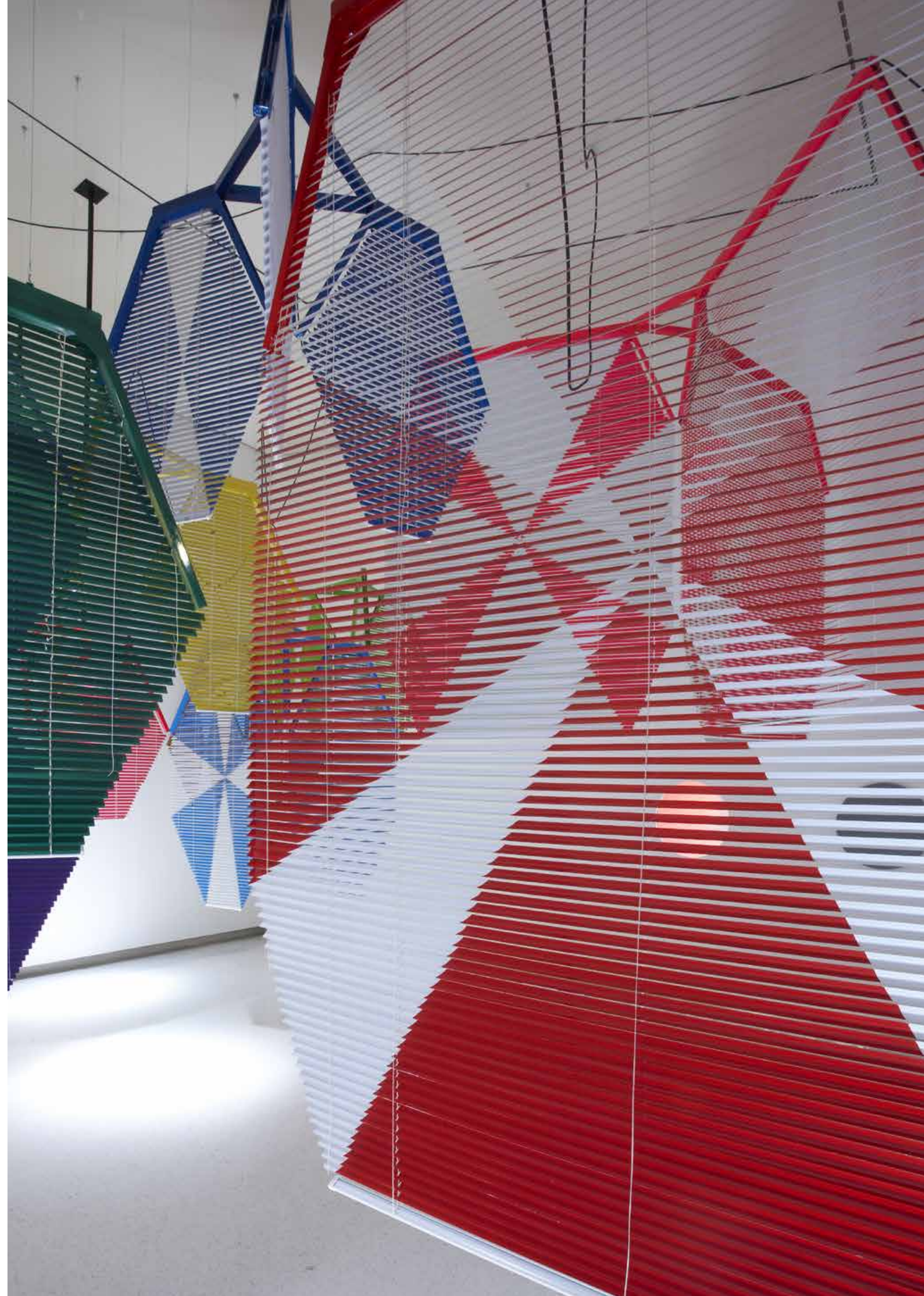


Three Kinds

2008

Aluminum venetian blinds, aluminum hanging structure,
spray paint, steel wire rope, moving spotlights, floodlights
Aluminiumjalousien, Aluminiumhängestruktur, Sprühfarbe,
Stahlseil, bewegliche Scheinwerfer, Flutlichtstrahler
363 × 1000 × 715 cm

Installation *Life on Mars*, 55th Carnegie International,
Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, 2008





The most complex of the artist's blind installations, *Three Kinds* introduced the use of highly shaped venetian blinds in elongated hexagonal and octagonal forms. Each blind element was hung in groupings of three that share a vibrant hue (like the colors of a sporting team): pink, yellow, purple, brown, green, blue, and bright orange. These groupings were interconnected by a metal armature. Each "face" of the blind has a prismatic or windmill pattern. Three floodlights suspended from the ceiling sent shafts of light onto the floor. Additionally, three moving lights spinning smoothly in the space changed the atmosphere and character of the installation, creating a complex overlay of shifting colors and patterns.

Three Kinds
2008
Details



