





ABOVE:
VISITOR EXITING LURE

NEXT:
EXTERIOR FACADE OF MADART
STUDIO VEILED IN BLUE DEBRIS
NET

LURE

DREAM THE COMBINE
WITH
CLAYTON BINKLEY

SEPTEMBER 24 - DECEMBER 7
2019



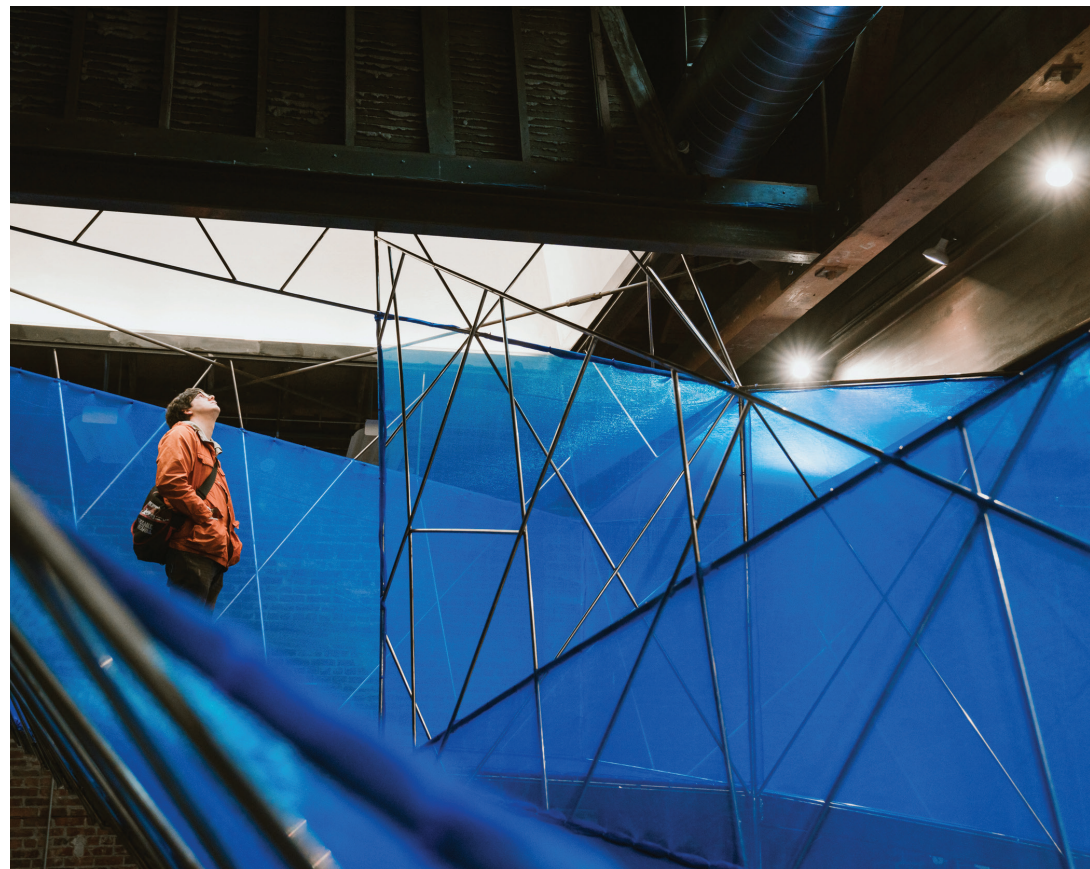
MADART SUPPORTS ARTISTS IN OUR COMMUNITY, BRINGS ART INTO OUR LIVES
IN UNEXPECTED WAYS, AND CREATES COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN THE ARTS.

FORWARD

To enter into MadArt Studio is to cross the threshold into *Lure*, the latest installation by Clayton Binkley with Jennifer Newsom and Tom Carruthers of Dream The Combine. As their most extensive collaboration to date, *Lure* acts as a platform for the artists to further investigate their interests in collapsing the boundaries between illusory, constructed, and implied space. In past works—as seen most recently in their 2018 Young Architects Award exhibition *Hide and Seek* at MoMA PS1—the artists utilized reflective materials, often times with a kinetic element, to complicate the relationship between real and imagined space. However, for *Lure*, the artists venture into new territory by using spatial and material voids, controlled and forced perspective, complex geometric planes, and nuanced blue fabric to destabilize visitors' visual and physical perceptions of space. Inspired by theatrical scenography and the ways in which people relate to the two-dimensional image, this work builds on the artists' practice by creating an inhabitable version of the illusory expanses they have created up to this point. *Lure* creates a stage which calls on the viewer to activate its form. At its simplest, it is a shifting and relational visceral experience.

As an immersive sculptural installation, *Lure* is comprised of an intertwining network of passageways that appear to spill into the studio from the street. It's physical form is shaped by the artists' vision of a pre-existing spatial volume, a figmental interior space longing to be turned outwards. The pathways act as ramps extending from each of the three front entrances of the studio, supporting visitors as they ascend to the underbelly of the two lath-and-plaster skylights, one of the building's original architectural gems. Like a three-dimensional drawing, these angled planes intersect and overlap to bring visitors up, around, and back onto the street in a circuitous fashion. Eliminating the barrier to the outside world by leaving the doors open during studio hours, the exhibition acts as an offshoot of public space; an unexpected eddy for people to wander into and stay awhile. From the street, the open doors provide pedestrians with a controlled vantage into *Lure*'s tangled network. Once inside, the system's unique spatial relationship to the building and neighboring urban structures translates as an integrated continuation of the work into its environment.

Lure is swathed in vibrant, blue construction netting, mimicking chameleon skin with its many dispositions. In a single panel, light



ABOVE:
LURE VISITOR UNDER THE
STUDIO'S LATH-AND-PLASTER
SKYLIGHT

NEXT:
PEDESTRIANS PEERING INTO
LURE



conditions allow dichotomous traits—translucency and opacity, dullness and iridescence—to emerge. A diffuse cast that moves across the studio’s varied surfaces creates an otherworldly blue environment that can shift dramatically with the evolving light of the day. This material blows out of the front entrances to envelop the building’s façade. Tying back into the artists’ interest in our relationship to “the image,” this blue screen is designed at an aspect ratio of cinematic proportions and translates as a two-dimensional, blank billboard when viewed from the street. With the exception of the apertures that provide visual and physical access into *Lure*, the studio’s external identifying character has been muted by this fabric application. In a neighborhood that has seen rapid and extreme transformation over the last half-decade, the sudden appearance of construction netting around any building is not outside of the norm. This material association causes a brief moment of confusion for pedestrians, pulling them out of the expected and into a state of wonder.

The artists’ design approach considers the role of public space within issues of access and spatial demarcation, in this case specifically associated with South Lake Union’s rapidly-changing context. Identifying MadArt as a physical counter to these issues, *Lure* capitalizes on the studio’s objective of making art visible and accessible to all. Their response to our operational ethos and the ways in which architecture relates to accessibility, led to the decision to build directly up to and beyond the physical barriers of the space. The outcome is a dissolution of the boundary that designates private from public domain, disrupting pedestrians’ usual patterns of engagement. While the installation has encouraged a myriad of visitor responses, ultimately *Lure* demonstrates that when you open up, you stabilize the platform for genuine exploration, curiosity, and interaction. ♦

EMILY KELLY
MADART STUDIO DIRECTOR



ABOVE:
REAR INSTALLATION VIEW OF LURE

IN CONVERSATION WITH THE ARTISTS

WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE INSTALLATION'S TITLE, *LURE*?

Dream The Combine has long been interested in how words can have multiple interpretations, and our studio name is no exception. Text in and of itself is like an empty sign, letter arrangements that gain meaning through their context. So the exhibition title, *Lure*, has a number of shape-shifting evocations: from the maritime history of South Lake Union and the visual language of fish traps, to the temptation of breaking from your routine and walking into the space of the gallery. We envisioned the installation as both a lure and a trap, an object of seduction and an immersive environment.

HOW DOES THIS WORK EXPAND ON YOUR PREVIOUS BODY OF WORK?

We utilize the languages of film and theatrical scenography—media of representation and reality—to engage with the complexities of narrative, image, space, and direct experience. Whereas some of Dream The Combine's previous work considered a mirror's capacity to imply a flexing depth within a flat plane, here movement across the threshold takes the audience into the space of the image itself. In that way, *Lure* is an image you can step into.

The front of the installation is a giant CinemaScope-proportioned façade, referencing wide-screen images and scenic backdrops. The vibrancy of its blue hue references cinematic chroma key compositing, where one space gets mapped onto or replaced by another. We are interested in how forms can be an indicator or sign for something else. The façade becomes a stand in, a secondary image, a window, a ghost.

The present work still contends with aspects of the virtual—what is real versus what is illusory—in a totally analog way. But the plasticity of the form, the lack of a single right-angle, the compression within the gallery space, and the immersive quality of the blue color were all new ways of exploring these ideas that were certainly borne of our closer collaboration together.

CAN YOU TALK ABOUT THE COLLABORATIVE PROCESS AND HOW THIS WORKING MODEL IMPACTS YOUR PRACTICE?

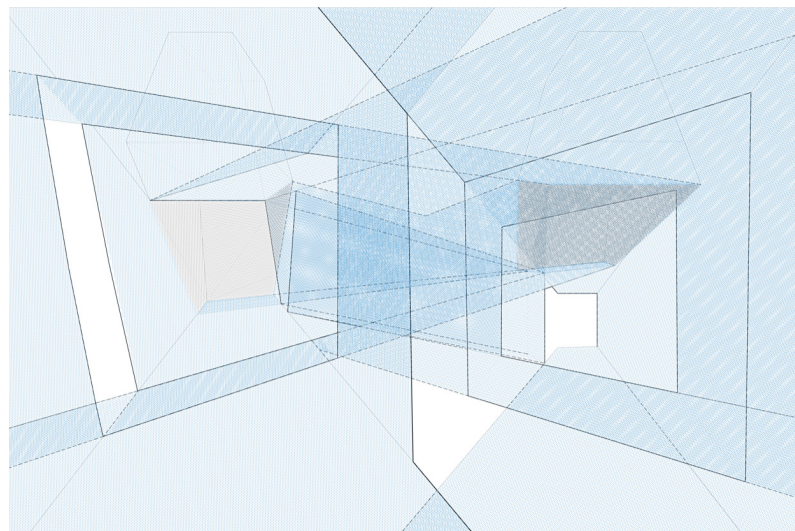
We have worked together off and on for seven years, but we have known each other for almost 30. So we have a kind of shorthand and common history that anchors our process.

This piece was developed over a number of months, during which we examined in a serious way what it means for the three of us to be working together creatively from the beginning phases of a project. Previously, Dream The Combine worked with Clayton as an engineer, and he entered the project after

the conceptual focus was outlined. But here we came up with the early artistic direction together. We built off of Clayton's research into tensile structures as well as his forays in set design. We built off Dream The Combine's interest in filmic techniques and installation-based architecture that engages public space.

Lure grows out of previous works that each of us have done separately and together, but it is not something that any one of us would have done on our own.

Also, the notion of collaboration extends beyond the artist team. We rely on those helping to fabricate



ABOVE: **BISECT OF LURE** IN PRELIMINARY PROJECT
RENDERING AND IN INSTALLATION VIEW

the work, the curatorial team, and of course the public that inhabits the work to open our eyes to new areas of exploration within the piece.

OVER THE PROJECT'S DEVELOPMENT, THERE HAVE BEEN SEVERAL POINTS OF INTRIGUE AND INSPIRATION. CAN YOU SPEAK TO SOME OF THE MAIN CONCEPTUAL DRIVERS THAT CARRIED THE PIECE THROUGH?

We are concerned with the fundamental question of how the artwork and the gallery interact with the public. The work erodes the separation between public and private space that we see happening all around us: between the privacy of our online presence and surveillance of the public sphere.

It was key to us that the exterior skin fold into the space of the gallery, creating an interwoven series of intersecting passages. This latticework of debris netting, steel, and expanded metal mesh pathways expose a pre-existing circulatory system within the gallery that connects the street to the rear skylights. It functions almost like an eddy off of the primary flow on the sidewalk, but could also be an infinite loop: from street through installation to the street again.

The piece also responds to a desire to inhabit the gallery in a certain way and explore areas of the space that are inaccessible. We all had a strong reaction to the rendering of light and physical architecture of the studio and this piece is a direct response to those

feelings.

YOU CHOSE TO INCORPORATE A NEW AND VIBRANTLY COLORED MATERIAL INTO LURE, CAN YOU TALK ABOUT MATERIALITY AND THE USE OF COLOR IN THIS INSTALLATION?

The blue debris net was a kind of skin that the three of us were developing in new ways: by modulating its visual and physical transparency, exploring and revealing its two-sidedness, stretching it taut and utilizing it as a kind of structure, and expressing the material as a curtain that obscures the people within its layers.

It has been really intriguing. The blue debris net is this completely humble and commonplace material, yet it can do beautiful things. The varying opacities of mesh fabric tempers the sunlight entering the gallery and creates a series of immersive and pixelated veils. It colors the entire environment, picking up on the character of Seattle's sky, and ghosting occupants in a hazy blue hue. Clayton became interested in how this at times edits out defining features of a person's physical form; a novelty in this age of hyper-individualism. Blue has so many associations, from blue screens of death in the Windows operating system to the compression of being underwater.

Dream The Combine's work has always tried to complicate our perception of boundaries, based on a longtime interest in jump cuts, splicing, and other cinematic techniques. Chroma

keying is an important usage of blue in film post-production — because there is very little blue in our skin tones, it is an effective way of moving bodies from one space seamlessly to another. The color also stands apart from the existing concrete and black steel surfaces and further reinforces the installation as an edit to the architecture of the gallery.

OUTSIDE OF THE STRUCTURE'S PHYSICAL RELATIONSHIP AND RESPONSE TO MADART STUDIO, HOW IS LURE SITE-SPECIFIC?

The application of the netting on the exterior recalls Seattle's many construction sites — in fact blue netting was hard to find in bulk because there is so much construction going on. The debris net edits the building out of our awareness, moving it from a place of presentness to a point in the future. We kind of loved the confusion it induced - is this building slated for demolition? It automatically sets the space up as being a zone of transition.

Clayton often talked about how the work engages with issues of belonging that are at the forefront of conversations about access in Seattle right now. Who has the right to inhabit certain places in certain ways? We took the approach that the private gallery was actually an extension of the public space of the street. The work introduces a kind of seamlessness where the doors were always open and people could come right in.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE PUBLIC IN YOUR COLLABORATIVE WORK?

Our work is meant to be inhabited. They are invitations in that way, lures for people to break from their everyday routine. The large, sliding glass doors of the gallery were kept open during the installation, permitting direct entry into the work. Audiences perform within this liminal zone, moving between the street, the installation's passageways, and the street again in a series of infinite looping sequences.

The piece vacillates between an object and an environment; it can be both perceived and experienced. *Lure* changes and takes on a new character to outside observers when it becomes inhabited; it switches from a static form to a dynamic system.

The off-camber surfaces of the ramps and elasticity of the fabric underfoot leave you slightly unsteady. By inducing a heightened awareness of our bodies in relation to their environment, we hope to challenge our usual, automatic ways of moving through the world, capturing a moment of attention. The work's circulatory system encourages exploration, curiosity, and a reciprocal engagement between the form and its audiences. ❖

THE ARTISTS

DREAM THE COMBINE is the creative practice of Jennifer Newsom and Tom Carruthers, artists and architects based in Minneapolis, MN. Partners in work and life, they create site-specific installations exploring metaphor, imaginary environments, and perceptual uncertainties that cast doubt on our known understanding of the world. Their work is deeply collaborative and their studio name speaks to this process. Jennifer earned her Bachelor of Arts in architecture from Yale University and Tom received his Bachelor of Arts in drawing and sculpture from Brown University. They both received their Master of Architecture degrees from Yale University.

Trained as a sculptor and a structural engineer, **CLAYTON BINKLEY** is an artist, craftsman, and multidisciplinary designer. In his solo work he explores how we engage with and develop emotional connections with inanimate or performative objects and spaces. Working with Arup for over a decade, he has used his tools as a structural engineer to help open up new possibilities for artists such as Janet Echelman, Jenny Sabin, John Grade, Lead Pencil Studio, Jill Anholt, Rodney Graham, Ursula Von Rydingsvard, and many others. Clayton has lived in the US, Canada, United Kingdom and Denmark and now resides in Seattle. He received his Bachelor of Arts in sculpture from Yale University and his MEng in structural engineering from the University of Bath.

Clayton has collaborated extensively with Dream The Combine since the inception of their practice in 2013, most recently for the 2018 MoMA PS1 Young Architects Program installation, *Hide & Seek*.



LEFT TO RIGHT: CLAYTON BINKLEY, JENNIFER NEWSOM, & TOM CARRUTHERS

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