

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





# KATIE MILLER

## THE PRESENCE OF ABSENCE

PREVIOUS:  
MILLER CUTTING MYLAR  
STRIPS AT MADART  
STUDIO

ABOVE:  
INSTALLATION VIEW  
CAPTURING THE  
INTERPLAY BETWEEN  
VARIOUS SCULPTURES

MAY 14TH - AUGUST 18TH, 2018





TOP:  
INSTALLATION VIEW OF  
ARCHITECTURAL  
HAND-CUT PAPER WORK

BOTTOM:  
INSTALLATION VIEW OF  
IMMERSIVE WOOD AND  
MYLAR SCULPTURE

Katie Miller moved into MadArt Studio in early May, 2018. With her came the contents of her Ballard-based studio and the beginnings of a three-part sculptural installation: seven massive hand-cut paper drawings and the load of lumber to frame them. Providing a visual and material anchor, these wood-framed paper cut-outs

by our surroundings. Miller created both visual and physical obstacles through layering, repetition, design, and material selection, shaping how the viewer moves through the installation much like active construction influences our movement through cityscapes. Furthermore, by embracing both natural and applied light, the

**This imagery replicates the experience of a pedestrian navigating the built world, highlighting how our perception of place is informed by our surroundings.**

collectively serve as the foundation of the two other elements included in *The Presence Of Absence*. This exhibition expands into the three-dimensional realm to include a set of immersive and inhabitable pieces that incorporate the linear language found throughout Miller's body of work.

In each of the exhibition's components, Miller uniquely references the South Lake Union neighborhood by utilizing lines and angles familiar to architectural frameworks of transitioning urban landscapes. Illuminating the artist's conceptually driven practice, this imagery is intended to replicate the experience of a pedestrian navigating the built world and to highlight how our perception of place is informed

immaterial projections and shadows inherent to *The Presence Of Absence* embody the ever-changing, ephemeral nature of our contemporary urban environments.

In *The Presence Of Absence*, Miller converted the scaffolded superstructure, a form she commonly explores on a flat plane, into a towering, traversable sculpture for the first time. She established the forced-perspective, synonymous with her two-dimensional cut-outs, through sequential shifts in scale and varied linear repetition, making this re-creation seamless. The orientation of the superstructure considered the distinct architectural character of MadArt Studio and reveals the responsive nature of the artist's



process. Additionally, Miller emulates the two original lath and plaster skylights through sculpture, creating an intimate viewer experience that accentuates the scale, unique character, and shifting light conditions of the building's design.

Although Miller came into MadArt Studio with a solid vision for her exhibition, she intentionally left various integral imagery and media selections undetermined. In this, she embraced MadArt's project-based residency model, working responsively to her forms and environment, gradually building and strengthening their relationship to one another and to the space. At its core, *The Presence of Absence* embodies experimentation and establishes an environment in which viewers can relate to and reflect on their surroundings. Δ

EMILY KELLY  
MADART STUDIO DIRECTOR



LEFT: INSTALLATION  
VIEW OF MILLER'S  
SITE-RESPONSIVE  
SKYLIGHT SCULPTURE



DETAIL OF DOUBLE-LAYERED, LARGE-SCALE PAPER  
CUT-OUT AGAINST NATURAL LIGHT





## IN CONVERSATION WITH KATIE MILLER

### WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TITLE, **THE PRESENCE OF ABSENCE**?

*The Presence of Absence* references the transforming urban landscape and the vacant space remaining after a building is demolished. The South Lake Union neighborhood surrounding MadArt Studio has undergone a tremendous amount of change. It is in a state of transition in which one day a building is standing, and the next day there is only an open pit or the historic façade remaining. As I explored the neighborhood researching for my exhibition, I found myself walking down streets unable to entirely recall what once filled an empty space, yet its absence created a longing for what once was and what will be. *The Presence of Absence* also refers to the architectural paper cut-outs that are depicted as void and layered or segmented and then reanimated with light and shadow. These works speak to the temporality of our surrounding environment and our changing sense of place through an absence.

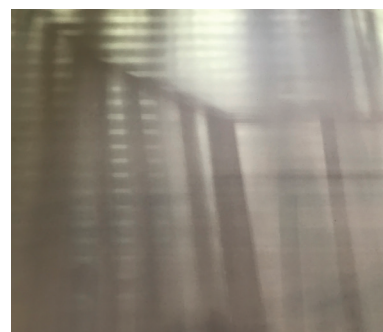
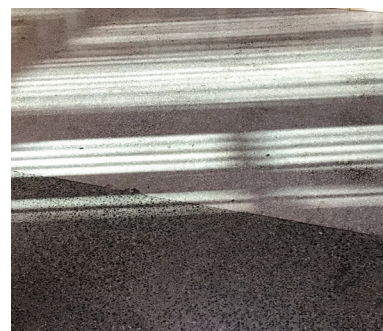
### DESCRIBE YOUR PRACTICE AND HOW IT HAS INFORMED

### THE PRESENCE OF ABSENCE AND THE WORK THAT YOU CREATE?

My artistic practice is multifaceted and often begins with research and exploration. My site-specific installations start by developing a relationship with the space and surrounding neighborhood. Through walking observations, I document my experience in photographs, drawings, and writings about the site. I let creativity drive my direction and notice what draws my attention such as reflections, shadows, light, lines, layers, repetition of form, obstructions, sounds, smells, wind, etc. Influenced by my experience and documentation, I begin to develop ideas and sketch out the installation.

The imagery for the paper cut-outs is generated using a combination of layered photographs and drawings, which I manipulate digitally. The final image is then projected on a wall, and I hand cut the paper forms.

The immersive sculptures are designed as spatial explorations and are in response to the pedestrian experience within a rapidly transforming urban landscape and the architectural features within MadArt Studio. I'm interested in how as we traverse a city under construction we are redirected under scaffolding, through shipping containers, and along barriers. As



ABOVE: MILLER EMBRACES NATURAL AND APPLIED LIGHT AS A CENTRAL ELEMENT IN THE **PRESENCE OF ABSENCE**. THESE IMAGES DISPLAY THE COUNTLESS VARIATIONS OF EPHEMERAL LIGHT AND SHADOW PLAY OCCURING THROUGHOUT THE DAY

NEXT: MILLER WORKING THROUGH IDEAS FOR HER SITE-RESPONSIVE SCULPTURES THAT MODEL THE SHAPE AND CONSTRUCTION OF THE ORIGINAL BUILDING LATH AND PLASTER SKYLIGHTS



neighborhoods densify and buildings become taller, our experience and relationship to our surroundings shift. I am drawn to the way natural phenomena impact our experience and awareness of the world around us and created these structures to capture the dynamic light flooding into the studio.

**WHAT ABOUT MADART STUDIO, HOW HAS WORKING IN THIS SPACE CHALLENGED YOU AS AN ARTIST?**

My project based residency and exhibition at MadArt Studio have challenged me as an artist in a variety of ways. The scale of the space was overwhelming as I developed ideas, but also offered an opportunity to expand my practice and approach. Working in this new environment offered an atmosphere full of potential and time for unexpected directions, transformations, and new solutions, but the pressure of an exhibition

focused my attention in a different way than previous residencies I've attended.

Working at MadArt Studio and creating work in direct response to the surrounding architecture presented a

wealth of inspiration and was a new way of working for me. Typically, I plan out and pre-build everything in my studio one piece at a time, then arrive to install the work over a short period of time. With the gift of a two-month residency in an expansive space, I was able to explore new materials and scale, while also developing sculptural structures in relationship to each other within the space.

Another creative challenge was my decision to primarily use natural light to cast shadows and projections throughout the exhibition. The moving position of the sun, buildings blocking or reflecting sunlight, and varied weather required me to be to be more flexible with my vision, yet created a dynamic, magical and ever changing experience within the installation.

Shifting how I work to be more process driven and responsive, while also adjusting to a new environment and a studio open to the public was a vulnerable experience. Exposing my creative process, mock-ups, models, and failures to the public highlighted that I am generally an introvert and like to keep my undeveloped ideas in the privacy of my own studio. Exploring ideas in a new context allowed for discoveries I could not have had in my own studio, and I am grateful for this platform to expand my artistic practice.

**WHAT DO YOU HOPE VISITORS WILL TAKE AWAY FROM THIS EXHIBITION?**

I hope viewers will interact with the installation and explore their surroundings in a new way, as well as consider their own experience within the surrounding altered urban landscape. I aspire for the exhibition to provide a space for engagement, challenging the way we look at and deal with objects, space, and situations in our physical lives. I hope to draw people's attention to the subtle nuances of natural phenomena and the changing light within the installation and outdoors. Ultimately, I'd like visitors to leave the exhibition with a heightened awareness of their surroundings and to notice something new when they step out into the world. Δ







ABOVE:  
MILLER TAKING IN  
THE NATURAL LIGHT  
CONDITIONS OF HER  
IMMERSIVE SKYLIGHT  
SCULPTURE

RIGHT:  
INSTALLATION VIEW  
OF **THE PRESENCE OF  
ABSENCE**

**Katie Miller** was born and raised in the backwoods of Northeastern Minnesota, but is now deeply rooted in the Pacific Northwest. As an interdisciplinary artist, Miller creates immersive installations often with a participatory element. She received her BFA from the University of Washington and her MFA from the Tyler School of Art, Temple University. Her work has been collected and exhibited nationally, with recent solo exhibitions at Gallery 4Culture and METHOD Gallery in Seattle, Washington and group exhibitions at the Bellevue Arts Museum in Bellevue, Washington and Temple Contemporary in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Miller has been selected for numerous artist residency programs including the Montello Foundation, Bullseye Glass Resource Center, Art Farm, Anderson Ranch, and Sculpture Space.





A SPECIAL THANKS FOR THE MANY HANDS THAT MADE  
THIS EXHIBITION POSSIBLE.

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ALL CATALOG PHOTOGRAPHY BY  
JAMES HARNOIS

MADART IS A CONTEMPORARY ART ORGANIZATION LOCATED  
IN SEATTLE, WASHINGTON. WE SERVE AS A CATALYST FOR  
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