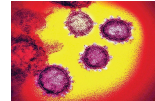




(/thebeat/)SIGN UP FOR NEWS ALERTS
(/thebeat/)

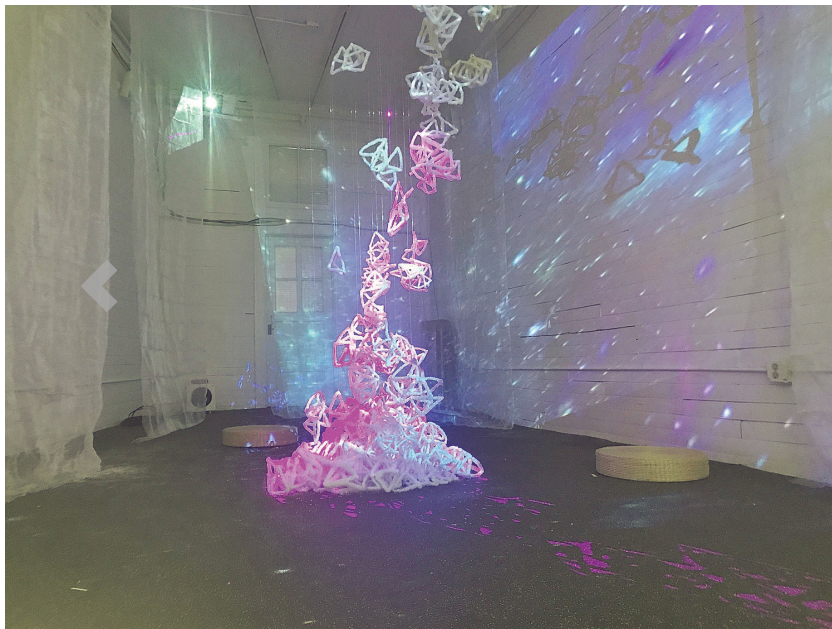


(/coronavirus/)

CORONAVIRUS NEWS (/coronavirus/)

≡ SECTIONS HOME (/) NEWS (/LOCAL-NEWS/) SPORTS (/LOCAL-SPORTS/) CULTURE (/BERKSHIRELANDSCAPES/)
OPINION (/OPINION/) CALENDAR (/CALENDAR/) OBITUARIES ([HTTP://WWW.LEGACY.COM/OBITUARIES/BERKSHIRE/](http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/berkshire/))

View fullscreen



(/uploads/original/20190626-131833-Installationspace-T_29795.jpg)

The large-scale piece cascades to the floor in the back of the room where visitors can sit, hook themselves up to a monitor and change the color of the crystals with their breath.
PHOTO PROVIDED BY STUDIO HHH

A truly immersive art installation

New work at Installation Space

Posted Wednesday, June 26, 2019 1:18 pm

Don't miss the big stories. Like us on Facebook.

Like 43K

Support local
journalism
SUBSCRIBE TODAY →

On exhibit ...

By Nicolas Davidoff, The Berkshire Eagle

North Adams — What if your breath could become a work of art? That concept became the starting point for Studio HHH's new project, "Time-Link Present."

Vanessa Till Hooper, creative director and founder of the Somerville-based design studio — which specializes in large-scale art installations, interior architecture and the creation of immersive environments — set out to create a data set that could allow us to visualize our own breath. On

What: "Time-Link Present," an immersive and experiential installation by Studio HHH

Where: Installation Space, 49 Eagle St., North Adams

When: Opening reception, 5 to 8 p.m., Thursday, June 27. Exhibit on view through Aug. 18

Information: www.49eaglestreet.com

Thursday, Installation Space — the Eagle Street gallery that focuses on installation art — will showcase the interactive project that took months of research and design to put together. The free exhibit will be on view until Aug. 18.

Sitting in the middle of the large, windowless space is an enormous constellation of crystals, or as Studio HHH likes to call them, "crystalline formations."

Project manager Jessie Klein, an artist by training, created each individual crystal in a lab.

"Our method of growing crystals is a secret," Klein said. "But we grow them in vats with boiling water and over very long periods of time. I had to do a lot of research and experimentation in order to develop these shapes. I've been making crystals for around two months now."

Making crystals is one of the many new skills that Studio HHH members had to acquire in order to complete this project. Each crystal that Klein created hangs from a nylon thread that is attached to the ceiling. Altogether, they form a structure that begins on a pedestal at the space's entrance, arching toward the ceiling before it cascades onto the floor at the back of the room, where the magic happens. There, visitors can sit on three tatami mats surrounding the crystal structure that tumbles onto the floor. They will then be offered a sensor, which wraps securely around their chest to monitor their breath.

"As you breathe in, the crystals in front of you are slowly filled with fuchsia, green, orange and blue," Hooper said. "By the time you reach the climax of your breath, the crystals become fully saturated with color. And then as you fully exhale, the color fades back to completely white."

You can think of it as a game, controlling the intensity and pace of your breath in order to change the colorful projection in front of you. But Hooper believes it also serves a greater purpose.

"You become very aware of your breath and mindful of the present moment," she said. "It can become a meditative process, as well."

ARTICLE CONTINUES AFTER THESE ADS

The front of the room offers a completely different experience. Hooper explained that she wanted to separate the interactive and passive sections, while still conveying a homogeneous message with the entire structure.

"The part of the structure that sits on the pedestal is a form of reverence to the traditional display of three dimensional art," she said. "The interactive section in the back is more irreverent and it offers a new outlook on what art can be."

Yet there is a third part to the installation — a two dimensional projection of the crystal's shadows on one of the walls. The light reflects off of the floating crystals and onto the wall, each crystal is a unique shape and so each reflection is wildly different.

"We see each reflection as a being, a word of a fake language that we created" Hooper said. "And so, the wall displays a sort of alphabet made up of all these different shapes. I like to think of it as a vernacular of crystals."

Hooper studied art and architecture, but she has always been fascinated by technology and constantly looks for ways to integrate it into her projects.

"I think of my work as architecturally integrated, large-scale art installations," she said. "But, I am also interested in the technology element in terms of how artwork can become more of an interactive experience and more about the moment that a person is experiencing an immersive environment."

Hooper enlisted Pamela Hersch to help with the interactive and technological aspect of "Time-Link Present." Hersch has served as the creative technologist at Studio HHH for over a year.

"This is the most detailed projection mapping I have ever done," Hersch said. "It has been a huge undertaking for me. It's the most complicated project we've ever done."

Hersch took the sensors made by Swedezpot — a Swedish athletic sensor manufacturer — and figured out a way to use the data they collected to create a proprietary software that Studio HHH could use for the projection mapping.

"The combination of all these separate elements makes up a series of messages and perceptions, which we had about art as a whole," Hooper said. "At the same time, it's a grounding experience that forces you to be in the moment through the beautiful crystal shapes and the meditation that can occur when you control your breath."