



ANTHONY
JAMES

OPERA GALLERY

ANTHONY JAMES

27 MARCH – 9 APRIL 2020

PREFACE

Opera Gallery is thrilled to present the first solo exhibition in London dedicated to Anthony James, the sculptor of a new era, where light becomes a tangible material.

James was raised in London where he graduated from Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design in 1998. He is best known for his imposing, immersive sculptures and installations. This February the British artist is exhibiting fifteen new artworks that consist of different materials and various shapes, with the constants of steel and LED lighting.

Through his practice, James revisits Euclidian geometry, more specifically Platonic solids, a series of three-dimensional polyhedrons. Considered ideal shapes by the Ancient Greeks, they are here reborn under the genius hands of the artist, who propels them into a futuristic aesthetic of metal and technological light.

Standing in front of a light sculpture by Anthony James is like looking at the night sky through a telescope. One admires the harmonious, elegant, symmetrical and orderly geometry, like peering into a microcosmic rendition of the Universe, where Newton's gravity and Einstein's relativity inexplicably coexist. Then curiosity leads you to explore further. One glance is like a first step into the kaleidoscopic realm that unfolds, like a takeoff for galaxies yet to be discovered. Is this still a cosmos (from the ancient Greek word for 'order')? You notice that straight lines become curved before disappearing into black holes seemingly beyond the very extremes of the sculpture. The mass is curving the trajectory, time seems to shrink or dilate depending on your position. Anthony James' LED lighting appears to move in a curved space-time induced by their mass and energy.

As contemplation beckons further into the hidden worlds of the artworks, one might be compelled to reflect on cosmic rules, Einsteinian and otherwise. Planets and moons orbiting around the sun, galaxies and supernovas, dark matter and bright stars. What would it feel to travel as fast as light, as far as time? As windows onto a myriad of cosmic dimensions, Anthony James' artworks give a new, contemporary meaning to the words of William Blake: "To see a World in a Grain of Sand/ And a Heaven in a Wild Flower/ Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand/ And Eternity in an hour."

Opera Gallery is delighted to present the mesmerising worlds of Anthony James, an all-encompassing experimentation with light and space.

Gilles Dyan
Founder and Chairman
Opera Gallery Group

Federica Beretta
Director
Opera Gallery London



Freestanding Birch
2019

Stainless steel, specialised glass, LED and birch trees
Installation of four - unique pieces
96 x 40 x 40 in - 243.8 x 101.6 x 101.6 cm each



Wall Mounted Birch

2019

Specialised glass, LED and birch trees
Unique piece
30 x 84 x 15 in - 76.2 x 213.4 x 38.1 cm





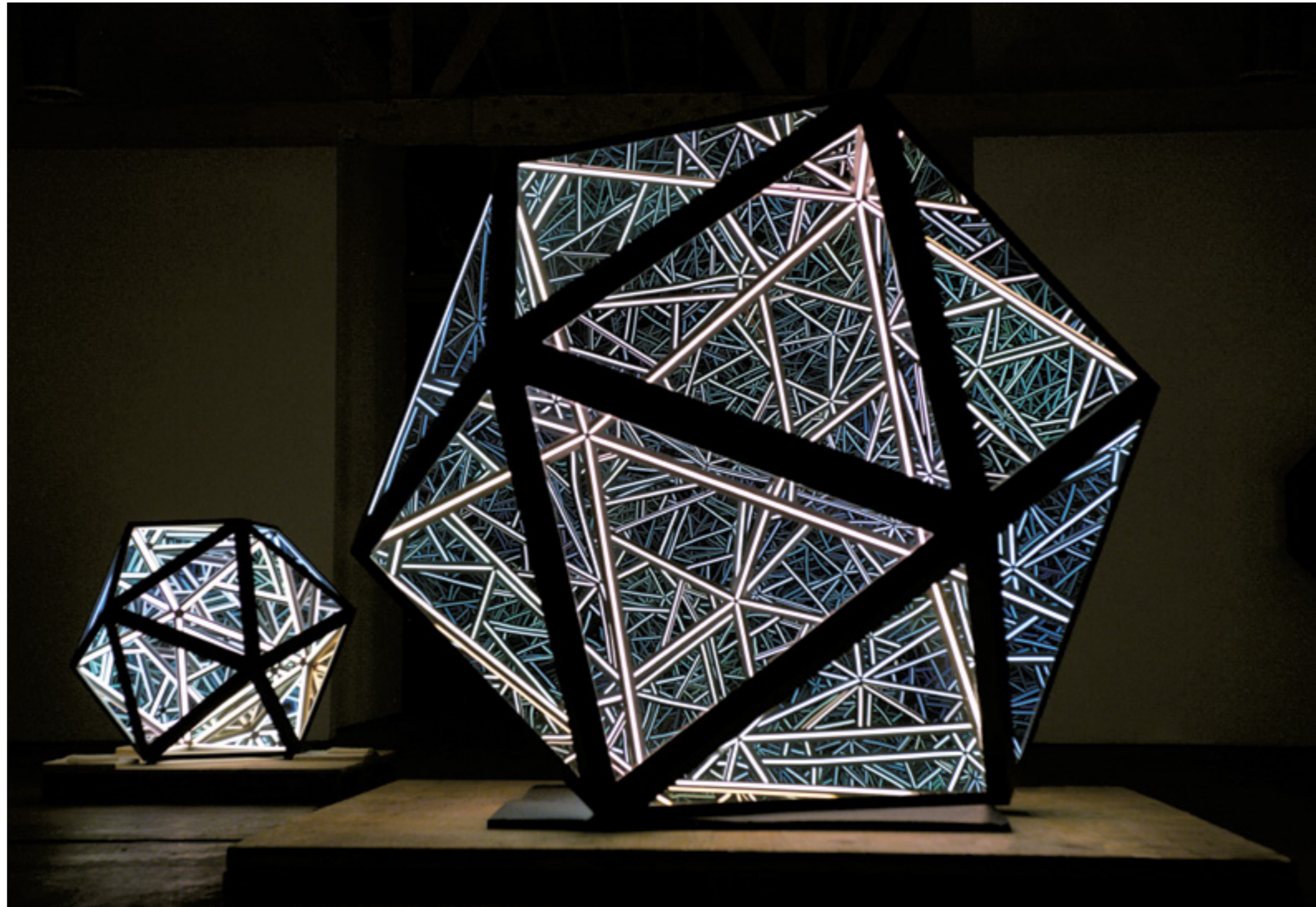
40" Icosahedron (Solar Black)

2020

Stainless steel, specialised glass, LED, solar black finish

Edition of 6

40 x 40 x 40 in - 101.6 x 101.6 x 101.6 cm



40" Icosahedron (Black Nickel)
2020

Steel, specialised glass, LED, black nickel finish
Edition of 6
40 x 40 x 40 in - 101.6 x 101.6 x 101.6 cm





24" Icosahedron (Bright Nickel)
2020

Steel, specialised glass, LED, bright nickel finish
Edition of 24
24 x 24 x 24 in - 61 x 61 x 61 cm



24" Icosahedron (Gold)
2020

Steel, specialised glass, LED, gold finish
Edition of 24
24 x 24 x 24 in - 61 x 61 x 61 cm



24" Cube (Black Nickel)

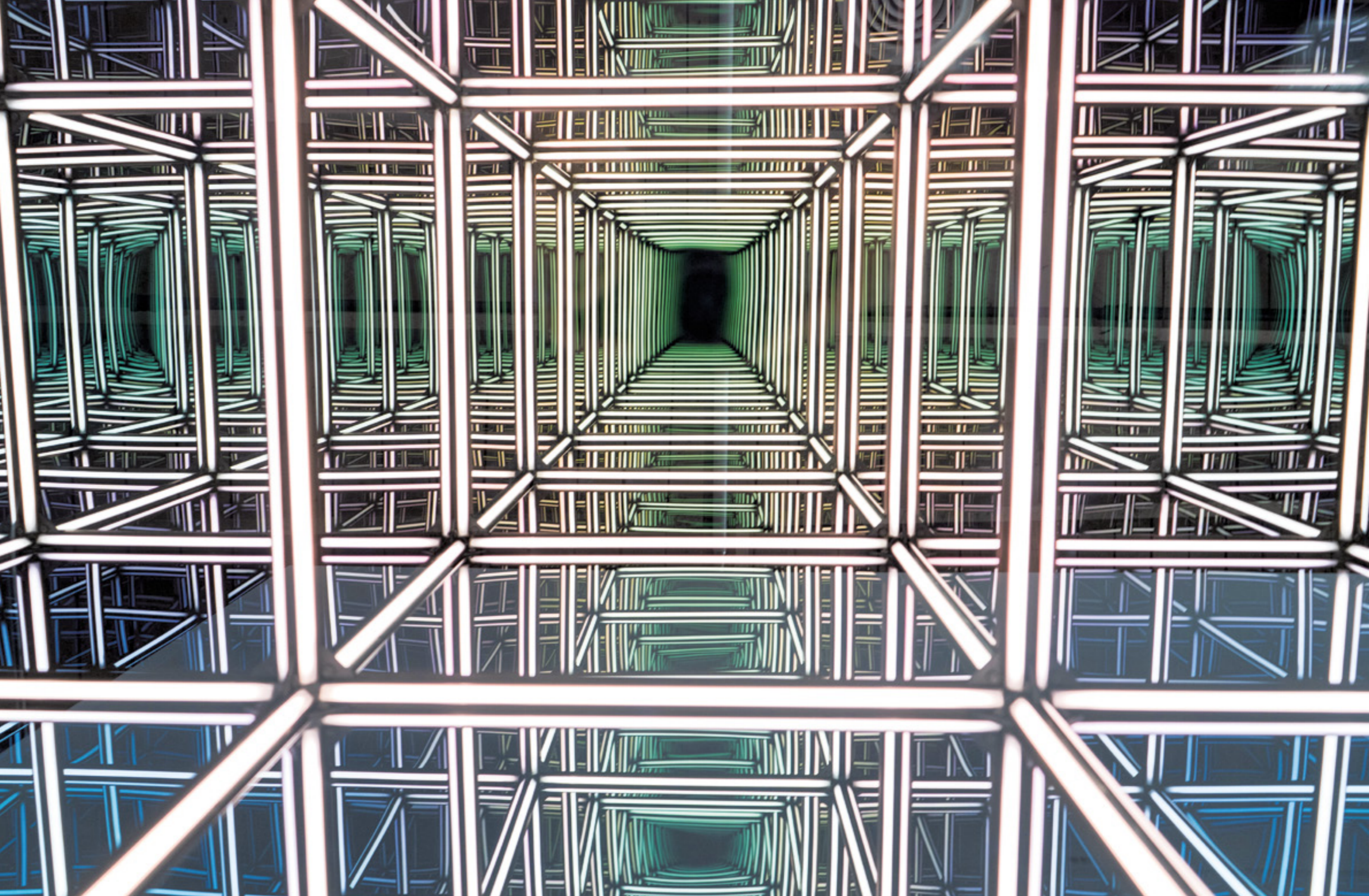
2020

Steel, specialised glass, LED, black nickel finish

Edition of 24

24 x 24 x 24 in - 61 x 61 x 61 cm





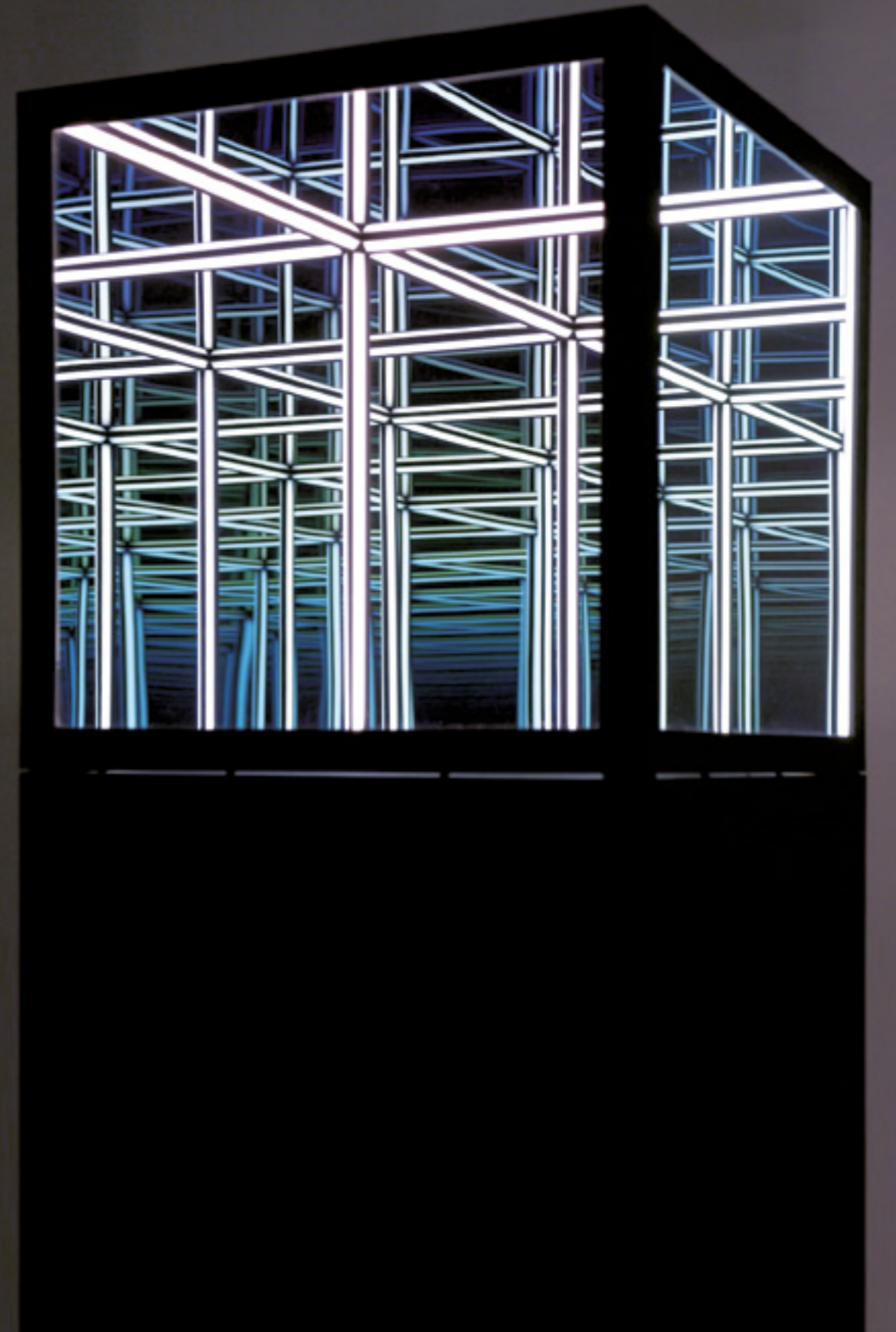
24" Cube (Solar Black)

2020

Stainless steel, specialised glass, LED, solar black finish

Edition of 24

24 x 24 x 24 in - 61 x 61 x 61 cm



24" Tetrahedron (Gold)

2020

Steel, specialised glass, LED, gold finish

Edition of 24

24 x 24 x 24 in - 61 x 61 x 61 cm



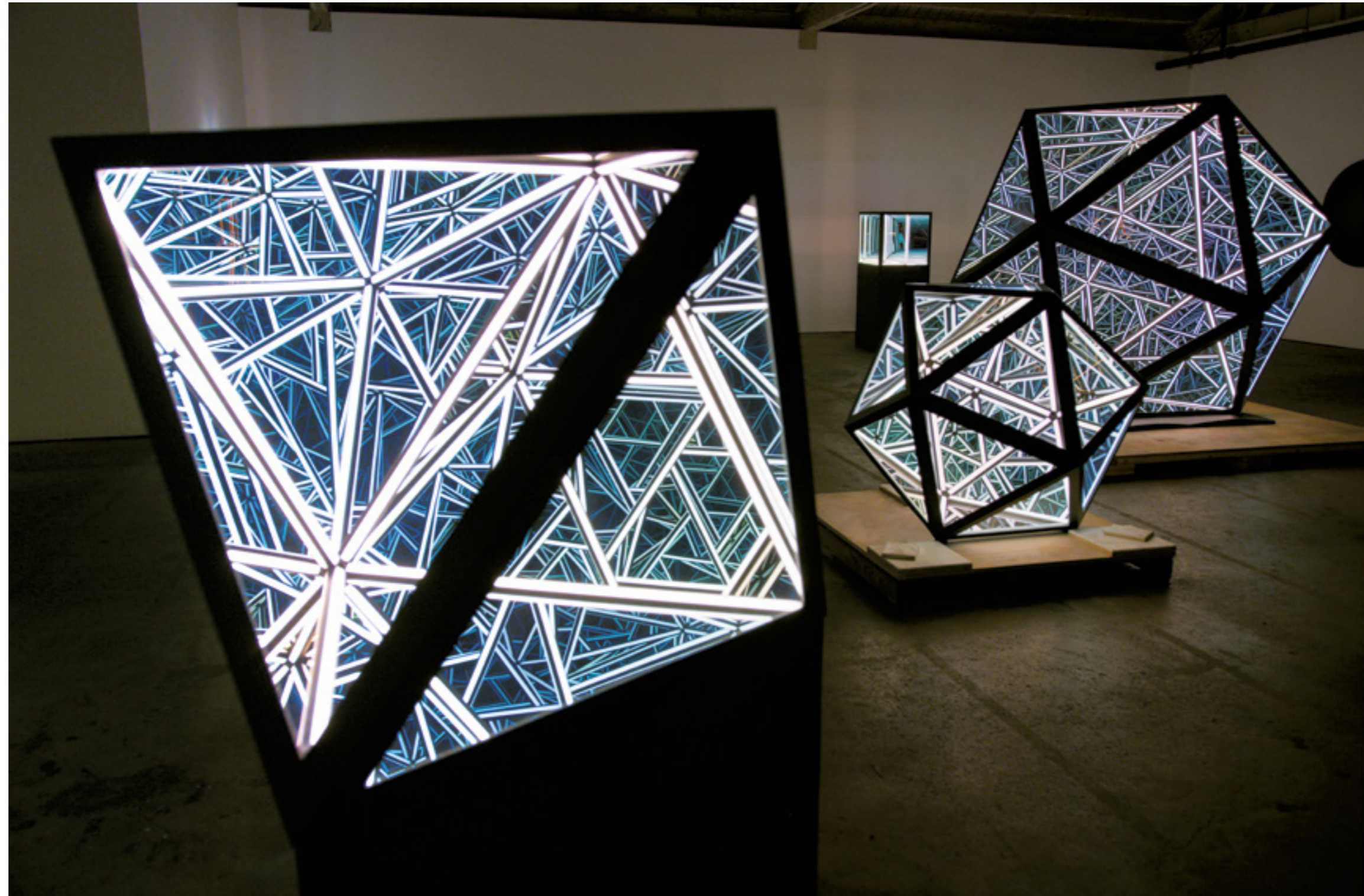
24" Octahedron (Solar Black)

2020

Stainless steel, specialised glass, LED, solar black finish

Edition of 24

24 x 29 x 34 in - 61 x 73.7 x 86.4 cm



24" Dodecahedron (Solar Black)

2019

Stainless steel, specialised glass, LED, solar black finish

Edition of 24

24 x 24 x 24 in - 61 x 61 x 61 cm





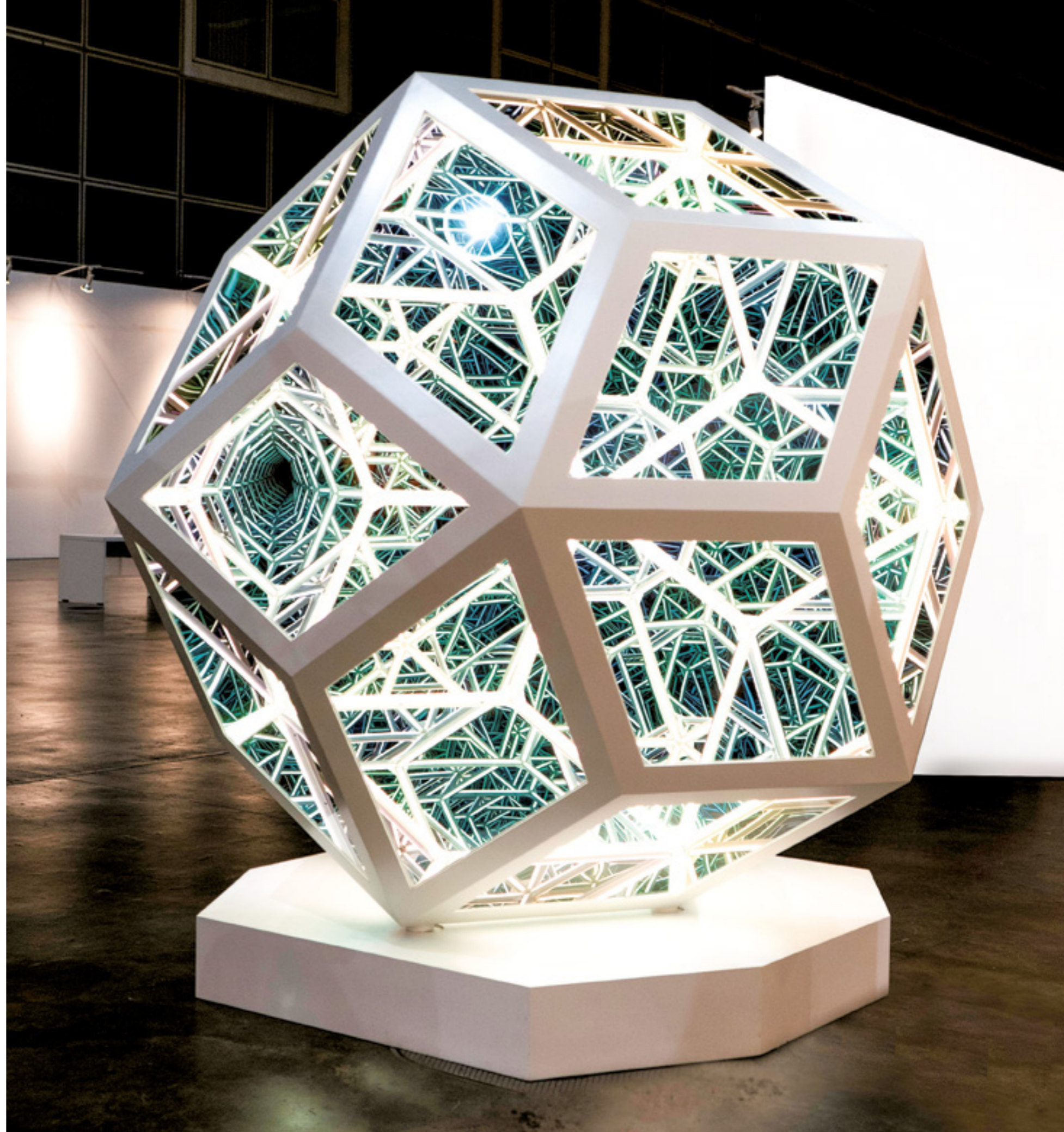
60" Tricontahedron (Solar White)

2020

Stainless steel, specialised glass, LED, solar white finish

Edition of 6

60 x 60 x 60 in - 152.4 x 152.4 x 152.4 cm



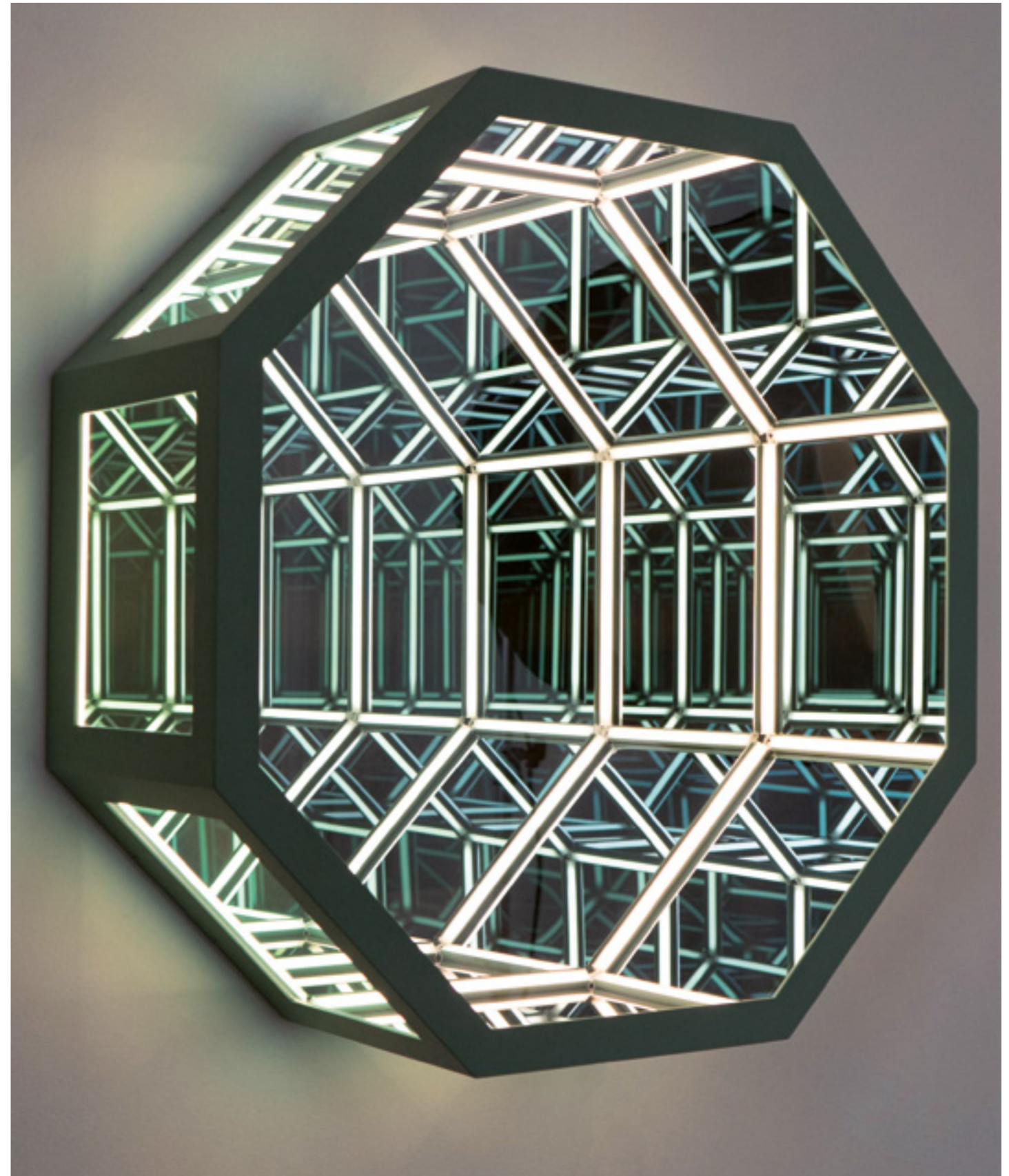
32" Wall Portal (Aged Copper)

2020

Steel, specialised glass, LED, aged copper finish

Edition of 6

32 x 32 in - 81.3 x 81.3 cm



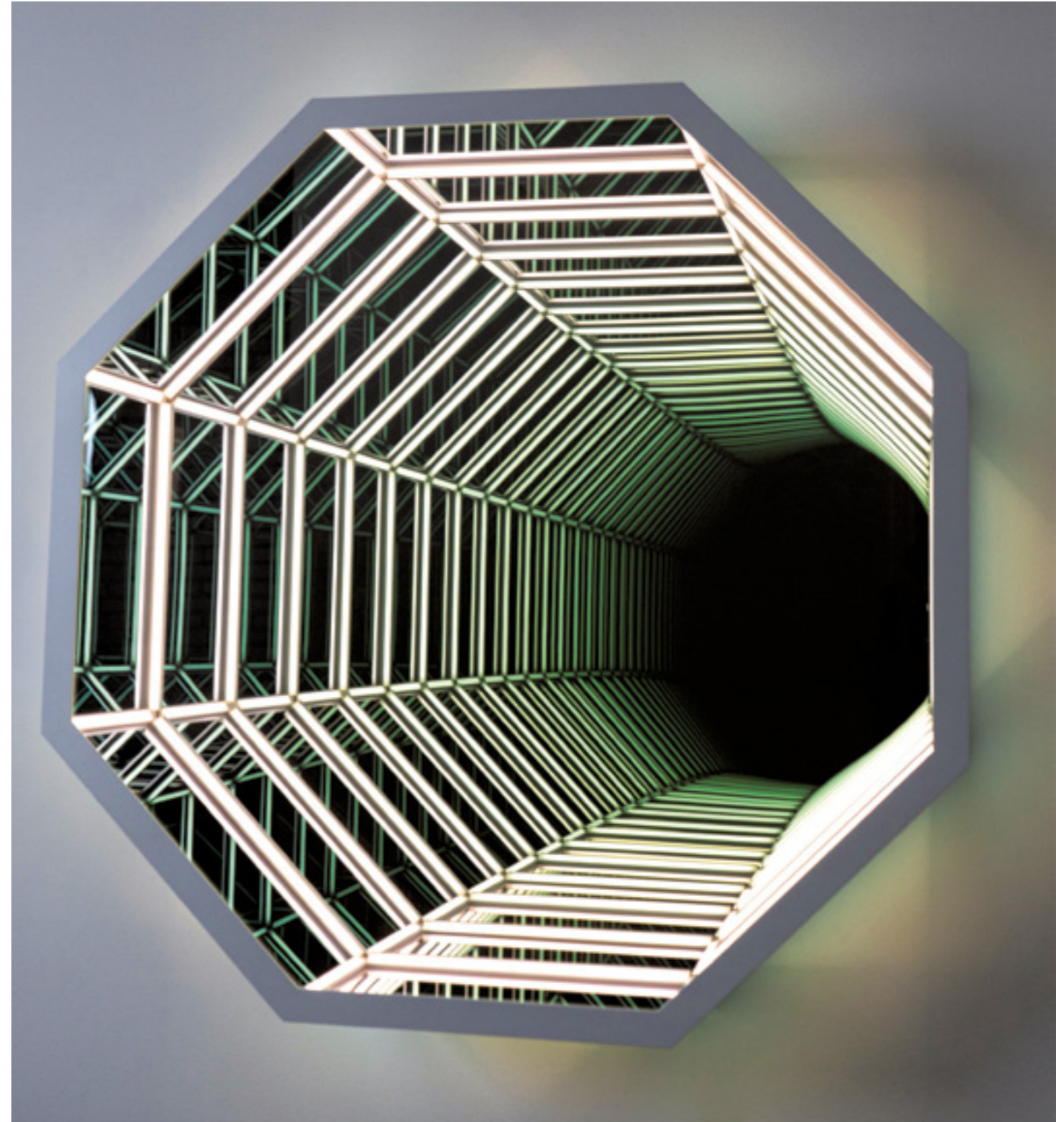
42" Wall Portal (Solar White)

2020

Stainless steel, specialised glass, LED, solar white finish

Edition of 6

42 x 42 in - 106.7 x 106.7 cm





ANTHONY JAMES

B. 1974

Anthony James is a British-American artist based in Los Angeles, known for his monumental installations and sculptures. He was born in England in 1974 and studied in London at Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design from 1994 to 1998. His work gestures towards minimalism, materiality, process, alchemy, language, mechanisation and experimentation with light and space.

The *Birch* series of sculptures were debuted in New York City in 2005. They consist of several variously sized, freestanding and wall-mounted, internally illuminated, steel and glass vitrines with birch tree trunks inside. The birch tree is associated with magical symbolism. Many anthropologists consider it to be a possible agent of the transformation of human consciousness. The birch tree is also “associated with birth and rebirth” and is “hermaphroditic and self-propagating, with male and female flowers on the same tree”. The works have mirrored sides, which give the illusion of endless birch forests. These artworks also reference the containment and simulation of nature.

His *Portal* sculptures take up the concepts of the universal and transcendental. The historical cosmology of Plato is a primary inspiration for the sculptures. The effect is both esoteric and scientific, morphic and distinctly concrete. The historical references here span the empirical experimentation of cultures.

James' objects show a formal certainty and perspicuity (exact symmetry, white light, accurate shape) that registers purity, autonomy and wholeness. His works illustrate ideals, but they themselves are very contingent and actual: they are for today.

The sculptures operate between the iconic and the arbitrary, the concrete and the alchemic, the mythical and the experiential. James describes his work as, “evoking pictorial depictions of the cosmos, alluding to notions of mysticism, ethereality, spirituality and science, all the while anchored through the use of weighty, industrial materials”.

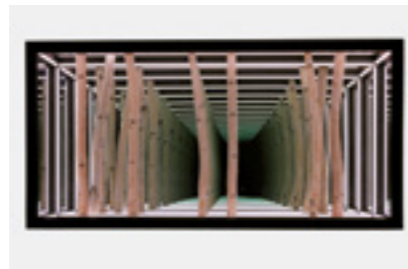
Icosahedrons - the geometric globes of twenty identical triangular facets - were a mathematical experiment in unity used by Plato to demonstrate an ideal compositional system of perfect symmetry in three dimensions. In a twenty-first century gallery space, the glass, steel, and LED structures bring a rigid and gleaming tangibility to the abstraction of the numerical calculation of flawless coherence. James' artworks are compelling approximations, facsimiles of understanding and belief thousands of years old that come down to us on our own terms of modern metals and technological light.

Anthony James has exhibited in several international museums. His first monograph, 'Morphic fields', was published by Hatje Cantz in 2014. His work has recently been exhibited at Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, USA, 'Crystals in Art, ancient and today' (October 2019 - January 2020), curated by Joachim Pissarro and Lauren Hayes.

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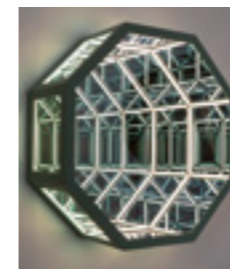
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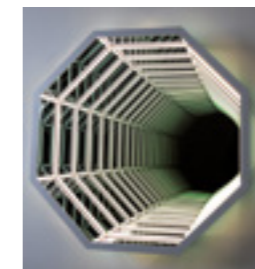
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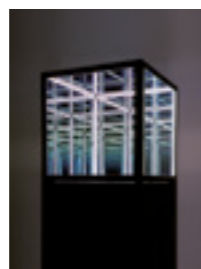
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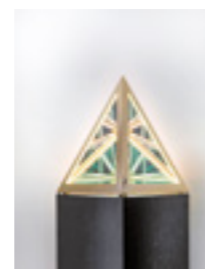
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Opera Gallery would like to thank the artist for his help and generosity that made this exhibition possible.

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