

The background of the entire image is an abstract geometric pattern. It consists of numerous thin, parallel lines in a vibrant green color. These lines are arranged in a way that creates a strong sense of perspective, appearing to recede into the distance. The lines intersect to form a grid-like structure, with the perspective being most pronounced towards the right side of the image, where the lines converge. The overall effect is one of depth and architectural structure, reminiscent of a modern interior space or a complex architectural detail.

A N T H O N Y J A M E S

TRANSCENDENCE

OPERA GALLERY

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6 - 26 August 2021

OPERA GALLERY



FOREWORD

Opera Gallery is delighted to present *Transcendence*, Anthony James first solo show in Seoul.

Anthony James (b. in 1974) is a British-American artist based in Los Angeles. He graduated from Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design in 1998. James is best known for his sublime, immersive sculptural works and installations.

While implying concepts such as minimalism, mysticism, alchemy, spirituality, and science, he uses crude industrial materials — steel, LED, and glass — to create his works and builds an eternal, infinite realm that seems to illustrate the universe itself.

Growing up in the pandemonium of 70-80s' England, James was naturally attracted to formalism and minimalism as the means which allowed him to create his own sense of “order.”

“My intention is to bring an impossible concept like the idea of infinity, or the cosmos, into physical objective existence. I am attempting to express science, spirituality, and philosophy in an object in the purest and most honest way I know how.” - Anthony James -

Euclidean geometry, established as a systemized theory in Greece based on Ancient Egypt's experiential knowledge of geometric shapes, has, at long last, been reborn in the hands of this innovative, talented artist. Facing his work, viewers are held in awe by the elegant, exquisite, symmetric, and methodical polyhedrons that seem to condense the universe itself within them.

The illuminated sculptures put forth an infinite, uncharted realm where awe and sublimity coexist. Listening to their heartfelt rendition of the trio of light, time, and space, visitors experience an unmatched journey engaging a space empty yet complete and become one with James' works.

Opera Gallery is thrilled to present Anthony James and his artistic expedition pioneering every aspect of light and space. James' space of transcendence provides a brief moment of rest amidst the franticness of modern life and requests visitors to examine inwards. Through his works, we hope to provide a restful moment that allows undisturbed introspection and reflection.

Gilles Dyan
Founder and Chairman
Opera Gallery Group

Yoonju Kim
Director
Opera Gallery Seoul

서문

오페라갤러리는 빛을 창조적 매체로 다루는 새시대의 아티스트 앤서니 제임스를 조명하는 서울 첫 단독 전시 *Transcendence* 를 개최합니다 .

앤서니 제임스는 로스앤젤레스에 기반을 둔 영국계 미국인 예술가로 , 1974 년 영국에서 태어났고 , 1998 년 런던에서 센트럴 세인트 마틴 예술 디자인 대학을 졸업했습니다 . 그는 위엄 있고 몰입감 넘치는 조각과 설치 작품으로 가장 잘 알려져 있습니다 .

그의 작품은 미니멀리즘 , 신비주의 , 연금술 , 영성과 과학에 대한 개념을 암시하는 동시에 강철과 LED, 유리 와 같은 무거운 산업 재료를 사용함으로써 빛과 공간을 다루며 마치 우주를 묘사하듯 , 영속하는 무한의 세상을 만드는 작업을 하고 있습니다 .

70-80 년대 혼란스러웠던 시대에 영국에서 어린시절을 보낸 작가는 ‘질서’ 를 만드는 자신만의 방식으로 형식주의와 미니멀리즘 예술에 빠져 들게 됩니다 .

“나의 의도는 무한대 , 즉 우주와 같은 불가능한 개념을 물리적이고 객관적인 존재로 끌어내는 것이다 .
과학 , 영성 , 철학을 내가 아는 가장 순수하고 정직한 방법으로 표현하려 한다 .” - 앤서니 제임스 -

고대 이집트에서 측량기술에 의해 얻은 도형에 관한 경험적 지식이 그리스로 전파되어 이론적으로 정리되고 체계화된 유클리드 기하학은 마침내 이 천재적인 예술가의 손아래서 다시 태어납니다 . 우리는 우주의 축소된 모습을 담은 듯한 조화롭고 우아하고 대칭적이며 질서정연한 그의 기하학 다면체 작품에 감탄하지 않을 수 없습니다 .

앤서니 제임스가 만든 불빛 조각물 앞에 서 있으면 한없이 뻗어 나가는 듯한 미지의 공간과 접하게 되는데 이는 두려움과 숭고미를 동시에 느끼게 하는 공간입니다 . 작품 속으로 녹아 드는 이 특별한 체험은 비어 있으되 충만한 공간 , 그 안에서 빛어지는 빛 , 시간 , 공간의 삼중주는 관객의 마음속 감성을 깊숙이 건드립니다 .

오페라 갤러리는 빛과 공간에 대한 모든 것을 아우르는 실험적인 아티스트 앤서니 제임스의 매혹적인 세계를 보여주게 되어 흥분을 감출 수 없습니다 . 우리들의 내면을 들여다보라 말하는 듯 이 ‘초월’ 의 공간이 우리에게 잠시나마 번잡한 삶에서 마음의 심표를 찍는 순간으로 , 오직 나 자신과 소통하는 성찰의 시간을 선사하길 기대합니다 .

오페라갤러리 그룹 회장
질 디앙

오페라갤러리 서울 디렉터
김윤주

50" Icosahedron

2019

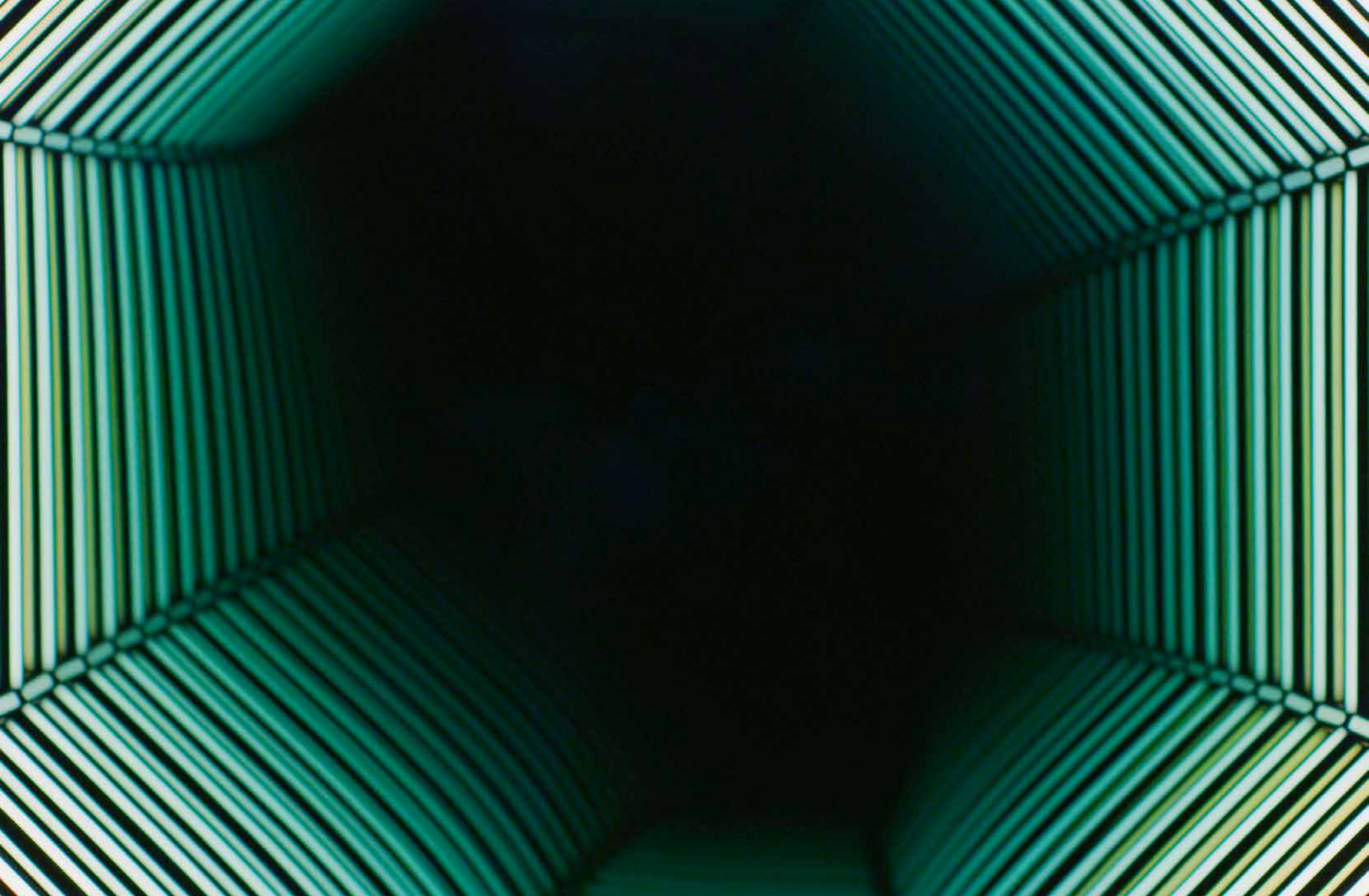
Stainless steel, specialised glass, LED,
Solar Black finish
Edition of 6
127 x 127 x 127 cm | 50 x 50 x 50 in



50" Triacontahedron (Solar Black)
2020

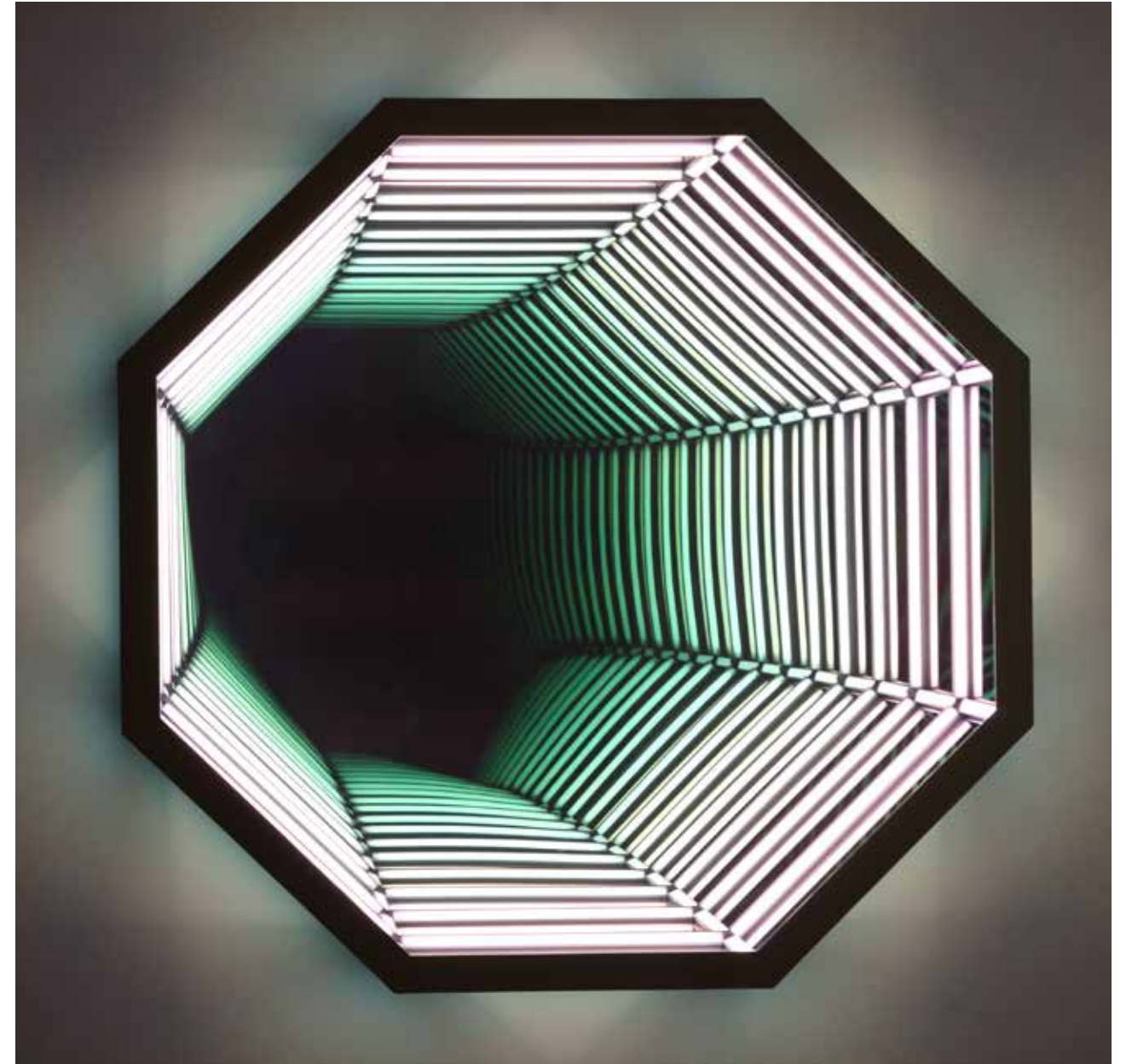
Stainless steel, specialised glass, LED,
Solar Black finish
Edition of 6
127 x 127 x 127 cm | 50 x 50 x 50 in





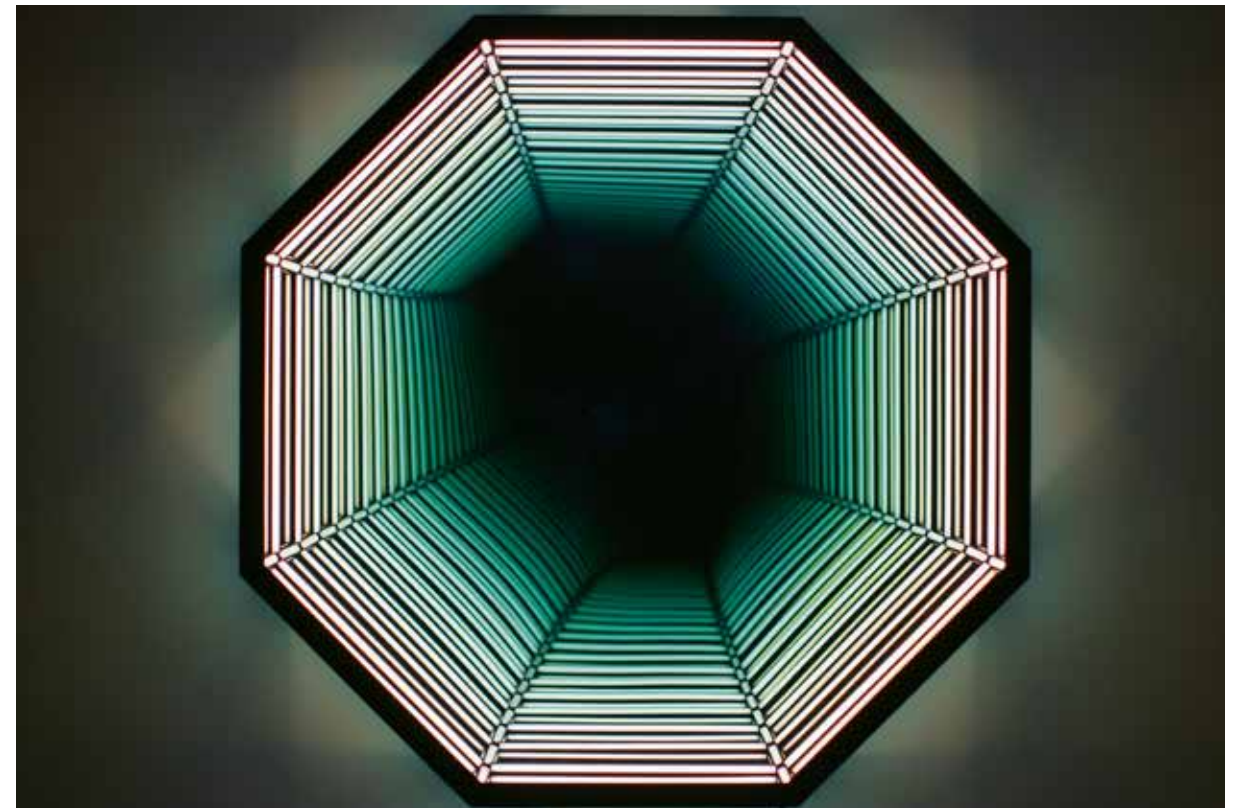
36" Wall Portal (Silver Birch Gray)
2020

Stainless steel, specialised glass, LED,
Silver Birch Grey finish
Edition of 6
91.4 x 91.4 x 38.1 cm | 36 x 36 x 15 in



50" Octagon Wall Portal
2019

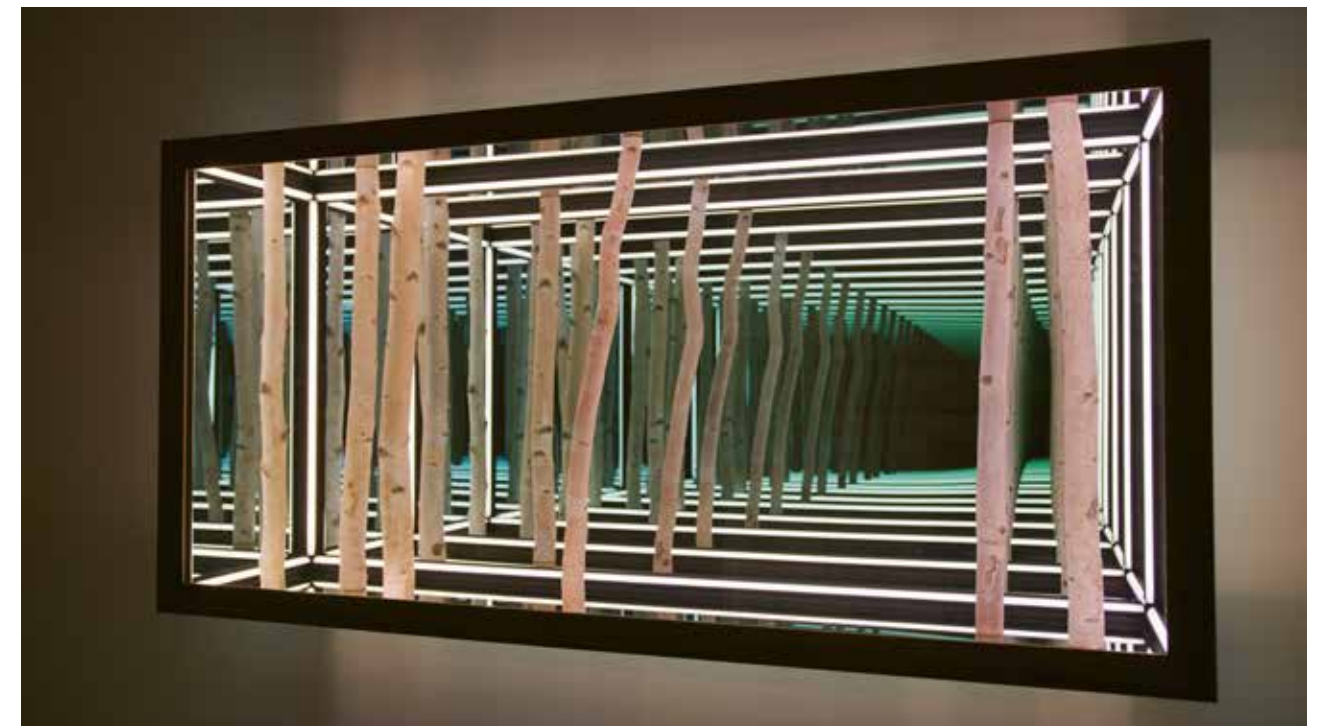
Powdercoated stainless steel, specialised glass, LED,
Solar Black finish
Edition of 6
127 x 127 x 38.1 cm | 50 x 50 x 15 in





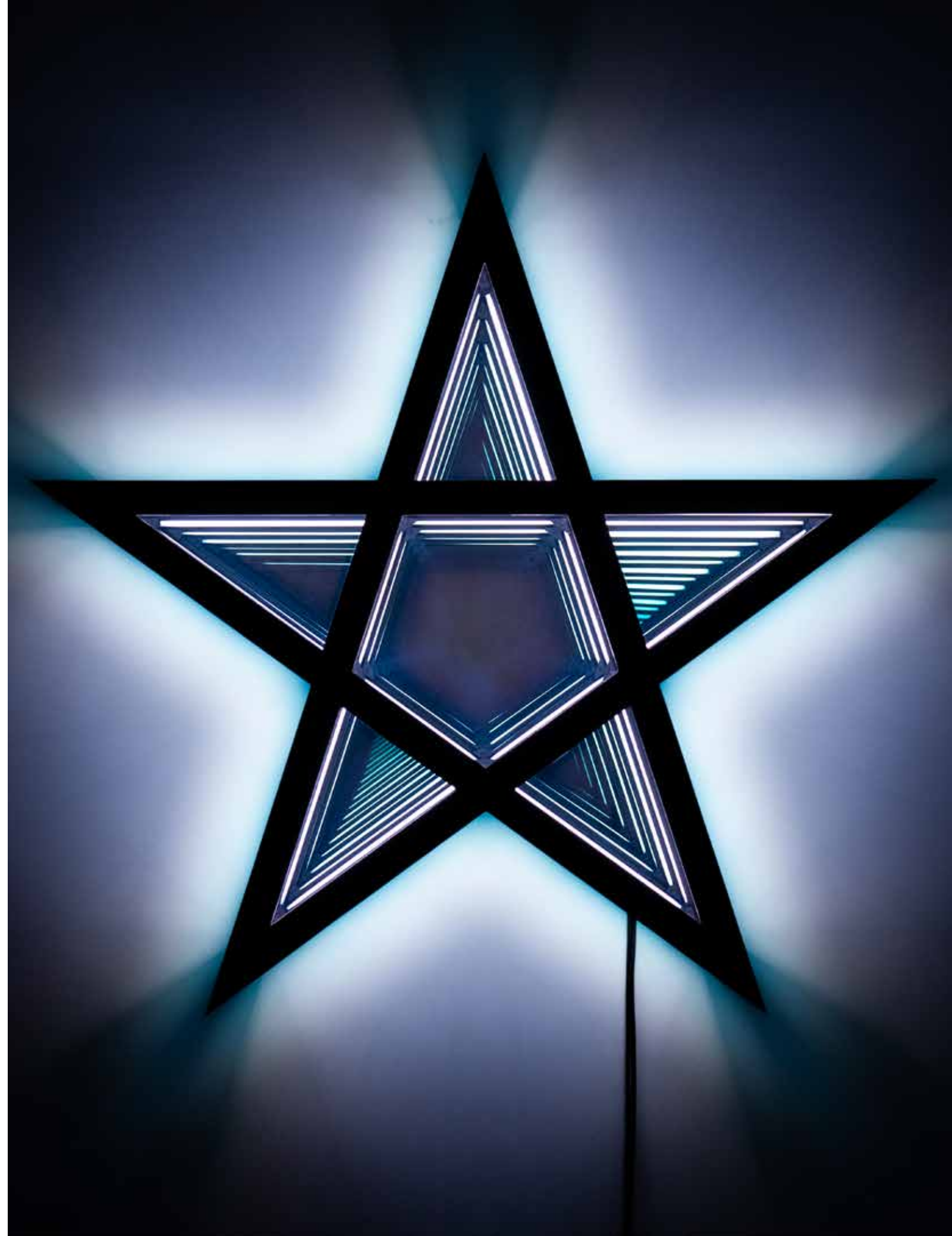
60" Wall Mounted Birch (Cherry Frame)
2019

Stainless steel, specialised glass, LED, birch,
cherry wood frame
Unique piece
76.2 x 152.4 x 38.1 cm | 30 x 60 x 15 in



50" Pentagram (Solar Black)
2020

Stainless steel, specialised glass, LED,
Solar Black finish
Edition of 6
127 x 127 x 127 cm | 50 x 50 x 50 in



30" Bullet Painting
2020

Polished stainless steel
Unique piece
76.2 x 76.2 cm | 30 x 30 in



40" Bullet Painting
2020

Polished stainless steel
Unique piece
101.6 x 101.6 cm - 40 x 40 in





"My job as an artist is to make my work look effortless but of course it's not. The human eye only hits the mistakes. I will never let your eye hit on a mistake." - Anthony James



THE *BIRCH* SERIES, 2005

"I think about the containment of nature. The containment of our own nature. There's something about the individuals journey that is really at the roof of it. Going into the forest - not knowing what you'll find - not knowing if you'll ever return... You can see the metaphor"

James originally debuted The *Birch* Series in New York City in 2005. It consisted of several variously sized, vertical light boxes with young birch tree trunks inside. The sculpture series references the containment and simulation of nature. The works have mirrored sides, which give the illusion of an endless birch forest. The pieces are composed of birch trees, metal, glass, and fluorescent lights or LEDs. The birch tree is associated with magical symbolism. Glenn O'Brien wrote about birch trees that their *"magic...is rooted in [the] special relationship with fly agaric mushrooms - that famed toadstool of the red cap and white spots - which is so often associated with elves and spirits...Many anthropologists consider it to be a possible agent of the transformation of human consciousness."*



Anthony James' *80 Great Rhombicosidodecahedron*, 2020 at the Palm Springs Art Museum in California in 2021



Anthony James' *Crystal 001* at the Mayfair sculpture trail in London in 2020, ©David Gutierrez

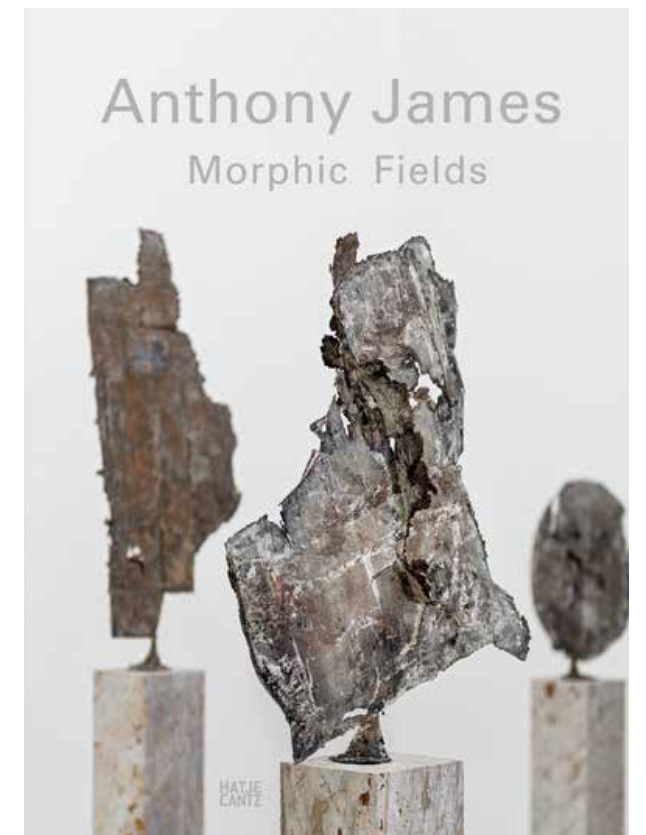


BULLET SERIES, 2011 - PRESENT

"I first started making the *Bullet Series* in 2011. They are documented in my book, *Morphic Fields*, published by Hatje Cantz Verlag in 2014. The concept behind the series was to make a visual demonstration of the universe.

I took an arsenal of assault rifles, shotguns, pistols, revolvers... you get the idea. The gesture became a meditation - almost a Zen practice. I am particularly fond of these works... and they're a lot of fun to make."

The material used is mirror polished steel. I wanted to puncture the steel with an effortless gesture and flow in a similar attempt to how Lucio Fontana would slice his canvas with a knife or puncture paper with a pencil. Given the nature of steel, a knife and a pencil were not a possibility.

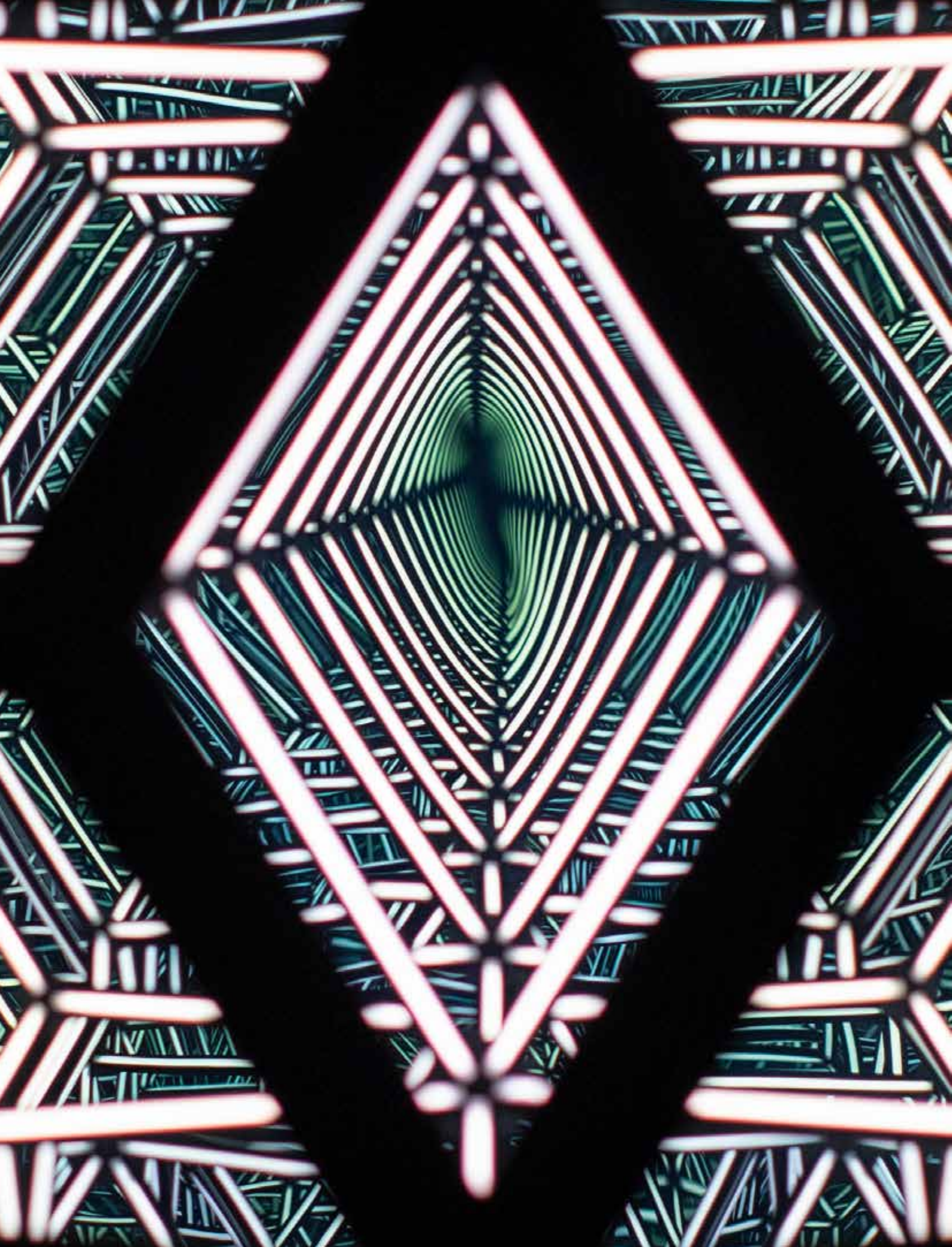


MORPHIC FIELDS, 2014

Morphic Fields was an exhibition of bronze and limestone pieces inspired by the English scientist Rupert Sheldrake's theory of morphic resonance: "*a process whereby self-organizing systems inherit a memory from previous similar systems.*"

"All morphic fields begin with individuals... Very few contemporary artists have the sense of inspiration from a transcendent source beyond the human realm. But I would argue that they are also drawing from the collective human experience. As much as there is room for individual creativity, every artist is also transcending collective memory. Artists can create new morphic fields. Yet, all art exists within a morphic field beyond the individual." The sculptures are created from found materials and "through [James'] process of converting...waste into bronze they morph into something very beautiful and precious."

30" *Bullet Painting*, 2020 (detail)



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’s objects show a formal certainty and perspicuity (exact symmetry, white light, accurate shape) that registers purity, autonomy and wholeness. Although his works illustrate ideals, themselves are very contingent and actual: they are made 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’s 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.

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

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