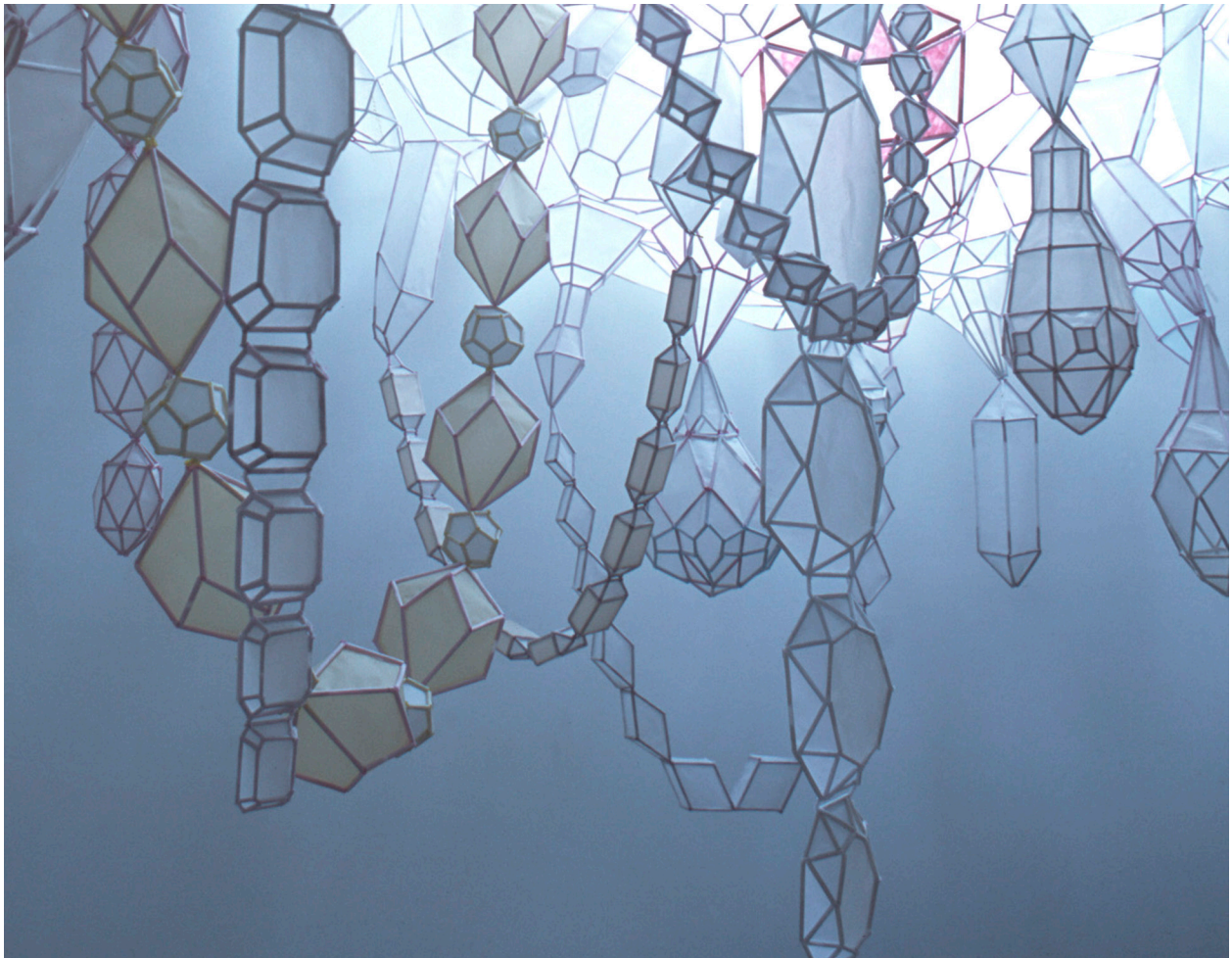


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Contact: Katherine Kuster, 713.348.5761
Press images available

Rice Gallery

KIRSTEN HASSENFELD: *NEW INSTALLATION*
SEPTEMBER 27 – DECEMBER 9, 2007

Opening Thursday, September 27, 5:30 – 7:30 pm



Dollar Dreams, 2002 (installation detail)
Photo courtesy the artist and Bellwether, New York

HOUSTON, Texas, July 23, 2007 — Rice University Art Gallery has commissioned a new installation by New York artist Kirsten Hassenfeld, whose translucent sculptures have been characterized as “extravaganzas of the handmade.” Hassenfeld uses the most ordinary of materials, paper, to create ornate, obsessively detailed objects that reference luxury goods, classical architecture, and decorative arts. Described by Hassenfeld as “dreams on the edge of vanishing,” her ethereal sculptures are carefully lit to evoke the diaphanous surfaces of precious gems and glass objects. Her installation at Rice Gallery will consist of the largest objects Hassenfeld has ever created. Structures six to eight feet

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in diameter, resembling gigantic droplets or the onion domes of Russian architecture, will be draped with clusters and strands of faceted, gem-like forms. Lit from within, they will transform the gallery into a dim, cavernous treasure trove. Rice Gallery's opening celebration will take place on Thursday, September 27, from 5:30 to 7:30 pm, and will feature remarks by Kirsten Hassenfeld at 6:00 pm. Complimentary beverages including ale from St. Arnold Brewery will be served. The event is free and open to the public. For more information, visit www.ricegallery.org, or call 713.348.6069.

Initially inspired by the idea of pawnshops and casinos as places of longing for money and coveted objects, Hassenfeld explores her own fantasies of plenty and abundance. She scours auction catalogues and books on decoration, indulging in her attraction to the beauty of ornament, which she feels adds a "human quality" to whatever object or building it adorns. Hassenfeld begins a sculpture by creating patterns on a computer, precisely replicating the angular geometry of various cuts of gems and crystalline formations. She then hand-cuts pieces of paper and uses traditional techniques of paper folding, rolling, and coiling to assemble the tens of thousands of tiny, fragile decorative components that comprise each work. Each work is constructed using a variety of papers and vellums of different opacities and requires an elaborately engineered armature made of lightweight, yet supportive materials. Her installation at Rice Gallery will be her most technically ambitious work yet, because as Hassenfeld puts it, "With paper, the minute is easy; the gigantic is extremely difficult."

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Kirsten Hassenfeld was born in Albany, New York. She received a BFA from the Rhode Island School of Design in 1994 and an MFA from The University of Arizona, Tucson in 1998. Her work has been featured in numerous exhibitions throughout New York, including *Light x Eight: The Hanukkah Project* (2006), The Jewish Museum; *Greater New York* (2005), MoMA/P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center, and *Open House: Working in Brooklyn* (2004), The Brooklyn Museum of Art. She has been an artist-in-residence in New York at Dieu Donn  Papermill (2005), The Marie Walsh Sharpe Art Foundation (2004), and Smack Mellon Artist Studio Program (2003). In 2006, Hassenfeld was awarded a grant from The Pollock-Krasner Foundation. She lives and works in Brooklyn, New York.

GALLERY TALK AND LUNCHEON

Kirsten Hassenfeld will give a gallery talk at noon on Friday, September 28. A complimentary light lunch will be provided to all participants.

All events are free and open to the public.

ADMISSION IS FREE.

SUPPORT AND SPONSORSHIP

Rice Gallery exhibitions and programs receive major support from Rice Gallery Patrons and Members, The Brown Foundation, Inc., and the Kilgore Endowment. Exhibition catalogues are funded in part by the Robert J. Card, M.D. and Karol Kreymer Catalogue Endowment. The gallery receives partial operating support from the City of Houston. KUHF-FM and Saint Arnold Brewing Company provide in-kind support.

LOCATION AND PARKING

Rice Gallery is on the ground floor of Sewall Hall, and is reached using Campus Entrance 1 located at the intersection of Main Street and Sunset Boulevard. Paid parking (credit card only; \$3.00 per hour, \$9.00 daily maximum) is available in the Founder's Court Lot directly in front of Sewall Hall. For other parking options visit www.rice.edu/parking.

By METRORail: Hermann Park/Rice University Station.

WHEELCHAIR ACCESS

Wheelchair access is on the south (left) side of the building.

HOURS

Rice Gallery is open Tuesday through Saturday 11:00 – 5:00, Thursday until 7:00, and Sunday, noon to 5:00. The gallery is closed Mondays and university holidays.