

MEA S17

MANIFEST
EXHIBITION
ANNUAL
SEASON 17

M.

SUBMITTED	1027	214	38	7
	WORKS	ARTISTS	STATES	COUNTRIES
SELECTED	1	1	1	1

ONE 11: 11TH ANNUAL MANIFEST PRIZE

CENTRAL GALLERY

about the exhibit

All of Manifest's calls for entry are competitive. The stiffness of the competition has increased in proportion to Manifest's growing reputation, multi-faceted mission, and international reach. Our mission to stand for quality, to create a system whereby works are judged with objectivity as a primary aim, and assembled with as little subjective curatorial agenda as possible has gained the respect of thousands of artists from all over the world, and a vast following of arts lovers, patrons, and supporters.

Five years ago the annual *Manifest Prize* award was increased to \$5,000. Two years ago Manifest increased the total award amount provided to artists by adding ten \$100 awards for each of the ten finalist works—those which were the highest ranked by our jury after the chosen winner. This underscores our non-profit organization's commitment to reward, showcase, celebrate, and document exceptional artwork being made today by working artists.

We respect the creative principle of reduction (the jury process) as it is employed to achieve an essential conclusive statement for each exhibit we produce. This is what has led to the high caliber of each Manifest exhibit, and to the gallery's notable reputation. We believe competition does breed excellence.

With this principle of reduction in mind, we have been inspired by the intensity of jury after jury to narrow down a collection of entries to a strong end result. Therefore we determined ten years ago to launch the *Manifest Prize* in order to push the process to the ultimate limit—from among many to select just ONE work.

Manifest's jury process for *One 11* included multiple levels of review of 1,027 works by 214 artists by a total of 20 different jurors. Each level resulted in fewer works passing on to the next, until a winner was reached. The size and physical nature of the works considered was not a factor in the jury scoring and selection.

The winning work is entitled *Many Moons* by Carol Prusa of Boca Raton, Florida. It is the recipient of the 11th annual *Manifest Prize*, accompanied by several juror statements and the artist's statement. Seven semi-finalists are also featured here in recognition of their success through this incredibly competitive award and project. These are works by Raymond Baccari (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania), Patricia Bellan-Gillen (Burggettstown, Pennsylvania), Lisa Bryson (Jamul, California), Rosalinda Cabrera (Romeoville, Illinois), Dana Kotler (Weehawken, New Jersey), Sadhbh Mowlds (Carbondale, Illinois), and Elena Peteva (Providence, Rhode Island).

WINNER

Carol Prusa
Boca Raton, Florida

FINALISTS

Raymond Baccari
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Patricia Bellan-Gillen
Burggettstown, Pennsylvania

Lisa Bryson
Jamul, California

Rosalinda Cabrera
Romeoville, Illinois

Dana Kotler
Weehawken, New Jersey

Sadhbh Mowlds
Carbondale, Illinois

Elena Peteva
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Carol Prusa
Many Moons (detail)
silverpoint, graphite, and acrylic on plexiglass circles
100" x 275" x 2" · 2020



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Many Moons by Carol Prusa immediately stood out from a crowd of extremely competent, interesting works. All art can be categorized based on materials and contextually what has come before it. This fact is never more apparent than when numerous works are submitted for a juried exhibition. There is a uniqueness, an “otherness” about Prusa’s work. It is enigmatic and contemplative.

Like the title suggests, the piece *Many Moons* depicts a series of night skies, but what it abstractly replicates is the feeling of the cosmos, through overall nuanced design, masterfully detailed execution, and gorgeous, muted color. The work is celestial contemplation, stillness, silence, and ultimately, peace. It connects geometry, science, and art, conveying the sensation of the infinite, and one’s infinitesimally small place within the universe.

Prusa isn’t instructing us, she isn’t telling us anything we don’t already know. She is inviting us to look into the void and feel something that is deeply ingrained in all of us, in the human experience; which is ultimately much more meaningful and important.

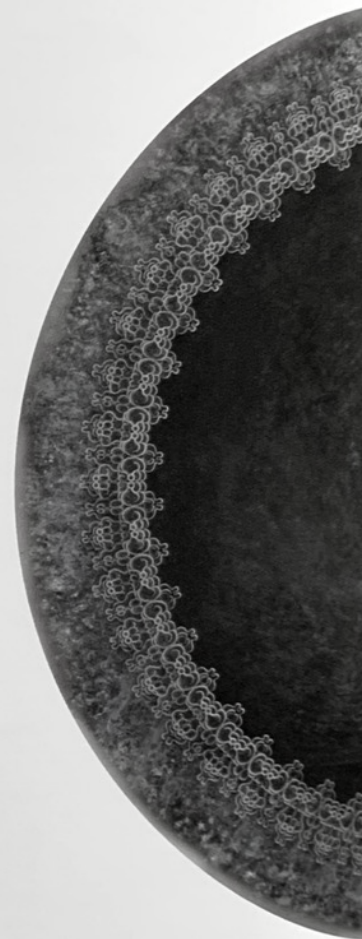
Who hasn’t looked up at a peaceful night sky, and felt the mystery and the wonder of this universe? This work reminds us, in the best possible way, that we should all critically cultivate our perspective as we move through this life together. That we should strive to not lose a sense of mystery and wonder despite the overwhelming complexities and distractions that exist in our world today. Simply put, we should all look up, and in turn, look inward more often. Nothing could be more relevant, especially in these times we are currently living through.

Many Moons struck me as being worthy of the Manifest Prize for several reasons. It caught my eye immediately and readily held my attention as I spent time studying the mark-making and details both up close and from afar. Taking in the edges of the work, delicate as lacework or embroidered stitches, I felt for a moment larger than life. This emotion was broken down as I was pulled into the center of every individual piece. Each part stands as a focal point for experiencing the sublime, a captured moment where planetary bodies align amidst dark skies and even darker horizon lines. Feeling existentially small, it brings you into this experience through a delicately crafted iris of sorts, creating multiple windows into the stages of this event that appear to gaze out as much as I gaze in. In the overall installation the parts stand marvelously on their own, but together they form an organic arrangement that forms a powerful experience of the cosmic entity they capture.

I was drawn in by cold light of *Many Moons*. The moon floods these pieces in a way that I have never seen captured before. In this work the landscape is born again in the night’s new view. The lacy quality that vignettes the edges of each part of *Many Moons* moves my mind to the gentle touch that the moon brings. Their light is soft and subtle, just as the material is thin. This work bursts with the feminine quality that the moon carries over the Earth since its birth.

Many Moons initially captivates in its ability to depict both a simultaneous sense of grandiosity and an inner microcosm. Like looking at an image of the cosmos taken from a powerful camera, we’re met with a collection of celestial bodies to endlessly magnify and examine closer and closer.

Meditative, hypnotic mandala patterns are coupled with haunting depictions of moon phases. The highly ornate circular patterns frame nighttime skies, creating a timeless, antique quality, like peering at the moon through a Baroque telescope. The deep, velvety blacks of the sky circled by the delicate and airy patterns around it create an intense sense of depth in each moon phase.



Many Moons (detail)
silverpoint, graphite, and acrylic on plexiglass circles
100" x 275" x 2" · 2020

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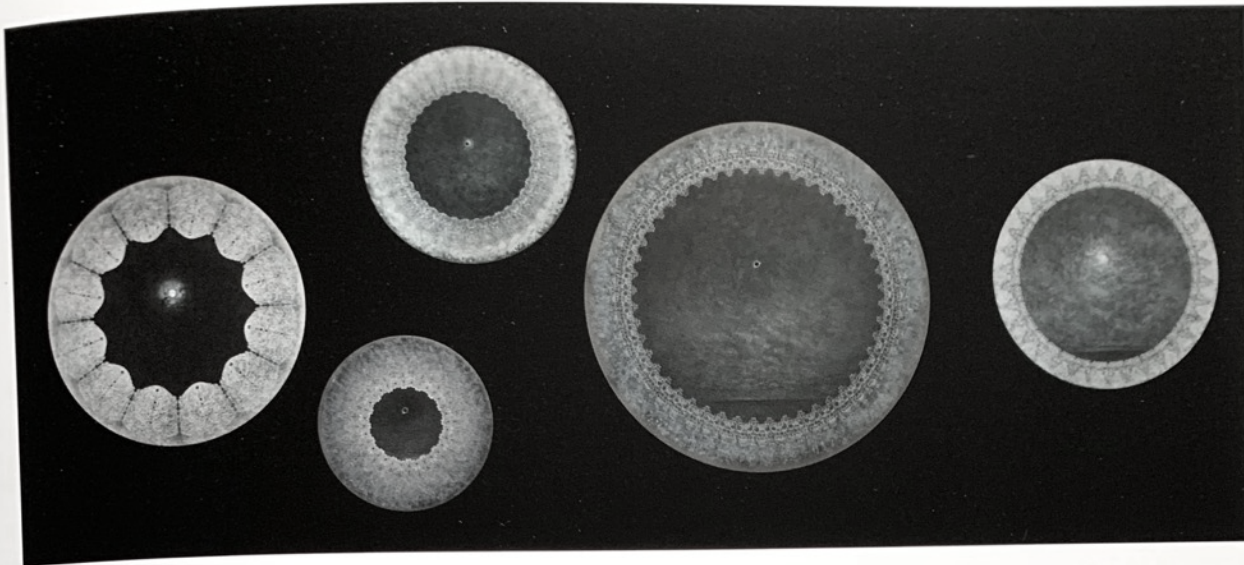
There's a level of transcendental craft and detail throughout the piece, making the viewer wonder exactly how such ornamented patterns were created by hand. Though it's not technical prowess for its own sake, the level of boundless detail only lends to the level of immensity felt from each panel of the piece.

There is a harmony to Carol Prusa's *Many Moons* that was evident even in the limited medium of a digital image used to jury such a project. Imagining the piece in person allowed me to draw a few conclusions:

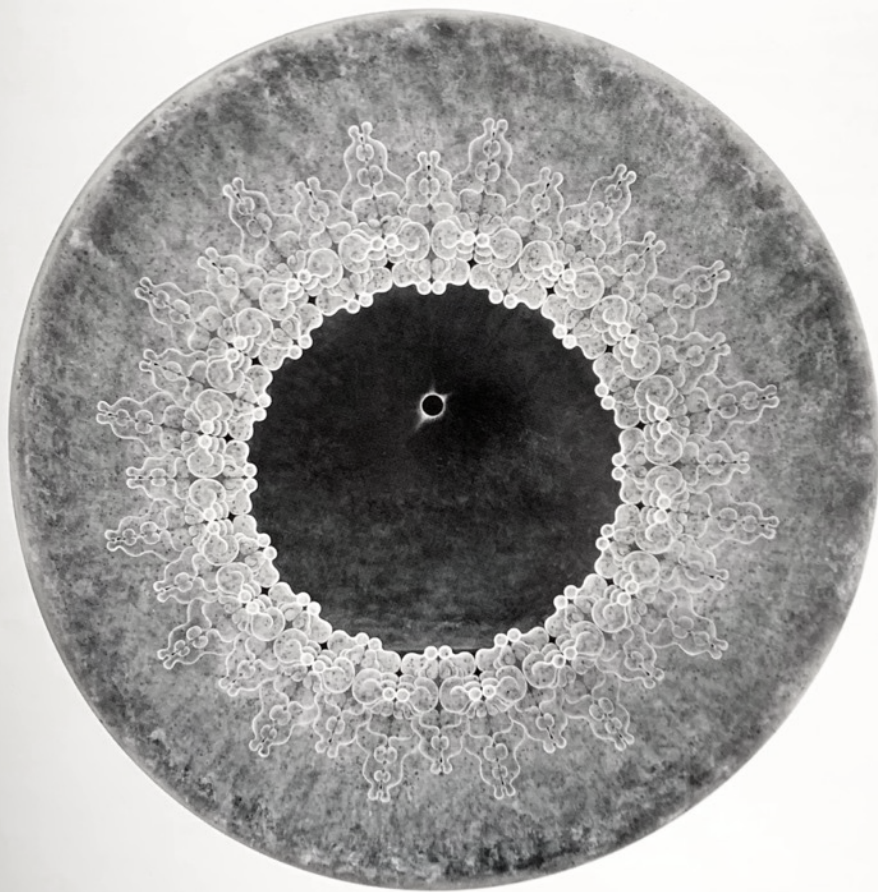
1. The multiple metaphors which directed my mind; temple oculus, iris, lace doily, etc. floated in and out without dictating terms of engagement. I felt some small amount of wonder, even in image form.
2. The intensive labor was not a stand in for the art; the artist did not confuse labor for art.
3. Despite being highly polished, I sensed a warmth in the manipulation of materials.

Functioning as a looking glass in which some fundamental law or truth about the universe, life, or death may be found—I found this work to be joyous and mournful in equal measure—evoking the sense of standing at the edge of a void, quiet and terrified, all the while held tight by the comfort of something familiar and human. A personal wish or whisper hand in hand with the sublime.

It was a love from first sight. I was particularly compelled and bewitched by *Many Moons*, by its luring light that reminded me of something nostalgic and familiar from the past. The pieces have a wonderful undertone of the classical realism that carries through in combination of contemporary and old classical drawing materials. Maybe that's why it feels familiar, nostalgic like from the dream I saw, but at the same time unusual and contemporary, otherworldly. The luminosity of this work is so powerful. It's a window into the past through the lenses of the present.



Many Moons
silverpoint, graphite, and acrylic on plexiglass circles
100" x 275" x 2" · 2020



“I hope in my work to create a shimmering body of work coalesced in the uneasy thin space between what I do and don’t yet understand and the erotic dark energy threading me to all.”

WINNER
CAROL PRUSA

about the artist

Carol Prusa is a mid-career contemporary artist known for her meticulous silverpoint technique and use of unexpected materials from sculpted resin and fiberglass to metal leaf and LED lights. In the 2015 catalogue essay for the exhibition *Drawing in Silver and Gold: Leonardo to Jasper Johns*, Bruce Weber called Carol Prusa "one of the most innovative artists working in metalpoint today." Born in Chicago, Prusa lives and works in South Florida and exhibits internationally, including at Brintz Gallery/375 Gallery (Palm Beach) and Bluerider Art (Taipei). Her work is included in numerous public and private collections, including the Perez Art Museum (Miami), The Museum of Arts and Design (NYC), Telfair Art Museum (Savannah), and the Francie Bishop Good and David Horvitz Collection.



of her work the artist states

"The world of learning is so broad, and the human soul is so limited in power! We reach forth and strain every nerve, but we seize only a bit of the curtain that hides the infinite from us."

—
MARIA MITCHELL from her diary

"In my work I desire to create a generative space that tethers us as one in the vastness of the cosmos and the voids between, communicating what cannot be seen but felt—the vibrations that are part of us all, echoes from billions of years ago.

When I was young I would look at the night sky to try and envision what there was before there was something. I want my art to express that vastness and the overwhelming fecundity of life. Looking at the night sky leaves me breathless by sheer scale and beauty, spinning with what I do not yet know. My quest to grasp the universe around me led me to astrophysicist Vera Rubin and her determination of dark matter. Vera Rubin credited Maria Mitchell as instrumental in her decision to study astronomy and as I read Mitchell's journals, I became determined to follow in her footsteps that took her and her team of women astronomers to Denver in 1878 to experience a total eclipse. I experienced the August 2017 eclipse standing, between day and night, on the bank of the Platte River in Nebraska as the midday sky to my right darkened and to my left appeared hued like dawn. As the moon's shadow passed overhead, I saw a crisp black disk—the moon eclipsing the sun, transforming the sun's brightness into a palladium halo. When Venus popped out I lost my grounding. I became an umbraphile, seeking shadows and exploring scotopic vision—propelled to make work to understand why the eclipse and its otherworldly beauty gripped me so.

Coming to visual terms with the strange light of the 2017 eclipse resolved in *Many Moons*. I made this series of silverpoint and acrylic paintings to express the quality of light I experienced during the event. Applying many layers of acrylic medium with ground pigment on Plexiglas, I sought to optically achieve a strange shimmer and give a sense of the light I experienced during the eclipse. The final painting, *Selene*, is a more recent viewing of the moon on a cloudy night, where I attempt to create darkness that has luminosity, depth and structure.

As a 'conceptual voyager' I play with cosmologies created when scientists and artists imagine, making work that posits, as George Johnson suggests science does, "...a glorious human construction, an artful fitting of the data into a carefully crafted mental framework, a construction of towers that just possibly might have been built another way." I hope in my work to create a shimmering body of work coalesced in the uneasy thin space between what I do and don't yet understand and the erotic dark energy threading me to all."

