

ORNA FEINSTEIN

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*IN FULL BLOOM*



WOMEN & THEIR WORK

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MARCH 12 - APRIL 28, 2016

AUSTIN, TEXAS



*Papellibrium*, 2016, (gallery view), sewn used art invitations, dimensions variable.

Cover: *Papellibrium*, 2016, (gallery view), sewn used art invitations from these galleries: Anya Tish Gallery, Houston Arts Alliance, the Museum of Geometric and Madi Art Dallas, the Printing Museum, John Cleary Gallery, Goldsberry Gallery, Hooks Epstein Gallery, CamibaArt Gallery, Austin Contemporary, Williams Tower Gallery, Lawndale, and Women & Their Work, dimensions variable.



# ORNA FEINSTEIN

## IN FULL BLOOM

*Papellibrium* is the most recent culmination of Orna Feinstein's explorations into materiality, process, and space. Formally trained as a scientist, the artist became preoccupied with visual material early during her formative years. The desire to move beyond the laboratory or, better yet, expand upon science through visual reference later evolved into a career-shifting epiphany. Upon her arrival in Houston nearly two decades ago, Feinstein has been relentless in making up for lost time. She immediately set upon a studio practice path with formal studies that earned her a certificate in studio arts from the Glassell School of Art at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston and an undergraduate degree in sculpture from the University of Houston.

When I first met the artist as a student, she already possessed a maturity and visual articulation, matched only by her unyielding exploration into process-oriented art and its presentation. Working primarily in printmaking, she has explored a range of materials from monographs on paper to multi-layered relief and freestanding works combining fiber and print on Plexiglas. Her compositions, while abstract in nature, integrate the visual language of her former endeavor as a scientist. In encountering her work as a viewer, your unconscious mind bends around the almost imperceptible beauty of the molecular cells and alchemical symbols she renders in relief. The effect is often aligned with that of Op Art or Optical Art, where movement of the static image is optically rendered through the creation of patterns, color, and/or compositions. The artist, however, is less interested in "implied movement" than the nearly invisible biology that exists around us. And, it is from this conceptual frame that the artist has

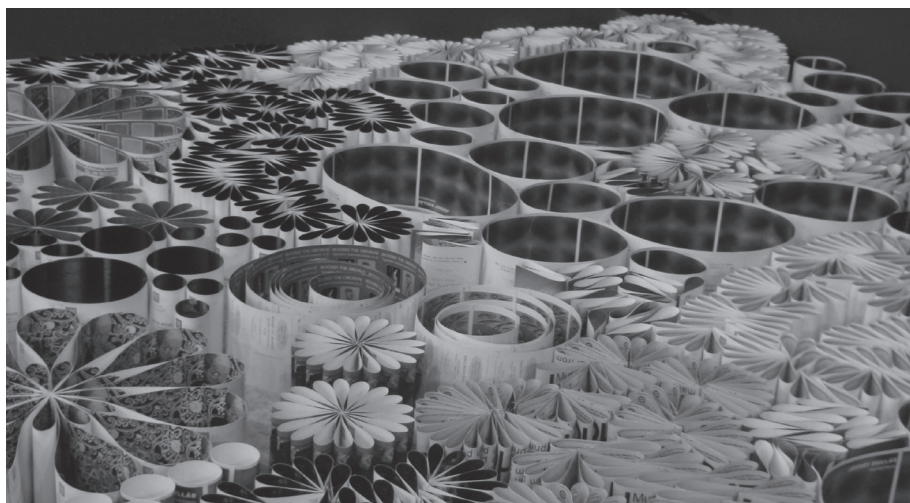
persisted in creating discrete two-dimensional works as well as more large-scale installation work.

In her recent survey, *Orna Feinstein: Now and Zen – Fifteen Years of Contemporary Printmaking*, the artist has proved that her evolution has been a seamless one that has focused on the immutable nature that surrounds us. The survey has also served to bring more focus on the totality of the artist's work beyond the pristine gallery. Not featured in the survey was Feinstein's more playful approach toward material and process using found and appropriated materials. In truth, the artist's experimentation with appropriating ordinary material objects has existed in tandem with her more iconic work. For almost a decade, Feinstein has probed the use of installation work as a mode of responding to the character of architectural space rather than architecture as simply a venue where existing work is presented. The catalyst of her "call and response" to space began in 2008 when invitations to her exhibition at the Museum of Printing History in Houston were rendered useless due to the impact of Hurricane Ike. Rather than simply trash the invitations, the artist

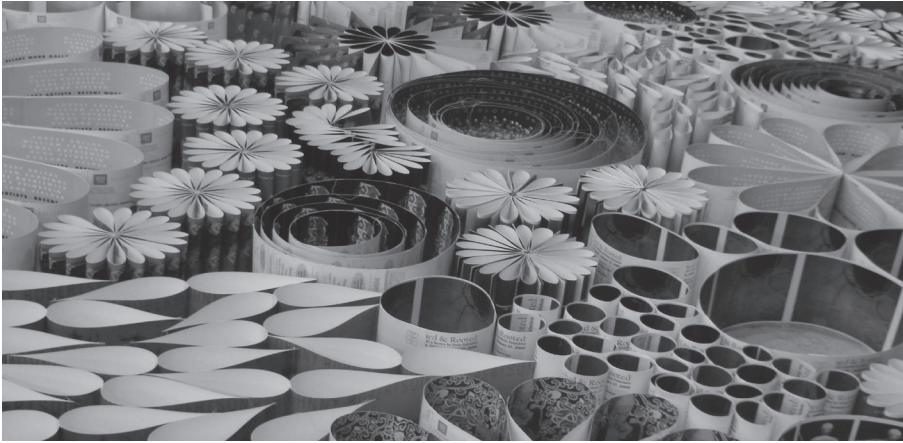
recycled them as material objects, sewing nearly 10,000 of the invitations into a vivid and imaginative garden.

In 2012, the artist produced another site-specific installation entitled *Multi-librium* at Box 13, an alternative art space in Houston. And, over the course of the four years since the presentation of *Multi-librium*, the artist has accumulated thousands more of outdated invitations pulled from shelves of art galleries, alternative spaces, and museums. *Papellibrium* is the most expansive of the series to date and draws upon the lifecycle of nature and material. Variations in the geometry, shape, and color in the installation have affirmed the artist's predilection toward the organic and the alchemy of the natural world. As with her more discrete works, Feinstein is quick to incorporate color and composition in the service of optical wonderment.

Rather than the implied movement of optical art, the artist's installation embraces the immutable and imperceptible rhythm of the natural world. The singular material object—postcard, exhibition announcement, and invitation—dissolves into the vastness of space where it literally and figuratively



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transforms into a sea of wild flowers amid a backdrop of blue. The timing of the exhibition's opening to coincide with the advent of spring helps to complete the transformative moment and brief suspension of belief. The artist's nuanced, yet pointed discourse on the fragility of our ecology, though not readily apparent, lies just below the surface of wonder.

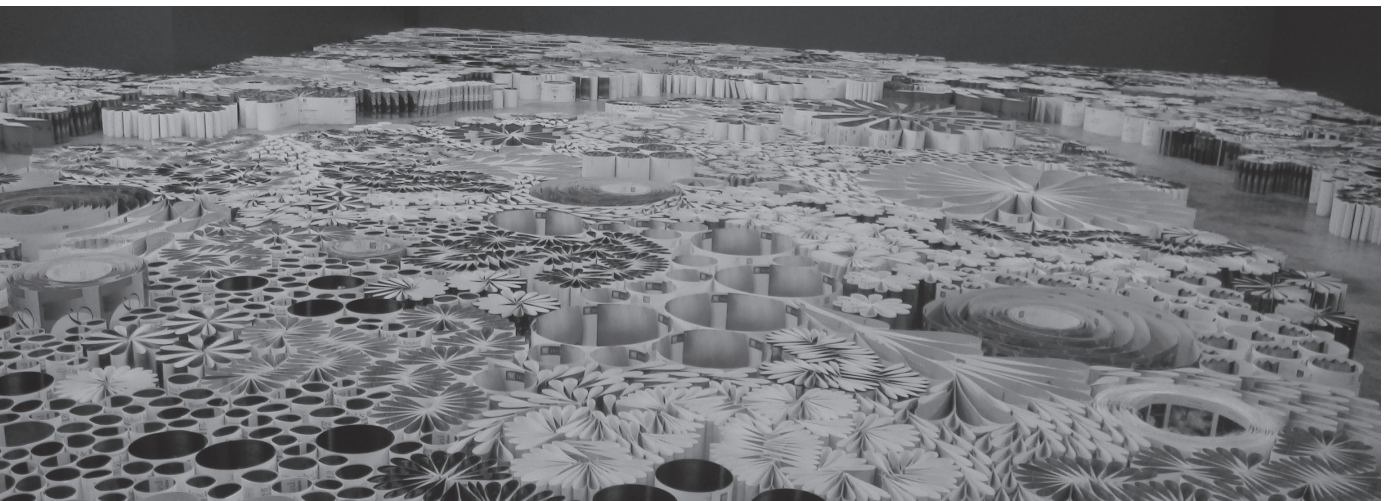
The artist's love of process and material in response to the architecture of space overrides the intentionality of dogmatic politics, but it is precisely the use of this material or,

rather, the sheer quantity of it that calls into question the creation of waste in the service of art. Luckily for us, Feinstein has honed her skill in the appropriation of this material with such a deftness that we want for it. While *Papellibrium* distinguishes itself from her more signature style, it is no doubt an extension of Feinstein's pursuit to overlay the totality of her experiences as both scientist and artist into new territory. The act of playing upon the senses—of transforming space and the material object through a longing for the organic

(and in this case, advent of spring)—proves that we are all yearning for the beauty of the natural world. This longing gives way to an agency of unlimited possibilities that not only influences how we move through the world, but also what we leave behind.

As the latest iteration in the artist's ongoing series, *Papellibrium* is the artist's most ambitious installation to date. While the scale has shifted, Feinstein's conceptual underpinnings remain deeply rooted in an artistic investigation that creatively stitches the visual language of organic science to explorations into material, process, and space. The culmination of the artist's journey thus far has not distanced itself from her earlier endeavors in the alchemical sciences, but rather strengthened its place as the very foundation of her creative vision. The resulting imprint of that vision as rendered in this project is a pulsating and vivid imitation of the natural world in bloom.

—Valerie Cassel Oliver is Senior Curator at the Contemporary Art Museum in Houston.



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# ORNA FEINSTEIN

## EDUCATION

- 2008 BFA, University of Houston, Houston, Texas
- 2002 Diploma, Studio Arts, Glassell School of Art of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Texas

## SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2016 *Papellibrium*, Women & Their Work, Austin, Texas,  
Site Specific Paper Installation
- Matter, Material and Metaphor*, CamibaArt Gallery, in  
conjunction with *PrintAustin* 2016, Austin, Texas
- 2015 *Now and Zen*, Art Museum of Southeast Texas,  
Beaumont, Texas
- Layer by Layer*, The Museum of Geometric and  
Madi Art, Dallas, Texas
- New Work*, Craighead Green Gallery, Dallas, Texas
- Slice by Slice*, Anya Tish Gallery, Houston, Texas
- Now and Zen*, 15 Years of Contemporary Printmaking,  
Davis Gallery, Austin, Texas
- 2014 *Now and Zen*, 15 Years of Contemporary Printmaking,  
Galveston Art Center, Galveston, Texas
- Now and Zen*, 15 Years of Contemporary Printmaking,  
Museum of The Southwest, Midland, Texas
- Trajectories*, Orna Feinstein and Jeanne Heifetz, ArtSpace,  
Raleigh, North Carolina
- 2012 *Multi-Librium*, Site Specific Paper Installation,  
Box13 Artspace, Houston, Texas
- 2010 *Panton Nemus*, O2 Gallery, Flatbed World Headquarters,  
Austin, Texas
- Tree-mendous Geometries*, Craighead Green Gallery,  
Dallas, Texas
- 2008 *Branched and Rooted, Evolution of a Series*,  
The Printing Museum, Houston, Texas
- Branched and Rooted*, Anya Tish Gallery, Houston, Texas
- Geometries of Conviction*, Rehoboth Art League,  
Rehoboth Beach, Delaware
- 2005 *Branched and Rooted*, Fine Arts Gallery, Kingwood College,  
Kingwood, Texas
- 2004 *Art In Print*, The Hoyt Institute of Fine Arts,  
New Castle, Pennsylvania
- Orna Feinstein – Monoprints*, McCormick Gallery,  
Midland College, Midland, Texas
- 2003 *The Rings Series, Recent Monoprints*, Galveston Art  
Center, Galveston, Texas

- 2003 *Orna Feinstein – Monoprints*, Watermark Art  
Center, Bemidji, Minnesota
- Pictorial Tree Tales*, Northfield Arts Guild,  
Northfield, Minnesota
- Pictoria Tree Tales*, Fire House Gallery, Rogue  
Community College, Grants Pass, Oregon
- Feinstein, Girard and Jones*, Louisville Visual Art  
Association, Louisville, Kentucky
- The Tree Spirit Series*, Anya Tish Gallery, Houston, Texas
- 2002 *Nature Observed, Nature Imagined – Monoprints*, Deutser  
Art Gallery, ERJCC, Houston, Texas
- 2001 *Inspired by Nature – Monoprints*, Hannover, Germany

## SELECTED AWARDS

- 2013 1st Place Award, AMoA Biennnial 600: *Printmaking*,  
Amarillo Museum of Art, Amarillo, Texas. Juror:  
Kathleen Edwards, Chief Curator of Iowa Museum of  
Art, Iowa City
- 1st Place Award, 3rd *National Juried Monotype &  
Monoprint Exhibition*, Barrington Center for the Arts,  
Gordon College in Wenham, MA. Juror: Mark Pascale,  
Curator in the department of Prints and Drawings at the  
Art Institute of Chicago
- 2011 2nd Place Award, *2011 Annual Juried Art Exhibition*,  
Live Oak Art Center, Columbus, Texas. Juror:  
Clint Willour, Executive Director and Curator of the  
Galveston Art Center

## SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

- 2015 *Contemporary American Printmakers*, E. Ashley Rooney  
and Stephanie Standish Schiffer Publishing, 2015.  
Pages 58-59.
- 2013 *The State of The Art: Contemporary Artists in Texas*,  
second edition. eBook by June Mattingly. Pages 56-59.

Orna Feinstein is represented by the CamibaArt Gallery in Austin,  
the Anya Tish Gallery in Houston, and the Craighead Green Gallery  
in Dallas.





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## Women & Their Work

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Known for its pioneering spirit, embrace of artistic innovation, and commitment to Texas audiences and artists, Women & Their Work is now celebrating its 38th anniversary. Presenting over 50 events a year in visual art, dance, theater, music, and film, the gallery features on-going exhibitions of Texas women artists and brings artists of national stature to Texas audiences. Since its founding, Women & Their Work has presented 1,888 artists in 301 visual art exhibitions, 124 music, dance and theater events, 16 film festivals, 27 literary readings and spoken word performances, and 57 workshops in programming that reflects the broad diversity of this region. Nationally recognized, Women & Their Work has been featured in Art in America, the New York Times, ArtForum and on National Public Radio and was the first organization in Texas to receive a grant

in visual art from the National Endowment for the Arts. Women & Their Work reaches over 650 school children and teachers each year through gallery tours, gallery talks with exhibiting artists, participatory workshops, in-school performances, dance master classes, and teacher workshops.



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