

SALLY WEBER

ELEMENTAL



WOMEN & THEIR WORK

JANUARY 23 - MARCH 3, 2016

AUSTIN, TEXAS



Carbon Rose, 2016, archival digital print, mounted with frame, 44" x 50"

Cover: Elemental, 2016, (gallery view), *Flux*, 20 laser pendulums, drive system, three sand boxes, pigments, *Passions*, three mixed media panels and cast iron sculpture with digital hologram, dimensions variable, and *Trace: Emotions*, holographic installation, two panels, emulsion on glass, wood, photo by A. Harlan

SALLY WEBER

COMING TO KNOW

Elemental explores the elusive nature of infinity that has long intrigued Sally Weber. Having filled countless journals on the subject, she was particularly fascinated to learn of a parchment codex from the second half of the 10th century containing works by noted thinker and mathematician, Archimedes. Most of the original content was later scraped off and written over with Christian liturgical texts. Rediscovered in the 20th century, the codex includes the sole copy of Archimedes' *The Method*, a geometric proof suggesting an approach to infinity that was revealed only recently through advanced digital imaging and scholarly research in the last ten years. "The writings in the codex represent vastly different world views, priorities and practices of cultures 1600 years apart," Weber observes, "and yet, although visually and conceptually opposed to each other, both seek to understand and define the infinite in their own way."

For this exhibition, the artist, who received her Masters from the Center for Advanced Visual Studies at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, turned to her artistic practice. The resulting holograms, video, sculpture and photography welcome viewers to participate in a non-verbal dialogue requiring only physical presence and an openness to new ideas. Individual viewers are free to assign their own meaning to the work or simply to take visceral pleasure in the color and form of impeccably crafted and occasionally interactive objects. For Weber, *Elemental* serves as a metaphor for, among other things, how we come to know and come to believe what we know and come to know what truth is for us.

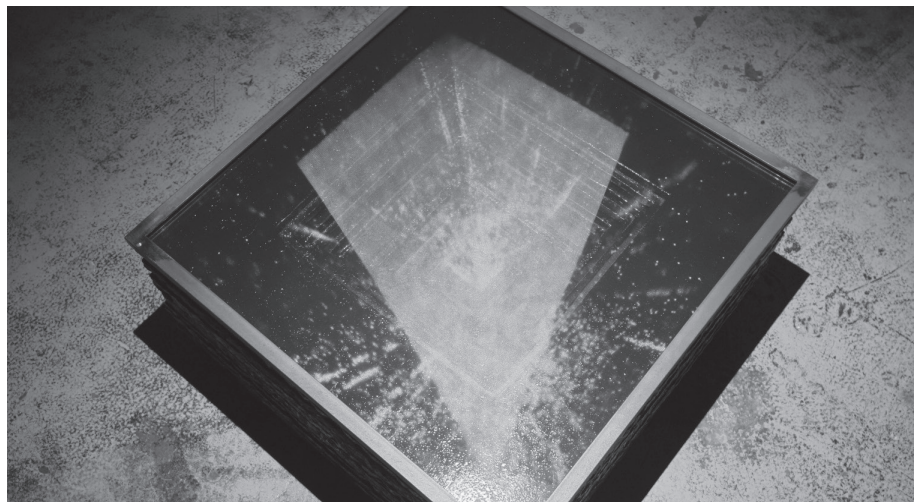
Weber employs cutting edge technology to create these metaphors. Her inquiry transcends time, referencing the perspective

of ancient cultures and religious practice through digital imaging. This apparent duality is best represented by *Core*, a cast iron sculpture whose interior void is shaped like an upside down ziggurat. Iron (Fe), the most plentiful element in the universe, is also the transformative one. Its fusion in the core of a star triggers a supernova and causes the subsequent creation of all the heavier metals including silver, gold, uranium and plutonium. At a distance the modest-sized cube appears listless and low on the floor, bathed in an eerie green glow. Approach and new worlds magically appear. The holographic image projected into the stair step form is a star field, a galaxy map that suggests the viewer is peering, godlike, into the universe. A magical green cone levitates above the void. Does this signify the beginning of time or the end? Is there an end? Viewers squint and bob searching for the optimum vantage point, circling like primitives around the embers of a crackling fire. Holography, more than other medium, requires that the viewer establish a particular physical relationship with the object in order to experience its full potential.

A seven and one-half minute video projected large on the wall references *Core* and also affirms the elemental attraction of fire.

Weber filmed the pouring of hot metal from a one-ton ladle into forms made of sand and epoxy. Burning liquid metal overflows through holes in the forms and steam clouds erupt as water is poured on molten metal at the end of the process. Sound reinforces the experience of the foundry's controlled chaos, but rather than a documentarian's viewpoint, Weber and her husband, Craig Newswanger, who edited the film, direct attention to the abstract dynamism of yellow orange flames and fiery metal as it surges and pools. Additional depth is added, both literally and figuratively, when Fermilab bubble chamber images of trace elements smashing into each other dance frenetically atop views of the foundry. Still photographs from the casting are also on exhibit in the gallery.

Core is part of a quartet of objects the artist has titled *Passions*. The others are two-dimensional panels where illusion rather than holography transports the viewer into the third dimension. *Emergence (ruby)* and *Immersed (lapis)* present as large rectangles of primary color—red, and blue. The smaller black squares in their center appear to exist on a separate plane, perhaps printed atop the Plexiglas that covers the striated color fields. The interior square may be perceived



Passions: Core, 2016, cast iron, digital hologram, with LED illuminator, 24" x 24" x 12"



Passions: Core, 2016, (gallery view) cast iron, digital hologram, with LED illuminator, 24" x 24" x 12" and *Elemental*, 7.5 min video loop, dimensions variable

as a metaphor for the dark center of a fortune teller's bowl which, when covered in water, glistens with portent. In *Allure* the center black square is carved out of a gold leafed panel affixed to a board heavily textured with carbon ground from natural charcoal. The viewer might focus on the alluring physical properties of gold (Au) and carbon (C) which offer sufficient pleasure, or search for an apt metaphor corresponding to the relationship of the two very different surfaces. Jung's concept of Anima/Animus comes to mind.

A fourth brilliantly colored panel hangs apart from the others. *Carbon Rose* is a digital print of flower images—not all of them roses—combined in the computer to form a huge, highly dimensional single blossom with a black and white pistil. The flower's center is charred paper Weber retrieved from a fireplace. Perhaps the title literally refers to the ash that remained after the

paper was burned juxtaposed with pretty flowers all around. More likely it is a subtle reminder that we are all carbon-based life forms, each of us a large blossom made of infinitesimally small carbon atoms bonded with other elements.

Trace: Emotions began with Weber's purchase of an old specimen box at a swap meet. The box has been replicated with holographic imagery and displayed on a pedestal. From afar, it appears to be a laptop computer. The hinged form is familiar; its intent is obscure. When approached, myriad tiny vials glow where the screen might have been and a separate blue-green set of vials float above the surface instead of a keyboard. The urge to wave a hand between the box and light source to be certain those vials have no material presence is palpable. Doing so causes no harm. Rather it increases the mystery inherent in this work.

Entangled another hologram also begs for confirmation of what is "real" and what is not. The image of a snake, an egg, a tiny bird skeleton, and a contemporary bit of wire wound together in a circular pattern floats above the surface of the box on which it is presented, Weber uses a mirror to reveal the underside of the image. How can you mirror something that is not really there? The mirror reflects "focused light" says Weber as if this will satisfy those who inquire. It is a pseudoscopic image. Knowing that *Entangled* has its origins in the "spooky" quantum physics theory of entangled particles sheds even less light on the subject for most. Better, perhaps, to concentrate on the role of snakes in ancient cultures and religious doctrine—they represent both good and evil—or this particular snake's relationship to that very contemporary bit of wire.

There is a similarly unexpected juxtaposition of images in Weber's hologram *Echo*. A feather dancing above an eddy of light balanced on tiny spindles or point clouds

encourages somewhat gentler inquiries than those inspired by the other. Is it evocative of a writing quill as it stirs the surface of a large ink pot, a swirling pool of water, or, as one visitor suggested to the artist, akin to the impact of celebratory lights above Shanghai?

Celebratory bursts of color do exist in *Flux*, a kinetic sculpture comprised of a series of 20 pendulums affixed to three ceiling panels that hover above three corresponding boxes set on the floor and filled with sand. The pendulums are programmed to be still until activated by the proximity of moving figures in the gallery. As the individual dangling strands dance and occasionally entwine, lasers affixed to their tips create nervous patterns of colored light across the sand. The jittering filaments and ephemeral designs mirror the endless chance encounters synonymous with being alive. Infinity may remain elusive, but *Flux* in its role as one of the central elements of Weber's installation, satisfies as metaphor for life's infinite possibilities.

– Rebecca S. Cohen is an artist, freelance writer, former art dealer and author of the book *Art Guide Texas*.



Flux, 2016, (detail), installation of 20 laser pendulums, drive system, three sand boxes, pigments, 10.5' x 2' x 20'

SALLY WEBER

EDUCATION

- 1984-1988 Visiting Lecturer, Brown University, Providence, RI
1983-1985 Research Affiliate, Center for Advanced Visual Studies,
Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, MA
1983 MSvisS, Center for Advanced Visual Studies,
Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, MA

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2016 *Elemental, Women & Their Work*, Austin, TX
2014 *Realms*, Hill Country Science Mill, Johnson City, TX
2013 *Unseen Things*, ACC Rio Grande Campus Gallery,
Austin, TX
2009 *Tertium Quid, (the third thing)*, Blue Star Contemporary
Art Center, San Antonio, TX
2008-2009 *Sally Weber: Consequence*, 1305.3 Position Gallery,
Austin, TX
2006-2007 *Sally Weber: Strata Series Holograms*, The Butler Institute
of American Art, Youngstown, OH
2006 *New Works from the Strata Series*, Center for the
Holographic Arts, Long Island City, NY
2005-2006 *Reflecting Time*, Scarborough Building, Austin, TX
1999 *Matrix*, E.P. Foster Library, Ventura, CA
1997 *Signature of the Source*, The Osthaus Museum,
Hagen, Germany
1996 *Sally Weber / Hologramme*, Frauen Museum, Bonn, Germany
1995 *Sally Weber, In Light, Holographic Works*, The Osthaus
Museum, Hagen, Germany
1994 *Celestial Chance*, Long Beach Boulevard Metro Station,
Los Angeles, CA
1993 *Evidence of Time and Dual Cascade*, Moreno Valley Mall,
Moreno Valley, CA

SELECT GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2015 Kunsthalle Budapest, Budapest, Hungary
2014 Cinnabar Gallery, San Antonio, TX
2013 Alden B. Dow Museum of Science & Art, Midland Center
for the Arts, Midland, MI
2011 Grand Rapids Art Museum, Grand Rapids, MI
Austin Museum of Art, Austin, TX
ACES Visualization Lab, TX Advanced Computing Ctr.,
University of TX Austin, TX
2008 MIT Museum, Massachusetts Institute of Technology,
Cambridge, MA
2005 Bauzentrum Munchen, Muchen-Riem, Germany
2004 Museum am Ostwall, Dortmund, Germany
The Osthaus Museum, Hagen, Germany
(Also in 2000 and 1990)

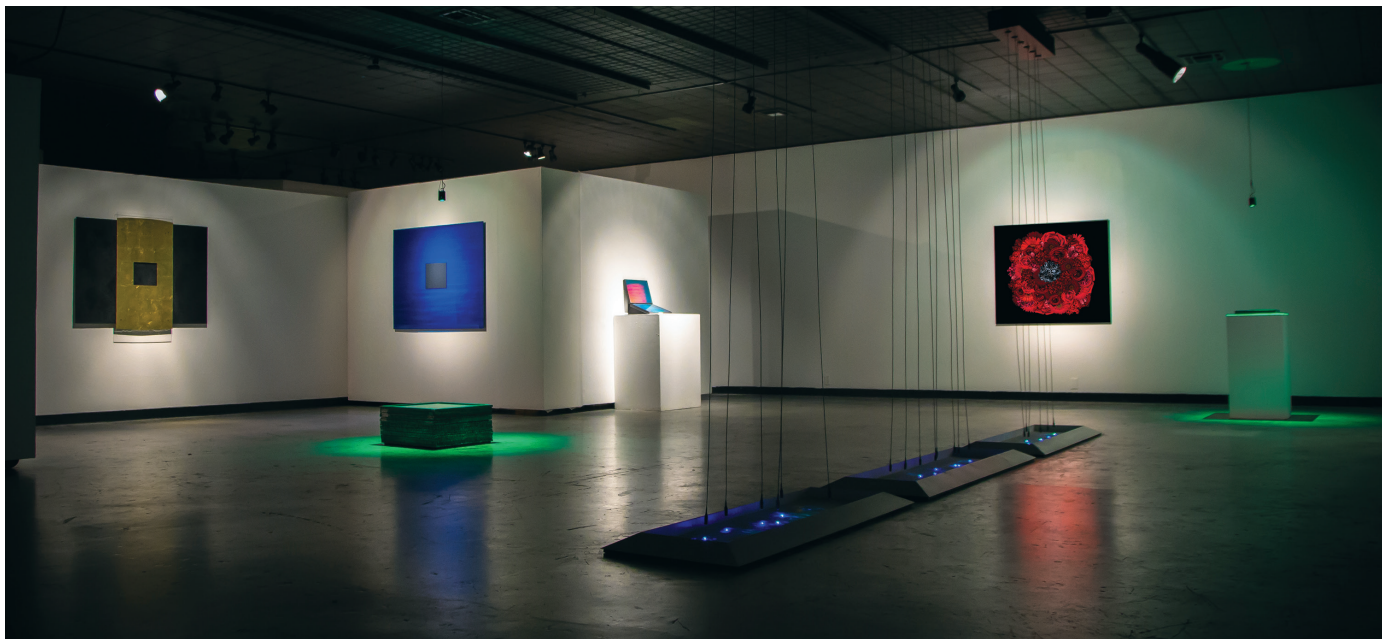
- 2004 Alten Schloss, Dillingen/Saar, Germany
RaumSolar, Munich-Neuhausen, Germany
2003 Ivan Dougherty Gallery, University of New South Wales,
Sydney, Australia
1999 Charlottenborg Exhibition Hall, Copenhagen, Denmark
Canton Museum of Art, Canton, OH
1997 NTT InterCommunication Center (ICC), Tokyo, Japan
1996 Akademie der Künste, Berlin, Germany
1995 Santa Monica Museum, Santa Monica, CA
Skulpturenmuseum Glaskasten Marl, Marl, Germany
1994 Contemporary Arts Forum, Santa Barbara, CA
1989-90 A11 Artforum, Munich, Germany
1989 Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions (LACE),
Los Angeles, CA
Nagoya Science Museum, Nagoya, Japan
1988 Museum of Holography, New York, NY
1984 Deutsches Filmmuseum, Frankfurt, Germany
1982 DeCordova Museum, Lincoln, MA

SELECT CATALOGS AND PUBLICATIONS

- 2006 Gage, John, *Color in Art, "Light from Colour, Colour
from Light"*, Thames & Hudson, NY
1999 *Lumia*; Charlottenborg Exhibition Hall,
Copenhagen, Denmark
1997 *Sensitive Chaos*, NTT InterCommunication Center
(ICC), Tokyo, Japan
1995 *Schweben: Antigrav in der Plastik*, Skulpturenmuseum
Glaskasten Marl, Marl, Germany
*Sally Weber, In Light / In Light, Holographische
Arbeiten / Holographic Works*, The Osthaus Museum,
Hagen, Germany
1989 *In Anderum Licht*, A11 Artforum, Munich, Germany
Leonardo, with S. St.Cyr, "Treading on the Tail of the
Tiger" Vol. 3-4
1987 Zec, P., *Holographie: Geschichte, Technik, Kunst*, Dumont
Buchverlag, Köln

SELECT COLLECTIONS

- Butler Institute of American Art, Youngstown, OH
Chunichi Shimibun Collection, Nagoya, Japan
David Bermant Foundation: Color, Light, Motion, Santa Ynez, CA
The MIT Museum, Cambridge, MA
The Osthaus Museum, Hagen, Germany
Norton Foundation, Los Angeles, CA
San Jose Museum, San Jose, CA



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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 37th anniversary. Presenting over 50 events a year in visual art, dance, theater, music, literature, 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 1,887 artists in 300 visual art exhibitions, 124 music, dance and theater events, 16 film festivals, 27 literary readings and 573 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.



women and
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