

“Mesmerizing “Portals” Made from Multi-Layered Colors Mimic Our Beautifully Mystifying World”
Sara Barnes / August 1, 2019



Jen Stark, *30 Cubed*, 2019, Powder coated aluminum and monofilament, 30 x 30 x 30 inches.
Image courtesy of the artist and Joshua Liner Gallery

Artist Jen Stark creates sculptures and paintings that delight the eyes with their visual effects. Using elements of optical illusions and Op art, her electrifying works appear in motion as they lead us down a dizzying tunnel or take over an entire wall. While it's natural to assume they are otherworldly forms, the pieces are wholly inspired by our planet. The works recall molecular structures and organic forms that we've seen in nature—even if we aren't able to put our finger on what they are.

This duality—of being intrigued by the unknown yet comforted by its odd familiarity—is what helps to make Stark's work so mesmerizing. Breaking down her influences, you can see how they correlate to her manufactured portals. The vibrant colors, for instance, are inspired by the “attractant/repellent properties of flowers encouraging pollination or insects warning birds of their poisonous traits, and the luminous mystery of phosphorescent sea creatures.” The materials she uses, including wood, paper, and metal, are placed atop one another in descending order of size. These fractal configurations are the same that “simulate plant growth, evolution, infinity, fractals, mimetic topographies, and sacred geometries.”