

Call For Artists: March 2018 and Beyond

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Matthew Terrell



Jeffrey Wilcox Paclipan's *Radiant Toys* installation in "Something Out of Nothing" at Chastain Arts Center.

In *Something Out of Nothing*, now on display at [Chastain Arts Center](#), Jeffrey Wilcox Paclipan and Sabre Esler, Atlanta-based artists with mixed-medium practices, present two very different yet complementary approaches to the relationship between line and form, between two-dimensional and three-dimensional. Paclipan takes a constructive approach and creates sculptural paintings out of flat, linear objects. Esler works in the other direction, deconstructing

amorphous forms into their two-dimensional base.

Paclipan's best works are his puzzle paintings, in which jigsaw puzzle pieces are used to construct sculptural paintings. Rather than the thick impasto of oil paint, Paclipan piles the cardboard pieces on top of each other to create undulating masses arranged in sweeping curvilinear planes, like heavy brushstrokes on a canvas. Some examples, like the moody *Dark Matter 2*, are also covered in paint, in this case, jet black — offering a new take on minimalist monochromatic painting. Some, like *Butterfly Effect*, are raw puzzle pieces with bits of their original graphics. These make for equally compelling works. The construction is very clean and professional; there's just enough of a patina of glue to hold everything together but not so much that it takes on an arts-and-crafts, clumpy look of too much glue congealing in one place.



Detail of Jeffrey Wilcox Paclipan, *Dark Matter 2*, 2017, puzzle pieces, glue, and black paint.

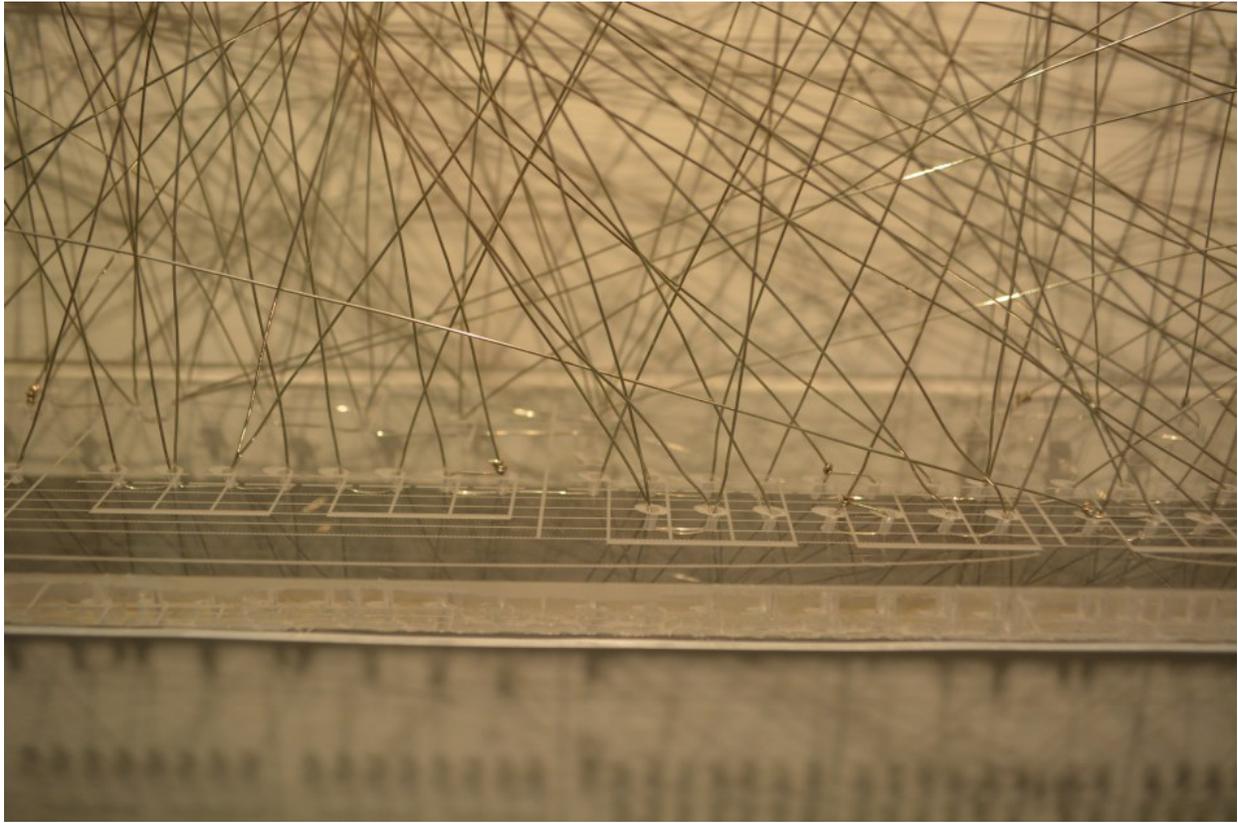
Paclipan's photos are not as visually impactful as the puzzle paintings. The artist takes children's toys with familiar forms, such as Mickey Mouse and Elmo, and bedazzles them. They are then arranged in evocative, sometimes provocative, poses and photographed. The dolls themselves make for intriguing objects, and they are used to good effect in a gallery installation. But as subjects, they don't break boundaries for the medium of photography. The puzzle pieces are so strong that they could stand alone with this show. The bedazzled teddy bears seem like another exhibition altogether.



Detail of Jeffrey Wilcox Paclipan's *Radiant Toys* installation at Chastain Arts Center.

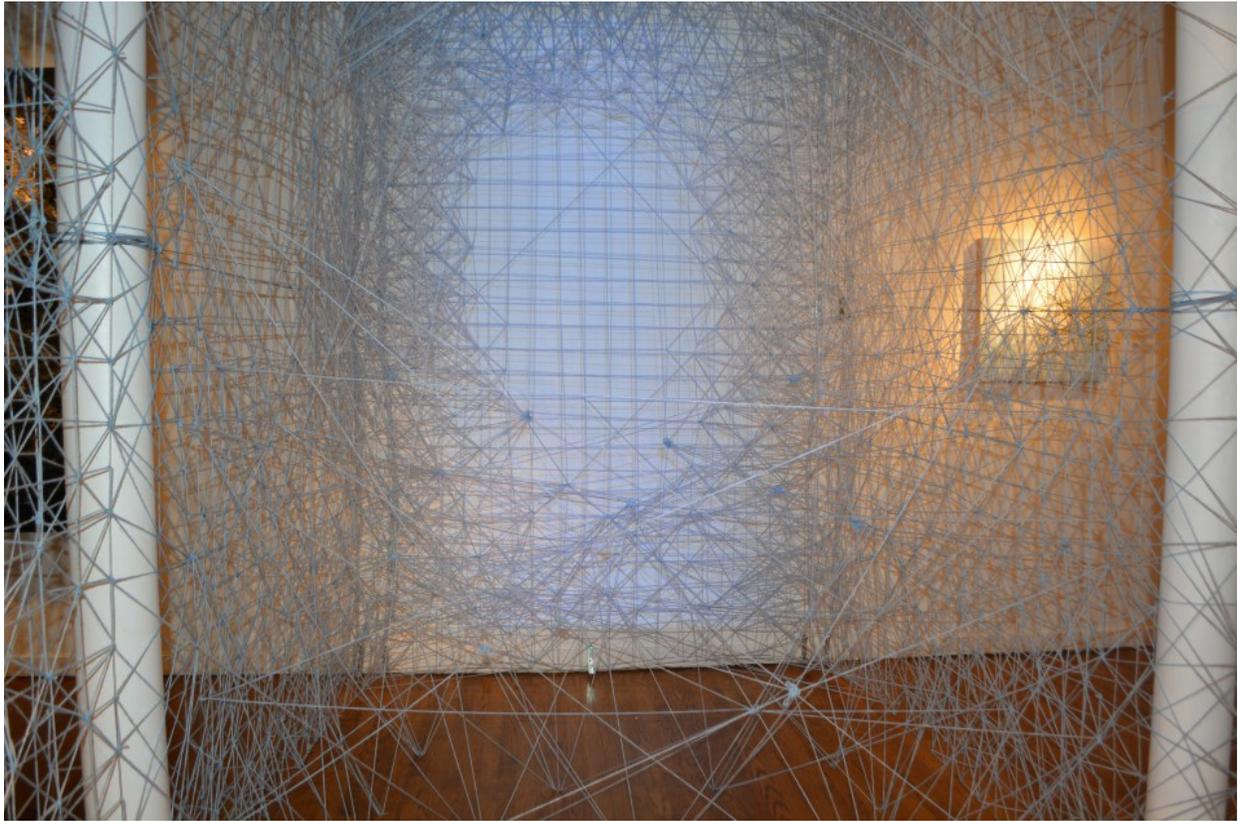
Sabre Esler turns fluffy clouds into basic linear forms. In *Crystallized I*, the background upon which she builds the 3D work is a soft field of blue oil on wood. Projecting from the surface are delicate steel rods of differing lengths, arranged at various angles. In this very industrial,

strong-edged form emerges the shape of a cloud. Esler has reduced the most ethereal form into logical lines. Other pieces, notably *Connected to the Music II*, use light and shadow to great advantage; in this one, music notes are shadows on the wall beneath the piece.



Detail of Sabre Esler's *Raindrop* by Chopin.

An installation by Esler imagines the feeling of being inside a cloud. In the manner of Sarah Sze, Esler weaves a delicate tunnel-like space out of light blue yarn. Much like the steel bars of her industrial cloud, the yarn is at odd angles and intersections. Backlighting makes the frayed edges of the yarn more noticeable and adds to the ethereal effect. A looping video of clouds completes the installation. The only noticeable weakness in this installation is the indelicate knots that connect the zigzagging yarn, breaking the illusion of floating in space. Similarly, in other pieces by Esler that use strung wire, the knots that hold the wire in place break the feeling of lightness of the material. A little refining of technique would go a long way.



Sabre Esler's string installation. (Photo: Chastain Arts Center)

Chastain Arts Center may be off the regular gallery circuit for some people, but it's definitely worth a visit. This city-run gallery gives artists like Paclipan and Esler the chance to try something new, without the pressure of commercial sales. An artist talk will take place there this Saturday, March 3, at 2pm.

***Matthew Terrell** writes, photographs, and creates videos in the fine city of Atlanta. His work can be found regularly on the [Huffington Post](#), where he covers such subjects as the queer history of the South, drag culture, and gay men's health issues.*