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# INVARIANT INTERVAL

NOV 1, 2013 | M.M. ADJARIAN

AUSTIN—*Invariant Interval* is a mesmerizing new installation at UT's Visual Arts Center (VAC) that challenges viewers to observe three-dimensional art in a relativistic context that includes the invisible but ever-present dimension of time.

Made from spring steel wires that VAC fall 2013 artist-in-residence Alyson Shotz painstakingly beaded, then crimped together into a series of 24 interconnected nets, this magnificent trompe-l'oeil piece is the centerpiece of the Visual Arts Center's vaulted gallery. The seemingly feather-light form that emerges from this meticulous patchwork rises, bends and dips only to collapse in on itself through the inexorable force of gravity.

From the balcony of the second floor mezzanine gallery, however, this shape—which Shotz achieves by manipulating fish lines tied to different parts of the net and attached to a special ceiling grid—also appears to have volume and mass. Mathematical precision undergirds Shotz's artistic vision and methodology and sustains both with a delicacy that is as breathtaking as it is remarkable.

Illuminated from by electric lights above and from the sides by natural light, *Invariant Interval* glimmers with patterns of light that change from moment to moment as the piece reacts to the environment. Shotz creates the illusion of motion, forcing viewers into an awareness that however solid three-dimensional sculpted art may appear, it exists and changes, however imperceptibly to the naked eye, in a continuum that also includes time.

Shotz's interest in the intersection of science, mathematics and art is not accidental. Although her bachelor's degree, which she earned from the Rhode Island School of Design, is in fine art, Shotz also studied biology as an undergraduate. Indeed, while *Invariant Intervals* explores the relationship of art to Einsteinian relativity and experiments with "molding" the four dimensions of space-time in three-space, it also weds organic shapes with non-organic material.

Ultimately Shotz's piece is about perception. Through its playful contortions, *Invariant Intervals* expands the way viewers understand the way surface and depth interact with each other while providing a one-of-a-kind sculptural experience for anyone willing to take the time to follow its shimmering twists of meaning.

—M.M. ADJARIAN

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Alyson Shotz  
*Invariant Interval*, 2013  
Stainless steel wire, silvered glass beads, and aluminum collars  
200 x 180 x 200 inches  
Photo: Ricky Yanas