

# The Columbus Dispatch

EXHIBITS | WEXNER CENTER FOR THE ARTS

## Shimmery installation toys with perceptions

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*FOR THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH*

### Standing Wave by Alyson Shotz

Alyson Shotz's *Standing Wave*, an elaborate and spectacularly beautiful installation, is a study of light, space and the inadequacies of human perception.

The piece consists of thousands of thin, dichroic acrylic strips placed side by side. Projecting from a long wall in curved arches, the strips form undulating waves.

Reminiscent of minimalist and op-art constructions, Shotz's work in the Wexner Center for the Arts relies on repetition and obsessive structure-building. Many of her installations resemble biological or scientific models. In every piece, she uses ordinary materials to produce intriguing physical conundrums that seem to vanish or blur as viewers try to comprehend them.

Shotz is adept at integrating material and meaning.

*Standing Wave* subverts expected visual experience by concentrating on the way dichroic acrylic reflects and absorbs wavelengths of light. An iridescent but clear plastic, it allows colors to magically appear and disappear. At certain angles, you can see through the plastic; at others, you cannot.

Cut into strips and combined to form a physical wave, the plastic produces unpredictable patterns of light and color that disrupt our ability to fully understand what we're seeing.

As an ethereal surrogate for the electromagnetic spectrum, the piece offers both weight and weightlessness. Light reflecting off its surface cascades across

nearby walls -- as if the piece were trying to subsume the space around itself. Shotz's wave becomes large, perhaps all-encompassing -- like a diagram of string theory in physics.

*Standing Wave* is impressive and intensely beautiful. But it isn't beautiful based on bright, happy colors.

Instead, beauty is in the tradition of the sublime -- in which what we witness is simply impossible to define and ultimately unknowable.

- "Alyson Shotz: " continues through April 11 in the Wexner Center for the Arts, 1871 N. High St. Hours: 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Sundays; and 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. Thursdays through Saturdays. Call 614-292-3535 or visit .