

# A DESIRE FOR INTIMACY AMONG COMMON OBJECTS

Carey Lovelace and Holly Block

*"For these ports I could not draw a route on the map or set a date for the landing. At times all I need is a brief glimpse, an opening in the midst of an incongruous landscape, a glint of lights in the fog, the dialogue of two passersby meeting in the crowd, and I think that, setting out from there, I will put together, piece by piece, the perfect city, made of fragments mixed with the rest, of instants separated by intervals, of signals one sends out, not knowing who receives them. If I tell you that the city toward which my journey tends is discontinuous in space and time, now scattered, now more condensed, you must not believe the search for it can stop."*

—Italo Calvino, *Invisible Cities*<sup>1</sup>

Like the dreamlike lands depicted in Italo Calvino's *Invisible Cities*, Sarah Sze's installations are architectures and universes in themselves. They are full of aspirations—to catapult forward, to dissolve, to twirl, to begin again, to guide your gaze. All of the fifty-five strange settlements in Calvino's book that Marco Polo describes to Kublai Khan are, one discovers midway through, metaphors for the city of Venice itself, Marco's hometown, that rich complex of history, desire, and the imagination. In Sze's work, however, while a peopled presence is palpable, the actual human body is absent. Yet, certainly, her work is populated—by forms, ideas, and traces—and it speaks the language of objects. And bringing together the residue and evidence of consumer society—the content of our age—it has launched a profound inquiry with a forward-looking view into the act of “viewing” itself—that is, the act that embodies the scaffolding and structure of art.

Sze is best known for meticulously arranged groupings of common objects: toothpicks, plastic forks, pieces of candy, batteries, Styrofoam packing material, colored yarn, desk lamps. Seeming freshly bought, these objects characteristically are grouped together in volume and presented in room-sized environments. Shelves teeter, ladders float, off-the-shelf building materials form sweeping arabesques of movement. Shapes are in counterpoint with other shapes—and become a commentary on shape itself. Most impressive is her rich imagination and virtuoso ability to orchestrate overlapping planes of visual detail in an almost unimaginably complex, yet mystifyingly unified, whole. And all is organized to confound viewers' sense of where, exactly, they are.

*Sarah Sze: Triple Point* for the United States Pavilion at the 2013 Venice Biennale is a site-specific and immersive sequence of environments. Perhaps more than any previous exhibition in the 1930 Delano & Aldrich building, it engages in a profound interaction with the edifice itself, examining its foundations, its “roots”—its floorplan, its mythos, its hidden areas, its dimensions. *Triple Point* exercises a majestic sense of space and continues the artist's deeply human inquiry into how we see and experience the physical world around us. The original commissions that make up the exhibition enact a profound, transformational dialogue with the building's Neoclassical architecture, at the same time bringing together many of the iconic forms, materials, strategies, and structural insights that Sze has developed during the course of her practice.

Even the most modest Sarah Sze work is packed with detail, unleashing multiple tracks of exploration, resonant with submerged storylines. (A sleeping bag is embedded, dreamlike, with what seem the remnants of a constructivist camping trip; a pointillist scattering of thousands of pills arranged by color stand adjacent to rows of obsessively positioned plastic water bottles; a series of shelves bear affectless objects that seem to be the product of study by some kind of pristine, celestial scientist.)

Sze is part of a post-conceptual early-twenty-first-century ethos. With a trace of postmodern detachment, even humor, Sze and other artists as diverse as Julie Mehretu, Mark Bradford, Jessica Stockholder, and Wade Guyton have returned to modernism itself for fresh ideas about the visual-plastic encounter with the phenomenological world.<sup>2</sup> They have moved beyond the identity politics and theoretical ideologies of the early 2000s. Sze, in her turn to abstraction, has chosen particularly nuanced territory, one that includes a colliding



interaction between two and three dimensions, a choreographic element, and an inquiry into the many adroit ways autobiographical content can be indirectly conveyed, yet concealed. Her work is, in its way, as potent as cubism or minimalism's redefinition of the compositional possibilities of art.

Although she identifies herself as a sculptor, Sze originally studied painting and architecture at Yale, where she received a B.A. in 1991. She lived for a year in Japan and then returned to the U.S., where she taught for several years. In 1996, while still a graduate student at New York's School of Visual Arts, she first captured critical attention with her installation (*Untitled*) *Soho Annual* at 420 West Broadway (a historic building where Leo Castelli and others opened their first downtown galleries in the 1970s). In it, she took (lowly) toilet paper and fashioned it with saliva into multitudinous, haunting tiny shapes. These resembled small tools or fossils. They were displayed with seeming manic energy, not in the main gallery, but in a backroom area, spilling off the shelves and onto the floor. (The *New York Times* likened the "gossamer sculptures" to "a new genus of sea creatures."<sup>3</sup>) This unorthodox choice of material (and display location) arose from an inquiry: What gives an item "value?" What retrieves it from the "valueless?"<sup>4</sup> Sze conjectures that, if one "re-frames" a common object, destabilizing its context, "you see things that are familiar to you, but you see them in an unfamiliar way."<sup>5</sup>

In the same vein, Sze turned to other materials. It was important, she said, that the objects used had no history—could not be castaways or trash, as these already bear sets of associations. Originally, she specialized in assemblages of small objects that are customarily parts of a whole, like screws and tacks, carvings from soap bars, or bits of computer circuitry. These were secreted in the peripheries of spaces, on shelves and sills, in closets or corners. From these beginnings, there has been an almost evolutionary logic to Sze's development. At first, her assemblages were planar, and frequently they occupied the floor, as if she remained tied to painting's two dimensions. However, as her ingenious arrangements secured attention, she was invited to ever more prestigious exhibition situations, giving her occasion to experiment on a larger scale.

Sze's artworks not only expanded in size but moved up off the floor, as if she were exploring gravity. For the 1998 Berlin Biennial, she built *Second Means of Egress*, a spidery tower of matchsticks and Q-tips rising twenty feet in the air. With its clever micro-level engineering, and defying logic, it appeared to exit through a crack near a ceiling skylight. (The room was Third Reich architect Albert Speer's former studio; the upward trajectory of Sze's piece followed a crack in the wall.) When, in 1999, the Fondation Cartier invited her to fill the ground floor of their Jean Nouvel-designed building in Paris, she again enlarged her approach. *Everything That Rises Must Converge* (1999) was, she said, "the first time I made something with items I couldn't hold in my hand."<sup>6</sup> Thirty-nine aluminum ladders, some partially dismembered, seemed to spin off into space, float up to the ceiling or, photosynthetically, toward daylight coming through floor-to-ceiling glass windows. The ladders' aluminum echoed the structure's steel girders, while referencing (literally) human scale. Within a complexity of other elements, an inspired, jerry-rigged water system hydrated a single plant on the floor, itself in dialogue with natural foliage outside the gallery's glass walls.

Sze's architectonic assemblages have taken on increasing engineering challenges on a macro and micro level. For *Things Fall Apart* (2001), she split an actual Jeep Cherokee into four parts and suspended the car-part sections along with other materials into a volumetric, illusionistically kinetic sculpture suspended in the four-floor atrium of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. At first glance from below, the content seemed abstract. As the viewer mounted the staircase, different sections of the red Jeep came into focus, as if the vehicle were hurtling through space. Viewing the sculpture from different heights, one could appreciate the dizzying, variegated object-assemblages fashioned in and around suspended components. Some car-interior segments were filled with what resembled terrarium landscapes mushrooming up; elsewhere, a diaphanous material brought to mind whirling gestures of Abstract Expressionist brushstrokes frozen in space.

Many of her works have been sited outdoors. *Blue Poles* (2006), for example, hugs the brick facade of a Massachusetts Institute of Technology dormitory, a series of cobalt-colored, interlocking fire-escape ladders in a crazy-kat arrangement, exercising a witty constructivism.<sup>7</sup> But Sze's works have become increasingly elaborated into multi-part environments, usually indoors, often low-lying. *Untitled* (2008), for example, occupied an immense rectangular gallery in Renzo Piano's Maison Hermès in Tokyo, distinct for its glass-brick walls that run the entire height of the building. Coalescing into oddly evocative sculptural units was a loose topology of copier paper, cardboard boxes, books, and other dorm-room-style paraphernalia, "found-object" vignettes interconnected along the maplewood floor via string, generating perspectival or directional lines. Most dramatically, jammed into one corner was what appeared to be a mounding, cracking ice-glacier, its "snow" composed of white typing paper, the cracked, arching striated "cliff" revealed to be layers of books, DVD boxes, and magazines. This oddly convincing mirage was a reference to the celebrated *ukiyo-e* Japanese woodblock prints of winter scenes (themselves reflections on mortality and purity). Antenna-like wires evoked leafless saplings that cast thin "shadows" (cut-out strips of shaded cloth). Heightening the illusion (and allusion), reflections from mirrored tiles on the floor made it appear as though this ice-cliff precipice extended into infinity.

Similar to terms a scientist might use to frame an experiment, Sze remarks of her work: "It always starts with a question and an examination of how that question transforms in time."<sup>8</sup> But the "question" is often phenomenological. In particular, she is drawn to a narrative architecture, a poetics of space. She has remarked that "the entire experience of a piece is based on a kind of circulation or choreography through the space. There's a consideration of how the viewer will see it at every point—even what one sees peripherally when looking at other things. Perspective and how information is revealed to the viewers as they move through time and space are for me actually what the experience of the work is about."<sup>9</sup>

In her sculpted environments, Sze establishes slight shifts (the tilt of the floor by an imperceptible few degrees, for example) that affect perception. These shifts aim, in part, to engender what Gaston Bachelard, in *The Poetics of Space*, refers to as "reverberation," a concept he attributes to Eugène Minkowski. ("It is as though," Minkowski wrote, "a well-spring existed in a sealed vase and its waves, repeatedly echoing from this vase, filled it with their sonority."<sup>10</sup>)



Passageways through Sze environments are often intentionally partially obstructed—viewers must choose between routes, or adjust to take an indirect course. This manipulation evokes a different bodily awareness, allied to the experiential state of “wandering,” that pleasantly vertiginous sensation of being lost, then locating oneself again. Sze found herself experiencing this type of circumambulation in Venice, she says, during site visits, navigating labyrinthine back lanes. She also noticed brief shifts in states of sensory awareness that occurred during her rides on the *vaporetti*, Venice’s public water “buses”:

In Venice you spend a good deal of time, in a very casual way, moving on and off water. You’re on water for two minutes, then on land . . . boarding and disembarking *vaporetti* on short trips throughout the day. It’s a profound feeling to have your whole body adjust to the new floor plane you’re standing on. You step on to land and have a strange sense of the ground, the weight of the stones under your feet. You are actively aware of the idea of gravity and you retain the memory of your own body on water.<sup>11</sup>

The same nuanced, subtle vertigo can be elicited by the scale shifts that the artist favors. Changing focus from a sweeping large-scale planar gesture, one might suddenly notice, say, a feather balancing on the rim of a water glass and apparently holding up a tabletop. Or an “eye chart” that reminds one that, always in Sze’s works, vision is being tested. “Two things I’m interested in,” she has remarked, “are a very distant perspective, where you get an overall view, and a very intimate view.”<sup>12</sup>

East Asian art can serve as a reference point here. In traditional Chinese painting, of course, landscape does not arrange itself around a single viewpoint as in Western one-point perspective. Indeed, the eye can fasten on successive areas in a vista, with surrounding details coalescing around each focal point. (In some ways, Sze points out, this matches more exactly the way we actually experience our surroundings.<sup>13</sup>) Chinese scrolls manifest “planes parallel to the earth that seem to float, planes instead of a one-point perspective.”<sup>14</sup> Sze herself translates such superimposed planes into three dimensions. She borrows other perspectival plays from two-dimensional art as well, such as the whirlwind-like, dynamic movement Futurists were able to simulate in their painting, which she actualizes in real-world space. Nevertheless, despite such influences and her own Chinese heritage (her father is an architect of Chinese descent), Sze’s practice is firmly rooted in the Western avant-garde.<sup>15</sup> One can trace out, for example, engineering motifs from twentieth-century Constructivism; the spidery Surrealism of painters such as Roberto Echaurren Matta; the wit in Marcel Duchamp’s *objets trouvés*; and Robert Smithson’s non-sites.

During her year in Japan, where she studied *ikebana* (flower arranging), Sze absorbed other insights. For example, in the *kaiyu-shiki-teien*, or Japanese “stroll gardens”—those terrains of rock, moss, dwarf pine, and brooks mimic nature’s aleatory aspect—you “feel like you have a natural path but in fact everything is carefully choreographed.”<sup>16</sup> When visitors enter, there is often a step that requires them to glance down; looking up, they find themselves gazing

on a composed landscape. The effect is contrived, Sze has observed, yet one feels as if one has discovered the vista on one's own. In terms of somatic psychological aesthetics, another inspiration is the breathtaking Taj Mahal, organized, Sze remarks, so that it is first perceived from a considerable distance through a series of archways. As one passes through darkened spaces, they open up, then contract again, like an aperture framing and reframing the building. Stepping into the final garden, she says, one suddenly experiences an incredible release of light.<sup>17</sup>

A 2010 exhibition at the Tanya Bonakdar Gallery in New York represented an important step in the artist's evolution of crafting her subtle but innovative narrative architecture, a kind of personal theatre of sensory shifts. Sze decided, rather than creating separate works, to fill Bonakdar's variously sized rooms with a chain of ten "experiences." Subtle markers guided the viewer's focus and imperceptible details heightened the encounter. Entering the gallery vestibule, one encountered several small-scale sculptures. In one instance, two stools stood against the wall, one made of toothpicks, while the other was a normal stool.<sup>18</sup> Their placement unobtrusively guided attention to the large adjacent gallery, where, like a river of light, *The Uncountables (Encyclopedia)* could be perceived, as if through a monumental frame. The dramatic illuminated arrangement of translucent cantilevered shelves was positioned at a kind of oddly dizzying tilt; the shelves held semi-abstract shapes of luminous blue and white, molds of objects bringing to mind Petri dishes, sleek perfume atomizers, or laboratory beakers, their forms dimly recognizable.

Mounting stairs to the second floor landing, one might (or might not) have observed small markers (paint and blue tape) along the floor, drawing attention to other works. Notably, at the far end of a darkened room was the tour-de-force 360 (*Portable Planetarium*), an armature of a huge globe, its inner glow visible through what appeared to be tattered apertures, supported by curved and clamped lattice strips. Approaching, one observed that the skeletal structure's interior was filled, like a Russian Easter Egg, with Sze-style infrastructure: a terracing of intricate shelving; an erector-set-style rollercoaster banding; colored strings like shooting rays; micro panoramas revealing themselves as one circumnavigated the piece.<sup>19</sup>

One might have noticed (or might not) when exiting the gallery the ghostly plaster "negatives" of recyclable bottles and fast-food containers standing on library shelves behind the gallery's front desk. These were replicas of remnants of containers for meals consumed by the artist and her assistants over the three-week installation period. Sze often casts, carves, or molds objects. These replicas of actual objects further heighten a sense of disorientation, making one question what is real, what is false.

Sze plans her detailed, multidimensional projects in her studio and experiments with prototypes of elements. Each artwork, of course, is different, and often preparation is quite elaborate, involving multiple sketches, revisions, and full-scale models. Parts are then broken down and shipped to the final site and recreated in an almost improvisatory way, changing sometimes up to the last minute. It is almost as if the layered revisions are a series of rehearsals for the "performance" of the complete installation, allowing for spontaneity in the final making. Her eventual installations are "a direct and immediate reaction to the site."<sup>20</sup>

She often enlists chance or "accident" in her process, in a manner that recalls Robert Rauschenberg, an artist she admires. ("Painting relates both to art and life," he once famously



remarked. "Neither can be made—I try to act in the gap between the two."<sup>21</sup>) With Sze, however, her use of chance is less philosophical, or a commentary on the intention involved in artmaking, and more in the service of conveying the raw inspiration that exists within the artist's studio as she is formulating an artwork. To heighten a sense of immediacy in her installations, she incorporates recognizable items (for example, a pat of butter or a packet of sugar from a local restaurant, or an airplane ticket). She has remarked that, during the work's construction in Venice, "I will be culling and saving materials while we're there—anything, every breakfast we have—so it feels like an accounting of time you're witnessing. It's important that [things are collected] every day because it marks a time frame for the work. There's a countdown of days up to the opening."<sup>22</sup>

Thus, the seemingly random scraps of everyday life that Sze aggregates is less a Merzbau collage and more a diary, the items documenting the work's fabrication. The ideal, she has said, is to create something that seems to have existed for centuries next to something apparently made a few minutes ago.<sup>23</sup>

In her work, Sze draws upon numerous bodies of thought. Many of her titles come from advanced mathematics. *Strange Attractor*, the name of a 2001 piece at the Whitney Museum of American Art, is a variable in chaos theory. "Random Walk," a branch of probability theory, was the collective title for sculptural assemblages in her 2011 Asia Society *Infinite Line* exhibition. The artist describes this as an act of poetic "theft" and recontextualization, rather than illustrative reference. The conceptual constructs and language of theoretical mathematics have shaped, particularly, shared metaphors in the early-twenty-first-century United States, their formulations extremely elastic in the way they can identify and describe phenomena heretofore inexplicable or unperceived—"a fantastic and delicate structure underlying complexity," as James Gleick put it in his book *Chaos*.<sup>24</sup> Just as probability charts the "behavior" of masses of small elements (raindrops on pavement, blades of grain bending in the wind), so Sze orchestrates the molecular components of her work into a harmonized complexity that at times seems as complicated as the universe itself. In thermodynamics, "triple point," the title of her Venice project, designates the temperature and pressure at which the three phases of a substance (gas, liquid, and solid) coexist in stable equilibrium. This "teetering between several states,"<sup>25</sup> of stability/instability, is a theme often returned to in Sze's cumulative environments, a dynamic balance juggling an illusion of seismic change.

Her public career only a few years old, Sze was included in the 1999 Venice Biennale curated by Harald Szeemann.<sup>26</sup> (Her highly praised installation *Capricious Invention of Prisons* inhabited a room in the Italian Pavilion: "a delicate, arching trail of wires, lamps, and toothpicks that swoops from floor to ceiling, a series of camouflaged anchors making it seem to float above viewers' heads like an alien chandelier."<sup>27</sup>) During the weeks spent constructing the piece, she often visited the U.S. Pavilion. This Palladian edifice of brick and Istrian marble has a venerated history, but its Neoclassical ornamented architecture can seem at odds with contemporary art. Even at the time, Sze was contemplating how one might contend artistically with the building's imposing symmetry and assertive Federalism, which evokes Jefferson's Monticello and other national symbols. Two symmetrical wings of galleries enclose a central patio; the main entrance is through a central rotunda. The





fig. 1. The United States Pavilion, built in 1930 by William Adams Delano and Chester Holmes Aldrich. Photo: Peggy Guggenheim Collection

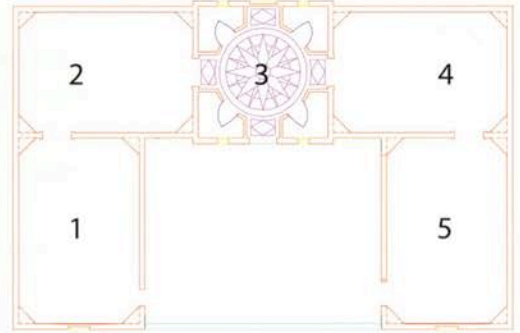


fig. 2. Floorplan of the United States Pavilion

floorplan necessitates that one must visit first one set of galleries, then the other, creating, the artist has noted, a slightly awkward circulation.<sup>28</sup>

For *Triple Point*, Sze reimagined the flow of a visit to the Pavilion. As the work's engagement with the building evolved, she also conceived an increasingly elaborate outdoor site-specific construct intervening in the visitor's initial encounter with the exterior. It extends from the central patio up to the roof, transforming the frontal prospect while allowing the architecture to remain visible from behind.

Inside, a single trajectory through the building enlists new points of egress. Instead of the rotunda, spectators enter the Pavilion through a side door in the north wing (customarily an emergency exit). They encounter successive installations that come together as a chain of experiences, creating an immersive environment. Throughout, markers and triggers elicit the viewer's psychic involvement and invite new modes of apprehension. In the corner of one darkened room stands a large-scale spherical planetarium-sculpture, illuminated from within. Another gallery (discussed in the artist's conversation with Jennifer Egan included in this publication) features workbenches and desks. It seems a place of study or of making. The surfaces, however, have circular apertures,<sup>29</sup> portions displaced and suspended at intervals; the assembly gives off an uncanny feeling of a kind of constructivist, form-oriented surrealism. Occupying still another chamber is a large pendulum. Suspended from the ceiling, its long arm sways precipitously over a minutely architected assembly of fragile items—plants with small, makeshift hydrating systems; pictures and postcards; water bottles; clay figurines; a diaphanous piece of paper blown by air from a small electric fan. The pendulum's trajectory has a complex, ever-shifting radius, its unpredictable motion causing slight anxiety.

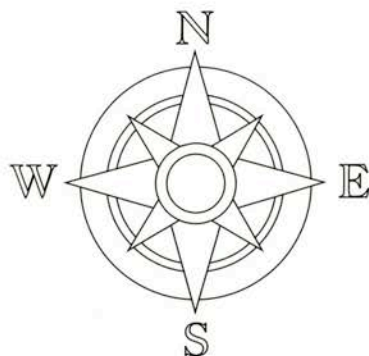


fig. 3. A compass rose displaying the orientation of the cardinal directions and their intermediate points.

Of the Pavilion's five chambers, only the central rotunda is presented without sculptural intervention. Here the focus is on the building itself—in particular, the floor, inlaid with a "cardinal rose," an eight-point star within a circle, a design that traditionally alludes to a compass. Sze, however, requested that a small corner storage closet in the rotunda be opened. Inside, she created an installation; here, as it were, she opened the doors to the backstage of the building.

The final gallery before one exits back into the central plaza serves as a kind of grand finale. To create a source of natural light within the space, Sze requested the removal of a faux-brick façade that usually covers a plate-glass window inserted more than forty years ago and that remains sealed for most exhibitions.<sup>30</sup> The restored floor-to-ceiling window allows a view onto the plaza and also permits a series of reflections. The artist has lined the gallery walls with mirrors, transforming the chamber into a camera lucida. It "pull[s] the courtyard into the space and confuses the interior and the exterior,"<sup>31</sup> she has said, thus engendering a multiplicity of perspectives.

Sze has appropriated, as a recurring emblem, the "cardinal" or "compass rose" inlaid in the entry rotunda; its form appears throughout the installation. The compass references the process of reorientation—as well as the circular trajectory of *Triple Point*, in which the viewer, finally, exits through the patio garden area, a constructed installation experienced at a distance on first approach, and then again, more intimately, as one exits, hence creating the impression of having come full circle.

Central to the garden installation is a large tree, a constant citizen of the patio area, but a slightly desolate one, standing asymmetrically to the side. Here, it serves as the anchor. Sze's pieces often act like complete ecosystems, enlisting tubes and catch-all engineering that



hydrate small plants. Nestled among the low-lying foliage are such plumbing systems—as well as photographs of rocks and landscapes—as if to create a dialogue between the real and the imaginary, the distant and the near. Throughout, small narratives are secreted, as if they were hidden codes or a series of markers, storylines rich with pathos, yet seeming to dissolve before one's eyes before they can be absolutely identified. One wants to crawl on hands and knees to peer more closely, and imagines this minute scattering of objects leading into Venice itself.

Just as Sze's precipitous assemblages, even the smallest, can seem (and often are) feats of engineering, the same could be said of Venice, the City of Light, with its overlay of histories, its Eastern domes, cupolas, and Gothic spires. Occupying 117 small islands at the head of the Adriatic, the once-flourishing center of trade (which by the fifteenth century was the home of the printing press), a nexus between Asia, Byzantium, and Europe, seems to balance on its water vista as a kind of impossibility. The settlement began to grow upward a millennium ago on a foundation of densely spaced alder-wood piles that petrified from the minerals in water. On these foundations stand raft-like platforms, able to adapt to changes in currents and tides. And on these rise the palazzi of spun-sugar white marble facades over brick, that themselves seem flights of fancy. John Ruskin commented on the "fantastic and unreal character" of St. Mark's Place, buildings appearing "as if they floated in the air or on the surface of the sea."<sup>32</sup> (But, of course, the city is also a victim of its engineering, from the *aqua alta* and shifting, sinking foundations.) The "compass rose" at the heart of the Pavilion, and *Triple Point*, refers to the points on the globe, Venice standing as the fulcrum, looking afar in many directions, finding its footing.

Approaching (or leaving) *Triple Point*, one observes what appears to be a dramatic cascade, sweeping upward in reverse into an S-shaped curve. It culminates in what appears to be a huge boulder sitting on lumber scaffolding at the very top of the Pavilion, balanced precariously on the roof. A tumble of stone, lumber, and rope create a seeming deconstruction of the elements constituting the edifice. Sze has mined the building of its accumulative history, enacting a reversal of high and low.

Among Calvino's (and Marco Polo's) *Invisible Cities* is Thekla, full to the brim with scaffoldings and metal armatures, its populace in endless construction of a town that never seems finished. If the inhabitants are asked what blueprint they are working from, Marco Polo relates, they answer, "We will show it to you as soon as the working day is over; we cannot interrupt the work now." He continues, "Work stops at sunset. Darkness falls over the building site. The sky is filled with stars. 'There is the blueprint,' they say."<sup>33</sup>

# Notes

1. Italo Calvino, *Invisible Cities* (San Diego: Harvest, 1972), p. 164.
2. Linda Norden, in "Show and Hide: Reading Sarah Sze," *Sarah Sze* (New York: Abrams, 2007), p. 8ff., discusses the fact that young artists in Sze's generation were returning to modernism to see what might be mined from it.
3. Roberta Smith, "Culture and Commerce Live Side by Side in SoHo," *New York Times*, September 13, 1996.
4. In *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, Walter Benjamin posited that unique objects, such as devotional fetishes or hand-crafted items, are perceived to have an ineffable quality, an "aura," that is proportional to being one of a kind. Sze explores the way that this "presence" can be transferred even onto seemingly everyday objects or materials, like tissue paper or small gadgets or mass-produced trinkets.
5. Sarah Sze, Interview with Carey Lovelace, January 10, 2013.
6. Sarah Sze, "Clarice Smith Distinguished Lectures in American Art" (public lecture conducted at the Smithsonian Museum of American Art, November 18, 2010).
7. The artist actually conceived a modular "kit" able to be installed on any building, in different configurations, of which *Blue Poles* was one. *Second Means of Egress* (Yellow) was at One Metro Center in Washington, D.C., in 2003; *Second Means of Egress* (Orange) appeared in the exhibition "State of Play" at the Serpentine Gallery in London in 2004.
8. "Transformation Exhibition: Sarah Sze Interview," Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JEvQ6eIr7QI>.
9. Melissa Chiu, "The Line between Drawing and Sculpture: An Interview with Sarah Sze, Melissa Chiu," in *Sarah Sze: Infinite Line* (New York: Asia Society Museum, 2011), p. 14.
10. Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space* (Boston: Beacon, 1994), xii.
11. Sarah Sze, Interview with Carey Lovelace, January 10, 2013.
12. Ibid.
13. It also parallels Cubism's analyses and presentation of multiple realities simultaneously.
14. Marry Carlock, "Sarah Sze's Organized Chaos," *Sculpture Magazine*, November 2003.
15. Also, nineteenth-century Impressionists and Post-Impressionists were likewise inspired in a manner similar to Sze by Japanese woodblock prints and the genre's experimentation with the picture plane.
16. Phong Bui, "In Conversation: Sarah Sze with Phong Bui," *The Brooklyn Rail*, October 2010.
17. Sarah Sze, "Clarice Smith Distinguished Lectures in American Art" (public lecture conducted at the Smithsonian Museum of American Art, November 18, 2010).
18. The twinning was a tribute to Felix Gonzalez-Torres's noted work "Untitled" (*Perfect Lovers*) (1991), involving two synchronized wall clocks, representing lovers.
19. Sze frequently relates critic Arthur Danto's remark that it is not architectural models that Sze's works most resemble (that is, something to be scaled upward). Rather, it is scientific models, because the latter reproduce behavior. 360 (*Portable Planetarium*) came from the artist's decision, after considering that remark, to build an actual "model."
20. Sarah Sze, Interview with Carey Lovelace, January 10, 2013.
21. Artist's statement in Dorothy C. Miller, ed., *Sixteen Americans*, exh. cat. (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1959), p. 58.
22. Sarah Sze, Interview with Carey Lovelace, January 10, 2013.
23. Sarah Sze, Interview with Carey Lovelace, December 21, 2012.
24. James Gleick, *Chaos: Making a New Science* (New York: Penguin, 2008), p. 4.
25. Sarah Sze, Interview with Carey Lovelace, December 21, 2012.
26. "dAPERTutto (APERTO over ALL)," curated by Harald Szeemann, 48th International Exhibition of Contemporary Art, La Biennale di Venezia, the Giardini, Arsenal (and other venues), Venice, Italy, June 10–November 7, 1999.
27. Jeffrey Kastner, "Discovering Poetry Even in the Clutter Around the House," *New York Times*, July 11, 1999, p. 36.
28. Sarah Sze, Interview with Carey Lovelace, December 21, 2012.
29. The apertures, unexpected "cuts" through apparently solid surfaces, may be a tribute to the structural disruptions of Gordon Matta-Clark.
30. Inserted for the 1970 Biennale, it has remained sealed ever since, except for the 2001 (Robert Gober) and 2009 (Bruce Nauman) pavilions.
31. Sarah Sze, Interview with Carey Lovelace, January 10, 2013.
32. John Ruskin, J.G. Links, ed., *The Stones of Venice* (New York: Da Capo, 2003), p. 69.
33. Calvino, *Invisible Cities*, p. 127.