

AUDEMARS PIGUET ART COMMISSION PRESENTS

# SLOWMOVING LUMINARIES

BY LARS JAN

DECEMBER 4<sup>TH</sup> • 7-11PM

DECEMBER 7<sup>TH</sup> TO 10<sup>TH</sup> • 3-11PM

MIAMI BEACH OCEANFRONT  
BETWEEN 21<sup>ST</sup> & 22<sup>ND</sup> STREETS



AUDEMARS PIGUET  
*Le Brassus*

PROUD PARTNER OF

Art | Basel

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**Art|Basel**

## **THE 3<sup>RD</sup> AUDEMARS PIGUET ART COMMISSION**

BY LARS JAN

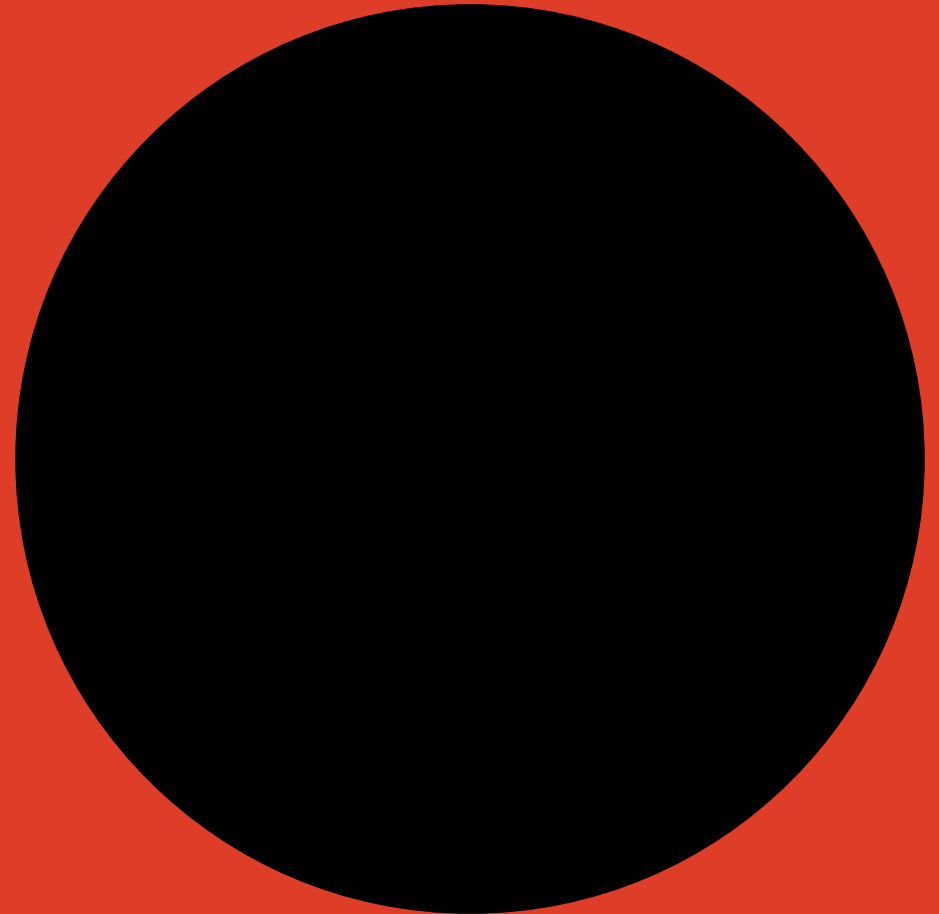
Each year, the Audemars Piguet Art Commission invites an artist to explore the themes of complexity and precision. The commission, which is overseen by a guest curator, not only provides for the resources required by the artist, but also offers access to any technical know-how and/or expertise the artist may request in the course of realizing the work. For the 2017 commission, the third in the series, Los Angeles-based artist Lars Jan has envisioned a multilayered, immersive installation for the Miami Beach oceanfront. Presented during Art Basel in Miami Beach, the project, developed with guest curator Kathleen Forde and more than a year in the making, responds to its immediate surroundings while raising universal concerns about our future.

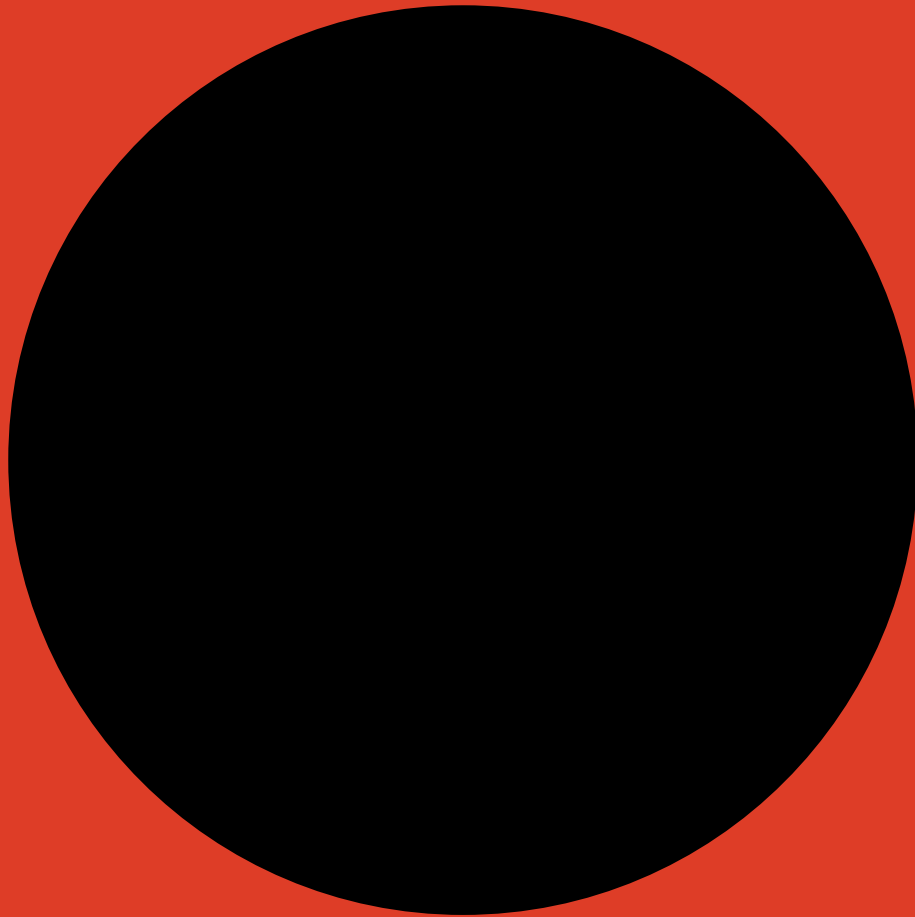


Lars Jan's installation,  
*Slow-Moving Luminaries*,  
facing the Miami Beach oceanfront.

"I find myself oscillating between impulses to contemplate reality  
and scream for help, and so I live between them."

— Lars Jan





## SLOW-MOVING LUMINARIES

In a city gripping the very edge of the continent, *Slow-Moving Luminaries* stages a hypnotic, unsettling encounter between natural and manmade elements, compelling visitors to consider a cultural moment between civilization and chaos. The artist, Lars Jan, known for his cross-disciplinary experiments in performance, art, and technology, describes his installation as an experience that “explores psychological states of meditation or reprieve, tethered to a sinking sense of crisis that lies in wait underneath.”

*Slow-Moving Luminaries* is an immersive, kinetic installation laid out on two 100 x 50-foot levels of an outdoor pavilion. A semi-opaque scrim, wrapping the east and west exteriors of the installation, is punctured by two large geometric cutouts, a circle on one side and a square directly opposite. These shapes recall for the artist his experience at a Zen Buddhist temple in Japan. The temple features a pair of windows—a circular “window of enlightenment” and a square “window of confusion”—whose shapes alter the view onto the same outdoor space, and symbolize the potential for “a radical shift in perspective, based on the fundamental geometries of the frames through which we view the world, or the spaces we construct and

inhabit," he says. Jan also sees this altered perspective as a feature of the physical universe: "We are not still, though at times we maintain that illusion. We are constantly in motion, and we're surrounded by motion at different scales . . . We are moving in patterns of waves, swinging like pendulums."

This oscillation in viewpoints is one premise of *Slow-Moving Luminaries*. At its entrance, visitors encounter a labyrinth that occupies the first tier, which maneuvers them through evolving environments, including a lush garden. The labyrinth form has a long history. In many traditions it is a mechanism for meditation: as one moves along the path, its embedded geometry is felt rather than seen, experienced on a level deeper than observation affords. Unbeknownst to visitors in this installation, the labyrinth they walk traces the path of three massive letters spelling *SOS*.

Five large building-like sculptures are placed along the labyrinth on lifts that slowly move them up through skylight apertures in the ceiling and back down again. Lit from within like lanterns, the scale models—minimalist and abstracted—share a contemporary architectural style, evoking the ubiquitous office and hotel towers of international urban centers. These same buildings are featured in a series of photographic light boxes at the end of the first level and a video work at the end of the second, which depict them in violent surf at the ocean's edge.

A staircase leads to an outdoor viewing deck with beach chairs at one end of the upper tier of the pavilion, modeled after the leisure spaces of resorts or cruise ships. A reflecting pool covers the remaining surface of this upper level, save for the apertures through which the five model buildings rise and fall. Hourly, they ascend to the upper

level in unison, forming a miniature skyline mirroring the backdrop of the real skyline of Miami Beach and the open ocean to the east—appearing to emerge from, and sink into, the water. The motion of the sculptures follows a calculation based on the movements of the nearest celestial luminary, the moon.

Jan describes this phenomenon in relation to his installation: "Shuttling between light and darkness is a defining characteristic of our world and our sense of time and sense of existence in it. We play that shuttling back and forth both within ourselves and our societies. . . . The title *Slow-Moving Luminaries* refers to the luminaries of our solar system, but also to the idea of 'luminaries' in a social sense—in other words, people."

Above the deck fly two flags featuring a black square and circle, the international maritime symbol for *SOS*. The shapes echo the circle and square motif on the exterior scrim. Below the surface of the reflecting pool, white tiles trace the same pathway formed by the labyrinth beneath, spelling out the letters *SOS*, indiscernible from the viewing deck but readable from the upper floor of a nearby hotel or even a passing plane. This detail, revealed only from a distance, suggests an alternate reading of *Slow-Moving Luminaries*—that from a particular vantage the choreography of our contemplation completes a portrait of our distress.

*Kathleen Forde*

*Guest curator of the 2017 commission*



Genko-an, a Zen Buddhist temple in Japan served as an inspiration for the installation.



## OUR CONSTRUCTIONS ARE ONLY EPHEMERALLY OURS

LARS JAN IN CONVERSATION  
WITH KATHLEEN FORDE

**KF:** In Le Brassus, you had the opportunity to meet with expert watchmakers at the Audemars Piguet manufacture. One conversation in particular that you had with Giulio Papi, Head of Research and Development at Audemars Piguet, regarding “the equation of time,” seemed to have a profound impact on your thinking about *Slow-Moving Luminaries*. The Audemars Piguet commission challenges artists to explore the ideas of complexity and precision. Can you expand on why this intrigues you and how it is present in the installation?

**LJ:** My visit with watchmakers and historians and AP very quickly shifted my thinking on watches in that I came to think of them as philosophical rather than utilitarian objects. I became interested in the miniature mechanical model on the wrist approximating the movements of almost incomprehensibly large celestial bodies, which themselves give us light and darkness and the shades therein. The very slight imperfection of these mechanical models is what charmed me most, and it was my introduction to one particular complication, a formula known as “the equation of time,” which has given metaphor to a feeling I’ve had internally for a while now. The equation of time



Kathleen Forde and Lars Jan  
in the artist's studio.

corrects for the fact that our version of noon, 12 pm, is really just an average and very rarely true solar noon, that is, the zenith of the sun. As the year passes, the variation between the two changes and the equation of time calculates this evolving discrepancy. Rather than accounting for this ebb and flow, the time we tell ourselves societally keeps a metronomic beat, but somehow it is the distance between this calculated beat and how I myself feel time slipping and rushing, more as a fluid, as a wave, that resonates most with the mechanism beating in my own chest.

**KF: Given its location in Miami, the work is nearly impossible not to view through the lens of the recent and devastating hurricanes. However, you've been developing *Slow-Moving Luminaries* for more than a year. Can you speak about the broader universal and metaphorical perspective from which you originally imagined this work?**

LJ: My last two projects focused alternately on climate change and remembering, and in a way both were centrally exploring the patterns of our lives in relation to various timescales, from the everyday, to the generational, to the geological. *Slow-Moving Luminaries* is a continuation of this inquiry, but now the viewers themselves become a part of the overall mechanism of the work. Floating buildings, gliding human bodies, plants, water, air—all moving, shimmering, in concert, at varying speeds and scales. I thought back to an experience at Angkor Wat, seeing a five- or six-hundred-year-old tree growing on top of the stone colonnade of a nine-hundred-year-old temple. Shades of ancient, a symbiosis of living and man-hewn elements, with the human fingerprint—the design of the colonnade, its assembly—intrinsic, but faded.

Another perspective comes from the beach itself, where the water meets the land, which is where I was raised and which I know to be a fragile place, and an ever-transforming one. There's the micro oscillation of the tides—again the celestial body and its material connection to our world—and then there are floods, the once-in-a-century floods that now arrive annually. Still, beyond the immediacy and horrors of this hurricane or that election cycle, which are real and occupy so much space in my mind, I can't help recognizing that some of what we build will be covered by the jungle, and the rest by the sea, that our constructions are only ephemerally ours, and that the agent of ephemerality can be a violent one.

**KF: Something I really enjoy about your work is the tension between very innovative technology and practice on the one hand, and a conceptual grounding in tradition(s) on the other. Can you address this aspect of your practice, as it's seen in *Slow-Moving Luminaries*?**

LJ: I see and communicate in terms of constellations. So, each of these influences—Japanese Zen temples and rock gardens, labyrinths, maritime symbols, the orbit of celestial bodies, the California Light and Space movement, and the equation of time—arose organically, in working through the project, usually manifesting as visual ideas first. Then I would look for the origins of the images, and find that I was referencing something from my past experience, reading or watching. So I'm in part interpreting the images that are coming up for myself, I'm trying to put words, history, context to abstractions which are otherwise untethered.

Methodology also emerges from primarily working in performance for years. Usually I would sequence such elements over the duration

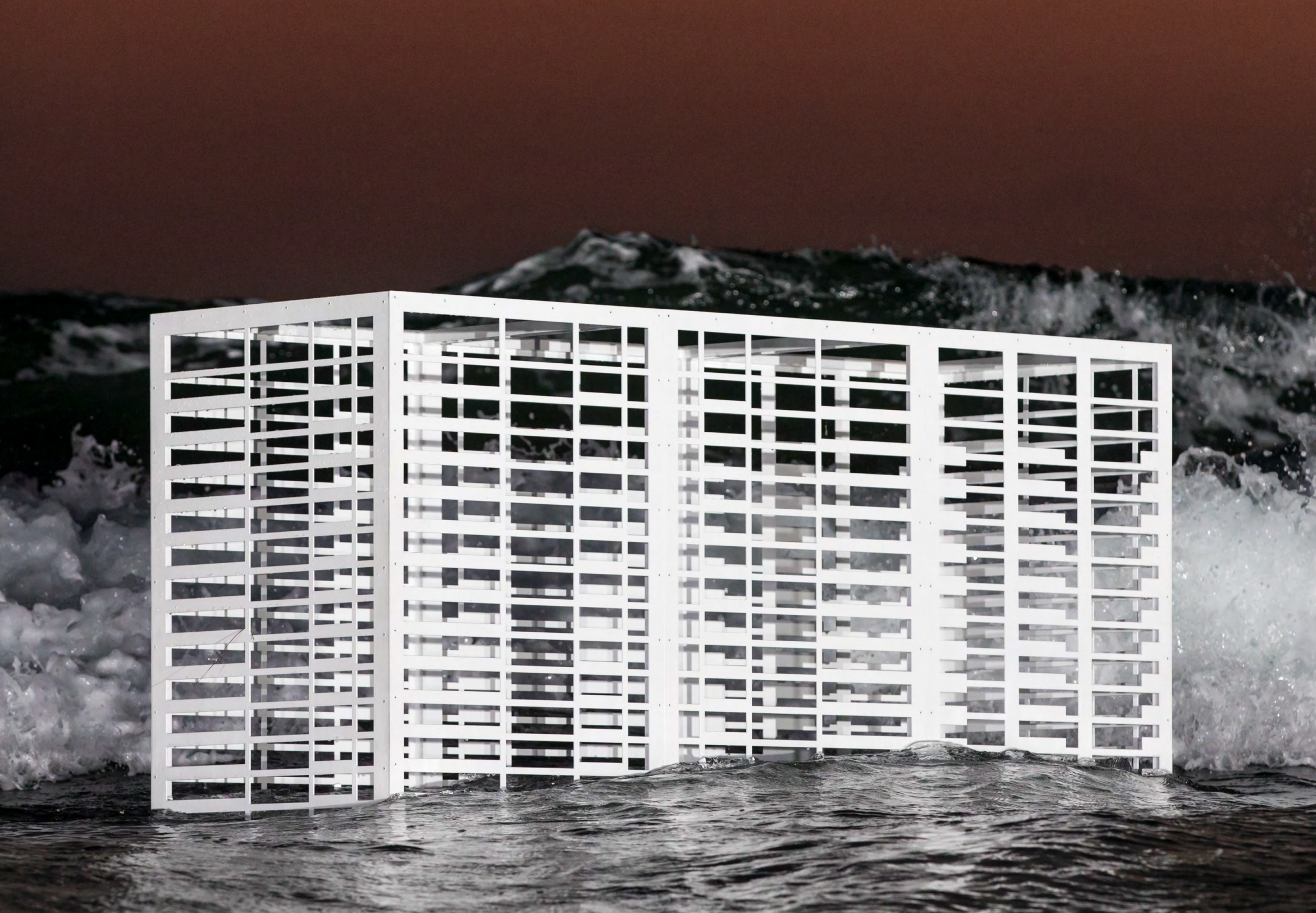
of a work, but in this installation they are embedded simultaneously. The piece is also time-based, in that it takes a while to walk through the various situations of the installation—which is, incidentally, how I think of viewers negotiating the work: moving through situations. But, a viewer can spend a varying amount of time with any one aspect, shifting its emphasis in her own constellation, and change direction at will, of her body, of her gaze, so the constellation in this sense is much more open than previous ones I've made.

**KF: *Slow-Moving Luminaries* contains multiple elements that potentially will go unnoticed by the viewer, like the SOS letters that shape the path of the walking labyrinth. What is the intention behind this strategy of embedded geometries and hidden codes?**

LJ: We live in a world of embedded geometries and hidden codes, both in the natural world and the systems of our creation. I love the Austrian architect and artist Friedensreich Hundertwasser because of his questioning of right angles in our living spaces—what they do to us metaphysically. Gravity is a hidden code, the movement of the moon is a code we considered over and over, until on some level we cracked it. As a species, I'm convinced we love to decipher—that, as Buckminster Fuller suggested, we are the perceiving mechanism of the universe. And yet no matter how much we uncover, most of the forces and forms at play in our experience will be forever unknown. I'm working in that tradition, if you could call the nearly opaque mechanism of the universe a tradition.

**KF: The Audemars Piguet commission will be your second large-scale public artwork. You spoke about this audience as being particularly interesting to you. What is it about working in public space that you find appealing?**

LJ: Public, outdoor work is often a surprise to the viewer. Observing them, I learn so much about how the work behaves, and my sense of the work is expanded as I listen to the multitude of impressions as I wander about, or just watch people watch. How the viewers gather and focus, the patterns that emerge in terms of the choreography of bodies, and also how voices and spaces are shared—all these factors become another artwork, a more political one, for me in and of themselves. When I am in a public space, this light, improvised choreography of the public itself is what I watch the most. Also, it turns out I love working outdoors; I like to be caught in the rain.





## LARS JAN

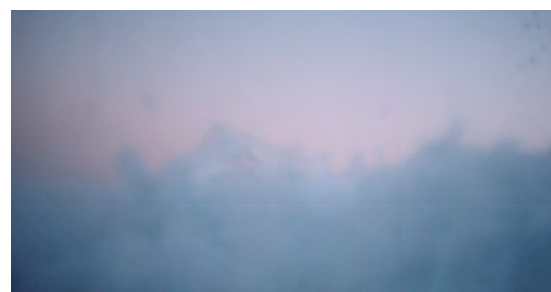
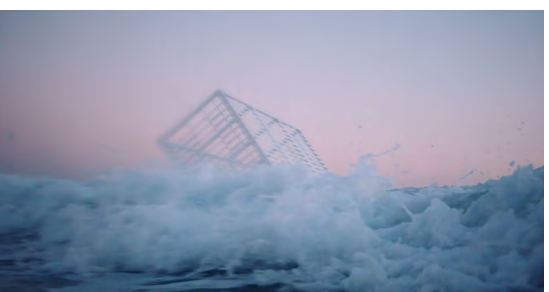
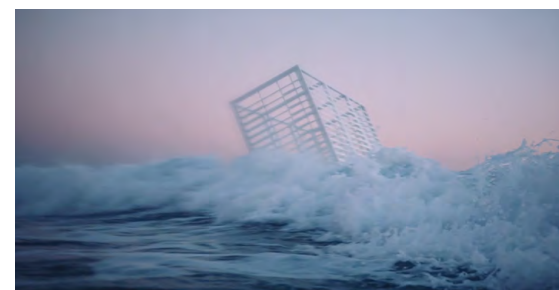
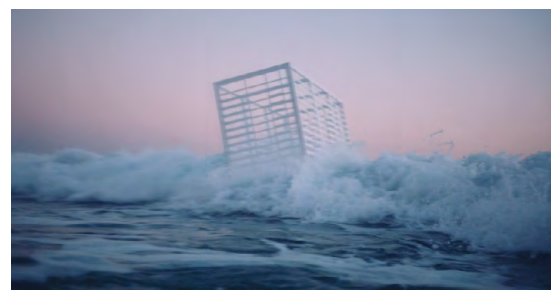
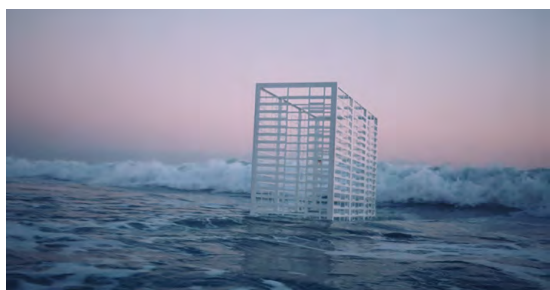
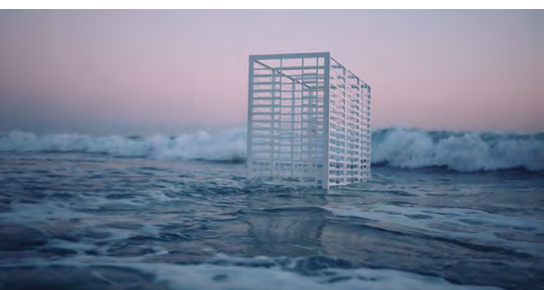
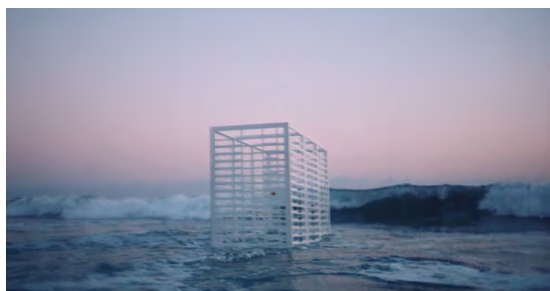
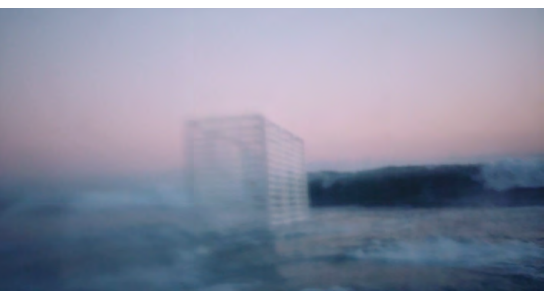
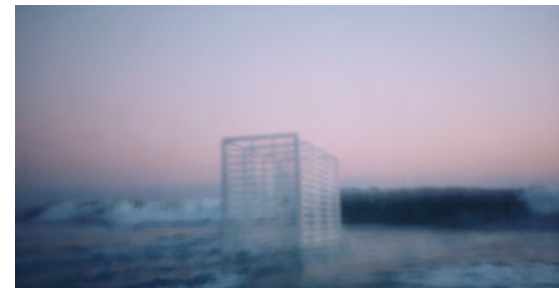
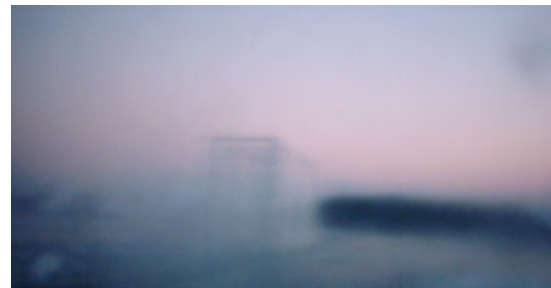
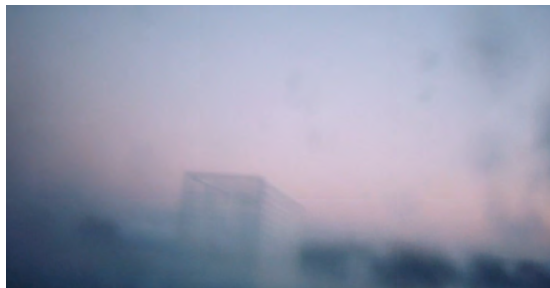
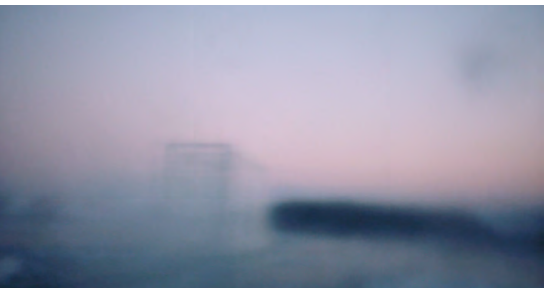
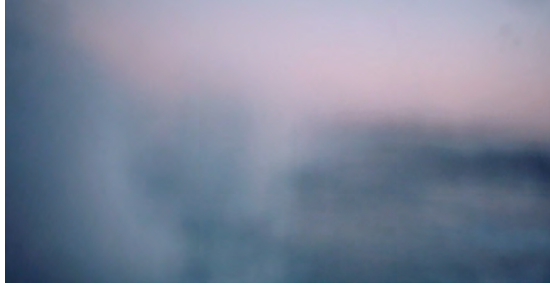
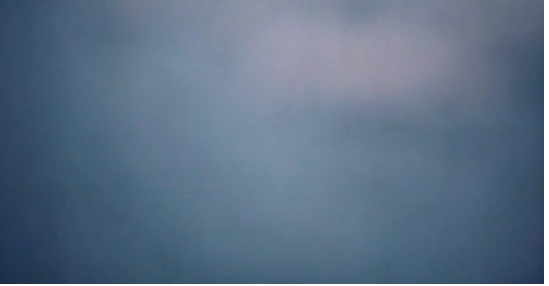
Artist, director, writer, and activist, Lars Jan is known for visually-striking, genre-bending performance and installation works exploring emerging technologies, live gatherings, and unclassifiable experience. Jan's original works—including *Holoscenes*, *The Institute of Memory*, *Abacus*—have been presented by the Whitney Museum, Sundance Film Festival, BAM Next Wave Festival, Hammer Museum, Toronto Nuit Blanche Festival, Ringling Museum of Art, and Istanbul Modern, among others. In June 2017, the public performance and installation *Holoscenes* was exhibited in Times Square. He is on faculty at CalArts and is a TED Senior Fellow.



## KATHLEEN FORDE



Kathleen Forde is the Artistic Director at Large for Borusan Contemporary, a collection-based space for media arts exhibitions, commissions, and public programming in Istanbul. During her tenure at BC, Forde has curated and toured numerous solo exhibitions by artists such as Rafael Lozano-Hemmer, Daniel Canogar, Brigitte Kowanz, Carsten Nicolai, and John Gerrard. Concurrently, she is working as an independent curator with various institutions both nationally and abroad, including the University of Michigan Museum of Art and the Frye Art Museum in Seattle. From 2005 to 2012 Forde was the Curator of Time-Based Visual Arts at the Experimental Media and Performing Arts Center (EMPAC) in Troy, NY. She previously held the positions of Curatorial Director for Live Arts and New Media at the Goethe Institut Internaciones in Berlin and Munich and Assistant Curator for Media Arts at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art.



Stills from the film  
*Luminaries, Point Dume.*



# AUDEMARS PIGUET

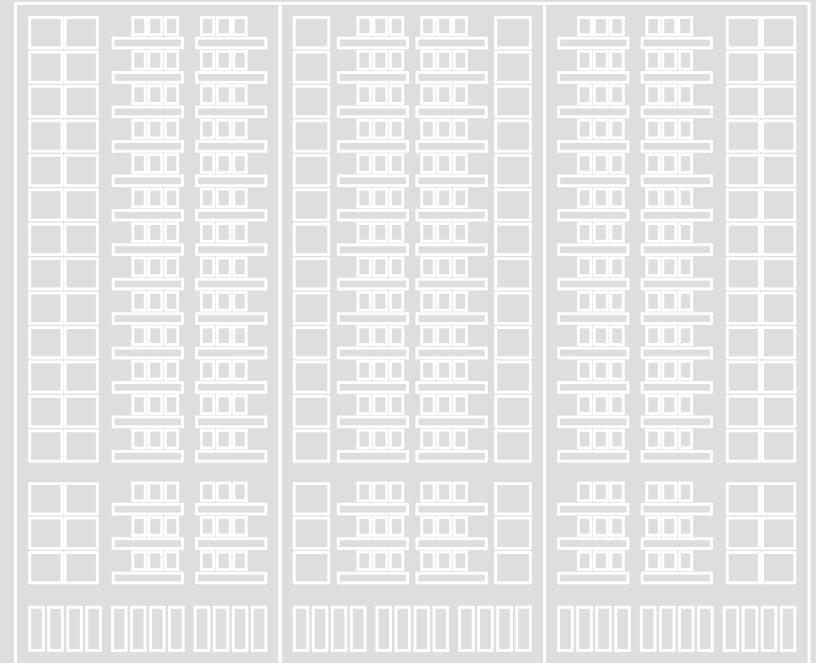
*Le Brassus*

Audemars Piguet is the oldest fine watchmaking manufacturer still in the hands of its founding families (Audemars and Piguet). Since 1875, the company has authored some of the most distinguished chapters in the history of Haute Horlogerie, including a number of world firsts. In the Vallée de Joux, at the heart of the Swiss Jura, numerous masterpieces are created in limited series embodying a remarkable degree of horological perfection, including daring sporty models, classic and traditional timepieces, splendid ladies' jewelry-watches as well as one-of-a-kind creations. The renowned 1972 octagonal Royal Oak, the first luxury watch to be made of stainless steel, is widely recognized as one of the most important innovations in watchmaking.

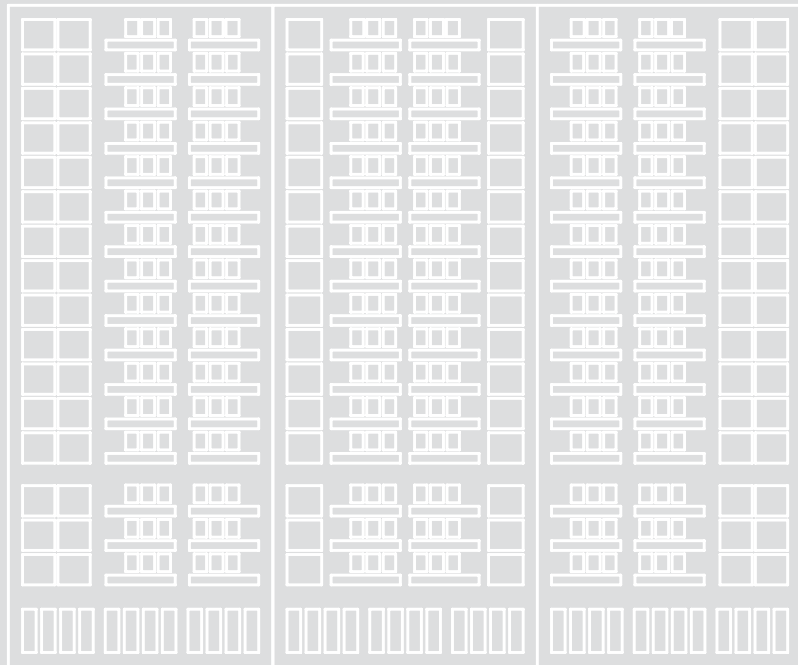




Hotel in Miami,  
captured by Lars Jan.



Technical drawing of a building sculpture  
from *Slow-Moving Luminaries*.



Technical drawing of a building sculpture  
from *Slow-Moving Luminaries*.



Point Dume, Malibu.

## A CONVERSATION WITH LARS JAN

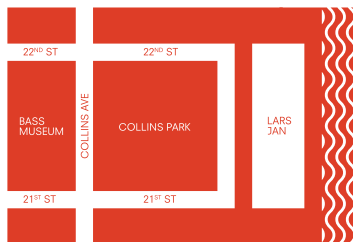
December 7<sup>th</sup> • 5:30-6:30 pm  
Moderated by Artsy  
Lars Jan Exhibition at the Oceanfront

## ART BASEL ARTIST TALK | NATURAL DISASTERS: WHOSE CRISIS IS IT?

December 8<sup>th</sup> • 3-4 pm  
With Lars Jan  
Banyan Room in the Botanical Garden

## LOCATION & HOURS

Miami Beach Oceanfront  
Between 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> Streets



Open to the public December 4<sup>th</sup> • 7-11 pm  
& December 7<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> • 3-11 pm  
Daily musical performances



Croton Petra featured in  
*Slow-Moving Luminaries*.



The upper observation deck of  
*Slow-Moving Luminaries*.

## SPECIAL THANKS

### STUDIO LARS JAN

Erin Besler

Erich Bolton

Miles Brenninkmeijer

Shawn Brown

Rocket Caleshu

Chu-Hsuan Chang

Amelia Charter

Peter Cote

Brad Culver

Alec Houge

Sam Kweskin

Ingrid Lao

Eric Lin

Henry Maynard

Mike Merchant

Blaine O'Neill

Nathan Ruyle

Elena Tilli

Madison Wetton

Patrick Wetton

Daniel Wheeler

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Elise Dicop

Laurie Hernandez

Zafrin Hossain

Lea Richard-Nagle

Cyril Stanajic

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