

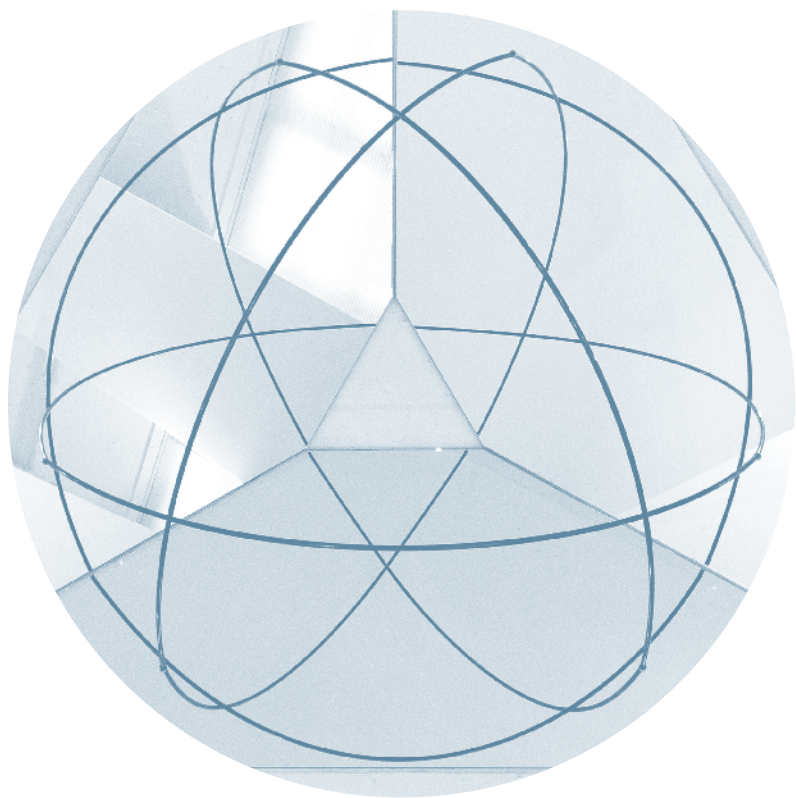
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# Brookhart Jonquil

## *In a Perfect World*

*April 12, 2013 – May 11, 2013*

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## *In A Perfect World* by Brookhart Jonquil

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If a man, while forming out of gold every type of shape, never stopped remolding each into all of the rest and if someone indicated one of those shapes and asked “what is it?” then, by far the safest answer with regard to truth would be “it is gold”.

-Plato, *The Timaeus*, c. 360 BCE

With this analogy, Plato first attempts to describe ether, a level of reality situated between the world of pure forms and our physical world. He proposed that since the elements of the physical world are constantly changing, such as water into steam, they cannot be the most fundamental material of the universe. Ether is the material of emptiness, the gold out of which arises the flux of images that constitutes our sensible universe. It fills the universe and has no time or any other material attributes. Some 2,400 years later, we confirm that matter is nothing but a condensation of electromagnetism, vibrating energy in constant flux, and furthermore, that what gives form to the physical are the forces within emptiness itself.

Our present view of the universe presents two realities which are completely separated from each other conceptually, although connected causally, namely, gravitational ether and electromagnetic field, or — as they might also be called — space and matter.

...According to the general theory of relativity space without ether is unthinkable... But this ether may not be thought of as endowed with the quality characteristic of ponderable media, as consisting of parts which may be tracked through time. The idea of motion may not be applied to it.

-Albert Einstein, *Ether and the Theory of Relativity*, 1920

The physical world, it would seem, is so much a matter of flux that, like the shapes in Plato's gold, it is impossible to say with certainty that it exists – as soon as one does it has already changed. Having no physicality or temporality, ether is perfectly complete, an ideal version of reality. Looking carefully at these qualities — immaterial, timeless, existing without physical location, a perfect reality — one may very easily think we

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are talking about something else— Utopia. While ether describes physical properties, Utopia refers to social implications of the same, so when speaking of a place, they are functionally synonymous.

In Utopia there is no discord between people. Yet discord, not to mention the whole spectrum of human drama, requires duration and bodies, it is a circumstance of flux, placing it in our world of images. Ether is void of subjective qualities; in it there can be no conflict. The reality this suggests is an interconnected dualism, on one hand we have the joy and suffering that feel as true as the ground beneath our feet. On the other hand, we have a place without ground or feet, a void free of duration where everything is exactly the way it must be at the moment that it is.

Utopia is not something to be attained, on the contrary, it is an aspect of reality more fundamental than the constant flux we perceive as the physical universe. And it is indeed from this ideal world that our physical surroundings take form. We all occupy Utopia, and it occupies us.

To talk about a place without form that is everywhere is challenging, however, it is made easier through the dual nature of mirrors. Reflections present us with visible evidence of a space we know cannot be physical – they are our only visible reference for Utopia. And yet it is paradoxically the only circumstance in which Utopia is not actually present. These images are purely phenomena, a phantom reality in which there is no foundation of ether. Through mirrors we can talk about what *is* through what *isn't* and about what *isn't* through what *is*.

The sculptures that create *In a Perfect World* do just this. Besides the four objects that inhabit the gallery, there is another object which is physically nowhere, yet occupies each of the sculptures. This form, used by Buckminster Fuller in his first Dymaxion Maps, divides a sphere by four great circles into equally sided triangles and squares. Each of the physical sculptures in the group is composed of bowed fiberglass rods that pass through holes cut in mirrors, and each is entirely unique with regard to the shapes, angles and numbers of these components. Yet as the fiberglass

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rods reflect around in the mirrors, all create this same virtual spherical structure. The rods bow with tension as they pierce their mirrors. They have a sense of sustained action, a charge of potential energy. The virtual sphere's entire structure is composed of reflections of this charged material, imbuing it with an explosive quality, an outward force bound by its material.

Seeming to float like a nucleus within the recurring sphere is another virtual shape that is different in each sculpture. This form arises from and echoes each unique composition of mirrors. These nuclei are caused by a hole in the end of each sculpture that presses against the gallery wall. The isolated architecture seen through the hole becomes perceptually dislocated, combining with reflected images to form a geometric mass that seems to float disembodied from the surrounding wall.

The physical composition of these sculptures is entirely dictated by the necessities of their immaterial aspects. Similarly, the other body of work in this exhibition, *VOIDS FOR BURNING*, consist of sculptures that derive their form from a physically absent element. These sculptures are made of a paper-like material that is draped over geometric objects, the object is removed and the paper retains its impression. The viewer can sense that it's empty but the emptiness has a specific shape, an implied physicality which seems to have mystical weight due to its veiling. This paper-like material is nitrocellulose, an unstable material that when ignited burns quickly, brightly, and completely, leaving nothing behind, not even ash. The intention of the piece is for the collector to take it home, and when they are ready, to burn it. The object transforms into a void. And yet in many ways it was already a void to begin with; the veil has just been removed. If the collector cannot bear to burn it, the instability of the material will cause it to eventually dissolve into a powder or a goo. The collector is free to make his or her own decisions but cannot control the ultimate ephemerality of the material. The sculptures are not multiples. Each one is a unique piece—its erasure is final.

*Building Pyramids*  
2011

Acrylic mirror, paint, gold  
spray paint on floor  
7ft 6in x 8ft x 4ft

Installation view, Brookhart Jonquil's  
installation at IMPULSE Miami, 2011

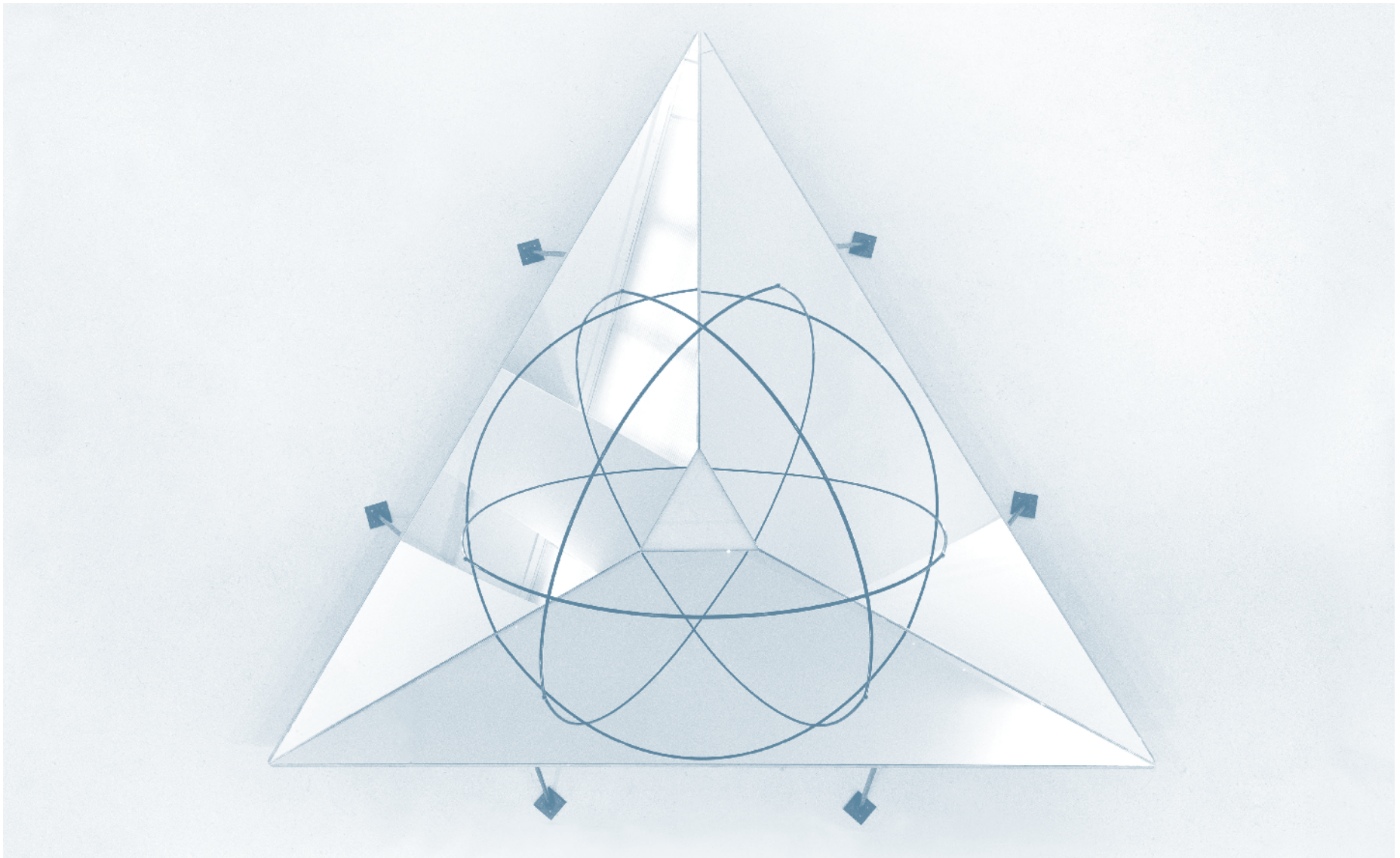


*In a Perfect World*

2013

Mirror, wood, fiberglass rods, steel

7ft 8in x 7ft 8in x 2ft 6in





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Detail from front page of booklet is from Brookhart Jonquil's *In A Perfect World*, 2013.

Brochure/poster published in April 2013 to supplement the exhibition "*In a Perfect World*" by Brookhart Jonquil, at Emerson Dorsch April 12, 2013-May 11, 2013.

Statement, "*In a Perfect World*," by Brookhart Jonquil.  
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