

Tara Donovan
b. 1969, Flushing, New York

Tara Donovan's large-scale installations, sculptures, drawings, and prints utilize everyday objects to explore the transformative effects of accumulation and aggregation. By identifying and exploiting the usually overlooked physical properties of modest, mass-produced goods, Donovan creates ethereal works that challenge our perceptual habits and preconceptions. The atmospheric effects of her art align her with Light and Space artists, such as Robert Irwin and James Turrell, while her commitment to a laborious and site-responsive methodology links her to Postminimalist and Process artists, especially Eva Hesse, Jackie Winsor, Richard Serra, and Robert Morris.

Soon after receiving an MFA from Virginia Commonwealth University in 1999, she obtained her first major museum solo exhibition at the Corcoran Gallery of Art's Hemicycle Gallery in Washington, D.C. A year later, she participated in the prestigious biennial of the Whitney Museum of American Art. In the early 2000s, for her first major gallery exhibitions at Ace Gallery in New York and Los Angeles, Donovan mounted a series of site-responsive installations, which became representative of her practice. In celebrated works, most notably *Transplanted* (2001), *Nebulous* (2002), and *Haze* (2003), Donovan created sublime gradients of light, color, translucence, and texture using nothing but tar paper, Scotch tape, and drinking straws, respectively. Despite the artificiality of their materials, Donovan's works often take on biomorphic qualities or evoke natural phenomena, from fog and rock formations to fungal blooms and stalagmites. Other works such as *Colony* (2000), which suggested urban sprawl, gestured to humankind's mark on the world—the Anthropocene.

After her exhibitions at Ace Gallery, Donovan devoted herself to a string of solo projects at distinguished museums, including UCLA's Hammer Museum, the Berkeley Art Museum, and the Museum of Contemporary Art Cleveland, among others. For one such project, *Tara Donovan at the Met* (2007), she clustered loops of metallic Mylar tape into a scintillating web that proliferated across several walls of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. Reworking the propositions of Minimalism, the artist staged a shifting phenomenological encounter that prompted visitors to circumambulate the space. Her first major survey exhibition at the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, opened the subsequent year and was followed by other solo projects at the Indianapolis Museum of Art, Milwaukee Art Museum, and Parrish Museum.

In recent years, Donovan has employed Slinkys, styrene cards, and pins to create framed, wall-hung works, whose tactile surfaces are animated by optical effects. Operating somewhere between drawing, painting, and relief sculpture, her two series *Drawings (Pins)* and *Compositions (Cards)* are abstract works in direct dialogue with her monumental sculptures constructed out of the same materials. They continue the artist's rigorous process of experimentation with mundane objects while expanding the possibilities of sculpture in relation to bodies, space, and time.