



• Installation • Routine Maintenance • Emergency Service
663-9300



the transcript.com

Voice of the Northern Berkshires

Home
Search Archives:

Forecast Today for
NORTH ADAMS, MA

Calendar » What's doing **This Week** • **Nightlife** • **Photo Gallery**
Don't miss » **School information** for bus schedules and the school calendar. Also: **Cuisine** and **Outdoors & Recreation** sections.



5 DAY FORECAST

RSS feeds **XML** + **MY YAHOO!**

Feedback » **Letters** » **Classifieds** » **Press Releases** » **Website issues**.
Please include phone number and address in correspondence.

THE ARTS

- Berkshires Week
- Entertainment
- Movies
- InBerkshires

Search

- del.icio.us
- Digg
- Reddit
- YahooMyWeb
- Google
- Facebook
- What's this?

- AUTOMOTIVE
- CLASSIFIED
- EMPLOYMENT
- REAL ESTATE

NEWS

from the Transcript

- Births
- Business
- Headlines
- Local News
- Region
- Nation
- World
- Obituaries
- Sports
- Social
- Weather

The art of stargazing

By *John E. Mitchell*, *North Adams Transcript*
Article Launched: 11/23/2007 12:06:57 PM EST

Friday, November 23

ADAMS — Light guides and attracts and enlightens — and one artist is using them to fashion charts of personal relationships where they do all three.

Maw, who is a researcher and professor of communications at New York University in the Interactive Telecommunications program, has taken several canvases and inserted LEDs in them, with the idea that each light springs from a person's face. Around the lights are spare figures in white implying two people's bodies, with heads fashioned from a pearl-type silver and connected to each other with lines as you would see on star maps.

Maw drew on the relationships in her own families and others, particularly in the way family relationships have been traditionally represented in art. Family photographs have been a huge inspiration for Maw — she's studied the iconography of the form. The idea that the subjects of these portraits are staring out of the photos in perpetuity fascinated Maw and she thought to replace this human gaze with the outward beam of the LED lights.

"It actually works really well with LEDs because they have a really narrow range of light and so they point directly out and engage the

viewer," said Maw.

In creating these canvases — and in her work still — Maw studied the placement of family members in portraits, the unspoken language of relationships as used in either fine art or popular portraiture.

"It's really interesting if you look at stock photo images or if you go to a gallery or museum like the Met," said Maw, "there are these various standardized layouts of people that imply different things. That's what I'm exploring right now."

Maw studies these relationships and their representations in regard to their existence as a system — one that

Have a tip on a story or breaking event?
» Email us

Opinion

- Editorials
- Letters
- Columnists

Features

- SteepleCats Preview
- Health
- Education
- Religion
- Food
- Outdoors
- Special Sections
- Personals

GUIDES

- Communities
- Adams/Cheshire
- Dalton
- North Adams
- Pittsfield
- Our Towns
- Southern Berkshire

Send us your community news » Email us

» Photo Gallery and Reprints

Advertisement



Keep in touch with THE BERKSHIRES



Local News

Advocate
Berkshire Eagle
Bennington Banner
Brattleboro Reformer
North Adams Transcript
Manchester Journal
Vermont Observer
S. Vermont Adventures

MARKETPLACE

Autos
Book of Homes
Classifieds
Jobs
Public Notices
Newspaper Ads

INFO**Services**

Advertisers Info
Contact Us
Submit Photos
Subscriber Services
Pearl Scholarship
Privacy Policy

Media Partners

CBS 6 Albany
WAMC

could use some mapping. It's with this in mind that Maw has dubbed the work "The Constellation Project" and creates the canvases in order to chart out the actual relationship between two people as one would stars in the sky — the constellations of personal interaction.

"I wanted to start with were the dyads, the iconic intimate relationships," said Maw. "One of the pieces is a mother and child, another piece is an older couple, another piece is a younger couple and then there's one that's two sisters. What I wanted to start with were the foundational relationships, how they get represented repeatedly in society."

Right now, Maw might be akin to a scientist studying a binary system, but her plan is to widen the view of her scope and study larger systems with what she has learned about the smaller ones.

"I'd like to move on from the dyads to the more complicated interactions," said Maw. "I thought that just starting with the two people would be better because then what's happening is that we have these foundational relationships that are the types that we take in and on which we model every other relationship — is this person like my sister or like my brother or like my parents, where do they fit in this, with the archetypes I already have?"

Maw began thinking about the project in regard to her relationship with the actual stars in the sky — or rather, their disappearance from everyday significance.

"When I was little, I would go to summer camp and there would be a huge array of stars and every year you ask 'Where's the Big Dipper?'" said Maw. "In the winter, you go back, and you're in the city, so even though it's dark early, you can't see stars."

Stars, Maw points out, were integral to daily life because of their importance to navigation as well as imagination and storytelling. Nowadays, they have been replaced in our everyday interaction by normal humans who have been elevated to such a lofty level.

"They've really dropped into the background in our day-to-day culture, and yet that's what we call celebrities — they're our stars," said Maw. "We've now replaced these celestial bodies that are far out with these human beings that are closer and that models more intimate relationships."

These human stars are so ingrained in our lives that a typical person will no doubt spend more time looking at some celebrity than they will their own relatives — to Maw, this skews the traditional perception of the relationships she explores and the effects they have on people's lives.

"I'm never going to meet Jennifer Aniston — she's a star — but I have met my sister," said Maw. "On 'Friends' reruns every night at 11, I can see Jennifer Aniston, but my sister lives in California and I see her four times a year. There's this really interesting dynamic going on between the things that are supposed to guide us and the things that actually do."

Stars were once used for navigation and guidance and they still are, but this time it is in regard to personal lives and goals, as well as appearance and interests. It's a bit of metaphorical beauty that stars are delivered to your daily life through the glowing medium of television rather than nuclear fission.

"You start see these stars, these things represented on TV and in the movies and in magazines as your neighbor," said Maw. "You couldn't do that a century ago, you couldn't see these people that you didn't know quite so regularly, living these lives that were so different from yours. I think that we've integrated this sense of these stars as 'This is what I should idolize, this is what comes into my living room and glows every night.'"

Maw's work on the project has been a journey of artistic exploration for her, uncovering the movement of old forms within new contexts — and how old media translated exactly into the modern age.

"I'm interested in how old forms and new forms relate in new media, because there's this sense that anything is possible," said Maw. "You end up with works that think of themselves as very removed from the past and yet there are these forms that occur over and over again. One of the pictures is a mother and a baby and to me it reads exactly like a Byzantine icon. Art has been representing these types of relationships over and over and over again and I wanted to see if I could use what is basically a pencil sketch in terms of new media — LEDs."

Maw's thought was that there is a lot of very complicated technology out there that people are utilizing out of the sheer excitement of being able to — complicated technology becomes like a thesaurus that allows a writer to show-off language merely because he has the resource to do so at his fingertips. Maw considered the question of what if she stripped down all the complication she had learned, what if she walked away from the world of mini micro processors and parallel converters and Perl and Linux in order to carry on the older forms with a technology you can buy at the corner store?



Our new user-friendly E-Edition looks & reads just like a newspaper!

- Move easily through pages and sections
- Search archives
- E-mail favorite stories
- View in graphic format or in text format

For more information or to subscribe, just visit www.BerkshireEagle.com and click on the E-Edition button on the home page.

Edition
The Berkshire Eagle

"It's the first thing that someone learns how to do when they learn how to do new media work, they learn how to light up an LED," said Maw. "Without even going any further than that, without integrating infrared sensors or even any interaction at all, there's not even a switch, fundamentally. What can just lighting up an LED do to our understanding of how to represent forms in art?"

Maw has found that while the more complicated things might wow people, but most experiences in working with technology starts out with the simple stuff and that's what will engage beginners. Maw finds that showing an actual application of simple technology — especially one that speaks to more complicated concepts — is a great way to engage students and viewers.

"It's mind boggling what can be done these days, so it's nice to take a step back and ask 'Why? What do I really need? What am I really trying to say?'" said Maw. "And you go back to your own message and then pick something that expresses the message as opposed to just acquiring another skill. Can't you just say something simply?"

And simplicity is just as applicable to her themes as to the physical realization of her work.

"I have some sketches of some more elaborate pieces where it was a family reunion," said Maw, "but I felt like what I really wanted to go back to were the dyads, were the one on one relationships, because I think in some ways that those are the ones that have suffered the most in our current context."

Maw's work is currently on display at Greylock Arts in Adams.

 [Print](#)  [Email](#)  [Return to Top](#)
Buy THE BERKSHIRES AdLinks!

Auto Insurance Quotes

Save Hundreds In Minutes w/ Fast, No Hassle Auto Ins From The Hartford
 AARP.TheHartford.com

Too Busy for School?

Earn a degree in as few as 2 years. Get Your Diploma Online!
 www.ClassesUSA.com

Refinance Now 5.3% Fixed!

\$300,000 mortgage for \$899/mo. No credit checks - Get 4 FREE quotes!
 www.lendgo.com

[Buy a link here](#)

 MEDIA NEWS GROUP

New England Newspapers, Inc.

» [BerkshireEagle.com](#)
 » [TheTranscript.com](#)
 » [BenningtonBanner.com](#)
 » [Reformer.com](#)
 » [ManchesterJournal.com](#)
 » [TheTowncriers.com](#)
 » [AdvocateWeekly.com](#)

» [Motorpicks.com](#)
 » [BerkshiresBestHomes.com](#)
 » [BerkshireCareers.com](#)
 » [BerkshiresWeek.com](#)
 » [ManchesterVermont.com](#)
 » [VermontObserver.com](#)
 » [SouthernVermontAdventures.com](#)

» [Rates & Data](#)
 » [E-mail](#)
 » (413) 663-3741
 » 124 American Legion Drive
 » North Adams, MA 01247



[Privacy Policy](#) | [MNG Corporate Site Map](#) | [Copyright](#)
 Weather data Copyright 2007 CustomWeather, Inc.