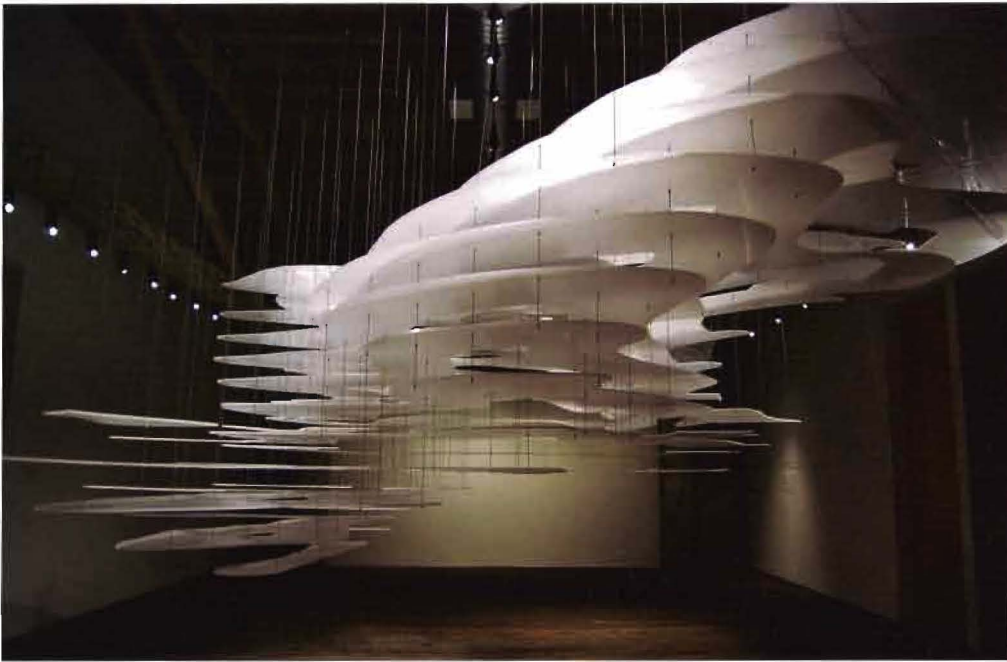




NEW GROWTH/STRATUM MODEL

INSTALLATION BY KENDALL BUSTER

SUYAMA SPACE, SEATTLE



PREFACE

Beth Sellars, Curator

Kendall Buster described *New Growth/Stratum Model* as both scale model for a building and a landscape fragment, operating as a merging of the natural and the constructed environment. The artist constructed her suspended horizontal planes to fill the space, creating a form at once topography map and architecture. She sliced her stacked planes into two segments, allowing movement through the building/landscape fragment.

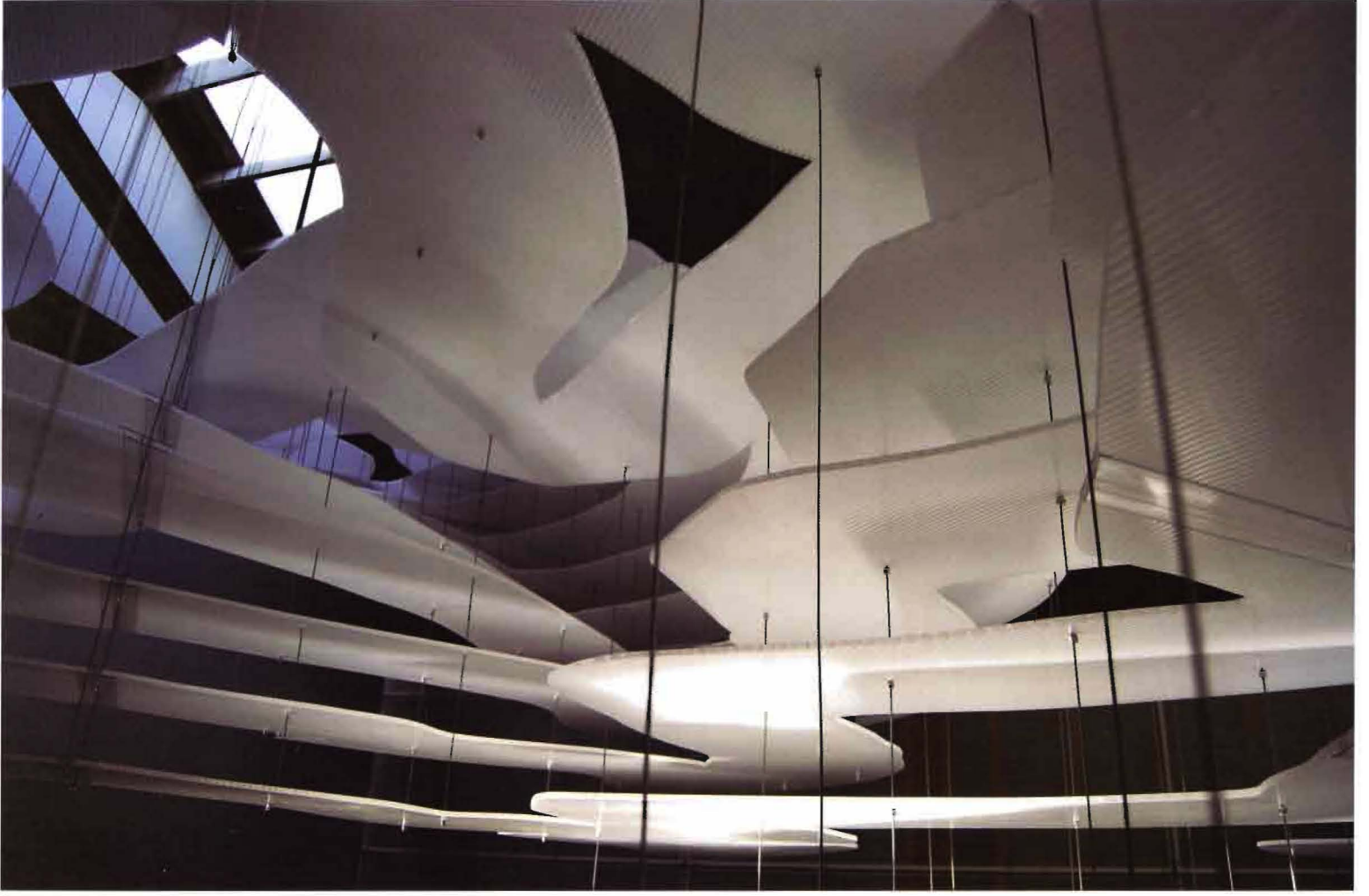
Buster says her *New Growth/Stratum Model* continues her interest in how a scale model with an unspoken ratio might operate. That is, she explains, the model might represent a microscopic landscape made large to allow human scale spelunking or an imagined sprawling cityscape shrunk to miniature size. The form of the sculpture suggests a provisional boundary with growth developing from the inside out — directed in a manner more akin to cellular organization

in response to an environment. Buster implies the model's edges might also suggest erosion or incomplete growth.

Kendall Buster is Associate Professor of Sculpture and Extended Media at Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, Virginia. She received her M.F.A. in Sculpture from Yale University, and B.F.A. from the Corcoran School of Art in Washington, D.C. Solo exhibitions are numerous, ranging from Artists Space, NY, The Mattress Factory, Pittsburgh, and the Houston Center for Contemporary Craft to KwaZuluNatal Society for the Arts, Durban, South Africa and the VCUQ Gallery, Doha, Qatar. Awards include the American Academy of Arts and Letters Visual Art Award, Joan Mitchell Foundation, and the NEA/MAAF Mid-Atlantic Art Foundation.

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STRATUM AUSPICIUM

Christopher Schnoor

If ever there was an elegant marriage of science and art it is to be found in the sculptural work of Kendall Buster. Her ability to subvert to her advantage this left-brain/right-brain dichotomy and reveal the underlying common attributes that these apparently opposing perspectives share, makes for a provocative visual and intellectual experience.

An artist with an academic background in microbiology and a multicultural interest in the history of architecture/urban development, Buster's insight has been to recognize the intrinsic, empathetic relationship between the spread of man-made structures and communities, and the biological processes of growth, regeneration, colonization and more. Buster demonstrates, in seemingly endless mediums, that the unseen processes and structures of the natural world, have relevance to, and provide a formal vocabulary for, a reconsideration of the way we fabricate our environment. It is an aesthetic built on the membranous architecture of biology, literally breathing life into static form, culminating in her current series of sculptural works called *New Growth*.

Buster's site-specific installation at Suyama Space entitled *New Growth/Stratum Model* is a departure from the pods, vessels and diaphanous enclosures of earlier projects. Her use of white shade cloth on steel frameworks has given way to an even lighter weight material of corrugated polycarbonate panels, suspended in a stacked series of planes for a structure that is as free-spirited as it is precisely engineered. The work conjures up a range of associations

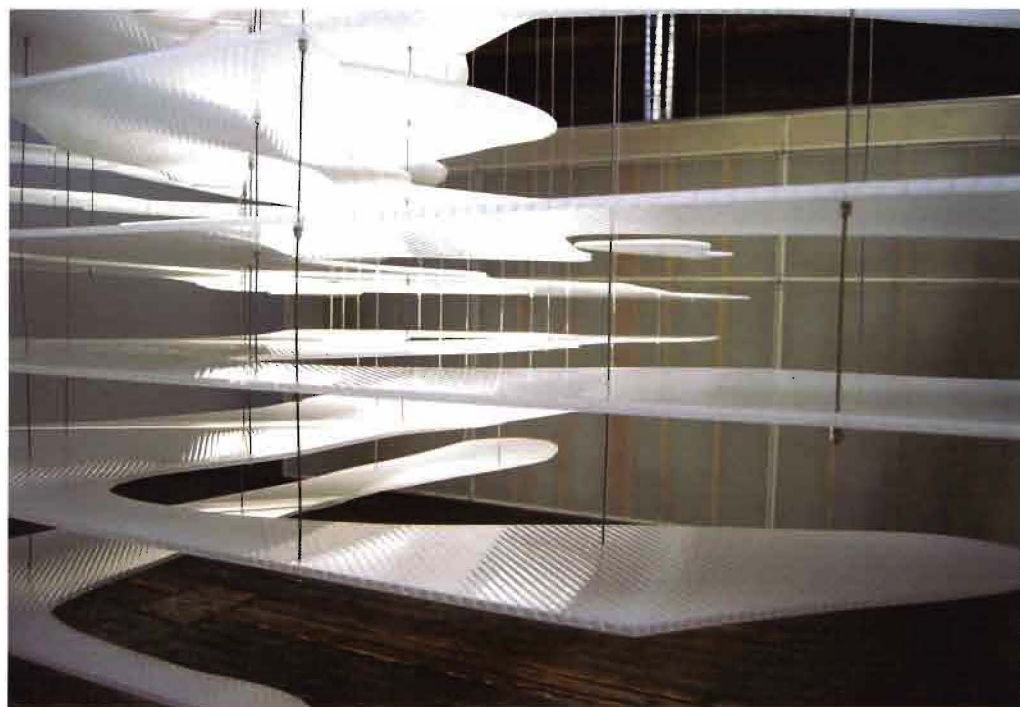


IMAGE BY JYM SNEDEKER

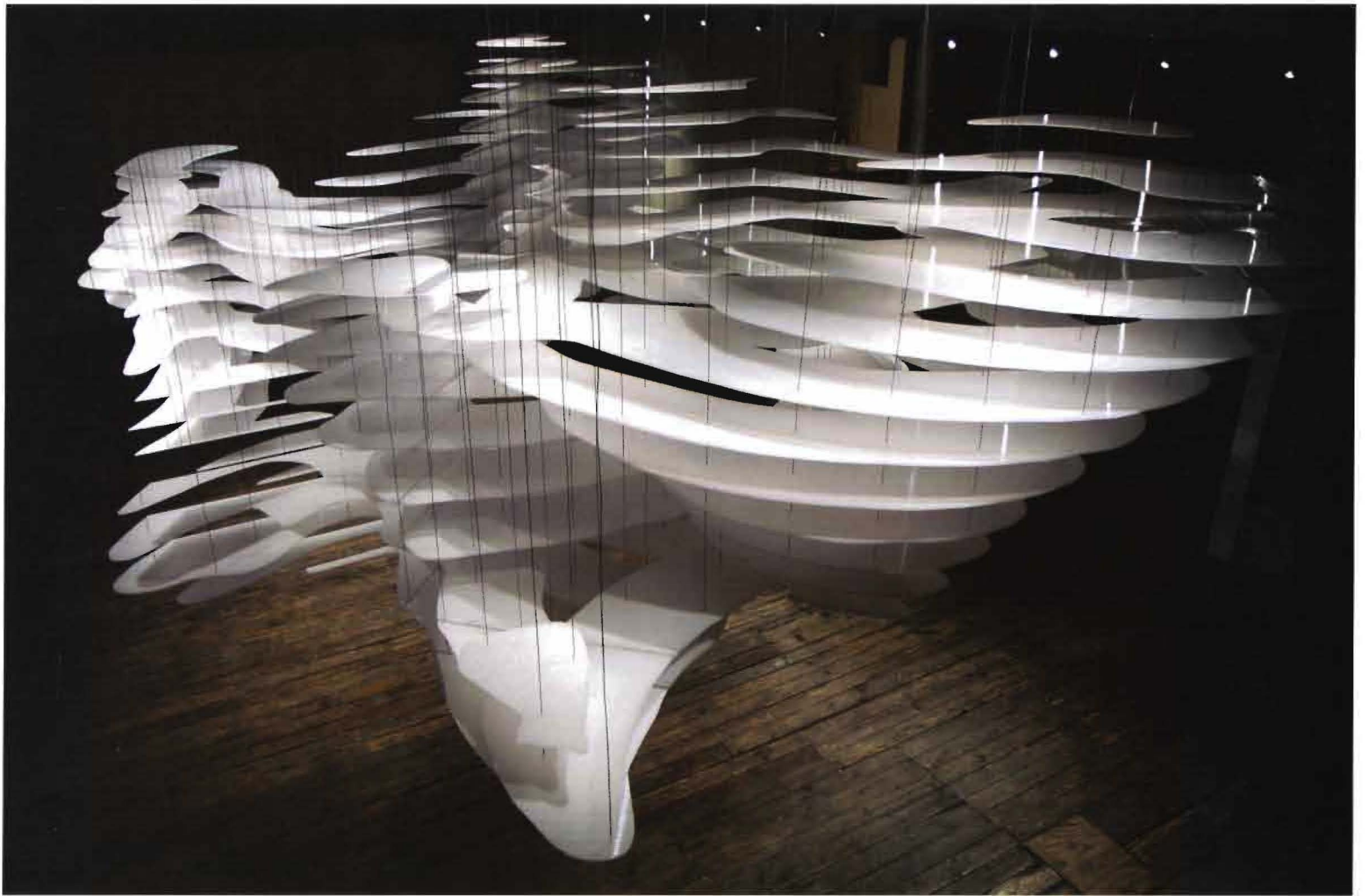
and images, from a scale-model, futuristic construction project to a floating tidal pool landscape. The fluidity of her forms alternately suggests cloudscapes, swarms of organisms, drifting smoke.

The pure white of the panels which in the daylight gives the piece the look of spilled milk, and a ghostly quality under artificial light at night, also lends Buster's sculpture a sense

of promise, a divination or omen of good things to come, as if to portend a time when art and scientific inquiry recapture the comradery they enjoyed in Leonardo's day.

Christopher Schnoor is a longtime freelance art writer and critic now based in Boise, Idaho.





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