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Sensitive to Art & its Discontents



*Chris Fraser, "CONE" (2013), Glass Microspheres, Plate Glass, Aluminum,
LED Pendant, 48" Diameter (all images via highlightgallery.com)*

Sculptures of Light and Illusion

By **An Xiao** on January 22, 2014

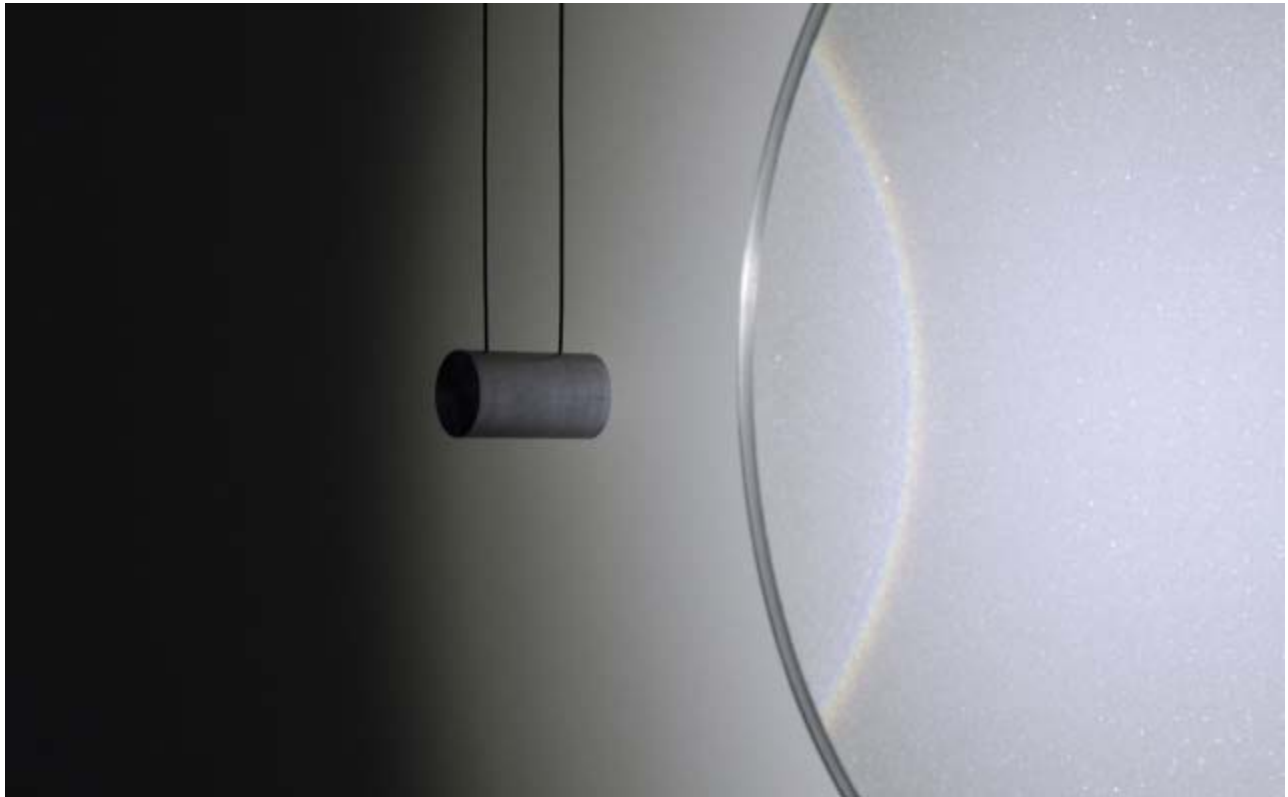
SAN FRANCISCO — *In Stereo*, an exhibition of new works by Bay Area-artist Chris Fraser at [Highlight Gallery](http://highlightgallery.com), plays with the ways our eyes perceive space. His sculptures occupy three-dimensional space, but something feels different. As you walk around each object you realize

the light is playing tricks with your eyes and creating spaces and experiences that are not physically present in a material sense but very much present through our perceptions of light.



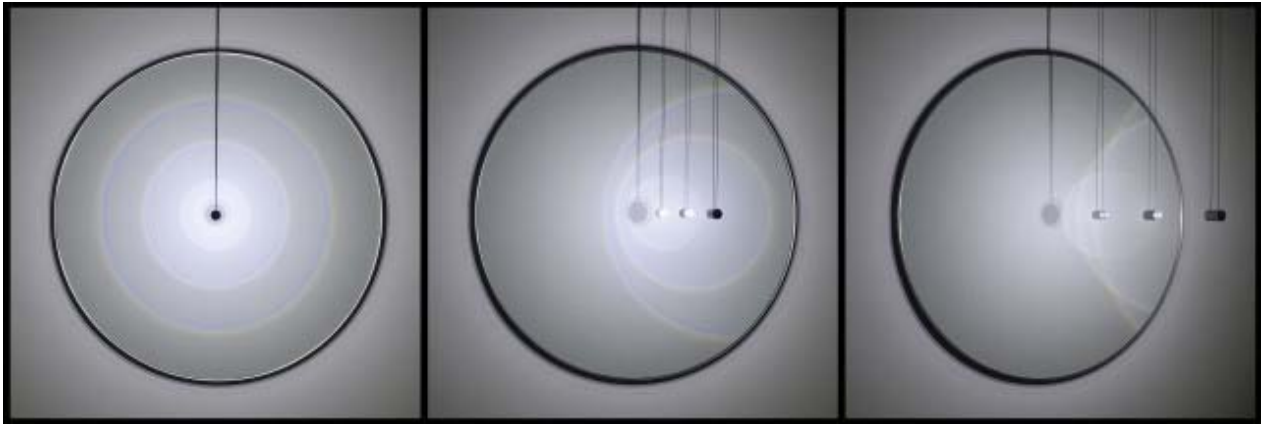
*Chris Fraser, "SCRY" (2013), Glass Microspheres, Plate Glass, Maple Plywood, LED Pendant,
25 3/4" Diameter x 6"*

“Open one eye and light becomes image. Open both and it becomes space,” noted Fraser in a statement he shared with Hyperallergic. But as he pointed out, the stereo vision with which we see the world can sometimes falter. Anyone who’s watched a 3D movie knows that the eye can perceive three dimensional space even when there’s no physical object present.



*Detail of Chris Fraser's "EMMANUELLE" (2013), Glass Microspheres, Plate Glass, Aluminum, LED Pendant, 24
1/4" Diameter x 1"*

It's difficult to describe Fraser's work without seeing them in person; even photos, which by their nature are monoscopic, can't capture the stereoscopic quality of the experience. "Emmanuelle" (2013) creates the sensation of a halo around an LED, but as you approach the object or swivel to the side, the scope of the halo shifts more than your brain expects. "Cone" (2013), with three lights in sequence, makes you want to extend your hand and touch the beams and circles in space, but as you do, there's nothing to grasp. As Fraser noted in his statement, "Vision does not verify or report on the real. In a very real sense, it creates it."



A sequence of images of Chris Fraser's "CONE" (2013)

Fraser describes his making process for this particular show as an accident, as he played around with materials in his studio. "I was throwing materials together in the studio," he said, "hoping something good would happen. That type of desperation is usually counterproductive. But on this occasion it worked." With a light bulb in front of glass, he saw the eventual object he would iterate on, leading to the current installations, which use cleverly-arranged glass to create the experience.

I hesitate to share this detail and want to be clear it's not a critique, but an insight: on opening night, the doors opened late, and visitors standing outside could see Fraser and team on ladders, carefully — very carefully — arranging the works in place. "While the conceptualization of a work is often easy," he explained, "the execution can be painstaking." For the patient viewer, it was well worth the wait.

In Stereo continues at Highlight Gallery (17 Kearny Street, Union Square, San Francisco) through January 31.

<http://hyperallergic.com/104061/sculptures-of-light-and-illusion/>