



Christine Sciulli  
TANGLE

March 14 - April 10, 2011  
Opening: Friday, March 18, 6-9 pm

causey  
contemporary

**Christine Sciulli, Tangle**  
Artist Statement  
February 2011

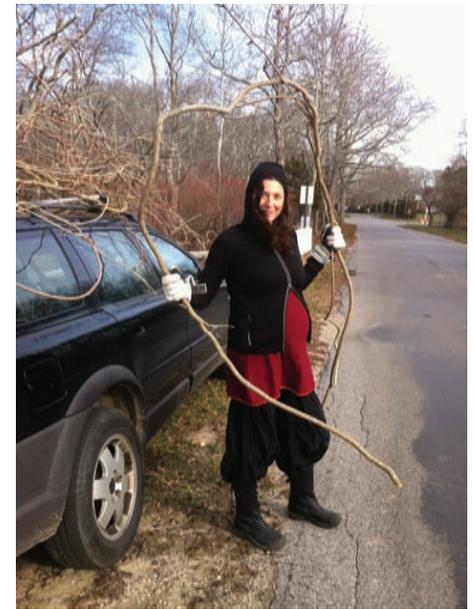
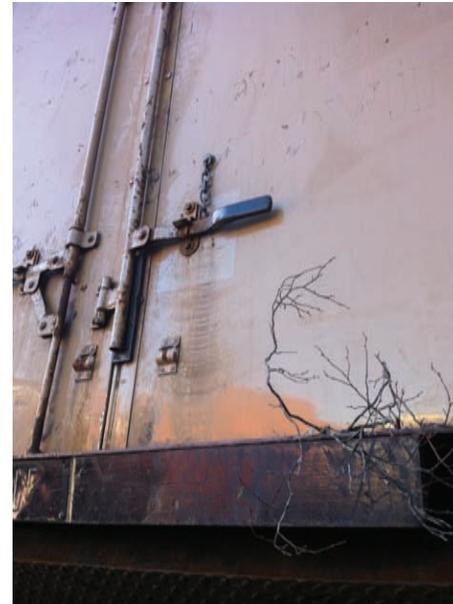
In Tangle, the interception of two-dimensional moving planes of light by a colicky three-dimensional physical network creates a kinetic environment of animated points of light. Causey Contemporary's space allows for an immersive installation within which the viewer is free to roam. The gallery-wide tangle of vines, branches and grass provides an organic network that interrupts clinically scanning planes of light with organized cacophony.

Working in the fields and forests of the eastern tip of Long Island to harvest material for the show, I was accompanied by a constant companion. At times knee deep in snow, wielding loppers on limbs and shrubs, vying with vines as they determinedly choked down trees, I attempted to wrangle nature while pregnancy wrangled me. Here, as I write this statement three weeks before installing the show, my body is still tangled with this ever-growing creature.

In my planesSPACE and Intercepting Planes installations, the intent has been to make work that creates a dialogue between a projection and its transformation, challenging the perception of seemingly simple geometries. The interception of roving lines of light generates a dynamic spatial mapping of the straight line as it becomes unraveled and fluidly recast in space as a multitude of coplanar points.



Tangle, Studio Installation, Amagansett, 2011



This page:  
Amagansett Studio,  
Harvesting vines  
with my stowaway,  
Greta, from whom  
I was untangled on  
February 22nd,  
Moving Day,  
Installation in  
progress at  
Causey Contemporary.

Page 6:  
East End Tangles ,  
Brush in the Snow,  
Installation in progress  
at Causey  
Contemporary,  
Swamp-Dune bush.

Christine Sciuilli: An Artist of the Floating World

*planesPACE* and Practical Geometry

The architect Mies Van Der Rohe once famously quipped “less is more.” It’s in that vein of observation—of scripted space and our intuitive response to it, that I like to think of Christine Sciuilli’s work. Whenever you look up and see a grid—whether it’s in the artwork of Sarah Morris, or Fred Sanback—you’re confronted with a simple notion: how we organize space, and create spatial relationships go right to the core of what it means to be human. I’m drawn to Sciuilli in the same way that I’m drawn to Pythagoras: she offers an elegant way to navigate some of the more complex issues facing our time and presents us with a geometry of lines and light to act as guideposts as we navigate the often hyper complex world of 21st century aesthetics. Think of her lines and abstracted intersections as a lyrical play on our modes of moving through space, and one could easily trace a relationship to music and geometry, much like Pythagoras.

According to legend, the way Pythagoras discovered that musical notes could be translated into mathematical equations was when one day he passed blacksmiths at work, and thought that the sounds emanating from their anvils being hit were beautiful and harmonious and decided that whatever scientific law caused this to happen must be mathematical and could be applied to music. He went to the blacksmiths to learn how this had happened by looking at their tools, he discovered that it was because the anvils were “simple ratios of each other, one was half the size of the first, another was  $\frac{2}{3}$  the size, and so on.” Think of Sciuilli’s oeuvre as a meditation of music and spatial relationships and you can easily see some of the same links—ratio, proportion and above all, pattern recognition. These are her informing motifs.

Pythagoras believed in something called the “harmony of the spheres.” He thought that the planets and stars moved according to mathematical equations, which corresponded to musical notes and thus produced a symphony—what would happen if we made Sciuilli’s material into music?

It’s not every day that you see an artist like Christine Sciuilli. Her work consists of intersections of the geometry and an intuitive sense of how to use everyday materials to give a sense of “spatialisation”—she plays with how we perceive the world around us in a way that leaves you with a kind of eerie sense of timelessness.

Some examples:

One day I walked outside of my place on Duane St Park and saw lights she had projected into the trees in front of my place. Another time, I saw a series of points and lines she created a subtle geometry of moving structure in the air that she had created at a gallery and was struck by the dynamic and beautiful structures she evoked as the light points and strings intersected, moved and evolved along different axes. It reminded me of some of the core issues composers like Iannis Xenakis (who reflected Pythagoras) or Pierre Boulez liked to think of when they wrote about music and geometry. Even Goethe came to mind with his infamous adage that “architecture is nothing but frozen music.”

In Sciuilli’s mind, the creation of topology and differential geometry is at play—the play of lines, the play of intersections, the play of vanishing points of perspective. They foster a kind of Euclidean geometry of an art composition. In our era of videogames and of hyper dense Computer Aided Design (CAD) compositions for architects like Frank Gehry and Rem Koolhaas, one can only wonder how the 21st century will respond to the maps of Google Earth and GPS systems—they too follow the logic of the grid. I can think of so many intersections between Sciuilli’s work and the way we live: the grids that organize the roads of any city, the fiberoptic networks holding our information economy together, the grids of solar panels... the examples are there, we just need to look for them.

Chiharu Shiota uses miles of string in her work to suspend objects in space and time, Richard Wentworth’s and Sol Lewitt’s use grid drawings and of course, some of the string compositions of Fred Sanback come to mind when I think of Sciuilli’s compositions. All of which, on one level or another, Sciuilli evokes and responds to.

Call and response—I guess you could say it’s the geometric equivalent of how music unfolds in space: points and lines, waveforms, volume, amplitude—they all come back to make the viewer, like Sciuilli, question how they orient their perspective in a world made of lines, and circles, data coordinates, and satellite links. I have a feeling that Sciuilli would know these artificial spaces as well as she knows her works relationship to the ancient of geometry. Seeing her material in play, Pythagoras would be happy and I think so would you.



Christine Sciulli is a New York based projection-installation artist. Her current body of work **planesSPACE**, has developed through solo shows and projects at AC Institute, Frederieke Taylor Gallery and Causey Contemporary, as well as group shows at Smithsonian affiliate Anmarie Garden and the Islip Art Museum where Janet Goleas described her installation of Intercepting Planes B to be “a quiet riot of controlled chaos.” She was the recipient of a Lower Manhattan Cultural Council Grant to produce a roving outdoor video installation, Intercepting Planes X, in Duane Park (New York).

She was a video artist for Phantom Limb’s 69°S and developed video for the project through Dartmouth College’s Hopkins Center Residency, and a Mass MoCA residency.

Sciulli was nominated for the American Academy of Arts and Letters 2010 Invitational Exhibition submission. Her collaborations with composers have been shown widely at European and American festivals. Sciulli has collaborated with Mabou Mines, who featured her projection

installation for their waterfront production of, “Song for New York: What Women Do While Men Sit Knitting” by Ruth Maleczek, developed during a Sundance Institute Theatre Lab Residency at White Oak. Her 2005 solo show at Causey Contemporary (formerly Chi Contemporary),

COVER, was a Village Voice Shortlist Choice: “projections...imbued with fresh, though enigmatic, meaning through intelligently deployed technology (RC BAKER).” Christine Sciulli holds an Architectural Engineering degree from Penn State University, and a BFA and MFA from Hunter College. Sciulli’s work is part of the New Museum’s Rhizome ArtBase (Rhizome.org). She is represented by Causey Contemporary.

For further information and video documentation, please visit [www.christinesciulli.net](http://www.christinesciulli.net)

...Spend a moment focusing on a small area of the work—a particular tangle of vines, for instance, or a less dense quadrant of the network that contains more negative space—and the tiny points of light seem to travel in isolation, as though independent of one another and unconnected. Each bright point, moving at varying speeds, curving and leaping from vine to vine, follows a predestined path dictated by the computer-generated planes of light emanating from the cold unblinking eye of a projector. Their trajectories are, by definition, lifeless. But Sciulli’s brilliant decision to use vines—organic, pliant, wild things—as the grid for her projections makes one forget for a moment that technology is involved and the suggestion of life is vivid and mesmerizing. This network’s lines are nature’s lines, not a machine’s and no two installations of *planesSPACE* will ever be the same. The vines twist and gnarl, they soar and sag, they bend and branch, and their wild randomness gives each tiny point its eerie aura of lifelike animation. If you look long enough, it sometimes seems Sciulli has brought a teeming colony of creatures to life and we have been given the privilege of observing them in their habitat, moving.

Step back from the points, however, and view the planes, and *planesSPACE* jumps into view not as a teeming colony of independent agents but as an orderly scan of three-dimensional space, generated by a single, controlling source. The projected planes of light cut methodical cross-sections of the space they survey like sweeps of radar. Sometimes moving slowly from the ground up; sometimes surging and spinning quickly across the field, colliding with each other soundlessly; sometimes slicing through whatever network they encounter like an MRI; the planes give us the rare experience of comprehending the origins of seemingly random, inexplicable movement. On the one hand the network of vines translates the planes, making them visible; on the other it splinters them into tiny pieces, appearing to fracture them and disguising their relationship to one another. In stepping back, however, we see that this fractured, disconnected appearance is an illusion. With this installation and its predecessors, Sciulli has powerfully illustrated the interconnectedness of things, the light-planes serving as a visual analog for the laws of physics acting on the natural world; for the invisible, larger order that animates and dictates the trajectories of life itself. In all its iterations, these works have been striking both in their philosophical depth, for the rich and myriad metaphors brought to mind, so challenging and also compellingly simple, and also for their sheer beauty. Standing in *planesSPACE* is pleasurable, it is *fun*, it is wondrous to behold, and children and adults alike may ooh and aah as the light spins and plays along the vines, each sweep launching an army of sparklers, travelers, streamers and miniature comets loose amongst the vines.

Kamy Wicoff, 2009 / [www.kamywicoff.com](http://www.kamywicoff.com)

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Scouting for material in Tangle (Above)  
Unloading cuttings at the studio (Cover Image)

The artist would like to thank the following people and organizations for making this exhibition possible: Bridget Vizoso, Carlos Quintana, Jim Knowlan and the Ross School, Larry Penny and the Town of East Hampton, Nicole and Michael Hartnett, Nick Nicolia, Peter Sabbeth, Wickham Boyle, David Peterson, Justin Waldstein, Kore Yoors, Jay and Sharon DiPietro, Sandy and Liz Sciulli, as well as Carter, Tycho, Tor and Greta Burwell.

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Gallery Hours:  
Wed-Fri 11-7, Sat-Sun 12-6, Mon 9-5  
Closed Tuesday  
92 Wythe Ave at N.11th St., Brooklyn, NY 11211  
Tracy Causey-Jeffrey 718.218.8939