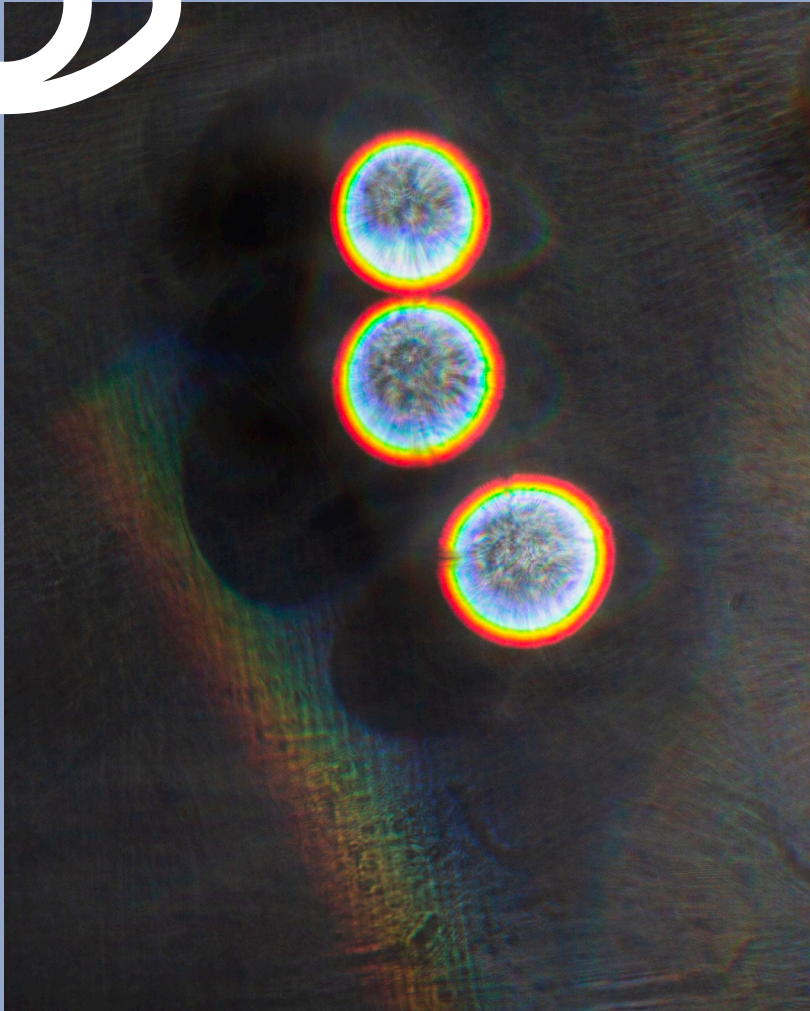


Silver Eye

Gallery Guide
Mar 3–Apr 23, 2022



Observational Astronomy
Centa Schumacher

About the Artist

Centa Schumacher is a lens-based artist and educator based in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and is the former director of the now-closed gallery Phosphor Project Space. Centa has shown her work nationally, including Paradise Palase in Brooklyn, NY, Aggregate Space in Oakland, CA, and an upcoming solo exhibition at the Carbon Copy Project Space in Louisville, KY. She received her MFA from San Francisco State University.

Cover image, *The Three Aspects*, 2021, courtesy of the artist

Observational Astronomy

Uninterested in what the camera can do as a factual recording device, artist Centa Schumacher works with a handmade lens assembled from vintage camera elements. She has worked with this lens for almost ten years. It offers her endless creative possibilities to distort light and perspective. Schumacher views this lens as a site of transition to explore intermediary spaces between the material world and the spiritual.

The photographs presented in *Observational Astronomy* use abstraction and luminance to create spaces that feel extraordinary and build a sense of transcendence. Three photographs from the series *Voids* are displayed on lightboxes facing Penn Avenue. This series began after the artist moved to Pittsburgh from California and continued ideas she explored while an artist in residence at the Vermont Studio Center in 2018. The harsh Eastern winters in her new home city were both cruel and entrancing. These images made by photographing the sun reflecting off melting snow and ice symbolize these conflicting responses. Together these images and the metaphor of the series title suggest a process of metamorphosis. While Schumacher's photographs record physical material change through abstract studies in light, this work speaks to broader personal transformation.

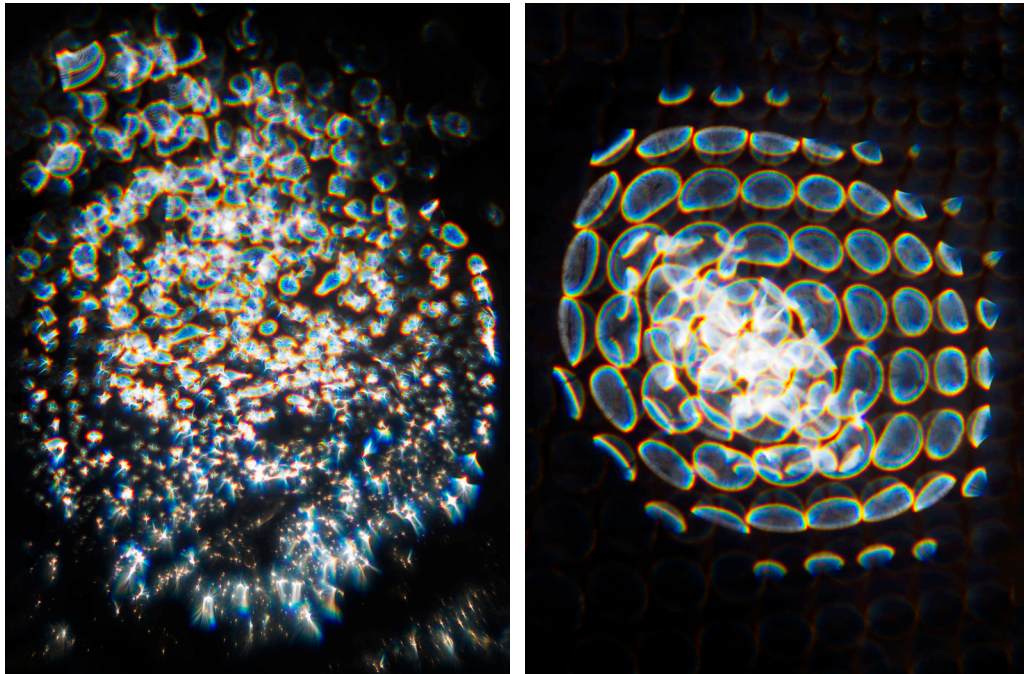
Building further on this theme is Schumacher's most recent series, *Asterisms*. In contemporary astronomy, asterisms are a group of stars that form a recognizable pattern or shape. Interestingly, asterisms may also be members of one or more constellations. By their familiar nature, asterisms can help navigate the night sky. For Schumacher, photography too is a guide. Her handmade lens serves as a path to exploring otherworldly interactions of light and space. She captures that which exists in our reality yet remains invisible to the human eye until now.

Space and astronomy have always been significant to Schumacher. She grew up in the country on a farm, so the night sky was a prominent aspect of her environment. She shared this experience with family members, especially her father, often watching meteor showers together or looking at Saturn and

Helen Trompeteler
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of Programs,
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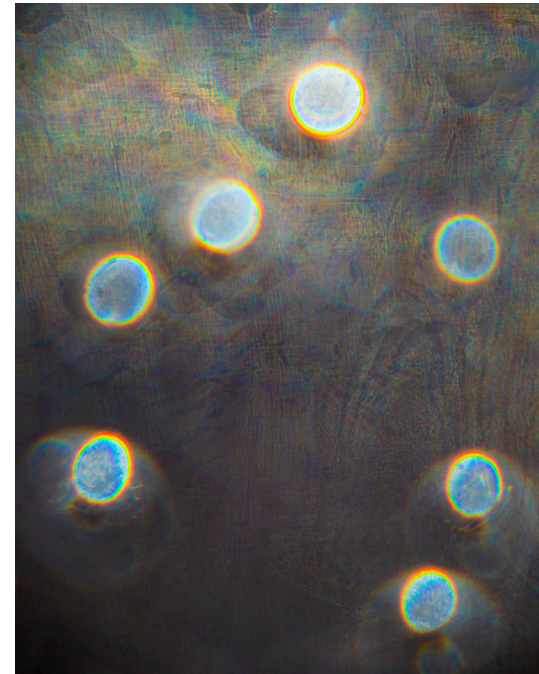
the moon through his telescope. The three photographs from *Asterisms* presented in the gallery are mysterious in their scale, echoing these early experiences of feeling small compared to the magnitude of the stars above. An experimental approach to scale has been a consistent thread throughout Schumacher's practice. She enjoys the push and pulls in perception that creates such disorientation.

Each image in this series contains unique and music-like notations of shapes which remain open to individual interpretation. It is a natural human trait to look for familiar traces and assign meaning to such random patterns. This phenomenon is called pareidolia and can be traced throughout the development of Western art and literature, and religious imagery. While color is a secondary consideration for Schumacher, as her images exist in fields of darkness, the prism of rainbow colors from refracted light occurs often. Coincidentally these multi-colors also allow viewers to make multiple points of emotional and psychological connection.



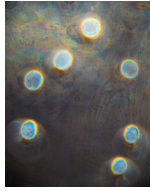
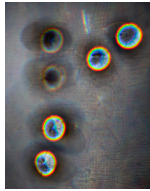
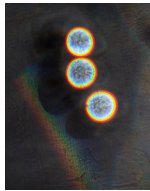
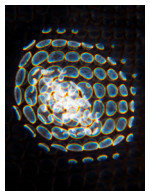
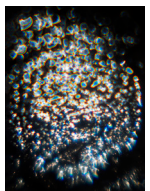
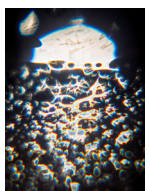
Fittingly in Greek mythology, the personification of the rainbow was Iris, a messenger of the gods to humanity. Likewise, many other mythologies and traditions perceive rainbows as a bridge between the earthly plane and the spiritual. There is an inherent spirituality throughout Schumacher's photography. Her photograph, *The Three Aspects*, especially evokes this by suggesting a harmony achievable through the union between mind, body, and spirit. While viewers can each interpret Schumacher's photographs in a way that is personally meaningful, collectively we can enjoy their elegant beauty.

Asterisms departs from the earlier series *Voids* by introducing a new vulnerability through autobiographical elements. Here we gain a clearer sense of Schumacher's authorship, with the traces of her fingerprints recorded on the reflective surface of an everyday household object. For a long-time, Schumacher's practice has centered on transforming mundane lived experience into something elevated and unrecognizable. This aim has a renewed poignancy given our



Images from left to right, *Voids, etc (chaos)*, 2020, *Voids, etc (order)*, 2020, *The Seven Talents*, 2021. All Images courtesy of the artist.

shared isolating experiences of lockdown during the pandemic. Schumacher has previously spoken of the triple aspect to change that begins with the standard order of things disrupted by an intense void or chaos. As we still grapple with the pandemic and associated social-political events, it is unclear what new states of being may follow. *Asterisms* was made during a period when time stood still for many of us, frozen, like a previously unimagined winter. Yet these photographs by Schumacher are still generative. Their themes offer space for self-examination to consider how we wish to emerge, personally and societally, from the chaos of recent times.

	Centa Schumacher	<i>The Seven Talents</i>	2021 Archival pigment print 20 x 16 Edition of 3	\$350
	Centa Schumacher	<i>Tutors of Dionysus</i>	2021 Archival pigment print 20 x 16 Edition of 3	\$350
	Centa Schumacher	<i>The Three Aspects</i>	2021 Archival pigment print 20 x 16 Edition of 3	\$350
	Centa Schumacher	<i>Voids, etc (order)</i>	2020 Archival pigment print 36 x 24 inches Uneditioned	\$475
	Centa Schumacher	<i>Voids, etc (chaos)</i>	2020 Archival pigment print 36 x 24 inches Uneditioned	\$475
	Centa Schumacher	<i>Voids, etc (intermediary)</i>	2020 Archival pigment print 36 x 24 inches Uneditioned	\$475

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Silver Eye Center for Photography is generously supported by our members and individual donors and by the Allegheny Regional Asset District, The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Bloomberg Philanthropies, Concept Art Gallery, The Heinz Endowments, The Hillman Foundation, the Henry John Simonds Foundation, the Irving and Aaronel deRoy Gruber Charitable Foundation, The National Endowment for the Arts, Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, the PNC Charitable Trust, and the William Talbott Hillman Foundation.