

Kana Tanaka

ARTIST STATEMENT

When light vanishes, the visible is obscured. When a position changes, the previous view disappears. When not paying attention, a moment is missed.

As I work with glass, I encounter diverse expressions of visible phenomena. These phenomena are everywhere in our daily lives wherever light interacts with glass—windows, household objects and fixtures. When a sunbeam enters a window, it is often scattered by small prisms. When a car passes by a window at night, the texture of the glass is projected on the wall with traces of the light pattern appearing and then instantaneously disappearing, creating a "trigger moment." My interest lies with these so-called "trigger moments" as they shift awareness within a split second, its image remembered as if suspended in a daydream.

I incorporate light phenomena in my installation pieces. Instead of making simple objects, which the viewer looks at, I create experiences that surround the viewer and affect their senses, directly and broadly. By means of exaggeration, amplification, distortion and division, I seek to generate new perceptions. Viewers become part of the work as they interact with it and observe light. Glass is the net—with which I take the experience of light and share it with others.

My past installations in galleries and theaters have focused primarily on the ephemeral quality of light and the viewer's changing perceptions. Through these projects, I have become increasingly concerned with the challenge of retaining this element of unpredictability and the uniqueness of the viewer's experience. Creating permanent public artworks allows me to make such experiences available to an unlimited audience for all ages and over time.

My design approach to public art begins with studying the local context—its physical and cultural environment, people, history and surrounding architecture. This research allows me to reinterpret my findings into a one-of-a-kind design. These artworks are for people in a specific locations/regions—they tell a story and/or relate to those communities. Another important factor for public art is making it durable for many years.

For the new works in Threshold, my creative process was opposite that of making public art. I tried to focus on my own feelings and the quality of fragility rather than durability. First, I let my material lead itself to become new forms and compositions. I saw in the new forms connections to my recent personal experiences, including a family member's life threatening events. The glass suggested body parts and organs. I thought of heart failure, cerebral infarction, miscarriage, arrhythmia, spine injury and paralysis. I have been contemplating these functional failures, their relationship to the life of the body, and the process of recovery. They have made me reflect on loss and hope, awareness and understanding.

I believe these reflections have a subtle presence in the works in this exhibition. I wonder how the viewers will see these new works—how they will relate to the forms, what they will see in them.