Jessica Angel is an installation artist concerned with highlighting concepts from the disciplines of physics, biology, information sciences, complexity research, mathematics, architecture, and philosophy. Frequently employing the macro vs. micro, the real vs. the virtual, Angel has been granted numerous residencies and awards in the U.S. and Colombia, with an upcoming residency at MASS MoCA.

By Danielle McCloskey

**DM:** Your current body of work involves large murals and installations that your artist statement describes as landscapes. They are often heavy in technology-based aesthetics and virtual realities. How do you conceive your imagery of realities that do not have place in the physical world? What are your main inspirations?

**JA:** The imagery in my work is an amalgam of elements from different sources. Some come from influences like the utopian architectural drawings by Yona Friedman and Cedric Price. I use imagery found in network visualization graphics, and, in general, either visual or literary images that delve into the advent of a technological era. I find deeper associations with these images when I read philosophy. Ideas developed by Michel Foucault, who explores information as the building blocks of our surrounding reality, make me question the state of information in our time, and its influence on what we blindly believe to be reality.

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This interest in architecture, and in the concept of information as the background of reality, has led me to create landscapes that offer a perspective of space and structure as the platform where information flows. Since computerized information is at the forefront of our time, I have focused my visual endeavors on creating imaginary sceneries of the micro spaces inside motherboards and integrated circuits.

In addition, I explore macro space, applying the concepts of architecture and information to the field of cosmology, where the massive structure of the universe is in itself our most sophisticated rendering. Our renderings of the universe disclose the current state of affairs of what we consider to be the truth in science today. It is an example of a very complex architecture of ideas and concepts. So, as far apart in size and nature as these micro and macro subjects may appear to be, I find a common systemic ground that reveals a structural character worth exploring and experiencing through the eyes of my installations.

DM: As each space you install is a new and completely different ‘canvas’, can you delve a little into your process as to where and how you get started on a project and how the space plays into the overall piece?

JA: Even though I have general ideas of what I want to produce, space always determines the evolution of the initial concept, so installing in a new space demands a dialogue between the stiffness of the wall and the flexibility of the idea. Considering that the installations are handmade, my approach to the space is natural and adaptable. I initially create scale models of the installations that work as three-dimensional sketches, complemented by supporting material like books, photographs, drawings, videos, and notes that nourish the overall content of the piece.

The early stages of a project involve a certain level of writing and communication that open channels of interaction with the curator, or facilitator of the space, enabling an intellectual dialogue that endures throughout the time of the exhibition and beyond.
DM: Your piece, Limitless Alignment installed at Seton Hall University accompanied you speaking in a panel discussion with others from different disciplines on the concept of infinity. What was discussed at the panel and how does Limitless Alignment coincide with your ideas on infinity?

JA: My take on infinity with this piece forged very interesting questions related to the contrast between ‘here and there’, meaning, the distance between one point and another, and the endless succession of distances found after that further point. This is why the installation shows the colored dots that map the furthest galaxies in the known universe. We know that if those galaxies are there (or were there billions of years ago), there must be something behind them.

On the other hand, the work aims to defy the cubic nature of the installation space, by visually bending the walls into a sphere. I am an enthusiast of the idea that the universe is curved and hyper-spherical, which opens up the possibility of the concepts ‘finite’ and ‘boundless’ to come into an agreement. For example: the point we see close here may as well be behind and not in front of the one we see far there—as if the endless succession of distances found behind that furthest point would inevitably end, after traveling throughout all the possible manifolds of the hyper-sphere, back where it started, encountering on its path this point that seems to be closer to us.

Unfortunately, the panel discussion was canceled due to inclement weather and the ideas around infinity from others in different fields never got to be shared. Nevertheless, the notions around infinity were flowing on a constant basis throughout the three weeks of the installation process. Jaclyn Avidon assisted me with the basic scientific framework of my piece. Her take on infinity comes from a mathematical foundation; she introduced the concepts of set theory and Cantor’s paradox. In general, the ideas around infinity in the exhibition collided in the shared reality that we are aware of our finite domain, which I believe to be the true nature of our perception of infinity.

DM: You are interested in collaborating with other artists and
Most importantly, I have discovered that I am not alone developing the ideas I am interested in, and that there are multiple perspectives, methods, and mediums that lead to the same and different arguments. This, to me, is proof that there is no such thing as an absolute truth and that the complexity of the intellectual, visual, and sensitive nature of the structure of everything is dependent on a rich and prolific collection of points of view.

When collaborating with people from different disciplines, my spectrum of understanding expands. My vision of everything becomes clear, revealing patterns that adapt to all fields of knowledge and action, so if I could be an enabler for these seemingly different disciplines to collide into an all-inclusive vision of art I would feel very accomplished, but I am still far away from that.

**DM:** What are you working on right now?

**JA:** I am getting ready to install a solo exhibition at Desert Casino, a trading company and show space experienced in art portfolio sales. It will be on view from April 10th to May 20th, where I will be showing drawings, paintings, and a wallpaper related to the landscapes I described earlier. In addition, I am preparing to spend August 2016 as a resident artist at the MASS MoCA Studios. This studio space will be the platform to finish up the plan for my next major project, taking place in early 2017 at the Abroms-Engel Institute for the Visual Arts AEIIVA. This project will be the next step in advancing the idea of collaboration and education, as it will engage students of the UAB Department of Art and Art History. And finally, I will be creating an installation for the second time in October 2016 at 516 ARTS, as part of their 10th anniversary group exhibition called “DECADE” that gathers about ten artists who have exhibited with them in the past 10 years.