

Hedge



Hedge, installation view, Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis, 2017. Recycled plastic and carbon fiber.

Built from recycled materials taken from industrial sites, the architectural installation *Hedge* experiments with light and reflection, with material and ephemera, and with changes in the weather. The design team of Jason Foster Butz, Nathaniel Elberfeld, and Lavender Tessmer investigate modular forms, with the repetition of smaller units reconceived to create a large-scale holistic material system. The completed form maintains a subtle yet profound influence on the outdoor space of CAM's courtyard, a surprise to the eye activated by cloud, sun, moon, and slant of light. The installation title refers to hedges found in everyday outdoor settings as natural dividers, but in this case the hedge has been lifted from the ground and suspended into the sky.

Prior to *Hedge*, Butz and Tessmer led graduate architecture students from the Sam Fox School of

Design and Visual Arts at Washington University in St. Louis in the creation of the site-specific installation *Accumulus*, which shimmered above CAM's front entrance in 2015. Returning to the Museum with their colleague Nathaniel Elberfeld, Butz and Tessmer bring their iterative design practice to a public space. This hedge of scrap materials is a gentle intervention in the courtyard, a delicate formal system that transforms in the moment and through the seasons.



Audio Tour

Visit camstlaudio.org or ask for an iPod at the front desk to hear directly from the artists and curator on the audio tour.

Jason Foster Butz, Nathaniel Elberfeld, and Lavender Tessmer are graduates of and lecturers in the Graduate School of Architecture and Urban Design at Washington University in St. Louis. They have taught seminars and studios in parametric design, digital fabrication, and digital representation and share research interests where digital specificity and analogue handcraft intersect. Prior to their collaboration, the three have practiced in offices in St. Louis and New York City and designed a wide-range of projects, from site-specific installations to high-end residential and commercial projects around the world.

Courtyard installations are generously supported by the Whitaker Foundation.

Hedge is organized for the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis by Lisa Melandri, Executive Director.

Related Program

Artist Talk: *Hedge*

Saturday, September 9, 11:00 am

The Digital and the Handmade

A hedge provides an edge between one space and another, a soft boundary that embraces opposite sides. And so the architectural installation *Hedge* walks a line between art and architecture, and in its creation weaves digital technology with the handmade. Butz, Elberfeld, and Tessmer are designers, practicing architects, and teachers of architecture. They use software as architects do and the digital process of their work is architectural, but the end results may be recognized under many different categories. They reference such craft techniques as lace-making, rug-making, and cross-stitch as part of their practice—techniques that rely on mapped patterns. Although the plastic components of *Hedge* are digitally scripted and mechanically produced, the net on which those components are hung is handwoven on a digitally produced armature.

The designers received donated material from PolyOne, a plastics material and resin manufacturing company. The scraps are leftovers from the manufacturing process, which frequently are not recyclable because of the use of experimental plastic mixtures. There are fifteen unique shapes and approximately 6,000 total plastic pieces in *Hedge*.



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