

Doug & Mike Starn

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Career Narrative

Doug and Mike Starn, American artists, identical twins, born 1961. First receiving international attention at the 1987 Whitney Biennial, the Starns are primarily known for working conceptually with photography for the past two and a half decades. Concerned largely with chaos, interconnection and interdependence, time, and physics. They continue defying categorization, effectively combining traditionally separate disciplines such as photography, sculpture, architecture and site-specific projects.

Their recent installation *Big Bambú: You Can't, You Don't, and You Won't Stop*, the 2010 at The Metropolitan Museum of Art ranked 4th in the world in 2010 for total attendance of contemporary art exhibitions and was the 9th most attended exhibition in the museum's history, the attendance-per-day ranking was the 8th in the world for a solo contemporary exhibit, with 3,913 visitors per day- with a total of 631,000 over the 6 month weather permitting show. Throughout the 6-month exhibit, the Starns and their crew of 10-16 rock climbers continuously lashed and sculpted over 7,000 bamboo poles, a performative architecture of randomly interconnected vectors forming a section of a seascape with a 70' cresting wave above Central Park. *Big Bambú* suggests the complexity and energy of an ever-growing and changing living organism. In 2011 *Big Bambú* continued above the Grand Canal as an official collateral exhibition of the 54th Venice Biennale, spiraling over 50 feet high. Several new iterations of the series are being developed internationally.

Gravity of Light, a solo exhibition by the Starn brothers featuring seven monumental photographs illuminated by a single, blindingly bright carbon arc lamp, originally commissioned by the Färgfabriken Kunsthalle, Stockholm, Sweden, is scheduled to open in the US in the fall of 2012. A series of artists' books accompanies the exhibition as well as a new monograph.

In the spring of 2009, the Starns completed their first permanently installed public commission for the New York City Metropolitan Transit Authority. *See it split, see it change*, a 250-foot long artwork, up to 14 feet in height, presents the artists' iconic tree photographs and a leaf transposed into fused glass, marble mosaics and a water jet cut stainless steel fence punctuate the South Ferry subway terminal. It is the recipient of the 2009 Brendan Gill Prize.

At the former Tallix foundry, their laboratory studio space in Beacon, New York, the Starns continue to build the first *Big Bambú*, a constantly evolving construction, formed by a network of more than 2,000 fresh-cut bamboo poles lashed together. This studio space allows Doug + Mike to explore in depth the dialogue *Big Bambú* has with early works such as *Stretched Christ*, *Siamese Twins*, *Sphere of Influence*, and *Amaterasu*, while pursuing their most recent investigations from their *Absorption of Light* concept, through *allevythingthat is you*, their photomicrographs of snow crystals, and their revival of the late 19th century color carbon printing process. Through their carbon-prints, the Starns mingle gilding techniques to the painterly photo-process, and further advance their metaphorical lexicon on light with photographs of Buddhist statuary.

Attracted to Light, *To Find God, not the Devil's Insides* and *allevythingthat is you* are the Starns' most recent monographic publications. The Starns are currently preparing a new artist book based on their iconic photograph of *Ganjin*, and a new monograph focused on *Big Bambú*.

The Starns were represented by Leo Castelli from 1989 until his death in 1999. Their art has been the object of numerous solo and group exhibitions in museums and galleries worldwide. The Starns have received many honors including two National Endowment for the Arts Grants in 1987 and 1995; The International Center for Photography's Infinity Award for Fine Art Photography in 1992; and, artists in residency at NASA in the mid-nineties. They have received critical acclaim in *The New York Times*, *Corriere della Sera*, *Le Figaro*, *The Times (London)*, *Art in America*, and *Artforum* amongst many other notable media. Major artworks by the Starns are represented in public and private collections including: The Museum of Modern Art (NYC); San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SF); Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, (NYC); The Jewish Museum, (NYC); The Metropolitan Museum of Art (NYC); The National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne; Whitney Museum of American Art (NYC); Yokohama Museum of Art, Japan; La Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris; La Maison Européenne de la Photographie, Paris; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, amongst many others.