

ARTnews

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Up Now

Doug and Mike Starn

NEUBERGER MUSEUM OF ART,
PURCHASE

Through August 8

Doug and Mike Starn are back showing in New York after a six-year absence, with two remarkable, if somewhat didactic exhibitions: one recently at Lehmann Maupin, the other—and more comprehensive—at the Neuberger. In addition, they have recently published a book of photographs, *Attracted to the Light* (powerHouse), consisting of a series of

creepy and beautiful preternaturally detailed portraits of nocturnal moths, tattered and with diaphanous wings, that was shown at Lehmann Maupin and is included in the Neuberger show. The subjects here are light as physical entity and as metaphor for perception and knowledge, and the Starn brothers have made an epic art-and-science project out of it—a visually lyrical seminar that attempts to demonstrate the interconnectedness of everything.

"Behind Your Eye," the title of the Neuberger spectacular, curated by Dede Young, occupies the museum's two largest galleries and consists of several installations, a video, and more than 80 photos and film stills, scaled from modest to cinematic. These include a high-mounted, sprawling, 30-foot-long still that seems to be framing a constellated night sky but instead depicts swarms of tiny, flitting, ephemeral moths and several 10-by-10-foot C-prints of the same subject. Also on view are the series "Black Pulse," X-ray-like pictures of leaves stripped to their veins,

and "The Structure of Thought," with starkly poetic silhouettes of intertwined trees and some branches printed on paper. Applied to Shoji-style screens, the



Doug and
Mike Starn,
Structure of Thought
#7 (walkthrough),
2001-4,
varnished MIS and
Lysonic ink-jet prints
on HM3 and Gampi
papers, silk and
matte medium,
stretched on
wood frame,
10' x 55' x 10 1/2'.
Neuberger
Museum of Art.

images form the portal through which viewers enter the vast space beyond, furnished as a reading room of sorts, with long tables covered with scrolls, catalogues, and photographic images—works in progress.

In the dark of the adjacent gallery, *The Gravity of Light* (1995-98), a gorgeous installation of fiber-optic light and wires, seems to float weightlessly in space, while *Nowhere to Fall* (2001-4), a two-channel video projected onto a giant screen, features Dennis Hopper musing on gravity and antigravity from a script based on the artists' observations, comments by cosmonauts and Dante, backed by the music of Tom Waits. It all adds up to a signature Starn team production—an extravagant, state-of-the-art, postlapsarian meditation on science, transcendence, and transience. —LillyWei