

PACIFIC NORTHWEST

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All the **BRIGHT MOVES**

FROM CELESTIAL IMAGERY TO HER OWN HEARTBEAT,
A SEATTLE ARTIST'S WORK CELEBRATES EXPLORATION.

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ith her boundless curiosity, it isn't surprising that Seattle artist Liz Tran takes an all-encompassing approach to materials,

creating mixed-media works with paint and inks, graphite and even glitter. A graduate of Cornish College of the Arts, Tran creates exuberant pieces that probe everything from human emotion to outer space. With ideas so vast in scale, it's also no surprise that her work is evolving into three-dimensional expressions, most notably site-specific installations. "Everything comes from painting, but I get bored, so it's helpful to work in different formats," she says.

Those formats have included printmaking and ceramics, as well as collaborating with Def Leppard's Vivian Campbell on a Gibson Les Paul guitar for a special VH1 Save The Music Foundation auction last fall, where it brought one of the highest bids. (Tran will quickly tell you that music is a huge influence on her work—lately it's been Janelle Monáe and Kendrick Lamar.) This summer, she brought her vision to JW Architects, where she created an installation called *Cumulus*. The two-story project, curated by Sarah Hurt of Seattle Art Source, was an imaginative combination of two- and three-dimensional work with a weather theme.

But there are more earthly subjects, too. A group session with a naturopath led to her *Heart Map* paintings, which debuted with Phylogeny Contemporary at the Seattle Art Fair this summer and which will be on view starting in November at Heron Arts in San Francisco. Using five-minute recordings of her heart rate, Tran "draws out the ups and downs, and then works off that pattern, putting it into painting form," she explains. "We learned about things like how a loud noise will make your heart rate spike. I didn't realize how tied our hearts are to us, emotionally." She also has a new collaboration with the Chihuly Garden and Glass museum, which licensed one of her paintings (a work inspired by Chihuly) for reproduction on goods including wearables. The latter is something Tran is intrigued by,

since she has often made attire for herself. “I’ve been thinking about how to make my work more accessible, and working in ways that aren’t precious,” she says. “I’m always trying to get back to the place where I don’t have any expectation of things. I’m less judgmental on myself working in mediums that I have little knowledge of. Creating apparel is something I’d like to pursue with a designer.”

In between her busy studio practice (she works out of the converted garage at her home in the Central District but dreams of a place in the country), Tran supports a variety of progressive causes, often donating her work for fund-raisers. “Artwork is a therapeutic exercise for me—a means of processing what’s going on in the world,” she says. “People complain but they don’t get active. Everyone has something they can contribute; give and make change in the ways you can. You don’t have to be stuck in the darkness.” And it’s that very spirit that emanates from her work. When asked what she hopes people take away from it, she doesn’t hesitate: “Joy. It’s what I’m searching for myself. I want to give people a joyful interruption in their day.” ■



With her boundless curiosity, it isn't surprising that Seattle artist Lix Tran takes an all-encompassing approach to materials, creating mixed-media works with paint and ink, graphite and even glitter. A graduate of Cornish College of the Arts, Tran creates exuberant pieces that probe everything from human emotion to outer space. With ideas so vast in scale, it's also no surprise that her work is evolving into three-dimensional expressions, most notably site-specific installations. "Everything comes from painting, but I get bored, so it's helpful to work in different formats," she says.

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Seattle artist Liz Tren (opposite) stands near *Cumulus*, her recent site-specific installation for local firm J.W. Architects. In Tren's studio are a collection of fishing floats (this page), which she found, painted and then strung together.

As part of the *Cumulus* installation, painted three-dimensional orbs hang from the ceiling (this page). "I cut thousands of circles a year for my work," says Tran of the scraps (opposite, top) she often uses for collages. One of the artist's completed paintings (opposite, bottom) rests in her studio.



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