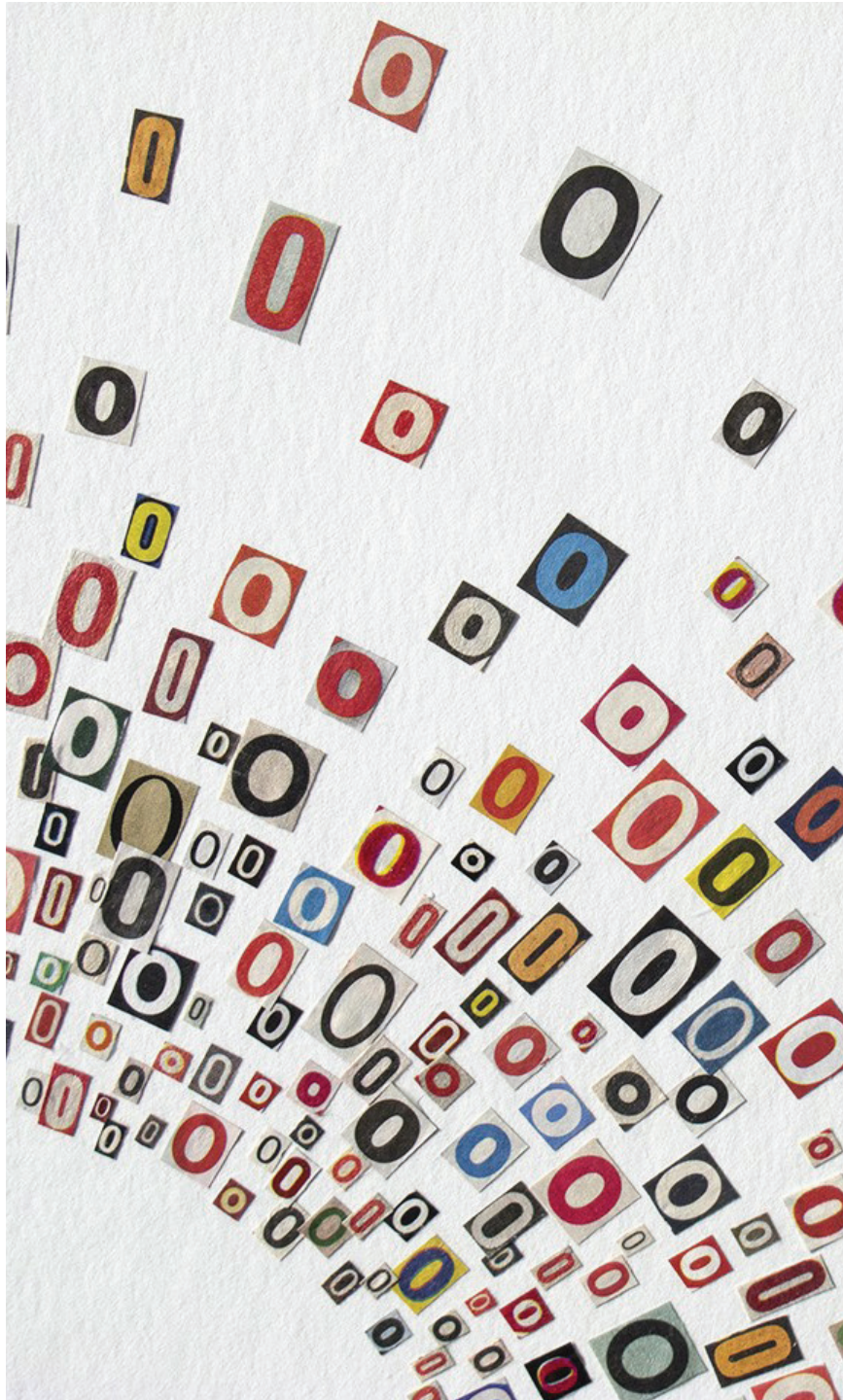


Kristiina Lahde

EMERGENT GEOMETRIES

May 30 - July 18, 2026



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Kristiina Lahde's artwork elegantly slips between categories, between art and everyday things, between 3-dimensional and 2-dimensional art forms, and between the scientific language of objective measurement and the poetic language of subjective perception. Through a balance of precision and play, Lahde's work is aimed at reconfiguring our relationship to familiar, but often overlooked, tools and systems of measurement, ordering, and understanding.

Cover: Kristiina Lahde, *Zero In*, 2021, collage, courtesy of the artist and MKG127.
Left: Kristiina Lahde, *Zero In* (Detail), 2021, collage, courtesy of the artist and MKG127.

Algorithms and statistics have shifted recently, from behind-the-scenes calculations and abstract metrics to tools that track and influence daily social interactions, the circulation of ideas, and the way that we process and share our experiences. This phenomenon raises new questions about the future of human agency—one’s freedom and ability to make one’s own decisions. By subtly reframing familiar things (geometry, numbers, rulers, measuring tapes, and catalogue cards) through artistic intervention or by the integration of chance, Lahde transforms their context, revealing the faults that are inherent in the uncritical use and compliance with such systems. Lahde’s exhibition exemplifies how minimal, creative, and very human interruptions can punctuate the mechanistic daily grind with moments of curiosity, beauty, and wonder.

Lahde’s creative “misuse” of objects that are associated with larger systems of measurement and classification causes her work to straddle many boundaries and operate between art and the commonplace. When considering what distinguishes an art object from an everyday object, philosopher and art critic, Arthur Danto wrote of the Pop Art of Andy Warhol,

*“Pop celebrated the most ordinary things of the most ordinary lives—corn flakes, canned soup, soap pads, movie stars, comics. And by the process of transfiguration, it gave them an almost transcendental air.”*¹

Echoes of this celebration and transformation of the ordinary are also found in Lahde’s work. The commonplace things that Lahde uses are often taken-for-granted, but when Lahde applies her processes, the objects undergo a kind of metamorphosis, as if art is an unanticipated emergent property hidden within everything. An emergent property is a characteristic, behaviour, or capability that complex systems possess, but individual parts of that system do not display independently. For example, a single molecule of water does not have the characteristic of wetness. Wetness only occurs when many water molecules are assembled. Lahde’s balance of analytical thought and lyrical artistry activates this idea by revealing the unapparent creative potential within seemingly inconsequential objects. Suspended within their unexpected combinations and arrangements, the objects within *Emergent Geometries* are held in a fragile balance between their new context within these artworks and the residue of their everyday function.

Follow a Curved Line to Completion and You Make a Circle

Much of Lahde’s work is rooted in geometry. For this work, she borrows an idea from one of Yoko Ono’s instruction paintings, which asks the viewer to consider a straight line drawn on a wall and imagine it as a segment of a very large circle. It is a model for how a very simple gesture can become a poetic reminder of the relationship between an artist, the artwork and the viewer. In this new iteration of Lahde’s 2020 installation, hundreds of circular found objects are arranged into twelve concentric arcs that radiate outward from the bottom corner of the gallery wall. Lahde’s title encourages the viewer to take a step into their own imagination

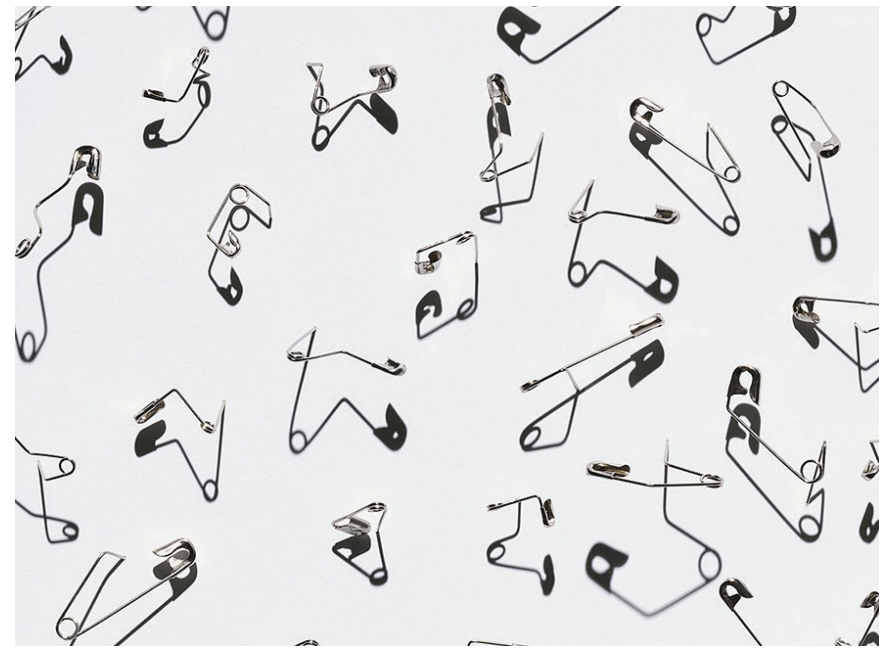
and to visualize the completion of the arcs of found objects that are tacked to the wall. This piece activates the gallery walls so that one can imagine these as segments of circles rippling out infinitely from the center.

Like much of Lahde's work, this piece seems to inhabit 2-dimensional space. Yet because her eye is informed by her sculptural awareness of space, form, and materials, viewers will often find that her work extends those limitations in unexpected ways.

Agony and Ecstasy

This work is created with over one hundred safety pins, an iconic symbol of punk aesthetics, as well as a tool used to fasten together pieces of fabric. Each pin is painstakingly bent and contorted, then stuck into a sheet of white foam core at a unique angle. The arrangement's appearance is intentionally chaotic and energetic – reminiscent of the ecstatic emotion and contained violence of a mosh pit at a punk rock show.

The sculptural work was then photographed with bold directional lighting to provide dramatic shadows; evoking stage lights cast across a pulsating dance floor. The values of the original image were then inverted, and then rotated 180 degrees to create a kind of doppelgänger, a mirrored other that further destabilizes the original composition and amplifies the tension between object and shadow.



Kristiina Lahde, *Agony and Ecstasy* (detail), 2023, Inkjet print on hahnemühle agave, courtesy of the artist and MKG127.

Under Pressure

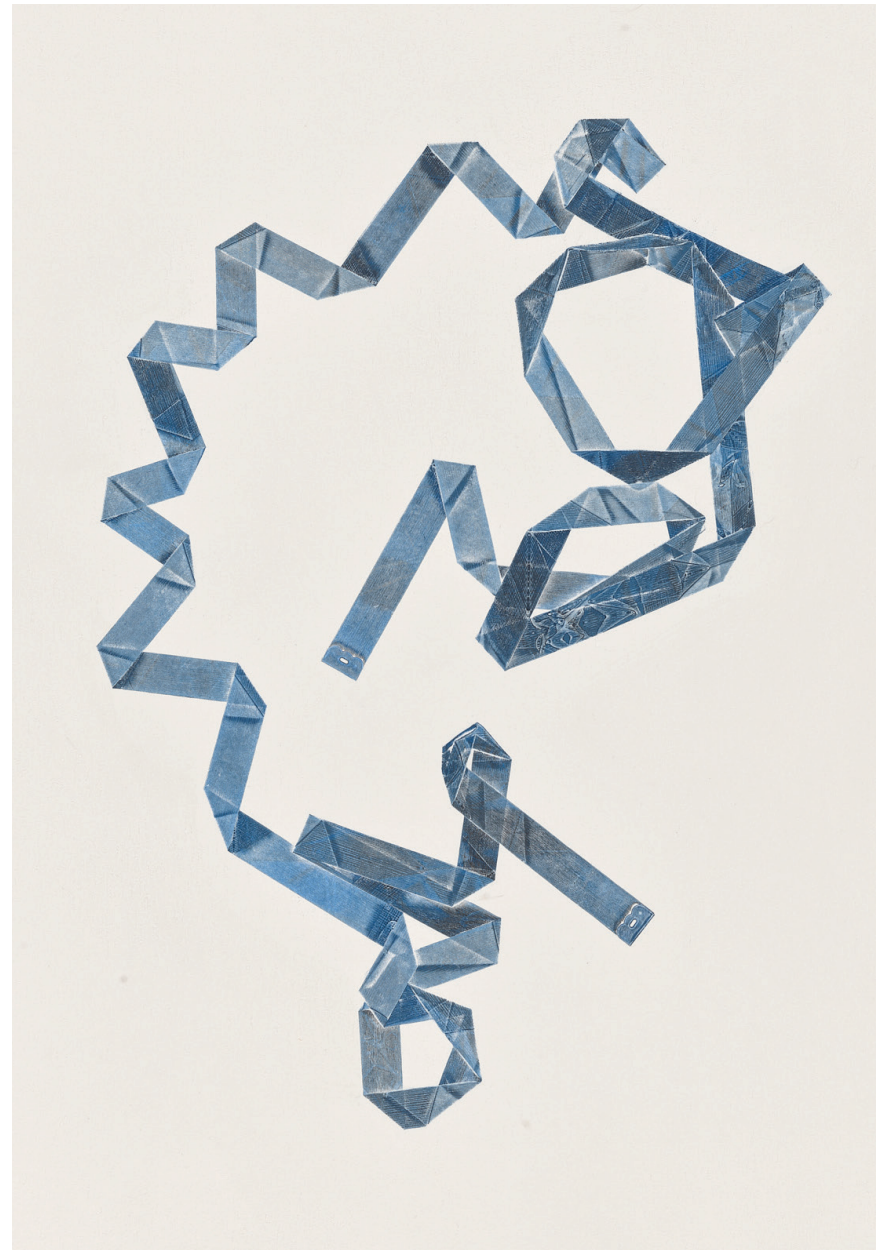
“Measurement is a dichotomy for me: I rely on it. At the same time, I don’t trust it. I am aware of the inconsistencies and slippages that can occur with measurement, miscalculations and such. Measurement is a rule, and as they say, rules are made to be broken. I think it is good to be wary of the rules.”

- Kristiina Lahde ²

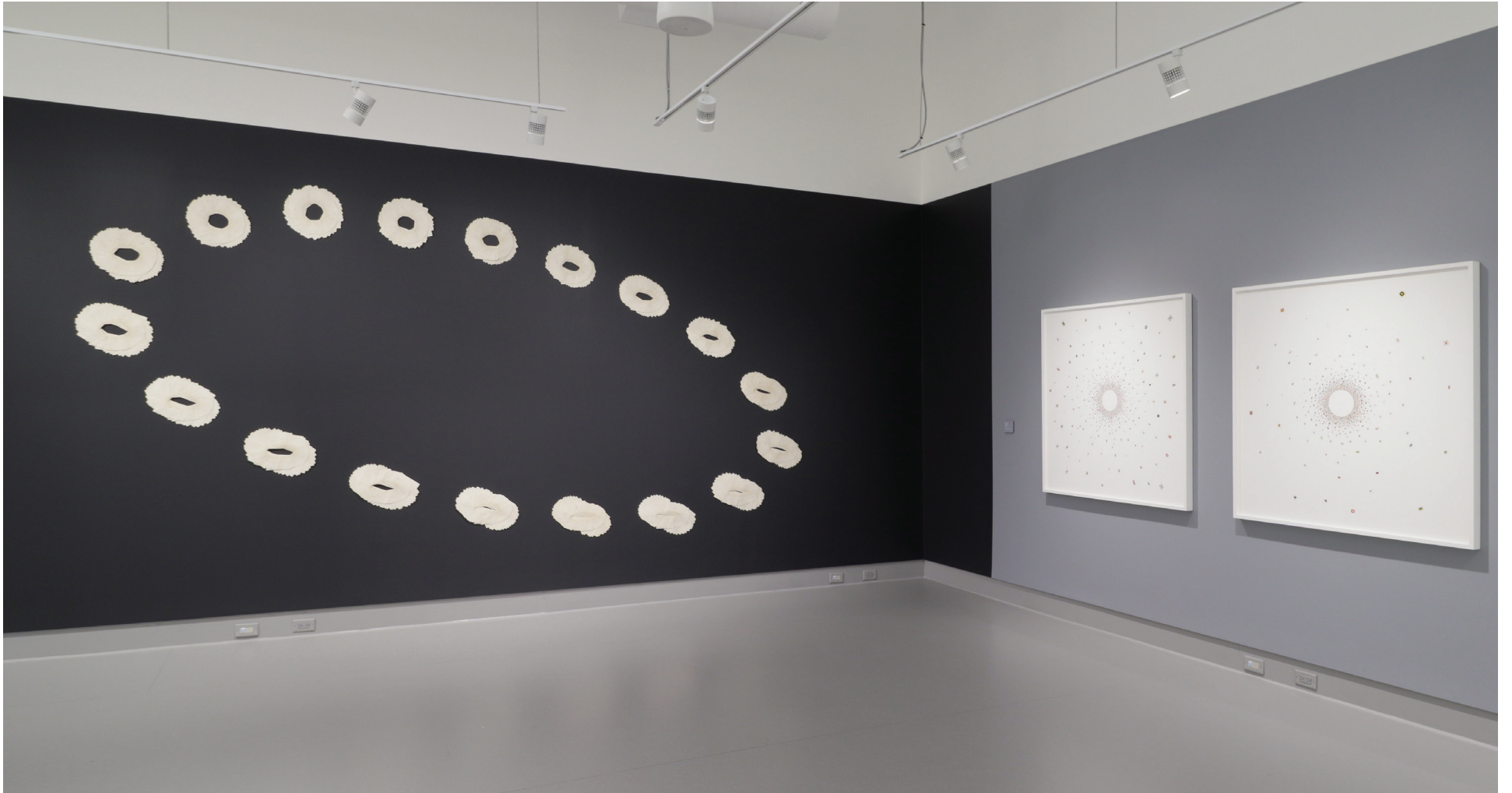
This series of monoprints occupies the “punk” corner of the exhibition along with *Agony and Ecstasy*, where anarchy thrives over order. This group of artwork also integrates textile-related tools, safety pins and tailor’s tapes. Under Pressure’s palette of blue, yellow, and black references the most common colours of tailor’s tapes, echoing the craft-based origin of these prints. Lahde’s Under Pressure monoprints are created by intermingling order with disorder and the artist’s impulse towards arrangement with openness to chance. Lahde allows the tapes to unfurl directly on the press bed, inviting a degree of randomness into the composition. As each tape is run through the printing press, an extra layer of randomness is introduced as the tapes are folded in on themselves, the pressure contorting the natural 3-dimensional spiral of the tape into a flat, 2-dimensional zigzag. Where a stretched tape measure quantifies a precise distance, these prints are a measure of disorder that record the random folds, overlaps, and accidental marks of Lahde’s process.

Some Symmetry

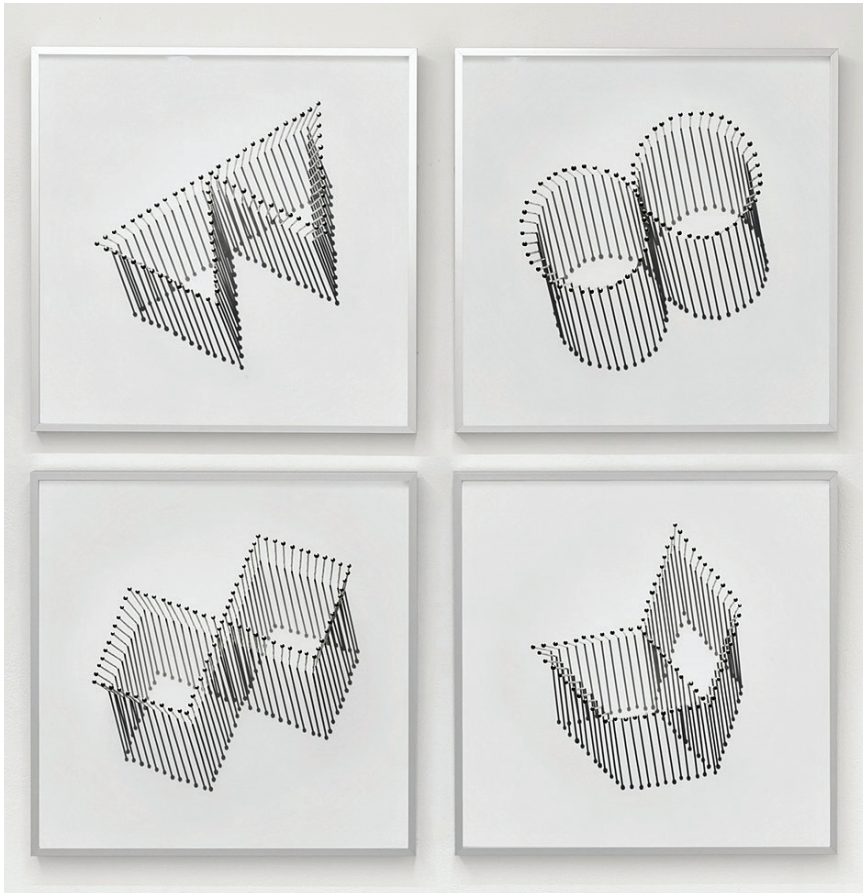
Using straight pins in a technique similar to *Agony and Ecstasy*, this piece demonstrates how objective reality can be destabilized by perspective. Lahde composed four symmetrical designs that would appear balanced and symmetrical when viewed head-on. However, by documenting the compositions from a skewed angle with the strong angled shadows, their symmetry is lost. In part, the work acts as a meditation on the relationship between belief, trust and perception, asking the viewer to consider how much of what we consider to be “true” might depend solely on viewpoint.



Kristiina Lahde, *Under Pressure 24*, 2023, Monoprint of measuring tapes, ink on paper, courtesy of the artist and MKG127.



Installation view of *Emergent Geometries*.



Kristiina Lahde, *Some Symmetry*, 2020, Inkjet print on hahnemühle agave, courtesy of the artist and MKG127.

Circulate

This unique arrangement of discarded library file cards acts as both installation and “found drawing.” Each card has a diagonal stroke through it, indicating its removal from a library’s circulation. Lahde arranged each card in such a way that the pencil line strokes align to create a drawing of an oval near the center. This grouping is installed to create a sense of the 2-dimensional space of the wall

installation extending into a pictorial 3rd dimension. The title refers to the language of geometry as well as the repeated shapes that make up the work. It also reflects the sharing and preserving of knowledge and ideas that is at the core of a public Library’s mission. The work elegizes the life (and the associated ideas) of objects once used to order knowledge while reanimating them into a new visual logic.

Zero In & Zero Out

“For me, repetition is about a commitment to process, a way to emphasize a concept. It is devotional, like a daily ritual. Repetition is also a result of a conceptual process. I set out the parameters and then follow them to completion. It speaks to intentionality.”

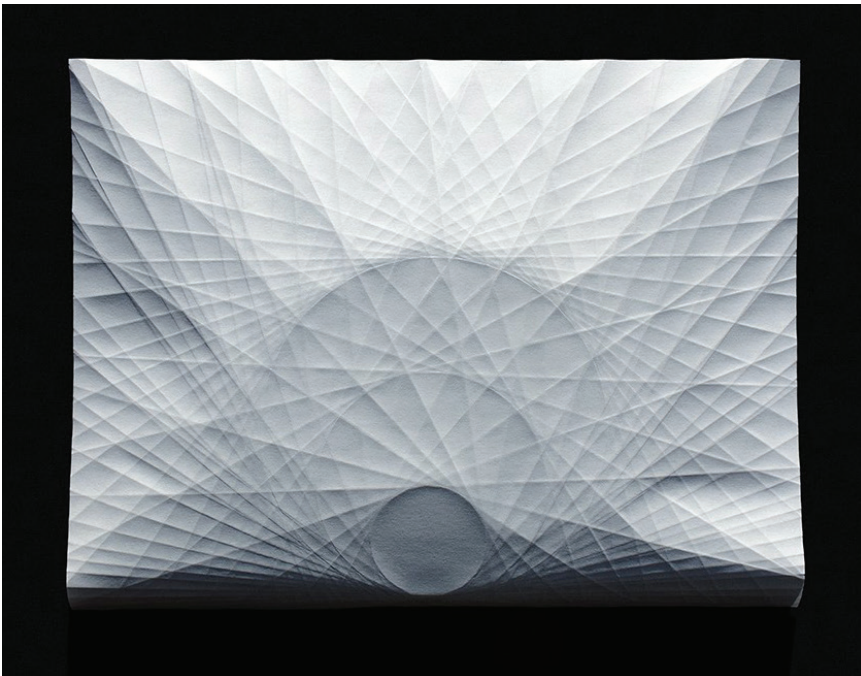
- Kristiina Lahde ³

These two related collages feature hundreds of zeroes sourced from various publications and advertisements. Similar to *Circulate*, Lahde composed these works to imply movement through the placement, size, and repetition of the numbers. At the center of each composition is an empty circular void. In mathematics, zeroes are both a placeholder helping to distinguish between 1, 10 and 100, pointing all the way to infinity, as well as a symbol of nothingness.

The titles of these two pieces also provide room for contemplation. “Zero In” is a phrase used to infer extreme focus, something that

echoes Lahde's devotion to process. With new technologies and theories, scientists can focus macroscopically on the world only to discover that, as more details are perceptible, the more mysteries are revealed regarding the structure of our universe.

"Zero Out" is a term used in financial systems to indicate the reduction of a quantity to zero by paying off a debt or clearing a balance. It is also used in digital processes to indicate resetting a system by wiping out previous content to start fresh. This introduces the binary architecture of digital systems in which a one represents an "on" signal and a zero represents an "off" signal. The void at the center of each work hints at unknown or unquantifiable phenomena.



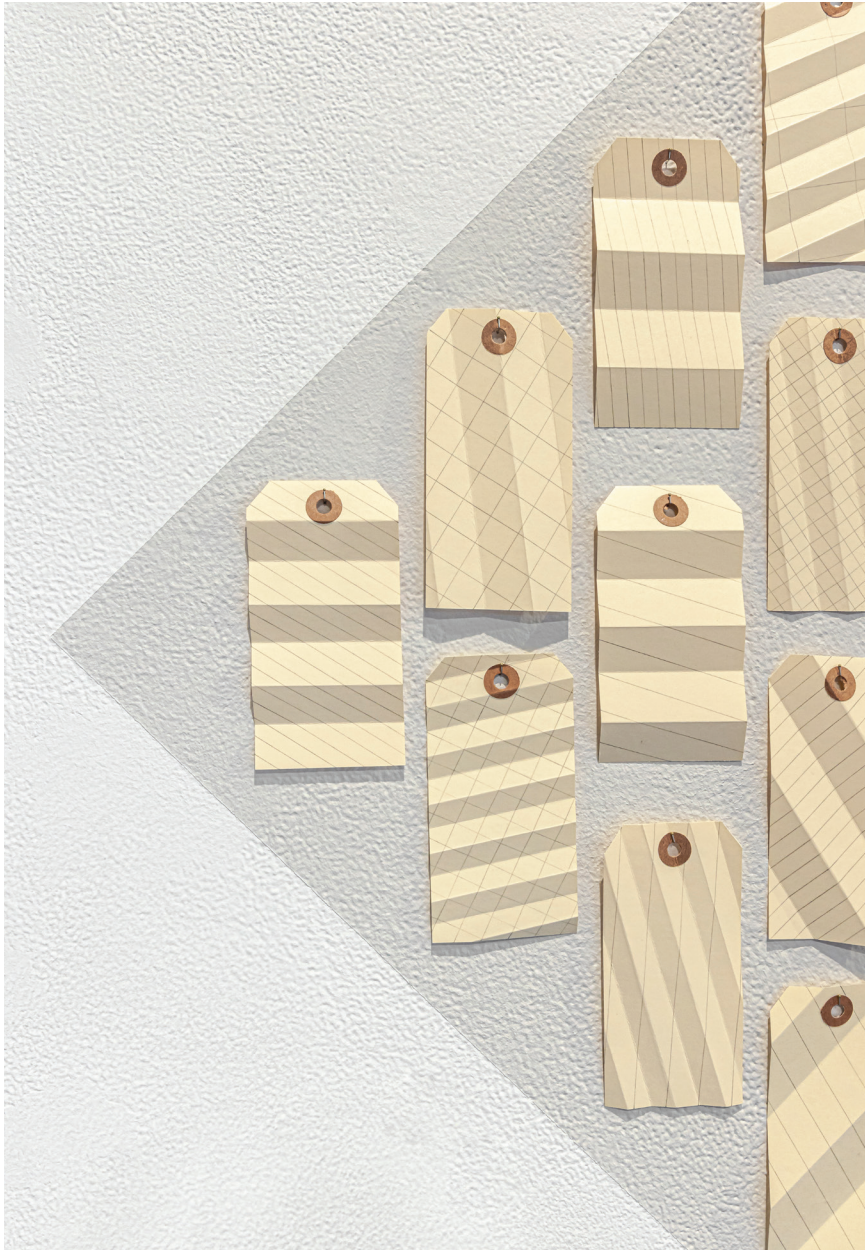
Kristiina Lahde, *Outer Edges 2*, 2020, Inkjet print on hahnemühle agave, courtesy of the artist and MKG127.

Outer Edges

A hybrid of paper sculpture and photography, the pieces in the *Outer Edges* series are produced using unique applications of the same process. For each piece, Lahde repeatedly folds multiple straight lines across a single sheet of paper. The web of intersecting folds creates circular negative shapes. Through the folding process, each simple sheet of paper is also transformed into a delicate sculptural object, as each fold warps the paper into a subtle topography. That 3-dimensional form is then photographed in a similar technique to *Some Symmetry, and Agony and Ecstasy*. The work occupies multiple spaces—drawing, relief, and photography—foregrounding the tactile history of Lahde's activity while also distancing the viewer from the 3-dimensional origin.

Between the Lines

This installation features paper tags fixed to the wall with entomological pins in meticulous order. This subtly references museum culture, with the tags being similar to museum object labels, while the light grey parallelogram framing the piece echoes the colour and shape of specimen boxes, and the pins are commonly used to mount specimens. Rather than inscribing an objective description that would catalogue or classify, however, Lahde has drawn a unique pattern of lines, sometimes parallel, sometimes perpendicular on each tag. The labels are also intricately folded to disrupt the graph-like quality of the linework while bringing the work off the wall into the territory of sculpture. There is an allusion to secret codes and systems that are at once legible and deliberately obscured.



Across the works featured in the exhibition, Lahde returns to a handful of interrelated concepts: the authority of measurement, the aesthetics of the ordinary, and the role of chance in human systems. Her pieces reveal how order is constructed and how easily it can be reconfigured and wiped away. Her interventions—folds, shadows, inverted images—are small but potent reminders that human judgment and creativity remain central to meaning-making.

Through modest materials and carefully considered processes, Kristiina Lahde's *Emergent Geometries* attends to the ordinary and reveals the poetic faults in measurement, the potential wonder in discarded objects, and the beauty of subtle disruptions. Lahde asks a deceptively simple question: how does a commonplace thing become art? Her work answers it by showing how art can emerge whenever systems and assumptions are altered, repositioned, and reconsidered to be seen anew.

- Jeff Nye

Kristiina Lahde, *Between the Lines*, 2023, Pencil on paper tags, entomological pins, courtesy of the artist and MKG127.



Kristiina Lahde

Kristiina Lahde is an artist from Toronto, Canada. Her conceptual practice focuses on material investigation and process. She received her BFA from the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design in 1999. Her recent solo exhibitions include *Extraordinary Measures* at the University of Waterloo Art Gallery, *Unfolding* at the Art Gallery of Hamilton, and *In and Out of Order* at OBORO in Montreal. She has also exhibited in Toronto at the Koffler Gallery, The Power Plant, and at La Biennale de Montréal. She was a long list nominee for the 2013 Sobey Art Award. Her works are held in many private, corporate and public collections including the Canada Council Art Bank, the Microsoft Corporation, TD Bank, Fidelity Investments, Bell Canada, TELUS and Brookfield Assets.

Kristiina would like to acknowledge the Ontario Arts Council for their support of this exhibition through their Exhibition Assistance Program.

Footnotes:

1. Arthur C. Danto, *After the End of Art: Contemporary Art and the Pale of History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), p. 30.
2. Claudia Pretelin, "A Continuous Line: An Interview with Kristiina Lahde", *Instruments of Memory*, August 16, 2021, <https://instrumentsofmemory.com/2021/08/16/a-continuous-line-an-interview-with-kristiina-lahde>
3. Ibid.

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