



PRESS RELEASE

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Ghost in the Machine Exhibit Opens at American University Museum at the Katzen *An Artist's Exploration of Science, Space, and the Ephemeral*

WASHINGTON, DC , May 19, 2026 — The American University Museum at the Katzen Arts Center presents *Ghost in the Machine*, a new exhibition by Washington, DC artist Timothy Makepeace, on view June 13 through August 9, 2026. Curated by Michael O'Sullivan and Thomas Drymon, the exhibition is the culmination of nine years of sustained artistic inquiry into the James Webb Space Telescope — the most powerful infrared space observatory ever built. Admission is free.

Exhibition Opening Reception is Saturday, June 13th, 6pm to 9pm at the Museum — 4400 Massachusetts Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20016. Exhibition runs Wednesday – Sunday, 11am – 4pm. Free admission.

In 2017, Makepeace was given rare access, along with a small group of artists selected nationwide, to make art about the telescope while it was still under construction at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center in Greenbelt, Maryland. Those encounters set in motion artistic exploration that has occupied him ever since.

"What started as an opportunity to be inspired by extraordinary engineering became something else entirely," says Makepeace. "Nine years of focused work asking what it means to build a machine designed to see the beginning of time. The relationship between the physical and the ephemeral; space and time; the finite reaching toward the infinite."

Rich in detail and expansive in scope, the exhibition draws on the philosophical concept of the "ghost in the machine" — the inextricable connection between body and mind, the physical and the ethereal — expanding the concept to encompass matter and space, the rational and the poetic, the mundane and the exquisite. The 38 works in charcoal, pastel, sumi ink, and acrylic are influenced by Constructivism and Precisionism — elevating engineered objects to geometric abstraction — to explore what transcendence looks like when it is man-made rather than natural.

"In a wide-ranging career, it's not a single look that he is after, but rather a singular idea," write curators Michael O'Sullivan and Thomas Drymon. "His pursuit is of something ineffable: an intangible, even unnameable transcendence that is not to be found in the grand, untamed landscapes that once captivated Albert Bierstadt and his peers but in what man has built. It is man who is Makepeace's true subject. And that's a transcendent enough idea."

An earlier body of this JWST-inspired work was presented in a solo exhibition, [Reflections on a Tool of Observation](#), at the National Academy of Sciences in Washington, DC, in 2021–22. *Ghost in the Machine* is the culmination of everything that has followed.

Contact: Caroline Makepeace | caromakepeace1@gmail.com | 301-744-7519

Media Kit: <https://tmakepeace.com/media-kit>

High-resolution images available. The artist is available for interviews and gallery tours. This exhibition is funded in part by the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities / National Endowment for the Arts.

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AMERICAN UNIVERSITY MUSEUM
AT THE KATZEN ARTS CENTER