

THE MISSION

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Points in Space

MAY 8—JUNE 27 2015

Zizkov Tower and St. Procopius/scaffold, 2015
archival cardboard, pine and concrete, 88.75 x 24 x 6.5 in

Susana Gilles





Kaminarimon Gate/cantilever, 2015
concrete and paper, 17.25 x 9 x 7.25 in

WE ARE THE SEARS TOWER. That is how we are perceived when others look upon Chicago. We are the architectural structures, the peaks built on top of us that project our topography upward to the vantage of other cities. These massive structures are impossible for those to digest down below, inhabitants and tourists alike must envelop them from afar or within. You can't look up: your neck is strained, the top is blurred, other buildings block its ascension into the sky. You must look down to engage the building—down upon yourself and the city structure that seems to lie flat below. You climb the tower, you conquer the tower, you buy a small charm to own the tower. Your comprehension of the tower now includes a decorative fudge in its form.

Through social media you can disseminate your experience of each grand structure you've mounted in a foreign city, catalogued end-points predetermined by Fodor's. You capture each building's facade to your iPhone's library, a collective pool proving to Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter that you've ticked each structure off your list. Bring your selfie stick to extend yourself further into the air and capture your conquest with a stainless steel pole that allows 51 extra inches of height. Augment your gesture to imitate the very building you stand inside. Make your present position concrete to the world as you reach tall like a steeple, your selfie stick stickin' it to the heavens.

This desire to capture, manipulate, and own architecture is the driving force behind the scale of Susan Giles's intricate sculptures. Her miniature buildings mimic the form of a souvenir, allowing a perceived ownership of the architectural forms tourists collect as objects of their travels. Giles gives a tangibility to these buildings formed out of drawing paper, allowing one to imagine they have been manipulated by their own hand, designed for their own home. The sculptures lay perched upon or skewed atop concrete—the materials a balance of potential ideas against the realities of a bleak quotidian material. The concrete reflects the grounding features of a city perpetually passed over by tourists, the viaducts and columns that lay far below the commonly photographed spires, minarets, and antennae that yearn to poke through the sky above.

Each structure within *Points in Space* is formulated through publicly available patterns or a composite of images shared via social media, pictures Giles gathers from Google Street View. Each sculpture becomes an open-sourced depiction of the original structure, a model removed from the ownership of the architects and cities that plotted their presence. Within the exhibition the sculptures exist as interpretations of the public view, how the everyday tourist chooses to remember the structures they visit by focusing on iconic features. Giles focuses on the structures that are easily remembered, those seen over and over again in travel books and friends' Facebook albums. Reproducing these common buildings she focuses on our obsession with owning the view from the top, be it racing to concretize the highest dot in our collective skyline or simply purchasing a tower's tiny replica from the 103rd-story gift shop.



- Kate Sierzputowski



St. Peter's Basilica/platform, 2015
concrete and paper, 8 x 9 x 5.5 in

Large-scale wooden sculptures by Susan Giles can be seen in a concurrent exhibition, *Scenic Overlook*, at Hyde Park Art Center through July 26, 2015.

**Susan Giles in conversation with
Allison Peters Quinn**
Thursday, June 25, 6pm
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**Catalog Release Party & Closing
Reception**
Sunday, July 26, 2-4pm
Hyde Park Art Center