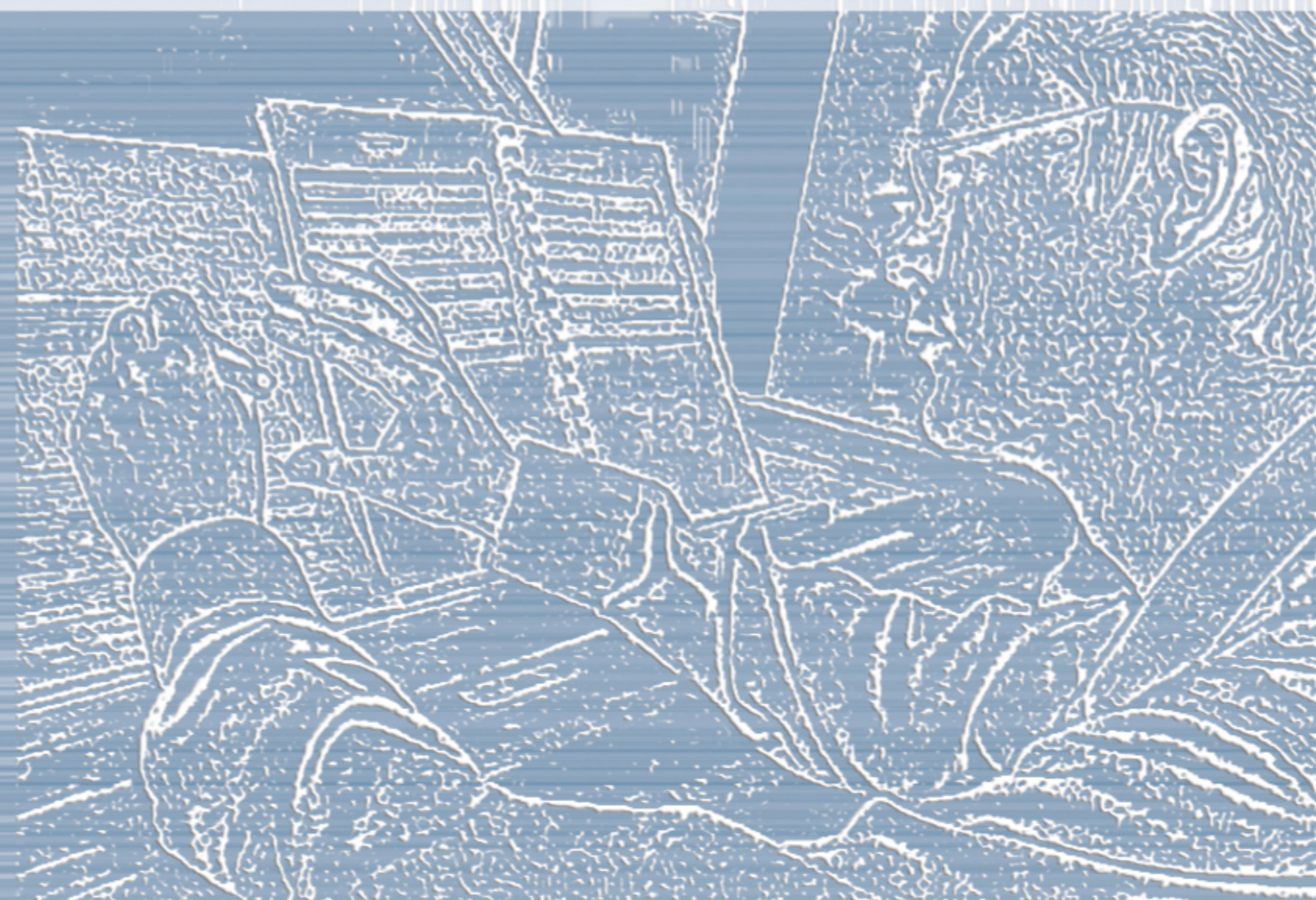BOSTON MUSICA VIVA
CLAYTON STATE CHORALE
SONIC GENERATOR

Jacob Greenberg
Lisa Leong
Amy Williams

Diptych

CHRIS ARRELL

CHRIS ARRELL (*1970, Stumptown) writes music for voices, instruments, and electronics. Praised for their unconventional beauty by The Boston Music Intelligencer and hailed as "sensuous" and "highly nuanced" by the Atlanta Journal Constitution, Arrell's compositions explore counterpoints of process woven from the interplay of color, line, harmony, and pulse. Arrell has fulfilled commissions for a number of prestigious ensembles and institutions including Boston Musica Viva, Music at the Anthology, Spivey Hall, Cornell University, and the Fromm Foundation of Harvard University. Additional recognition for Arrell's music includes awards from the Ossia International Music Competition, the League of Composers/International Society for Contemporary Music, the Salvatore Martirano Memorial Composition Competition, Cornell University, the Cape Fear New Music Festival, the Society of Composers, and ASCAP. Publications of Arrell's music are available from Electroshock Records, Beauport Classical, the Society of Composers, PARMA Recordings, Trevco Music, newbandmusic.com and chrisarrell.com.

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1. **DIPTYCH** (2012)

I wrote *Diptych* for Dancing Cage, a project created by the Bugallo-Williams Piano Duo for the purpose of commissioning composers to write new works for the same preparations as John Cage's Three Dances for Two Prepared Pianos. Generally speaking, a diptych is a book-shaped object consisting of two rectangular panels connected by a center hinge. Artists in Classical Antiquity frequently carved intricately detailed portraits, ceremonial scenes, and the like on the front of each panel, at times creating duplicate images and at other times creating related rather than identical images. In my *Diptych*, the two pianos connect via a metaphorical hinge of music sculpted from Apollonian processes interrupted by grooving, toe-tapping Dionysian excursions. Often the pianists swap identical music, Piano I assuming the music of Piano II and vice versa. In the case of notes in the extreme high and low registers (which feature relatively few preparations) the material sounds identical but for the majority of notes, the preparations serve to cast each piano in a unique light.

Recorded on 5/29/2007 in Brooks Concert Hall, College of the Holy Cross
Recording engineer: Toby Mountain

2. **echo electric** (2013)

Echo electric is a cousin of *NARCISSUS/echo*, a quartet of mine for purely acoustic forces whose instrumentation I borrowed from Messiaen's Quatuor pour la fin du temps. *Echo electric* builds on the acoustic ensemble of *NARCISSUS/echo* by adding live-signal processing and synthesized sounds to the instrumental ensemble with the aid of an interactive Max/MSP patch. Max/MSP allows real-time control over the timing of the synthesized sounds, which are precisely notated in the score, as well as parameters of the signal processing (also specified in the score) such as ring modulation frequencies, the speed and direction of Doppler effects, echo length, and feedback depth. I created the synthesized sounds by modeling the spectral content of the acoustic instruments, which I then subjected to various permutation with the help of Open Music, a powerful algorithmic programming language distributed by IRCAM.

Echo electric plays with two musical objects. The first of these objects, inspired by the image of Narcissus attempting to kiss his reflection, is a devilishly tricky shared melody that continuously evolves as it ripples through the ensemble. The second idea, repetitive rhythmic cells spun from the Narcissus theme, portrays Echo, who, unable to speak her own thoughts, mimics the object of her desire from the distance. Toward the end of the composition, the repeating cells grow silent as the Narcissus theme gradually mutates from a sonic object shared among the ensemble to a plaintive violin melody - a timbral metamorphosis representing the transformation of Narcissus.

Recording venue: Spivey Hall
Mixing date: 1/13/2013
Recording engineer: Barett Hoover

3-5. THREE PSALMS (2007)

The three psalms set here (43, 113, and 131) address a number of dualities - faith and doubt, love and fear, freedom and servitude; to name a few. All speak to the frailty of the human condition (a theme common to many ancient texts) be they biblical psalms, Greek legends or medieval nursery rhymes. I take comfort in this theme, perhaps in knowing that my imperfections and inadequacies are part of what connects me to humanity. For the Clayton State Chorale.

Recorded on 5/29/2007 in Spivey Hall
Recording engineer: Barett Hoover

6. ICARUS (2007)

Falling and rising melodic patterns feature prominently in *Icarus*. Over the course of the composition, these patterns slowly mutate, through a kind of reverse variation process, into a composition well-known in the classical world. My inclusion of this quote is not intended as the answer to a musical guessing game but rather, as a means to contrast continuous development (movement toward the new and unknown) with the gradual emergence of a familiar tune (movement toward the remembered and known). It is this contradictory experience that interests me, an experience that simultaneously pushes forwards and backwards. For LL.

Recorded on 5/25/2007 in Spivey Hall
Recording engineer: Barett Hoover

7. CONVERGENCE (2010)

Convergence begins with two contrasting ideas that transform and evolve, from recognizable variations to veiled recollections, as the music unfolds. Transformation results largely from the use of process (a technique of gradually altering sonic qualities by isolating individual elements such as pitch, rhythm, and timbre) and then mutating one or more of these elements through systematic change. Sometimes transparent and at other times obscure, the individual processes in *Convergence* usually work independently yet simultaneously, creating a kind of process counterpoint and chains of continuously overlapping strands. However, there are moments throughout the piece when processes converge and it is in these moments that structural markers are most clearly heard - their appearance serving to interject a moment of structural clarity, like the gears of a great mechanical clock chiming the hour. Boston Musica Viva gave the premiere of Convergence in 2010. The following year, the piece received first prize in the Fourth International Ossia New Music Ensemble Competition.

Recorded on 11/12/2010
Recording engineer: Frank Cunningham

COMPACT
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DIGITAL AUDIO

BC41317
TT 43:33

Beauport
classical

Diptych

CHRIS ARRELL

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disc
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1. **DIPTYCH**   10:09
   Jacob Greenberg (prepared piano)
   Amy Williams (prepared piano)

2. **ECHO ELECTRIC** (2013)   7:50
   SONIC GENERATOR
   Ted Gurch (clarinet), Helen Kim (violin)
   Brad Ritchie (cello), Chris Arrell (laptop)
   Tom Sherwood (vibraphone)

   THREE PSALMS
3. i.   Psalm 131   2:28
4. ii. Psalm 43   2:08
5. iii. Psalm 117   1:00
   CLAYTON STATE CHORALE
   Shaun Amos (conductor)

6. **ICARUS**   8:42
   Lisa Leong (piano)

7. **CONVERGENCE**   11:16
   BOSTON MUSICA VIVA
   Ann Bobo (flute), William Kirkley (clarinet)
   Bayla Keyes (violin)
   Jan Müller-Szeraws (cello)
   Geoffrey Burleson (piano)
   Robert Schulz (percussion)
   Richard Pittman (conductor)
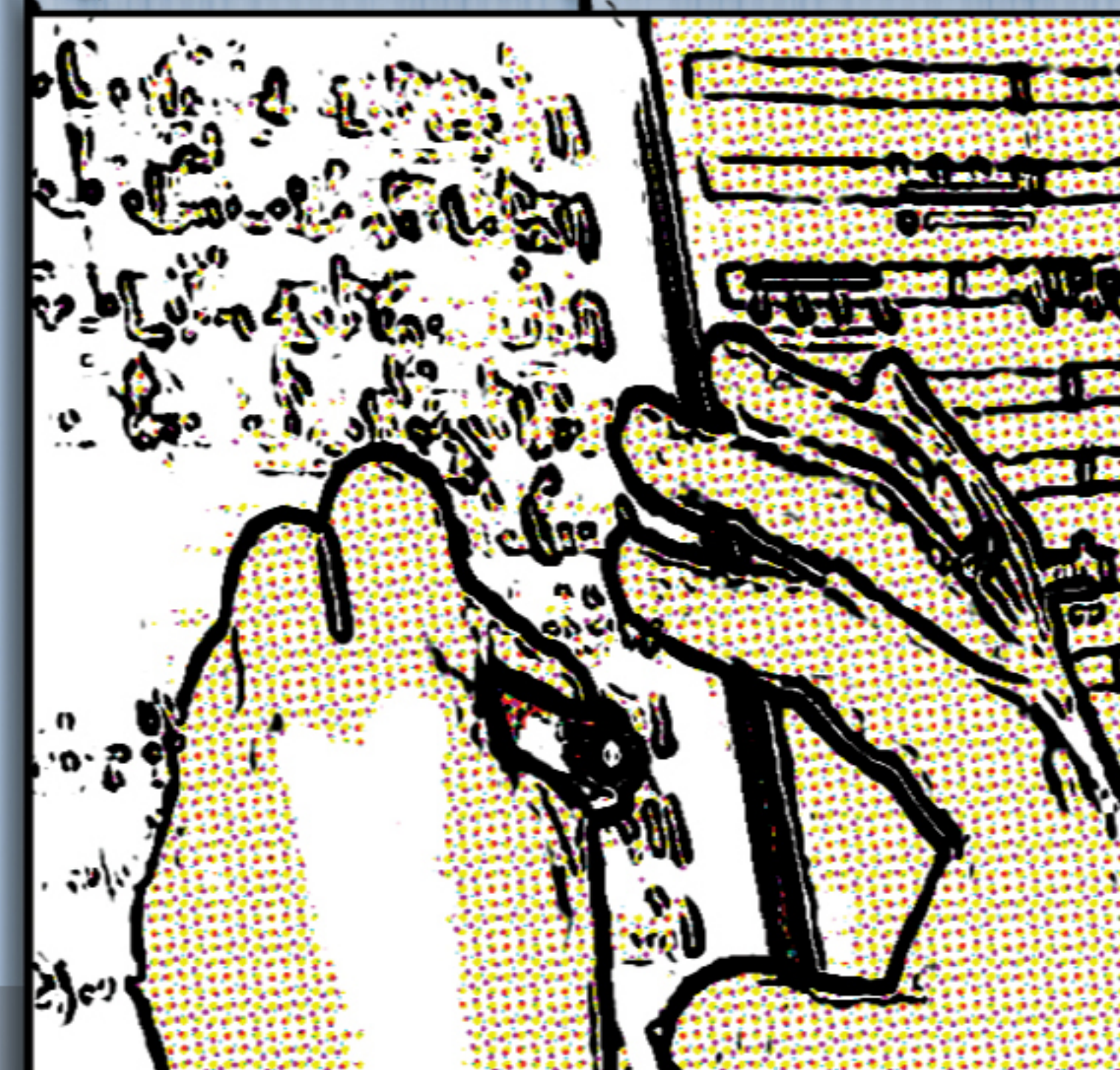
CHRIS ARRELL · **Diptych**

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