REVIEWS

WITH A TWINKLE IN THE SKIES: VICTORIA BURGE'S PRINTS TRANSFORM THE PRINT CENTER INTO A PLANETARIUM

BY *Edith Newhall* POSTED 10/24/16 4:41 PM

Philadelphia, through November 19

Victoria Burge and Scott Kip, *Untitled*, 2016, carbon paper, light, and motorized elements, 5½ x 5½ x 2½ inches. COURTESY THE ARTISTS

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From mysteriously reinvented vintage maps and charts to an indigo-painted panel pierced with white-topped butterfly pins to an installation that transforms a gallery into a planetarium of sorts, it's hard not to sense the uncanny at work in Victoria Burge's survey at the Print Center. Burge's intense and curious transformations of existing geographical and celestial chartings, especially from the past, could be viewed as a sorceress's notations for enchantments.

Burge's first solo Philadelphia exhibition comprises prints, drawings, a video, and photographs displayed in one half of the Print Center's second floor, while two site-specific works are installed in the other half. The smaller of these two, an untitled mechanized light piece made by Burge and the Philadelphia-based artist Scott Kip is set into a temporary wall and looks like a view of a night sky through a tiny window. Behind that wall is Burge's immersive installation *Penumbra*, which lends this exhibition its title. I'm sure I'm not the only person who initially assumed Burge and Kip's collaborative piece was a square porthole view of *Penumbra*, not its own entity.

Victoria Burge, *Light Study 1*, 2015, relief print with embossing, 26 x 20 inches.
COURTESY THE ARTIST

Penumbra itself occupies a darkened, theater-like space with benches allowing visitors to sit and meditate on what appears directly in front of them: a vision of a vast night sky filled with twinkling stars, not unlike the experience of lying on a beach at night, observing constellations in perfect quietude. Burge's starry "sky" is actually layers of pierced dark blue Japanese lens tissue suspended, curtain-like, in front of tiny LED lights that are arranged behind the tissues. The twinkling effect is produced by the breeze from a slowly oscillating fan (also hidden) that keeps the tissues constantly in motion,

Burge's pieces on the other side of the second floor, several of which date back to 2009 and 2011, are displayed in conventional gallery fashion, but with an emphasis on keeping the naturally-lit room as spare as possible. One of the most magical and dramatic of the images is Burge's mural-scale *Coastline* (2016) made up of 15 engraved plates from a 1916 Rand McNally atlas arranged into a grid with the artist's own painted meanderings superimposed onto it in patterns reminiscent of constellations.

But it is a modest 2012 video showing the effects of light on water, displayed here on an iPad, that shows Burge's eye for the poetic intersection of artist and nature to a T.

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