





## Alyson Shotz

American, born 1964

### *A Moment in Time, 2005*

Glass beads and monofilament, 132 x 192 x 192 inches  
University of Houston

Based in Brooklyn, New York, Alyson Shotz engages in artistic investigations into the physics of space, light, and matter. *A Moment in Time* (2005) represents an important early commission in her oeuvre, created as part of the renovation and expansion of the Wortham Theatre lobby on the campus of the University of Houston by Lake | Flato Architects. Working from a set of architectural drawings, Shotz imagined a stop-action, three-dimensional view of raindrops during a rainstorm when conceiving the sculpture. Organized in a sixteen-by-sixteen-foot grid, 2,300 translucent monofilament fibers with 110,660 clear glass beads of slightly increasing sizes hang elegantly above the entrance of the lobby. The sculpture fills, but does not clutter, the double-height space.

The artist explains, “The idea was to create a piece that would feel like looking up into the sky and watching raindrops fall, stopped in time. The sculpture mimics natural raindrops to some degree, yet it also has a false perspective wherein the drops get subtly larger as they get lower. In addition, it’s structured in a perfect grid, so it simultaneously has the feeling of being very much made by human hands. The hanging cube of rain also nods back to Minimalist sculptures like Sol LeWitt’s open cubes.”<sup>1</sup> The beads refract and reflect light, subtly changing throughout the day. At night, during evening performances, the work conjures a universe of glittering stars, transitioning and transporting



QUINTERO  
LAB THEATRE



theatergoers from their present-day realities to another world, the performance about to unfold on stage.

*A Moment in Time* has been a seminal work for Shotz, leading to the creation of other works that have taken form and shape in different media. According to the artist, these artworks include *The Bedroom, Time Lapse* (2014), a twenty-seven-minute digital animation; *Time Lapse Series I (I–V)* (2014), five large white-thread drawings related to Eadweard Muybridge’s stop-action photographs; and *Laws of Motion (I–X)* (2014–15), ten bronzes cast from slabs of clay dropped from different heights with varying degrees of force, capturing the moment of impact. Shotz reflects on her work for UH, “This was my first public commission, and it was a fantastic experience to engage with the space and to appreciate how it would be seen over time. I was grateful for the opportunity to work with the concept and materials of my choosing, and have returned again and again to the themes of light, space, and time over the intervening decade.”<sup>2</sup> The work achieves the highest aspiration of the PAUHS collection of beautifying and enriching the campus while promoting and furthering the artist’s creative practice and career.

**Irene Shum**

<sup>1</sup> Alyson Shotz, in an email to the author, 2018.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

