

DAVID DIMICHELE [Portrait](#) [About](#) | [C.O.L.A. Project](#) | [Past Projects](#)

**Place and year of birth** Long Beach, CA, 1954 **Year located in Los Angeles** 1990 **Area of Los Angeles in which you currently reside** Altadena **What places in the city do you go to for inspiration?** Angeles National Forest **What, if anything, about living in Los Angeles influences your work?** Conversations with other artists

Stacked and strewn, hundreds of gigantic shards of glass refract the crossbeam lighting of a massive space. In another hangerlike gallery, gargantuan strips of bark form a towering gothic web. From the windows and ceiling of an industrial space, thick, winding streams of molten metal puddle on the [floor](#). Elsewhere, fed from a forty-foot-high [skylight](#), coils of massive tubing violate a pristine white space. Another sanitized gallery is dominated by six huge monochrome white paintings and three immense white cubes, the largest of which is thirty feet high. And then there are the enormous towers of ice, two huge mounds of salt and asphalt, the Jupiter-size steel thunderbolt, and a bird's nest snag of withered forty-foot tree branches.

David DiMichele is the creator of these prime examples of the urge in contemporary art to shock and awe. Like the artists who have made huge puppies, humungous funhouse mirrors, and towering steel passageways, he gives viewers little chance not to pay attention. This is the heroic work of our time, requiring complicated fabrication, huge transportation budgets, and teams of workers to install.

The big dogs and steel corridors of today's global art world become known largely through installation photographs. Published in magazines and newspapers and exhibited in museums and galleries, these photos demonstrate mega-scale at work and suggest the kind of perceptual shifts that such works inspire. DiMichele's installation photographs take standard documentary format to a new level. They are large LightJet prints, scanned from shots taken with a 4x5 view camera, usually in low-angle long shot with humans included for scale, and with careful attention to lighting, deep focus, and composition.

Unlike most installation photos, however, DiMichele's documentations are themselves artworks. As their titles reveal, they are "pseudodocumentation," depicting masterfully made models for works whose full-scale perceptual tricks and awe-inspiring sublimity can only be imagined. DiMichele has described his photographs as "not parody but homage," referencing works by artists such as Michael Heizer, Richard Serra, and Robert Smithson. **The photos are fantastical enablers, allowing DiMichele to emulate his mentors and make art from difficult-to-obtain media on a wildly lavish scale.** Working

through his models, he can show photographic evidence of his imaginative leaps.

After years working as an abstract painter, DiMichele has expanded his range and capabilities in this project, now fully realized for the C.O.L.A. exhibition. Suddenly an artist of epic scale and limitless ambition, he can blithely ignore the postmodern roadblocks that have stymied so many of his generation. Gigantic scale and extravagant materials invite an indulgence in loaded imagery and rich metaphor, activating an emotional power that abstract painting now seems too cautious or cynical to pursue. DiMichele's room-size mounds of black sand emerging from a deep fog of billowing dry ice evoke the grandeur of traditional Chinese landscape painting. Rivaling the best California Light and Space work, his interlocking web of Lucite tubes containing and reflecting light conjures a new, scientifically inspired sublime. **An elevation of natural phenomena and perceptual experience is behind all DiMichele's imagined installations.** Pushing the envelope of what seems possible, he is creating inspiring art fantasies for his personal, homemade MASS MoCA, Dia:Beacon, L.A. MOCA, and MoMA. Endearing and slightly comic, these lyrical [flights](#) of fancy document big-time art dreams. **Michael Duncan**