

# The Philadelphia Inquirer

Friday, February 2, 2008

## Photos and sculptures at Locks

By Edith Newhall  
For The Inquirer

If anyone is reinventing the Pattern and Decoration movement of the 1970s with verve and originality (besides Virgil Marti, Jorge Pardo, Mark Bradford and others), it is Alyson Shotz. Her new digital photographs and sculpture have turned the ground-floor space at Locks Gallery into a glittering, contemporary techno version of a Vegas ballroom.

Shotz's sculptures, suspended from the ceiling with clear, almost invisible plastic fishing line, look like floating, ghostly chandeliers. The largest and most spectacular of the three, *Crystalline Structure* (2007), constructed from glass beads and steel wire, suggests a natural wonder of some kind, as if ice formed over a large, complex, open molecular shape (or, conversely, a science experiment in which the shape was dipped into water and flash-frozen).



It would be an inspired sculpture for one of those fantastic Scandinavian igloo hotels. Her two smaller hanging works, also of glass beads and steel wire, incorporate glass and light-reflecting plastic lenses as well.

A small black bead-and-wire floor sculpture occupies a corner of the room like a shy, fuzzy caterpillar. It makes you think Shotz might be implying an interaction between her sculptures - the black sheep seems to have been banished to the sidelines - but I think Locks' ground-floor gallery is simply too imposing for this quirky, retiring piece.

The imagery in Shotz's new digital photographs from her ongoing series, "A Momentary Configuration of Matter," are computer-made collages that mingle photographs of her sculptures with photographs of nature. These, too, resemble disembodied chandeliers, but also Rorschach tests, butterflies, lace patterns and skulls.

Shotz's work limns the chillier contours of the new P & D. Transparent, reflective, and ephemeral-looking, they accurately evoke the iPod age.

---

"Alyson Shotz: A Momentary Configuration of Matter" is on display Jan. 18 to Feb. 29 at the Locks Gallery, 600 Washington Square South.

Hours: 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesdays through Saturdays.

Information: 215-629-1000 or [www.locksgallery.com](http://www.locksgallery.com).