

The Sky as an Agent: **how meaning is constructed from sunlight falling onto objects** (can also apply to moonlight and starlight)



Dr Darrelyn Gunzburg

AIM: Understanding how light from the sky acts an agent for us.

Observation of cycles - diurnal and nocturnal.

Observation of light – sunlight, starlight, moonlight.

Observation of patterns – star patterns, cloud shapes.

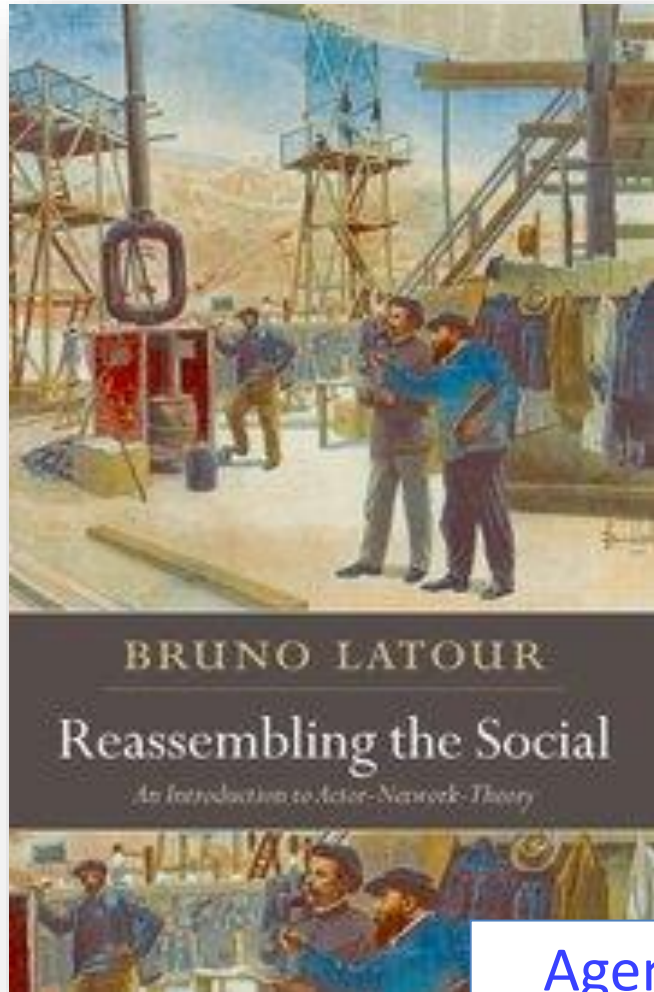


Tzikum, Israel, 2016: Photo: Dafna Tel.



St Bavo's Cathedral, Ghent.
Photo: Darrelyn Gunzburg

The idea of agency



Third Source of Uncertainty: Objects too Have Agency

If sociology has been marked from the start by the d
action was overtaken by other agencies, it has been
more forcefully by the ethical, political, and empirical d
there exist hierarchies, asymmetries, and inequalities; th
world is just as differentiated a landscape as a rugged and
terrain; that no amount of enthusiasm, free will, or in
make those asymmetries go away; that they all seem
heavily as the pyramids, which hampers individual ac
plains why society should be considered as a specific *sui g*
that any thinker who denies those inequalities and differ
gullible or somewhat reactionary; and, finally, that ignoring social
asymmetry is as ridiculous as claiming that Newtonian gravitation
does not exist.

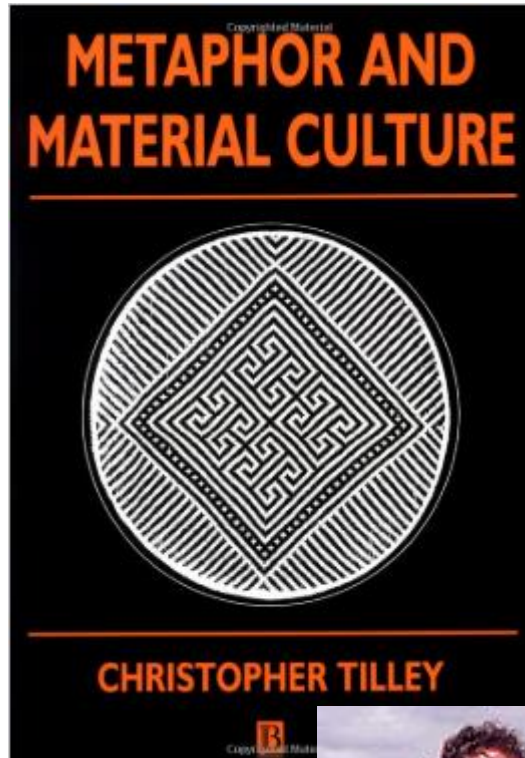
How could we be faithful to this intuition and still maintain, as I just
did with the first two sources of uncertainty, that groups are 'con-

ebated?
ed by a



Agency - that which has the ability to
move us in some way to take action

AIM: Understanding how the sky acts an agent for us.



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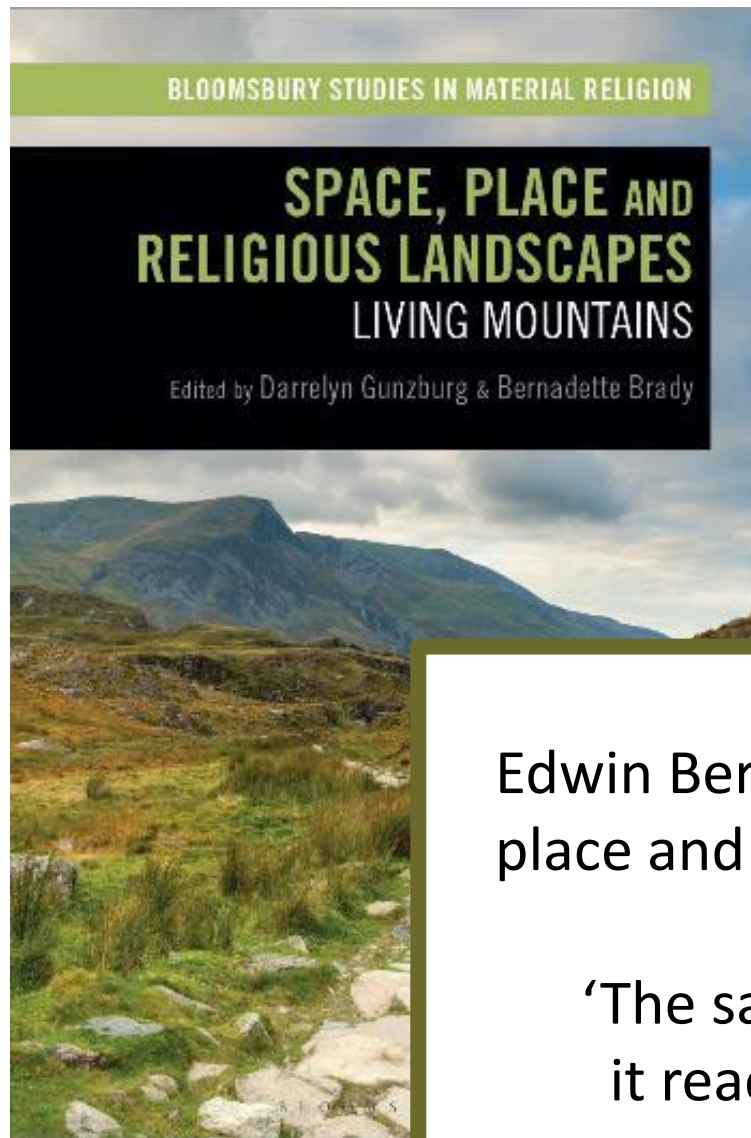
METAPHOR AND THE CONSTITUTION OF THE WORLD

simply not the case. Things create people as much as people make them. From a *theoretical* point of view it is obvious that people do encode metaphorical meanings into things which would themselves have no meaning. But from the point of view of *methodology*, of the analysis of material forms, things once created work themselves to reproduce or transform the social contexts in which they are encountered and move. They are active rather than passive and dialectically related to their social conditions of existence. Things, as Kopytoff (1986) usefully emphasizes, have biographies, or life-phases, like persons. We can ask such questions of things as: what are the socially constrained biographical possibilities of the object (as, for example, bulk commodity or prestige valuable)? What is the usual or ideal biography of a thing? What are the recognized 'phases' in a thing's life? How does its use and meaning change with age? What happens when it moves from one cultural context to another? How is it redefined and put



'Things create people as much as people make them ...'

Tilley, Christopher. *Metaphor and Material Culture*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1999, p.76.



Introduction: **Darrelyn Gunzburg and Bernadette Brady** (University of Wales Trinity Saint David)

Foreword: **Professor Christopher Tilley** (Professor of Anthropology & Archaeology, UCL)

PART I: PREHISTORIC CONVERSATIONS

1. **Frank Prendergast** (Technological University, Dublin): The Archaeology of Height—cultural meaning in the relativity of Irish megalithic tomb siting.
2. **Anna Estaroth** (University of Wales Trinity Saint David): How the shadow of the mountains created sacred spaces in Bronze Age Scotland.

PART 2: MEDIEVAL CONVERSATIONS

3. **Jon Cannon** (University of Bristol): Time and place at Brentor: exploring an encounter with a 'sacred mountain'.
4. **Darrelyn Gunzburg** (University of Wales Trinity Saint David): Building Paradise on the Hill of Hell in Assisi: Mountain as Reliquary.

Edwin Bernbaum captured both the phenomenology of place and the active agency of places when he wrote,

‘The sacred does not simply present itself to our gaze: it reaches out to seize us in its searing grasp.’

Edwin Bernbaum , *Sacred Mountains of the World* (San Francisco, CA: Sierra Club Paperback Library , 1992), xvi.

ford University):

woods, and the material

dragons, the Brecon

depiction of the Holy

radoxical and polylogical

line of the Sierra Nevada

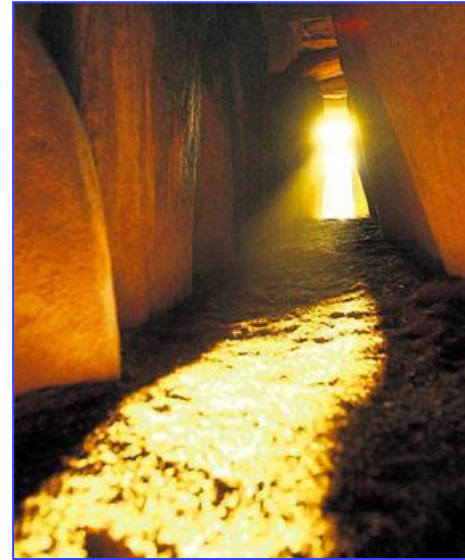


Altocumulus clouds over Recanati, Italy. Photo: Marco Cingolani.

‘I see the spectacle of morning from the hill-top over against my house, from day-break to sun-rise, with emotions which an angel might share. The long slender bars of cloud float like fishes in the sea of crimson light.’

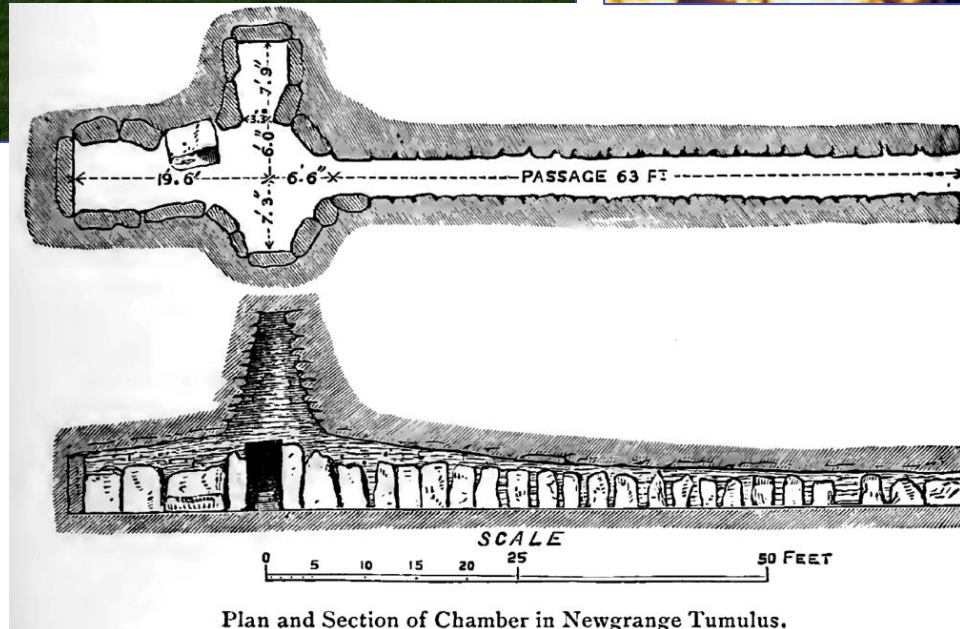
Ralph Waldo Emerson, ‘Nature’ from *Nature; Addresses and Lectures*, Boston: J.Munroe, 1849.

The sky also influences what we build via direct sun falling onto an object at a particular time of the day or year, captured through an aperture.



Newgrange and the illumination of the back stone.

Images: Wikimedia Commons and <http://www.newgrange.eu/tri-spiral.htm>.



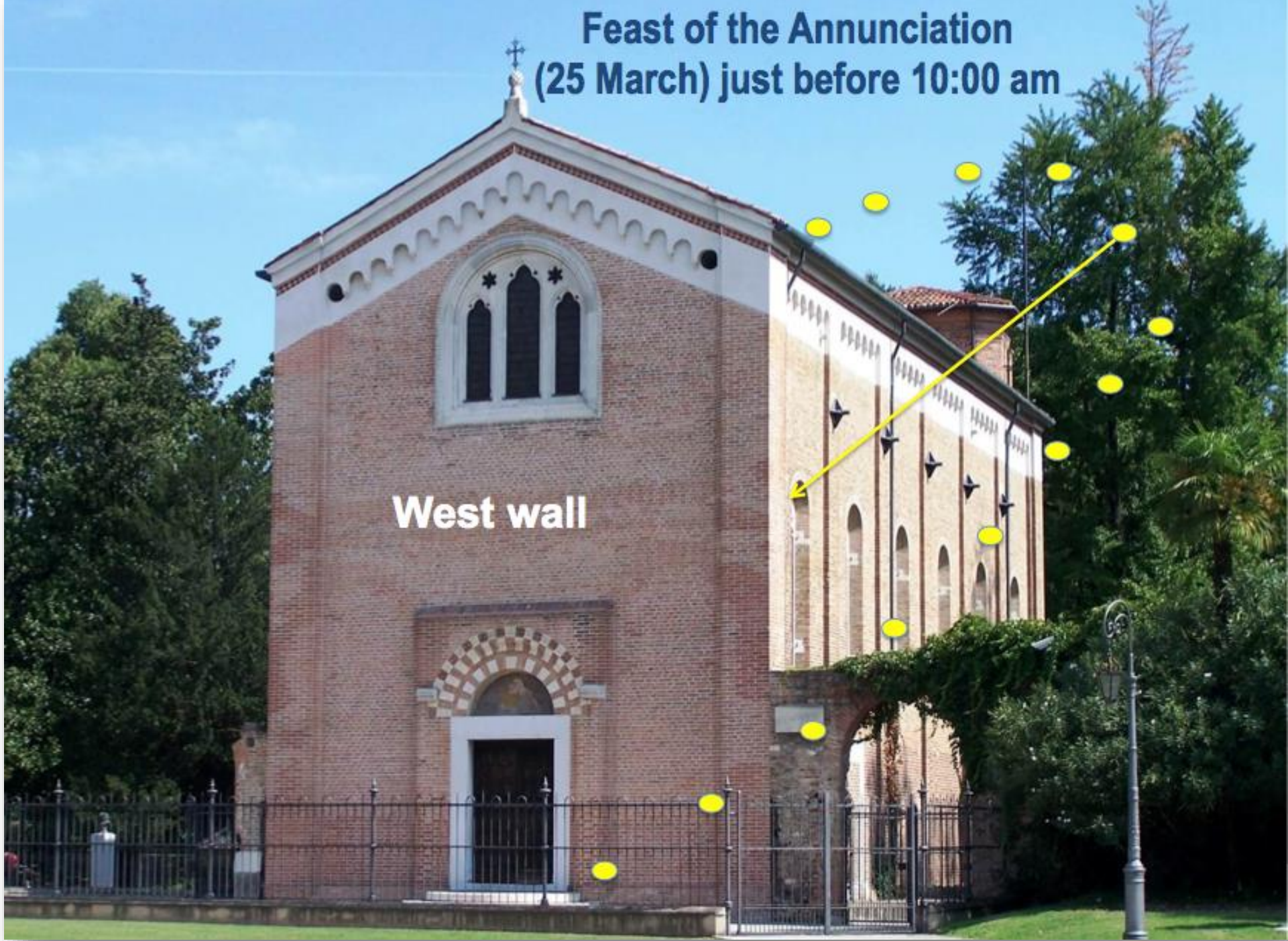
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We will do more on this in WEEKS 6 and 7: The Sky and Structures

WEEK 7: video
New Light at Newgrange

**Feast of the Annunciation
(25 March) just before 10:00 am**

West wall

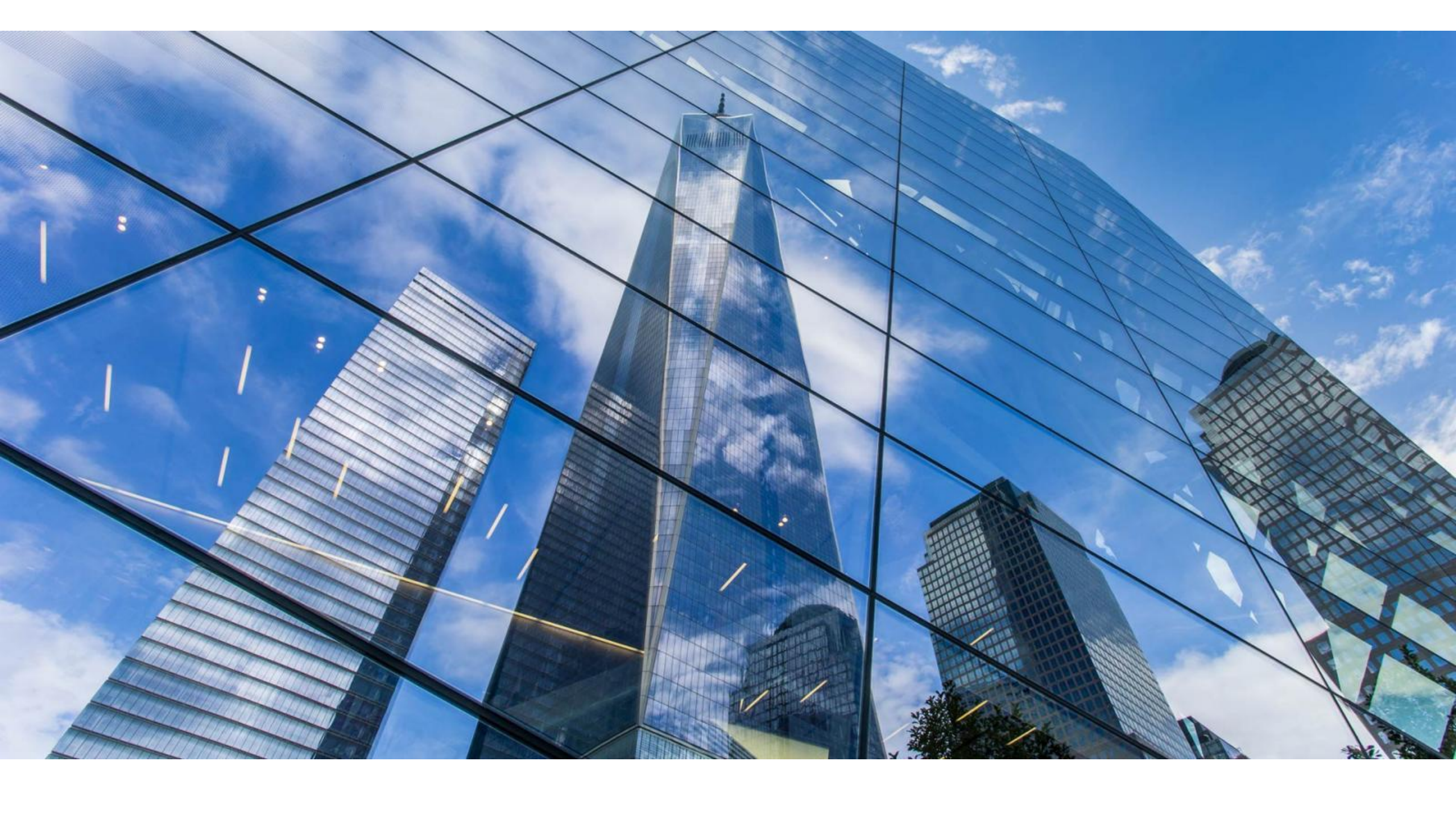






Romano, Giuliano, and Hans Michael Thomas.
 'Sul significato di alcuni fenomeni solari che si
 manifestano nella cappella di Giotto a Padova.'
Ateneo Veneto 178: 213-256.

Jacobus, Laura. 'Giotto's Annunciation in the
 Arena Chapel, Padua.' *The Art Bulletin* 81, no.
 1 (1999): 93-107.



9/11 Memorial, New York, NY.





9/11 Memorial, New York, NY. Photo: D.Gunzburg.

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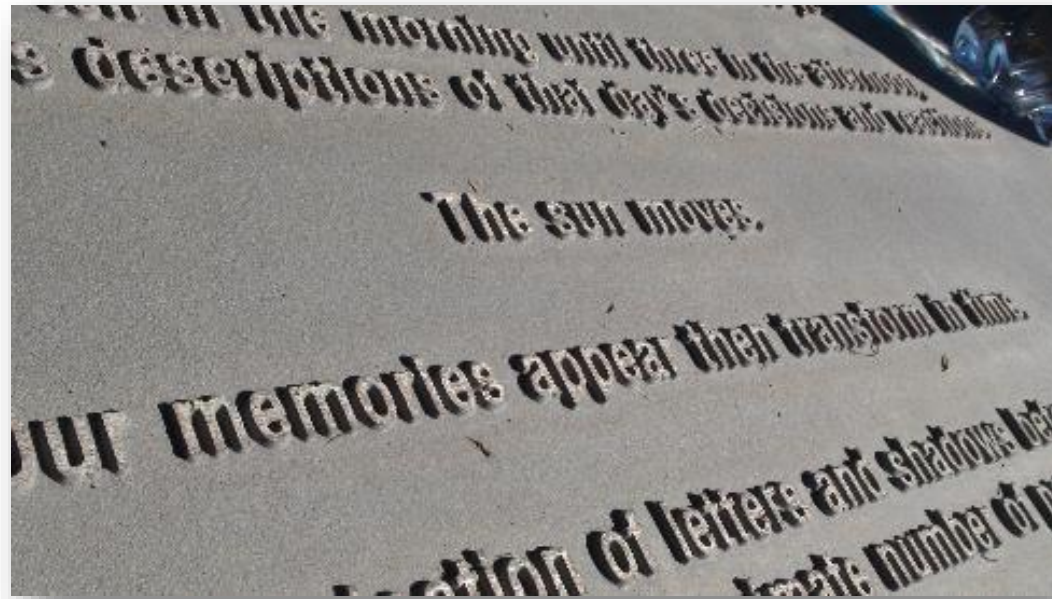
Moving Memories – Arizona 9/11 Memorial

Stainless steel panels cast changing sunlight through 54 laser cut inscriptions onto a concrete base below. Phrases were placed to reflect the stratified emotional, political, and psychological sentiments that Arizonans grappled with following the tragic event. As the sun moves, words appear as pixels of light and become legible for a time, and then blur again.



Photos: LaKeidra Denay Bronner

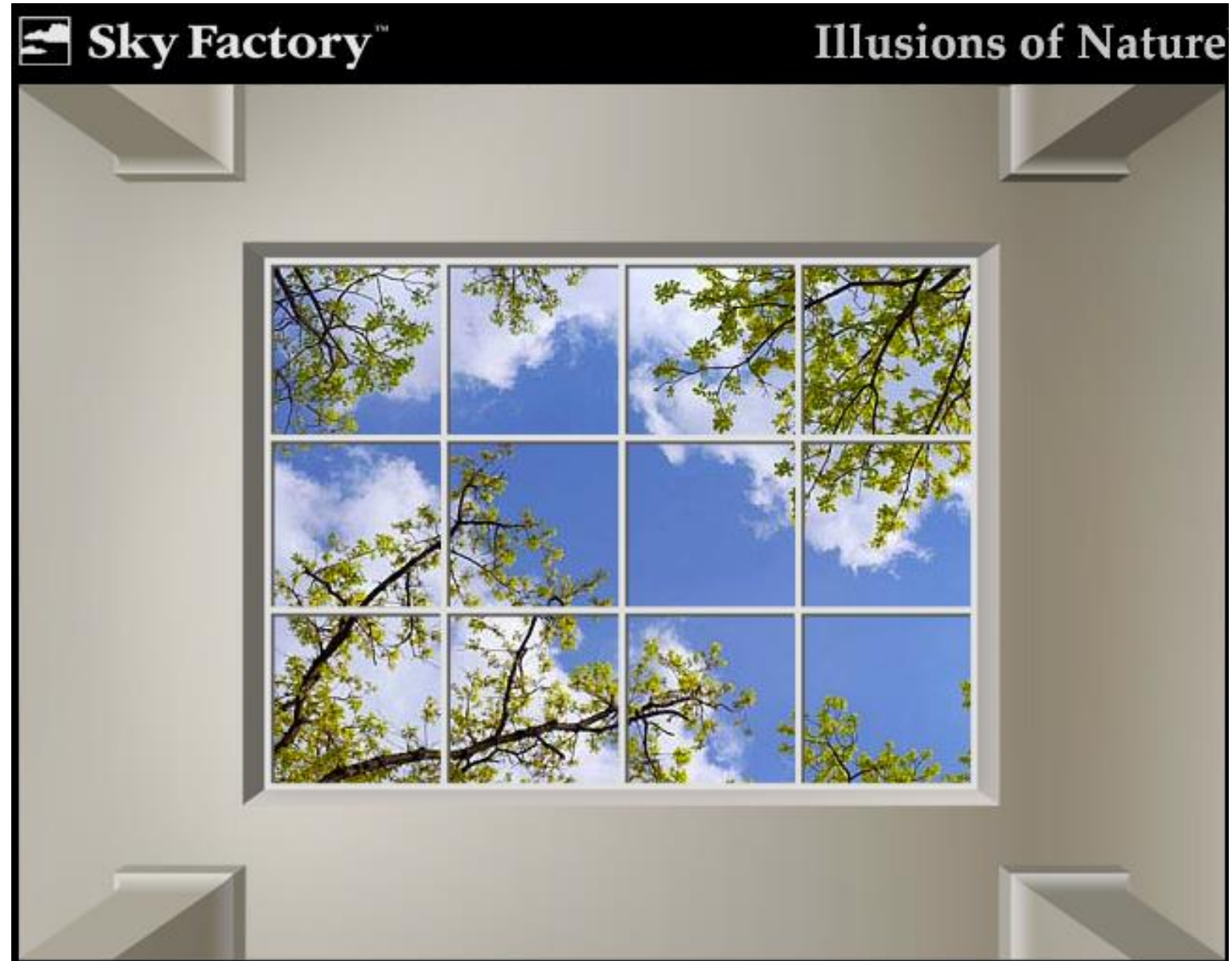
<http://architypereview.com/project/moving-memories-arizona-911-memorial/>

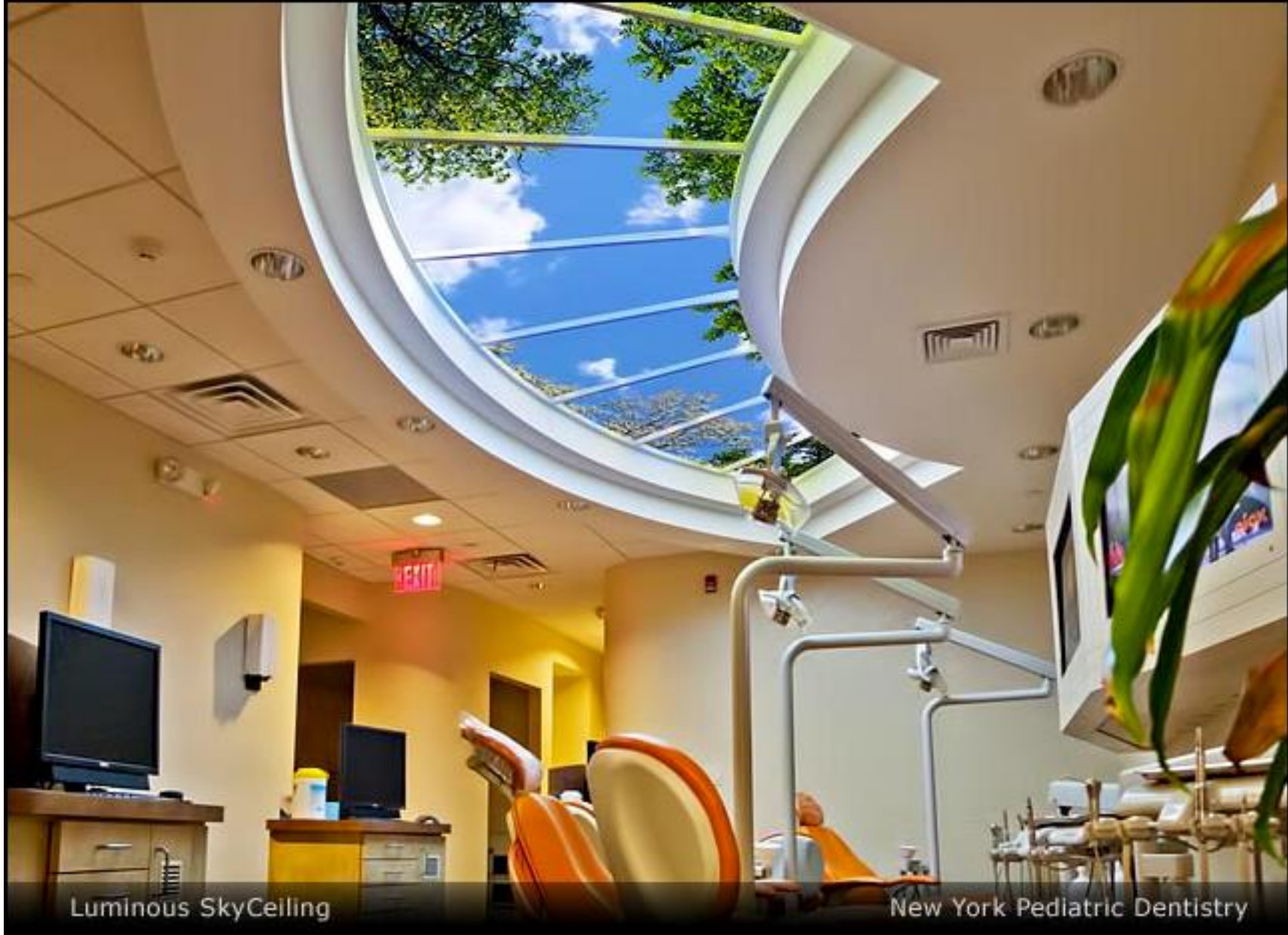


Eddie Jones, one of three designers of 'Moving Memories' said his design epiphany came after messing with cardboard cut-outs at his house and holding them to a sunny window. That led to messages built into the memorial that project words in shadow below when the sun hits them. said the phrases are first a blur, or an 'illegible memory', from the aftermath. But they become clear when the sun illuminates each phrase as it moves across the sky. Then, the lit words contrast against the dark concrete... [Jones said the words almost inhale and exhale when clouds cast shadows](#). 'It's an organic process that invites visitors to contemplate', he said.

The most sought-after feature in any architecture is a visual connection to nature.

<https://www.skyfactory.com/>





Luminous SkyCeiling

New York Pediatric Dentistry



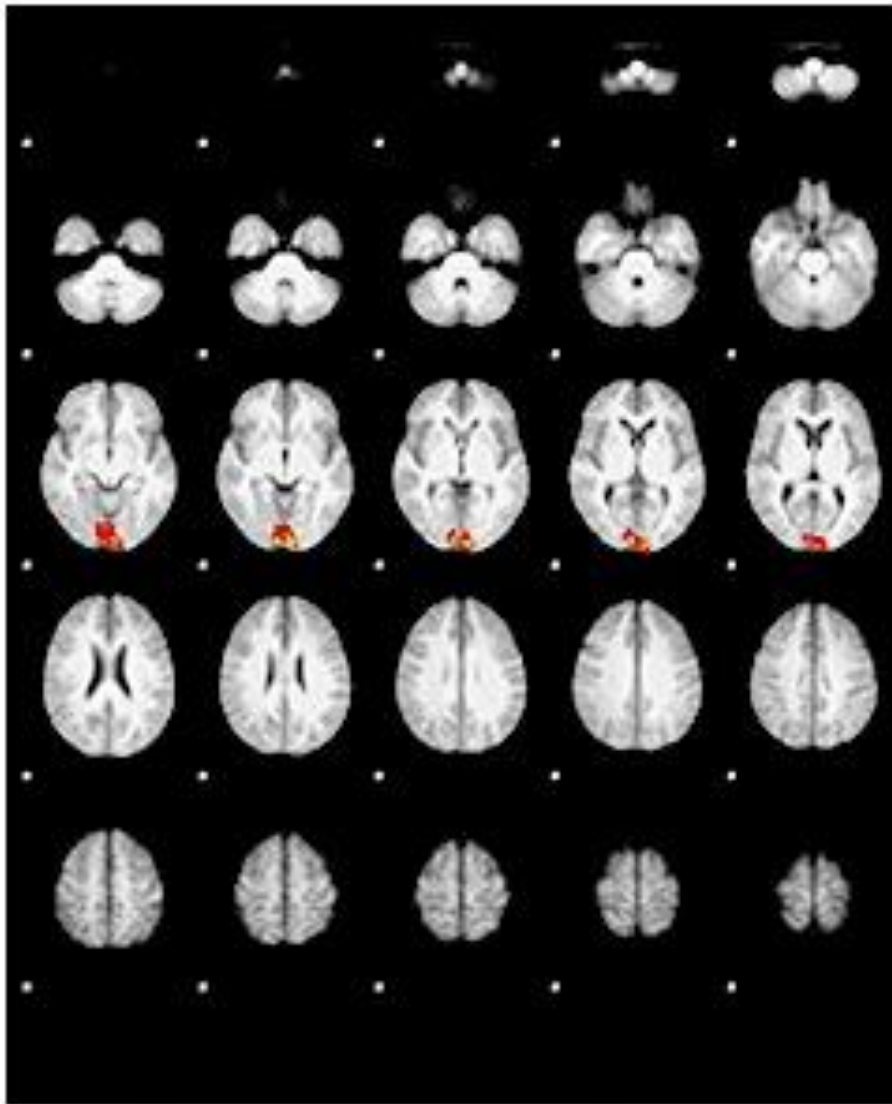
Luminous SkyCeiling

Yes2Life Natural Therapy Centre



Luminous SkyCeiling

ABC Cancer Center, Mexico



Unique brain activations of the cerebellum were effects of subjects viewing Sky Factory photographic sky compositions.

Image: Texas Tech
NeuroImaging Institute.

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The Cloud Appreciation Society: <https://cloudappreciationsociety.org/>