

# ARTFORUM

## Louise Despont

THE DRAWING CENTER  
35 Wooster Street  
January 22–March 20

Louise Despont's "Energy Scaffolds and Information Architecture" has a religious atmosphere. Visitors are asked to remove their shoes upon entering the museum. Despont's installation, an alternate universe containing two wooden chambers, is accompanied by a soft, live soundscape, courtesy of artist and musician Aaron Taylor Kuffner. Hung on the walls, Kuffner's robotic gongs, drums, chimes, and bells—collectively titled *The Gamelatron Roh Ageng*, 2013—play continuously to mimic the gamelan, orchestral music traditional to Despont's new home in Bali.



View of "Louise Despont," 2016.

Despont's sacred spaces serve as elaborate framing devices for her drawings—explorations of the subtle energy that moves between human, plant, and various other animate and inanimate forms. In the second enclosure after the main entrance is the most striking display: four highly stylized drawings of the human body in meditative poses, each meticulously cross-sectioned as if they were anatomical drawings from another world. Despont has rendered these figures almost life-size on sheets of antique ledger paper, which contain faded names, numbers, and dates scribbled between stenciled lattices. The energy centers thought to lie along the spinal cord and head, according to traditional Indonesian metaphysics, are exposed by Despont's circular, compass-based lines and colored in with pastel hues of chartreuse, indigo, violet, and blood orange. Each piece gives insight into the transcendental, prompting soul-seekers to ponder their peripheries. What really inhabits the space between skin, air, and other beings? In this instance, it is the sound waves from Kuffner's machines, certainly, among other elements reflecting the nature of existence as Despont imagines it: a *mélange* of beautifully formulated and evanescent Frankenstein beings who usually remain unseen.

— Heidi Harrington-Johnson