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Master whisky maker Gregg Glass, Ben Dobbin, and craftsman John Galvin explore themes of creative flow and precision.
Image courtesy of The Dalmore.

ARTIST SARAH MEYOHAS AND ARCHITECT BEN DOBBIN ON A.I. INFLUENCE, WORKING WITH LIGHT, AND THINKING LIKE A DENTIST

BY SOPHIE LEE
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Despite their different media of choice, artist Sarah Meyohas and architect Ben Dobbin begin their projects from the same place: imagining what a person will behold when they first approach the work.

For Dobbin, lead of the Foster + Partners San Francisco office, that vista tends to feature a looming facade encountered from the sidewalk—among them, Silicon Valley’s Apple Park and Vivaldi Towers in Amsterdam. Lately, though, he’s engaging the built environment on a more modest scale, partnering with The Dalmore, a nearly 200-year-old distillery in the Scottish Highlands. The new collaboration introduces the third masterpiece in the Luminary series and yielded a sculptural display for the presentation of two rare bottles of 52-year-aged whisky, one of which was auctioned at Sotheby’s last month. Dobbin’s creation is complemented by a strictly limited 20,000-bottle run of a 17-year-aged single malt sold in a bespoke case inspired by his work.

This recent turn to the sculptural brought Dobbin into a dimension with which Meyohas—whose conceptual practice dissects the impact of new technologies across film, cryptocurrency, holograms, and more—is familiar. Recently, the artist, whose work has been shown at institutions including New York’s New Museum and London’s Barbican Centre, veered into the architectural realm herself, to remarkable effect. She installed a meandering wall at the Desert X biennial in the Coachella Valley this past spring and served as an executive producer on last year’s Oscar-winning drama, *The Brutalist*, about a fictional architect.

These experiences have only deepened Meyohas's inquiries into the ways we perceive and give meaning to space—whether virtual or physical. Here, she joins Dobbin to compare notes on their complementary practices: the light it casts, the people who engage with it, and most importantly, how it feels to bring a heady concept to life.



Sarah Meyohas, *Truth Arrives In Slanted Beams*, 2025.
Photography by Lance Gerber and courtesy of Sarah Meyohas.

Sarah Meyohas: I'm excited to talk to you. I may be an artist, but architecture is calling me in multiple ways.

Ben Dobbin: I was watching your film *Cloud of Petals*. What inspired you to choose the Bell Labs building as the environment for that?

Meyohas: Bell Labs still holds this mythic weight in the tech world. I created that piece because I was so inspired by the grandness of that space. I don't often walk into office buildings that have such a large atrium—it lifts your gaze upwards like it's a cathedral. I'm very curious how you think about designing spaces.

Dobbin: That [taste for a] big central space and corporate messaging has evolved. Now people want impact, but also softness. They want multidisciplinary spaces where many things happen at once. I'd love to reinvent that building.

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Meyohas: Are there spaces you'd love to design but haven't found a client for?

Dobbin: There's a perception we only do big things—and we do—but we also just finished two very intimate restaurants in Tuscany. We have to maintain the discipline of working at the human scale, and that comes down to thinking about experience. There's a connection between making film and making architecture. Both involve experiential storyboarding: What do you see first? What's the next revelation? And the next? What if you came by foot, or off the bus, or were the executive, or the chef? We imagine those people's movements. Architecture is shaped through these little paths and perspectives.

Meyohas: That makes so much sense. I recently did a piece for Desert X—a sinuous, serpentine wall with large reflectors that cast light onto the surface. For me, both filmmaking and art-making begin with an obsession over light. When Desert X invited me, I asked, "What are our constraints? How big can we go?" From there, I leave room for experimentation. That's the gift of being an artist.



Sarah Meyohas, *Truth Arrives In Slanted Beams*, 2025.
Photo courtesy of Josh Rose and Sarah Meyohas.

Dobbin: That sounds familiar. We have more structure due to scale, but we also discover things as we go. Light, color, the way vegetation reflects or filters light—it all brings buildings alive. It's never too late to adjust and refine. Your holograms are amazing. They have a kaleidoscopic effect—almost cubist. What links the holograms to the ribbon in the desert, to the petals in the A.I. generation? How would you describe the thread that connects them?

Meyohas: I am the thread. The link between the ribbon in the desert and the holograms is much clearer—it's light reflecting off a surface. Light is a really good material for me because it combines the spirit—something metaphysical, transcendent—with a real, scientific entity that I can play with. These media help me turn light into something extraordinary. And they require physical presence. Now, I'm working on more film, more sculptures. I actually designed a bottle, too.

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Dobbin: Oh? What was ironic about The Dalmore project was that, at first, we thought it might be a bottle. In the end, it turned out to be everything but the bottle, which I quite liked, because the spirit itself was left pure. It's celebrated by all that surrounds it. What kind of bottle did you design?

Meyohas: That's the thing—no one called me up! So I designed a bottle for myself. It's meant to be cast glass. The patterns on it aren't bold—they're very soft. I've been writing and thinking a lot about perfume, which was the connection. But similar to you, I'm not interested in creating a scent itself—I'm only interested in the vessel. If someone wants a bottle, I've got a great one.



Ben Dobbin at work on the Luminary series.
Image courtesy of The Dalmore.

Dobbin: Outside of your own discipline, where do you look for inspiration?

Meyohas: Right now, I look to neuroscience. I've been spending a lot of time in San Francisco and have become friends with some extraordinary scientists and founders. Neuroscience is so interesting because it's focused on perception—the link between what we see and how we understand it—and consciousness.

Dobbin: One of the cool things about being an architect is that you're constantly working across professions. If you work for a dentist, you have to think like a dentist. If you're working for a tech company or an industrial design company, you start to understand what motivates them. When you work with scientists, you rub up against them. You're always learning. Every time you're exposed to something new, it's a new set of fingerprints on your brain.