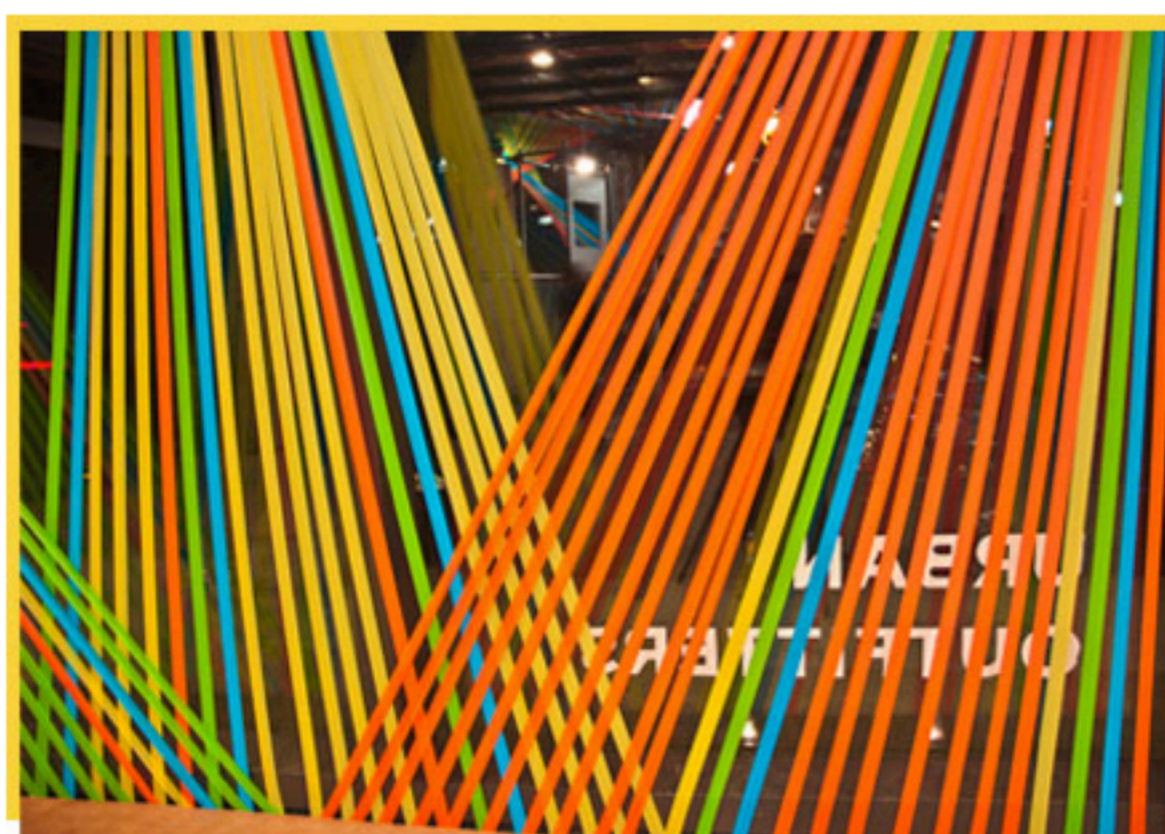
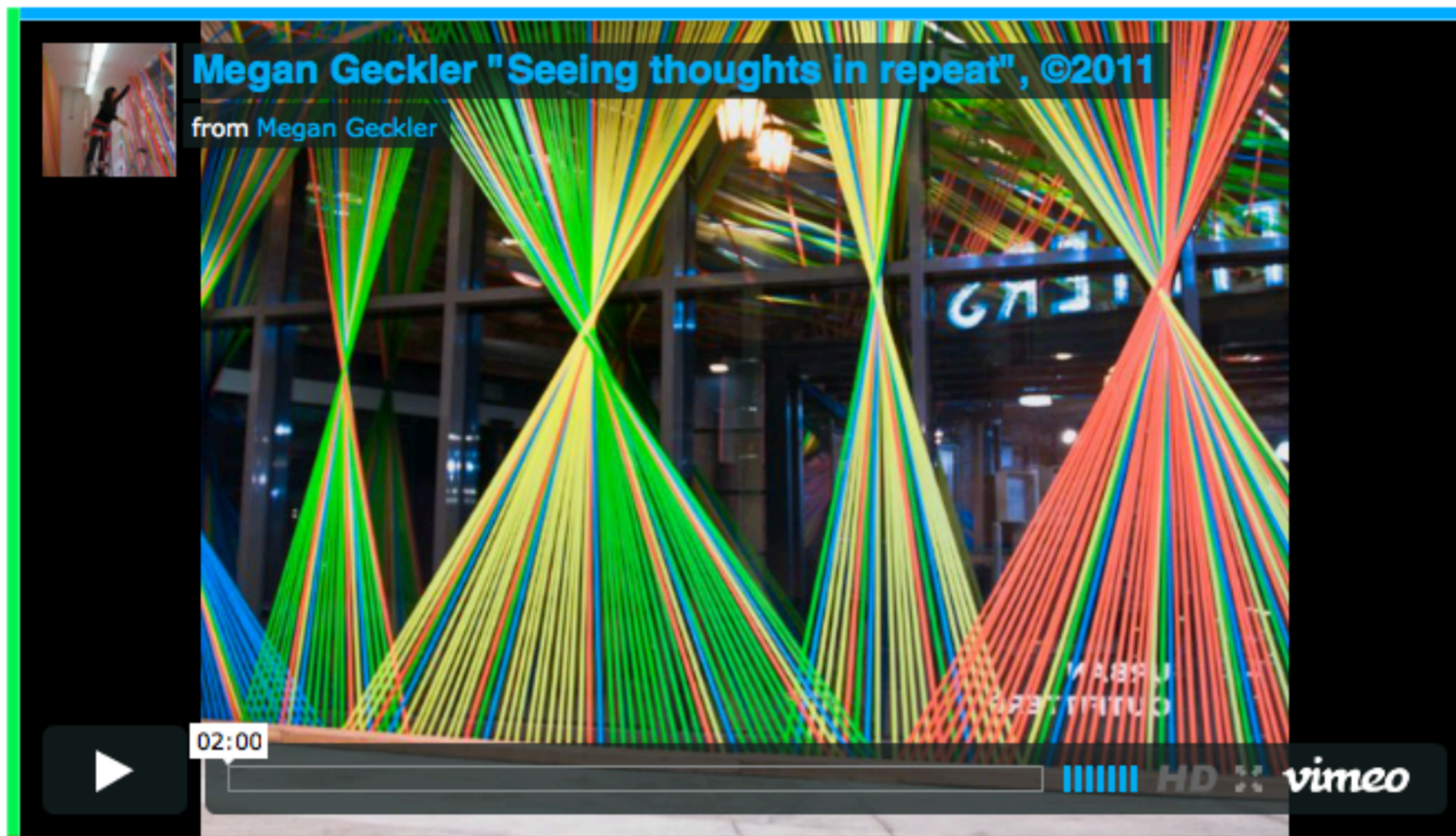


Megan Geckler: Seeing Thoughts in Repeat



When artist Megan Geckler moved to L.A., she threw out everything in her studio and bought some rainbow-colored construction site tape, which she uses to build massive site-specific installations. Geckler recently finished installing a piece at Space 15 Twenty in Los Angeles. Here, we speak with the artist about math, music and the best compliment she's ever heard.



INTERVIEW

Tell us about your installation at Space 15 Twenty.

The store itself opens onto three different exits. From what I understand, Space 15 Twenty used to be a lighting store, so it has that art history and a reclaimed warehouse feel to it. The tape runs from a beam just inside the store and the colors snake in through the letters on the Urban Outfitters sign, then explode back out onto the façade and rain down the window.

How did you choose the colors?

I wanted to do something citrusy because the installation will be up from now through June. In L.A., it's pretty much summer all year, but in most of the country it's still crappy out through April, so we came up with a color progression that goes from Day-Glo orange to lemony yellow to puke green to a lighter blue. It's an idea of transition, from dawn to dusk, spring to summer. Since there will be cool colors on one side of the entrance and warm on the other, people will get to choose which season they want to come in through—it's a choose your own adventure project.

Why did you start working with flagging tape?

After I moved from Philly to L.A., I did something really scary: I put everything in my studio away and I just started collecting. The first place I went was the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles, where I bought a book. They gave me this translucent green plastic bag and I thought it was awesome. I cut out the MoCA logo and put it in a flat file. Then I just kept collecting—this bag, that bag, some ribbon. I found flagging tape, making wallpaper and just experimenting and getting invited into these crazy spaces, being encouraged to do the biggest thing I could do.

What's the most difficult part of your installations?

The math! People who love math always say they like it because there's only one right answer, but then I'm working with this material that's flimsy, it's cheap, it stretches. If I was working with a more artistic material like paint, I could just buy a better brand. You can buy a better grade paint, but you can't buy a better grade flagging tape. The most intense installation we've ever done was with a team of five people working 88 hours each in five days. We barely slept but it got done on time and the client approved. Success!

How do you name your work?

They all come from song lyrics. I'm an indie-rock freak. I'm trying to pick lyrics that are really of the moment, or really, really old school, then I toss them around to friends, to strangers. I've tried to not make them too rhyme-y, but sometimes they're really obvious: "Every Move You Make, Every Step You Take" is obviously from The Police. This piece is called "Seeing Thoughts in Repeat," a lyric from Neon Indian's "Deadbeat Summer."

Do people ever confuse your work with decoration?

I've had people come to my shows and say, "Where's your art?" when really they just walked past it on their way in. But it's okay, it's almost a compliment when people get it mixed up with decoration or craft, because it means I'm walking that line really well. Someone can bring their grandma into Urban Outfitters and she'll look and go, "Oh! It's like knitting!" That's totally cool with me; everyone should be able to get something out of it. I'm not one of those artists that says, "You understand my work? Then I must not be trying hard enough." It should be fun and if you want to talk about pop art and minimalism, I'm there, but if you're like my mom, I just want you to like it.

On that note, what's the best compliment you've ever heard?

People walk in and it's immediate: "I want to live here, I want this in my house, can I do this at home?" They might not want to spend 700 hours of work on it, but it's accessible and inspiring—people get it, like it and think they could do it. My target audience is, above all else, college students and even more so, little kids. Little kids cannot keep themselves off it, they throw themselves on it, they yank on it. "Holy crap" is the best compliment I can get. I knock their socks off, and it's great.