

## M U R M U R A T I O N

As the COVID-19 pandemic swept the globe, bringing to light significant health and socioeconomic shortcomings worldwide, I was actually encouraged by how quickly we adopted new ways to connect, communicate, and collaborate. This project is an example of collaboration across multiple countries, cultures and time-zones, which may not have materialized if not for a pandemic-driven need for remote communication in lieu of meeting in person. This quick adaptation reminded me of the awe-inspiring vision of a murmuration of starlings. Starlings are individually rather small and ordinary black birds, who collectively, in flight, transform into mesmerizing natural wonder, morphing fluidly from one shape to another. Researchers learned that each starling in a large flock coordinates with its immediate neighbors to optimize the balance between the cohesion of the group and the effort of the individual, allowing for nearly instantaneous response to changes in direction or movement.

This discovery was both eye-opening and uplifting for me and after a conversation with Emilie De Pauw and Anne-Hélène Decaux of Panoptès Collection, the concept for my installation titled "Murmuration" was developed. In this work, I explore connection on three different levels: individual, community, and global society. Triangular acrylic picks (a mass-produced object often used for cocktail garnish) combined with dichroic film generate multi-directional prismatic effects through the interaction with light. The picks are installed at various angles and arranged to gather in three distinct areas as a nod to the three geographical locations that have shaped my practice and this project: Japan (my birth country), San Diego (my current residence), and Brussels (the project location), which happen to form a nearly perfect triangle. The installation as a whole illustrates a broader connection across individuals and regions, a dynamic network that is greater than the sum of its parts. The use of mundane materials to build a visual field in mass invites viewers to contemplate the phenomenological properties of the objects themselves as well as the transformative effect of assembly, much like the aerodynamic ballet orchestrated by thousands of starlings in unison. Perhaps we humans can take a lesson from the humble starling when it comes to figuring out how to live happily on an individual level while creating harmony within a community and as an inter-connected global society.