



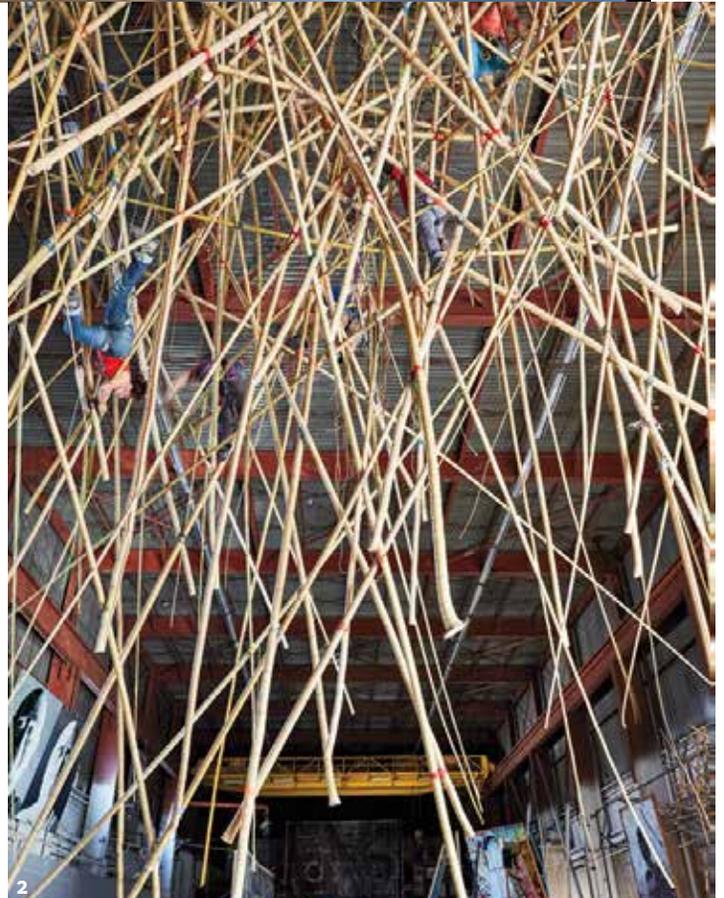
## Like Minds

The sprawling studio of artists *Doug and Mike Starn* is a testament to the brothers' shared vision

**G**rowing up in New Jersey, Doug and Mike Starn would sit next to each other at their family's kitchen table and do what kids do around the world: make art. In their case, the identical twins worked in complete harmony. "I'm painting on his painting, and he's painting on my painting, and we're perfectly happy," recalls Mike. "It's just the way we are."

The Starns have been collaborating in unison ever since, moving from childhood doodles to photography-based work that explores the intersection of art, science, and religion. In the 1980s, unable to afford enlarging an image to 30 or 40 inches, they just stuck small sheets of photographic paper together with Scotch tape, like a mosaic, before exposing them to chemicals in the darkroom. Since then they have pushed themselves far beyond photography, melding sculpture, performance, and more into their practice. Their 2010 rooftop installation, *Big Bambú: You Can't, You Don't, and You Won't Stop*, a jungle-gym-like structure consisting of 6,800 bamboo poles, remains one of the Metropolitan Museum of Art's most popular exhibitions ever, with 630,000 visitors and at least six marriage proposals reported over six months.

For the past eight years, the brothers have worked side by side—fueling each other's ideas, finishing each other's sentences—in a former factory in Beacon, New York. The 40,000-square-foot



1. THE BEACON, NEW YORK, STUDIO OF DOUG AND MIKE STARN.  
2. FEATURED AT THE SPACE IS A VERSION OF THE BROTHERS' 2010 INSTALLATION FOR THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART.

# CULTURE *AD visits*



1. GLASS PANELS FROM A RECENT PROJECT FOR PRINCETON UNIVERSITY. 2. AMONG THE MATERIALS ON A WORK SURFACE ARE ALBUMS FOR THE STARNIS' NEW SERIES, DEBUTING AT THE ARMORY SHOW AND TRAVELING TO THE BALDWIN GALLERY IN ASPEN, COLORADO. 3. A NEWLY RENOVATED STUDIO SPACE.

building once served as a foundry for casting metal sculptures as high as 50 feet not only for patriotic monuments on Washington's National Mall but also for fantastical creatures by such artists as Louise Bourgeois and Jeff Koons. The Starnis' original *Big Bambú* lives here, festooned with a bamboo sailboat (test-launched two summers ago on the upstate New York lake where they each have a weekend house). The room-size sculpture, inset with a woven staircase leading to the second-story gallery and a third-story office, continues to shift across the ground floor thanks to local rock climbers who extract and reattach poles using colored rope while 128 webcams capture the meticulous evolution. "Our vision is that nothing in the world is monolithic, nothing is one thing—everything is interconnected," Mike explains.

It's an especially productive time for the brothers. The annual Armory Show in New York City, running March 2–5, is featuring a double booth of new pieces—including large-scale portraits and a ten-foot-tall glass sculpture—for Stockholm's Wetterling Gallery. An exhibition of beloved album covers (complete with vinyl records) that they have reworked with paint opens at the Baldwin Gallery in Aspen, Colorado, on March 17, followed by a show of woven-bamboo furniture debuting April 27 at design dealer

Cristina Grajales's space in Manhattan. One of their most complex projects to date, a 90-foot-long stained-glass wall commissioned by the Art in Embassies program during the Obama administration, will be erected outside the U.S. embassy in Moscow this May. The freestanding façade, which consists of a composition of satellite images relating to space exploration and the cosmos, harks back to the brothers' 1990s tenure as NASA artists in residence. The digital photos have been transferred onto layers of glass (some of it handblown) by Franz Mayer of Munich, a fifth-generation workshop in Germany. "We've made translucent work with photographic film and glass throughout our career," Doug says, "but this piece has an additional meaning of transparency—science is positive—looking for truth in a transparent universe." —VICKY LOWRY

