

## Prize Winners Show Breathes Easy At CAW

by DAVID SEPULVEDA | Feb 5, 2016 8:10 am

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DAVID SEPULVEDA PHOTO

One of Morris's solar particle wind chime mobiles.

Soothing, resonant chimes that evoke distant church bells emanate from two large mobile configurations. Typically, their long arms would be rotating in a breeze-driven symphony of [Calderesque](#) movement.

But these are not your ordinary mobiles.



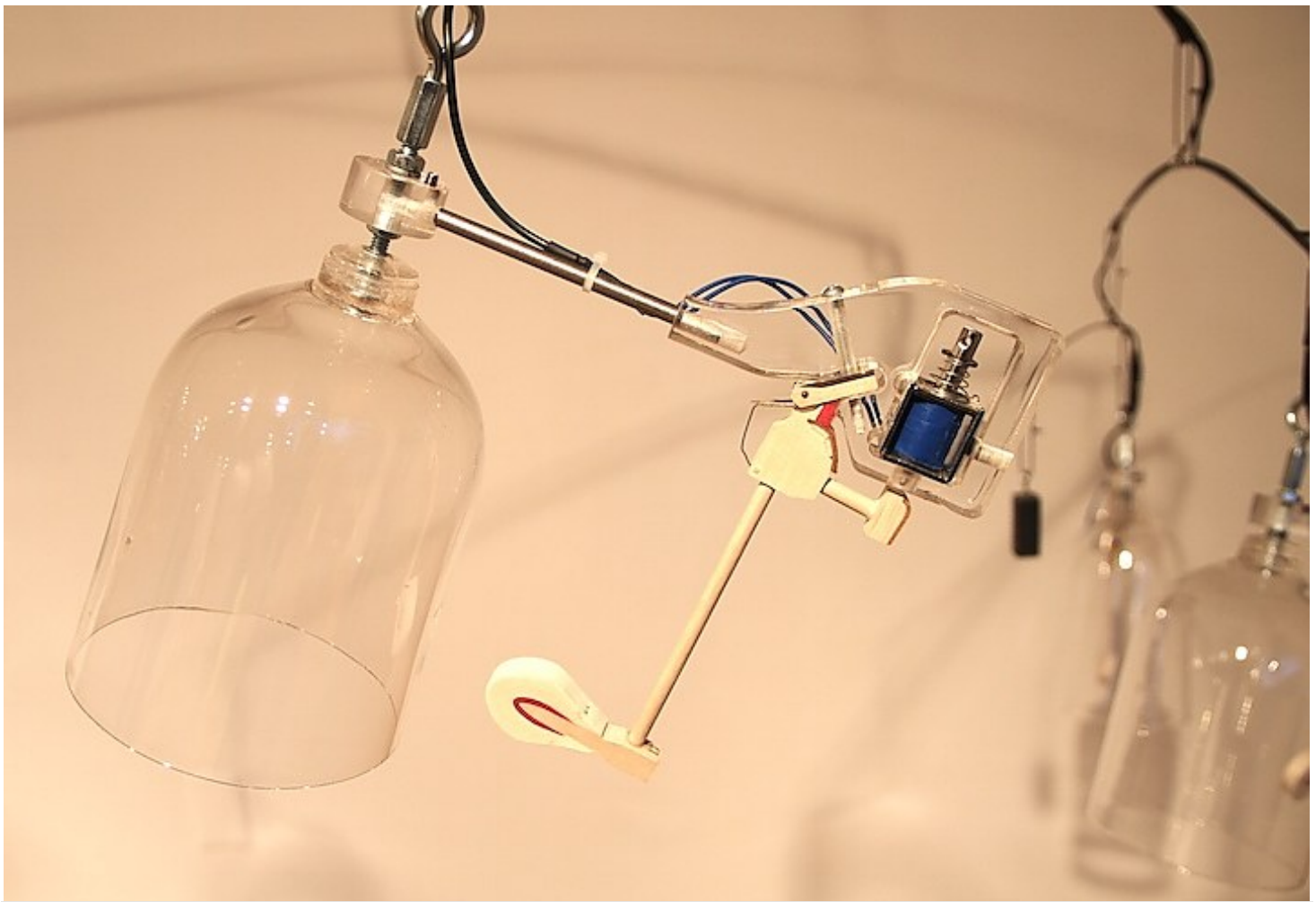
Morris (l) and Mandel (r) give artists' talks.

The mobiles are the creation of Brooklyn-based mixed-media sculptor [Joseph Morris](#). He and co-exhibitor, UMass assistant professor, and artist Robin Mandel were both prize winners of last summer's juried "Intelligent Objects" exhibit. They are now presenting their highly emotive works at [Creative Arts Workshop](#). The exhibition runs through Feb. 26.



Gallery view from second floor.

Juror George Fifield, an independent curator of New Media and founder and director of [Boston Cyberarts, Inc.](#), selected Morris and Mandel from among the 21 exhibiting artists at the CAW show. “This show is their prize” said CAW executive director Dan Fitzmaurice.



Chime detail.

Morris's solar particle wind chimes and breathing machines combine art, technology, and engineering, reflecting a trend in [affective computing](#). The pieces also signal his work as a visiting professor and technician at [Pratt Institute](#)'s department of industrial design and his educational background in technology studies and sculpture.

His works may strike the casual viewer as esoteric gadgetry, but they are much more. The pieces "move in real time and space, and so are active and performative. Their concern is to produce introspection and an empathetic response," according to Morris. These notions are borne out with careful listening and observation.

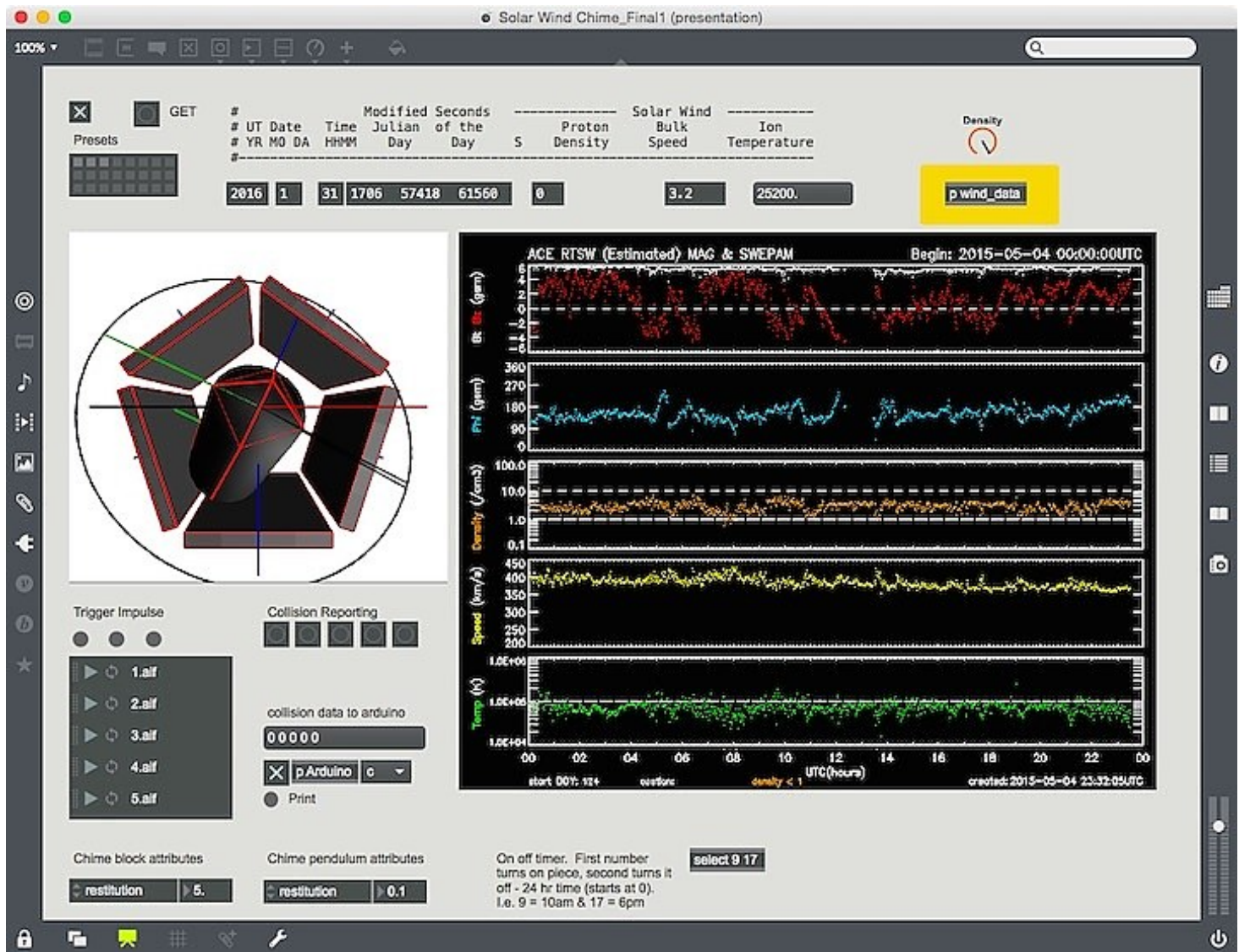


Image of software controlling wind chime data.

The CAW exhibit comes alive with sound, movement, and the anxious potential of energy about to be released. Morris's mobiles lack the rotating movement of conventional mobiles. They are instead animated through the data-driven staccato taps of repurposed piano hammers striking custom-made glass bells. The impulses are created by software that interprets data received from a NASA satellite positioned some 1.5 million kilometers from earth as it collects and relays solar wind particle data in real time.



"Breathing Water," contributed video still.

[Mandel](#) credits some of the show's cohesiveness to serendipity. His works represent a return to sculpture after forays into video and installation work. *Breathing Water*, his sole video installation in this exhibit, captures the breath-like, rhythmic exchange of water pouring between two horizontal glasses. "The gesture of breathing is evident in Joe's work as well," Mandel said, referencing Morris's nearby breathing machine.



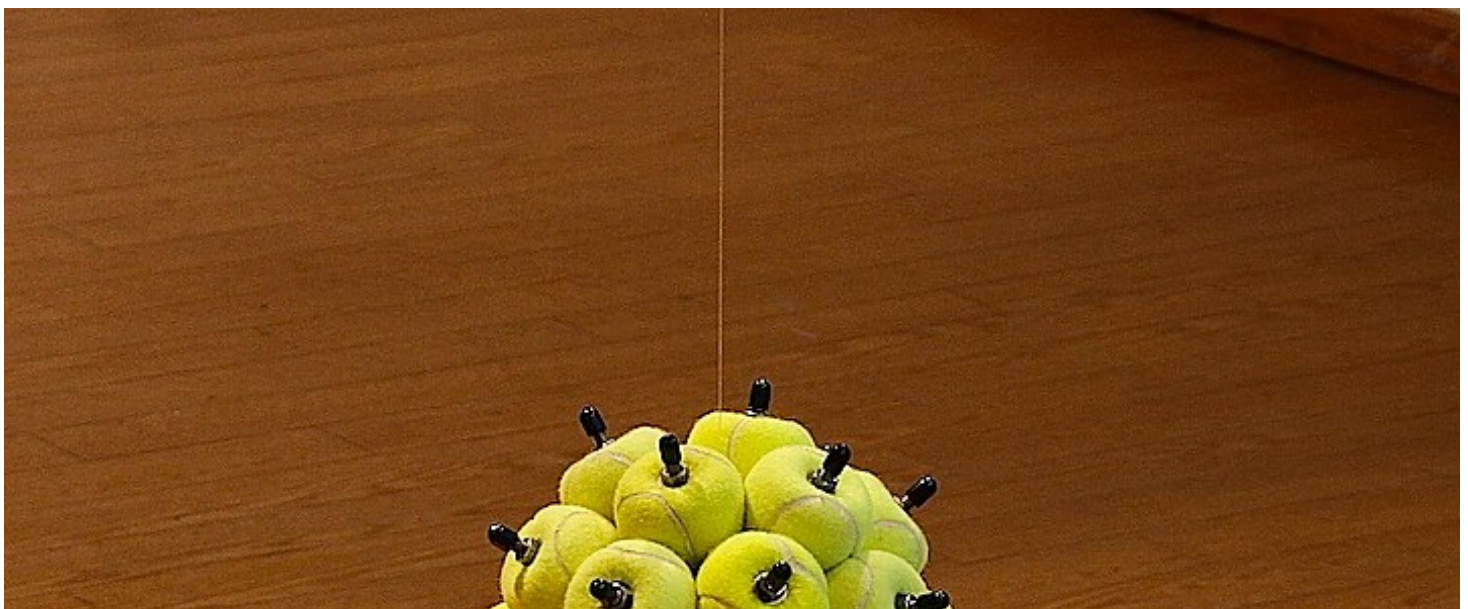
The machine, entitled “Serpentine Breath,” is a towering kinetic sculpture of metal and fabric. It evokes the bodily gesture of a giant breathing lung. The inhalation and contraction movements of its billowing, soft material are controlled by a motorized mechanism at the top of the sculpture that Morris both engineered and fabricated.





"White Dwarf" is constructed with tea cups.

Mandel's sculptures suggest an internal dynamism at their core, with works generally reflecting his "investigation into time, light, and motion," as his artist statement read. Teacups, candlesticks...

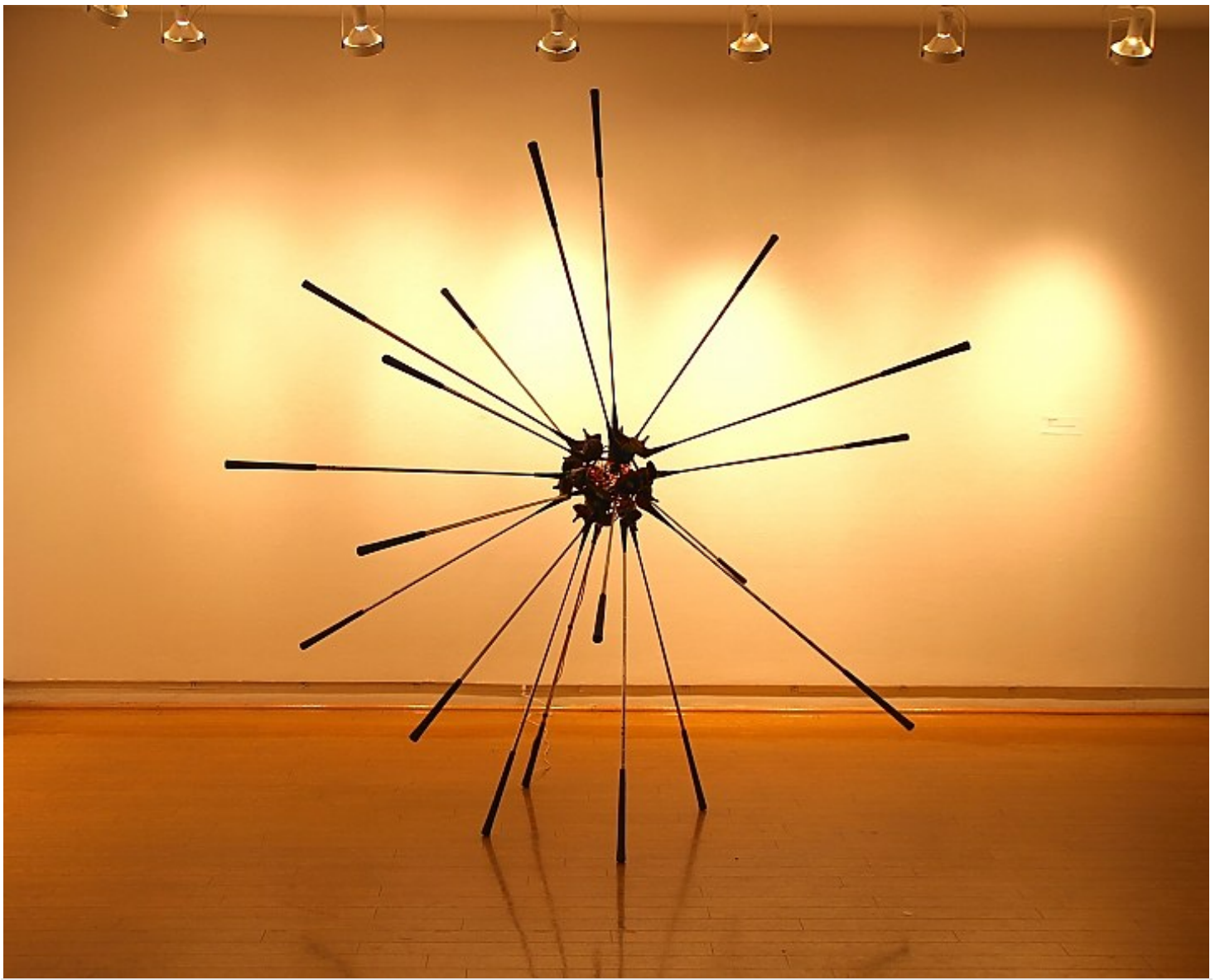






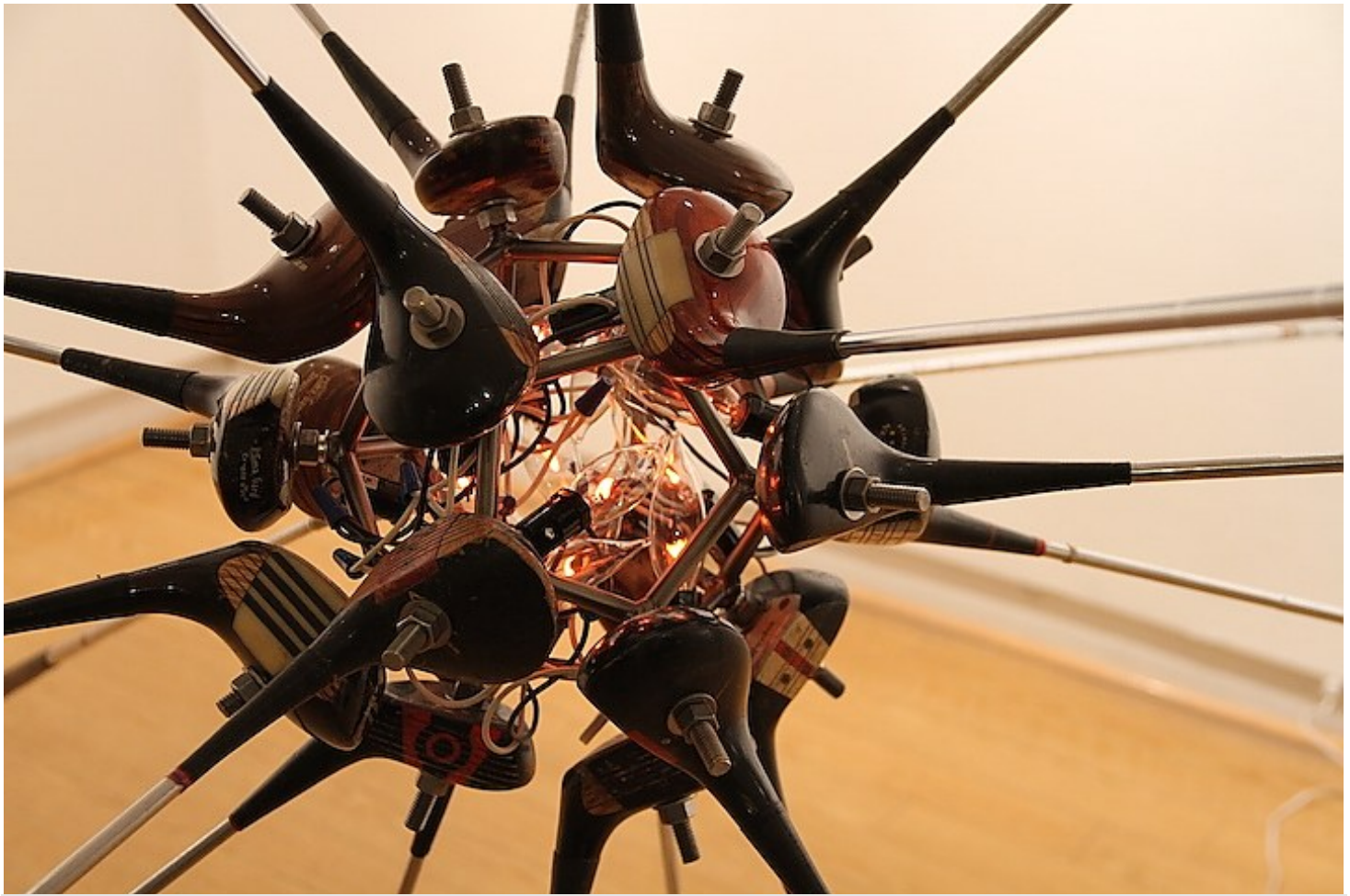
"Dull Boy" looms like an explosive mine.

...tennis balls....



"Red Giant" made with golf clubs.

... and golf clubs are among the found objects Mandel fashions around his spherical metal [armatures](#) as he builds the a shape with radial symmetry, strongly conveying active, outward energy.



"Red Giant," detail.

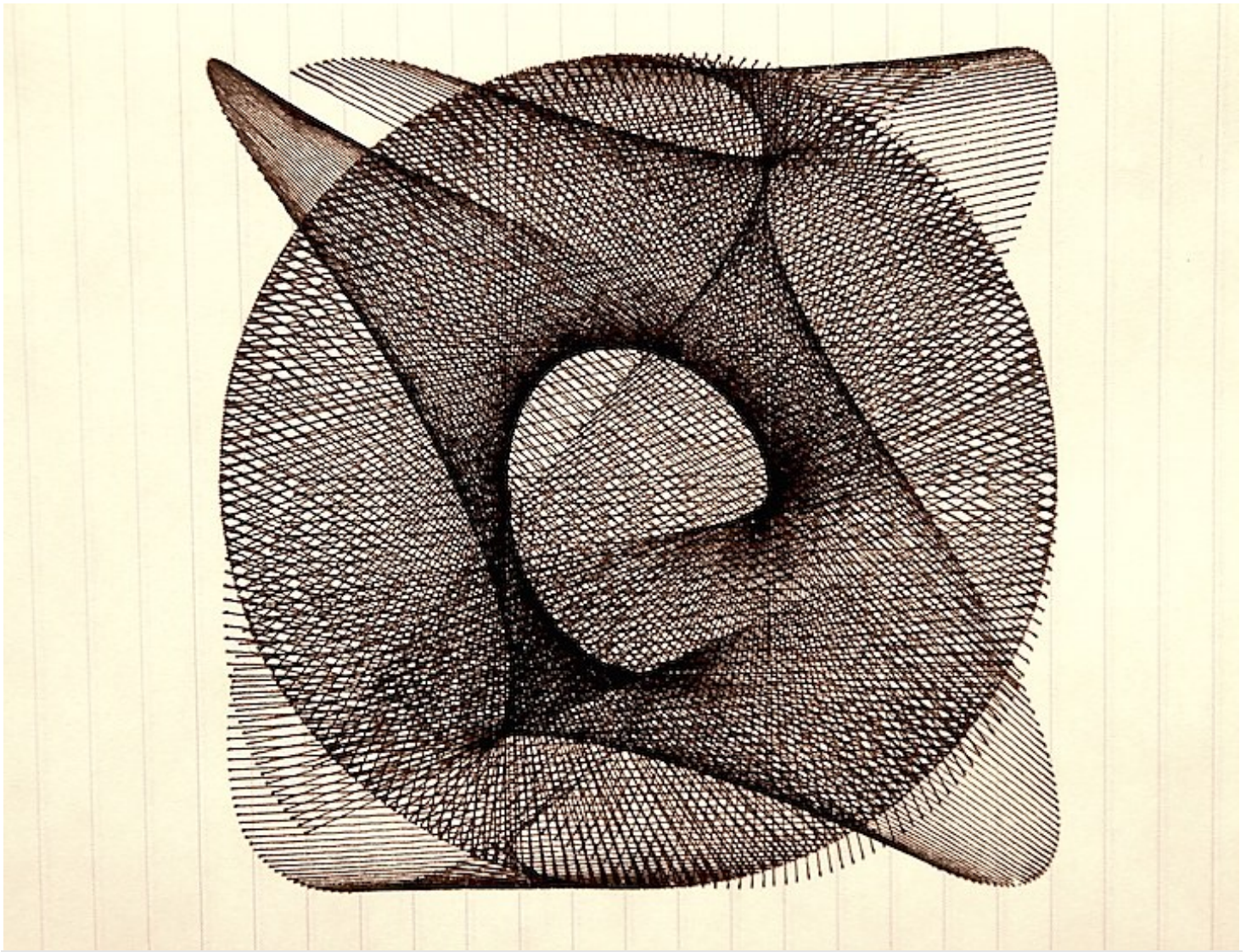
In his well-positioned "Red Giant," the viewer is confronted by a large Sputnik-like form. At the sculpture's core, lights crackle, summoning more investigation. It is difficult to reconcile the fact that these arranged golf clubs, such mundane implements of sport, so readily both transfix and transport the imagination.





"Unrealized Gain," wood and metal.

As Morris summons digital signals from the stars in the creation of of his sculpture, Mandel turns to constellations as metaphors and inspiration for some of his pieces. *Unrealized Gain* is a suspended and "exploding" chair. Its parts are both separated and connected, like the imaginary lines we conjure to connect stellar images of myths. It also recalls Tinker Toys, various shapes and forms connected by the thinnest of dowels inspiring an endless array of creative configurations.



Algorhythmic drawings.

Throughout the show, one can also find affordable two dimensional works, some created by custom algorhythmic software based on circular trigonometry.



Opening-night refreshments.

What later exhibitgoers will not find are samples of the crisp Easy Rye Da IPA, or the frothy, dark Granola Ale provided by the Black Hog Brewing Company of Oxford, which were served at the show's opening.



Handmade crafts for sale.

*The Prize Winner's Show, presented on two floors, will be on exhibit through February 26 at CAW's Hilles Gallery at 80 Audubon St. In CAW's book arts department is "XOXO: A Sale of Valentines," in addition to the books, boxes, pottery and prints created by CAW artists.*

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There were no comments