Blind Faith

CRUMBLING brick, fading gold leaf and a skeletal roof conspire to give the Holy Cross Church, in the Mount Adams section of Cincinnati, the appearance of a sacred ruin. In 2010, the Japanese artist Shinsu Turner-Yamamoto exploited the atmosphere of otherworldly decay in this deconsecrated chapel with a site-specific installation, “Hanging Garden.” He suspended two giant birch trees — one alive and green, the other desiccated and snow-white — atop each other in the church’s nave. One local critic called it the best public-art project he had seen in the city in years.

Now this same church is playing host to another knockout installation, the reviving art and science project Gravity of Light. As they’ve done in Stockholm and Pittsburgh, the identical twins Doug and Mike Starn arrayed photographic mosaics around a 45,000-watt carbon arc lamp that is so bright, one can no longer enter the church without wearing protective goggles. (The Cincinnati Enquirer reported that an attendant charged with replacing the carbon rods when they burn out must wear SPF 50 sunscreen.) The exhibition, part of the ongoing FotoFocus regional photography festival, is on view through Dec. 30. It also coincides with a new monograph, “Doug + Mike Starn: Gravity of Light” (Rizzoli, $55).

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