

Karen Brummund's *Performing Harmony*

by [Daniel C. Richardson](#) in the [September 2023](#) issue



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As part of a spring 2023 residency sponsored by the Foundation for Spirituality and the Arts, Alabama artist Karen Brummund worked closely with the people of Grace Church Cathedral in Charleston, South Carolina, to create a projected video installation inside and around the church called *Performing Harmony*.

Charleston is just one stop on a tour of this evolving installation, which brings together Brummund's signature interests in architectural forms and communal interaction—applied here within a sacred space for the first time in her creative career.

Performing Harmony begins with what she calls a community build, whereby members of the congregation generate together the raw materials used in the production of the final piece. Drawing, coloring, assembling, and stacking paper blocks as a group at this coordinated event, Brummund and the congregation occupy a designated space in dialogue with each other, building community while literally building in community.

This initial event generates a wealth of physical objects, along with detailed photographic and video documentation which Brummund uses to create carefully edited and layered video footage of the event. This footage is then projected onto a balanced structure made from the blocks assembled by the group. That projection is itself recaptured on video and edited once again, culminating in a pair of ten-minute looped video projections installed in various locations around the church, including above the side aisles of the sanctuary.

What we see is a poetic vision of the church at large—layers of hands, at once fragmented and coalescent, balancing what they've built together, individually and collectively—projected onto a tenuous and temporal construction, and into an intentionally shared architectural space.

See fsa.art for more information.