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## THE TORGGLER TENDS TO SHYLIGHT

by [LeeAnna Adams](#) | August 27, 2025

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In the midst of unpacking and arranging artwork for the next set of dynamic exhibitions, guiding more than 600 children through the joys of summer art camps, and firing community-made clay vessels, the Torggler Fine Arts Center paused to care for its beloved centerpiece, *Shylight*.

The striking kinetic sculpture, which hangs from the peak of the building's glass atrium, consists of multiple layers of hand-cut silk and custom machinery, designed to mimic flowers that close each night at the onset of darkness. Repeatedly descending and retreating from above while blossoming in a beautiful cascade, the intricate piece requires regular maintenance, which can only be performed by the creators of the work, Studio DRIFT, an artist duo and production team based in Amsterdam.



This summer, the Torggler welcomed Studio DRIFT team member Daniel Marshall to service *Shylight* and perform a number of updates to its physical and digital components. Marshall, who assisted with the initial installation in 2021 and has visited the Torggler periodically since, sat down to share some behind, or rather "*above the scenes*" details about the work.

As the airy, fluid motion of *Shylight* is essential to its effect, Marshall refreshed the installation's pulley systems by dusting and carefully cleaning each blossom. He also upgraded its digital components, installing new proprietary

remote-control software, removing outdated programs, and updating the operating system that powers the sculpture's movements.

When asked about the greatest challenge of maintaining *Shylight* at the Torggler, Marshall was quick to note that the distance from Amsterdam to Christopher Newport University isn't one of them. In fact, he enjoys his visits to Newport News, especially the chance to stop by Subway Station. The real challenge, he explained, is maneuvering the 60-foot lift just to reach the sculpture.



Marshall went on to praise the University's commitment to the arts, intellectual exploration, and curiosity, expressing gratitude for having Studio DRIFT's work showcased in such a distinctive setting. While versions of *Shylight* appear in multiple locations around the world, he noted that the Torggler's presentation stands out as one of his favorites. It is the only site where the sculpture is displayed in a fully transparent setting, allowing its illuminated beauty to shine with particular brilliance in the evening hours.

And the momentum at the Torggler isn't slowing down with the end of the summer. The Center opens the exhibitions

*Gateways: African American Art from the Key Collection* and *Luisa Adelfio: Transcendence* on September 13, along with a new set of fall classes, programs, and special events.

The range of opportunities for inspiring interactions with the arts at Christopher Newport is one example of how the University is connecting with the community, a priority in the [Strategic Compass](#).

*Shylight* was initially installed as part of *Night Light*, the Torggler's inaugural exhibition in 2021, and was ultimately purchased for the University through the generosity of Elizabeth B. and John B. Warters, becoming the Torggler's only permanent installation.

More information about *Shylight*, happenings at the Torggler, and details of past and upcoming exhibitions can be found at [thetorggler.org](http://thetorggler.org).