

Alchemy: Art + Science

Clark University, Schiltkamp Gallery/ Traina Center for the Arts
92 Downing Street, Worcester MA

February 15 – April 11, 2010

Opening Reception: Wednesday, March 4, 5:30-7:00

Preceded by Artists Talk from 4:30 – 5:30

Artists and Scientists: **Grace DeGennaro**, ME
Gary Duehr, Somerville, MA
Phyllis Ewen, Somerville, MA
Audrey Goldstein, Newton, MA
Gregory Gomez, Newton, MA
David Hibbett, Worcester, MA
Ayumi Ishii, Central Falls, RI
Oren Kalus, New Paltz, NY
David Lang, Wayland, MA
Jennifer Langhammer, Vineyard Haven, MA
Rachel Loischild, Worcester, MA
Anna Mazzarella, Worcester, MA
Soi Shin, Cambridge, MA
Fletcher Smith, Easthampton, MA
Rhonda Smith, Boston, MA
Naoe Suzuki, Waltham, MA
Marilu Swett, Boston, MA
Rachael Wren, Brooklyn, NY

This exhibition explores the intersections of art and science – art that is inspired by science as well as scientific images and models that are transcendent. The work in the show has been created by visual artists and scientists, and many contributors see themselves as both. Indeed, there is a rich tradition of the artist-scientist dating back to ancient Greece and perhaps most notably including Renaissance artists, Lenoardo da Vinci and Albrecht Durer.

In contemporary Western culture and in traditional academic disciplines, distinctions are often drawn between those who practice a form of “hard” or “social” science and those whose fields of inquiry fall within the “arts and humanities”. Yet these distinctions often belie the intersections of practice, methodology, and objective. To observe, identify, describe, investigate, and explain or take meaning from that process is common to the endeavors of artist and scientist. In essence, it is the pursuit of knowledge through methodological activity and disciplined practice that is at the core of this work.

Both artist and scientist begin with questions and some intuitive sense as they confront the physical world. The scientist, while bound by the need to “prove” theory and rationally explain phenomena, also often evokes the transcendent and mystical in the process. And the artist, who can rely on imitation and fancy, is most successful when there is authenticity, structure, and reference to the larger world in the work. Each pursuit requires creativity, dedication to work (even without public acknowledgement at times), and a sense of wonder about the universe. As Albert Einstein stated, “All religions, arts, and sciences are branches of the same tree”. Many artists are also influenced by scientific research and respond to it in their art (e.g. recently bioengineering has been a major theme) and scientists rely on the same creative impulses and cultural imperatives that propel artistic expression.

Several of the contributors to this show have connections to Clark University: **David Hibbett** is Professor of Biology and is currently serving as Chair of the Biology Department. **Anna Mazzearella** is a graduate student in Biology and had studied art and biology as an undergraduate at Clark as well. **Rachel Loischild** is a recent graduate of Clark and is currently teaching a COPACE (Continuing Education) course in Digital Photography at the university. All of them present photographic images that document their research – both scientific and artistic; **David Hibbett** with amplified microscopic images of mushrooms, **Anna Mazzearella** with the stickleback fish she experiments with in her lab, and **Rachel Loischild** with highly enlarged insects resting right on her large-format camera lens.

The work of the participants in this show range from an exploration of optical illusions by **Fletcher Smith** and **Rachael Wren** to kinetic sculptures by **David Lang**; from the reference to histological body sections in grids of wood slices by physician, **Oren Kalus**, to the delicate mathematical diagrams of “sacred geometries” by **Grace DeGennaro**. **Jennifer Langhammer**, **Soi Shin**, **Rhonda Smith**, and **Marilu Swett** draw inspiration from natural processes and/or biological forms. **Gary Duehr** encapsulates bits of ephemera in fused glass to create “an alchemy of everyday objects”, **Naoe Suzuki** explores the symbiosis between science and warfare, while **Ayumi Ishii** insinuates the heat and pressure of the human body on actual furniture. **Phyllis Ewen** casts laboratory vessels to explore notions of containment while referencing scientific text and illustration, **Gregory Gomez** also recontextualizes scientific notations and pictographs in his paintings and bronze wall sculptures, and **Audrey Goldstein** explores “network theory” and universal relationship in her performance piece “Data Bearers” and related paintings.

Gallery Hours: **Monday – Thursday 9AM- 9PM, Friday 9-5,
Saturday 12-5, Sunday 12-9**

Further Information: **(508) 793-8818 Elli Crocker, Assoc. Professor and Gallery Director
(508) 793-7349 Tina Zlody, Visual & Performing Arts
Events Coordinator**