THINK ART - ACT SCIENCE
SWISS ARTISTS-IN-LABS_

From 18th December 2010 to 15th May 2011

"Think Art – Act Science" is an exhibition of works from nine artists who have engaged in a long-term creative dialogue with scientists. These artists have all been exposed to specific debates within the scientific research community through an immersive nine month residency. Among them, a group of two participated in a Sino-Swiss residency exchange. As science is looking for new ways to interpret itself, so art is thinking about the position and actions of science in society. And just as the art and science collaborations are creating a new paradigm, so too is this exhibition, as it aims to visualize the collaborative process, rather than present finished works.

"Think Art – Act Science" explores the manifold dynamics of the collaborations and the resulting works show the communication potential of artists' responses to scientific research. Perceptions that science is literal and art figurative are blurred, and fixed notions of cultural cartography in art and science are questioned.

The exhibition is arranged around three main research themes addressed by artistic investigations: Ecology and Environment, Spatial Awareness and Emotions, and Exploration of New Technologies. Within these themes, the fields of scientific inquiry from environmental science and biotechnology to artificial intelligence are reinterpreted. It is hoped that these interpretations will challenge the visitor to think about issues such as machine-human interfaces, natural resources, relativity and genetically modified organisms. The visitor travels through the process of the collaborations, with extracts of interviews (video) of the "reflective and emotional" experiences of both scientists and the end-result of the collaboration – the artwork itself. Events such as performances and artists/scientist thematic talks will accompany the exhibition.

Spacial Awareness and Emotions

Christian Gonzenbach (1975, Geneva)
artist-in-lab at the Physics Department of the University of Geneva and the Centre of European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN)

QUARK Quantum Art Crystal, 2010

The artwork QUARC is a mechanical random generator. When the neon tubes of the crystal switch on and off, they resemble a Newtonian motion that create a quantum-situation. One understands how it functions but the sense of it remains a secret; just like in science where one starts to understand the universe, but its purpose remains in the dark. In physics observation, reflection and experiment serve the epistemology. Christian Gonzenbach uses these methods to think about the world.

Bio: Christian Gonzenbach's practice is concerned with the transformation of ordinary things. With his sculptures, installations and videos he creates images, objects and worlds that explores every day surroundings and the definition of life with humour and seriousness. He teaches at the University of Art and Design (HEAD) in Geneva and travels internationally as a guest lecturer. He has won several awards during the last few years.

Pe Lang (1974, Berlin/Zurich)
artist-in-lab at the Swiss Centre for Electronics and Microtechnology (CSEM), Lucerne

KINETIC SPEAKERS, 2007

Pe Lang's access to the latest developments in micro-systems and technology inspired him to develop kinetic speakers to analyse site-specific attributes using acoustic analysis. He compiles new micro- and macro-systems based on the idea that the "syntax" of music and/or composition is manipulated by an external system.

Bio: Pe Lang focuses on researching sound of materials as well as on creating accessible and organic acoustic spaces and kinetic installations investigating the properties of sound, materials, resonance and generative systems. Pe Lang work's focuses on minimal kinetic systems, combined with different materials, which are used as sound sources.

Ecology and Environment

Claudia Tolusso (1971, Lucerne)
artist-in-lab at the Swiss Federal Institute of Forest, Snow and Landscape Research (WSL), Bellinzona

DIVANO VERDE (2009)

The artist's installation draws attention to the process of settlement and growth of invasive species and the subsequent impact on the natural environment. "Divano Verde" invites the visitors to sit on the site-specific grass-couch installation to be featured on the terrace of Arts Santa Monica from March 2011.

Bio: Claudia Tolusso studied at the University of Arts in Stuttgart with Jürgen Rose and since 1999 she has been working as stage and costume designer for theatre, film and museums. The artist is interested in the crossroads of the fictional and non-fictional.

Hina Strüver (1974, Zurich) & **Mätti Wüthrich** (1972, Zurich)
artists-in-lab together with Mätti Wüthrich at the Institute for Integrative Biology (IBZ) at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH) Zürich

REGROWING EDEN, 2007
The artwork *Regrowing Eden* points to the discussion about genetic engineering (GE) and the consequences of creating genetically modified organisms (GMO). The title is a metaphor for the actual status of science, which has taken authority over life in a larger sense.

Bio: Hina Strüver is a performance artist. She has been exploring the human and sculptural body in the public space. Plants are also part of the public space, of science and public discussions. For the last few years Hina has therefore been establishing a series of performances about plants in public space, their status in society and questions about. The artist studied in the Hochschule für Bildende Künste in Braunschweig, Germany and at the F+F Art School in Zürich. She lives and works in Zürich.

Bio: Mätti Wüthrich, born in Switzerland and studied environmental sciences at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETHZ) in Zürich. Together in pairs he has been performing in public space and is working for an international environmental organisation. The artist lives and works in Zürich. Mätti Wüthrich has been an artist-in-lab together with Hina Strüver at the Institute for Integrative Biology (IBZ) at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETHZ) in Zürich in 2007.

Ping Qiu (1961, Berlin)
artist-in-lab at the Swiss Federal Institute of Aquatic Science and Technology (EAWAG)

BREATHING PLANTS, 2008

During her residency Ping Qiu was particularly fascinated by aquatic micro-organisms which she observed under the light microscope. The micro world under the microscope inspired her to develop large-scale kinetic sculptures: *Breathing plants* and *Eggs' Breath*. Ping states that as an artist-in-lab she felt like an autotrophic entity capable of making nutritive organic molecules from inorganic sources via photosynthesis.

Bio: Ping Qiu lives and works in Germany, near Berlin. She studied at the Art Academy of Hangzhou (China) and at the Hochschule der Künste (HdK) in Berlin. Ping Qiu is an installation artist and sculptor, who has a history of imitating organic forms with inorganic materials.

Sylvia Hostettler (1965, Bern)
artist-in-lab at the Centre for Integrative Genomics (CIG) of the Lausanne University

LIGHT REACTION – THE DIMENSION OF APPARENT INVISIBILITY, 2008

Sylvia Hostettler works magnify the micro-level of nature and interpret the behaviour of light on plant growth. The microscopic observation of the gallbladder brought the artist to the idea of creating objects made of natural elements on which invented wax forms were applied, like excrescences. With her light sculptures and images Sylvia blurs the boundaries of our perceptions of natural/unnatural.

Bio: Sylvia Hostettler lives and works in Bern, where she studied Fine Arts focusing on sculpture at the School of Arts Bern. For the last few years the artist has been focusing on a series of "landscapes" by means of photography and sculpture.

Alexandre Joly (1977, Geneva)
artist-in-lab at the Chengdu Institute of Biology (CIB) of the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) in the Sino-Swiss residency exchange

SACRED PEANUTS, 2010
BIRD'S POWDER, 2010
IMAGINARY LANDSCAPES, 2010

These works, created during Alexandre Joly's residency at the Chengdu Institute of Biology, combine his recording techniques with his understanding of scientific study. He created micro-worlds of sounds under glass domes and, revealing both the microscopic and the macroscopic aspects of research processes, gave a new artistic meaning to the idea of an established research field. A series of landscape drawings combines representations of the traditional Chinese landscape with the artists' imaginary landscapes.

Bio: Alexandre Joly lives and works in Geneva where he studied industrial design and fine art. Alexandre Joly is interested in creating new imaginative or materialized environments by using sound recordings. One of the core aspects of Alexandre's artistic approach is to look at the world with childlike curiosity and an open mind.

Wenfeng Liao (1984, Shanghai)
artist-in-lab at Swiss Federal Institute for Forest, Snow and Landscape Research (WSL), Birmendorf, in the Sino-Swiss residency exchange

DEAD MAN, 2010
SMALL PATH, 2010
DEAR SCIENTIST, 2010

During his residency with the Swiss Federal Institute for Forest, Snow and Landscape Research (WSL), Wenfeng Liao noticed that the scientists also collected data from dead trees (e.g., cycles of carbon and nutrients). Inspired by the data and the question "When is a dead tree a dead tree?", the artist created his very own interpretations such as with his sculpture "Dead Man". The artist explore another dimension with his video work "Small Path" and his photography installation "368 Office Plants" which carries the perception of "natural" and "artificial" spaces to the point of absurdity.

Bio: Wenfeng Liao works and lives in Shanghai, where he studied at the China Academy of Fine Arts. Mostly working with video or photography, Wenfeng Liao is exploring the ambiguity of reactions to artistically modified spaces.

Exploring New Technologies

Pablo Ventura (1959, Las Palmas/Zurich)
artist-in-lab at the Artificial Intelligence Laboratory (AIL) of the University of Zurich
Daniel Bisig (1968, Zurich)

"2047", 2008

Pablo Ventura has been interested in the theme of human's relations to machines and technology by contrasting the robot's locomotion to the fragility of human dance movement. "2047" is an interactive installation adapted from a dance work by the same title. The dance work was inspired by Won Kar Wai's Movie "2046" and creates a parallel plot by contrasting traditional and computer based dance using motion tracking techniques and swarm behaviour principles.
Daniel Bisig has developed dance pieces using swarm technology for the interactive in collaboration with the choreographer Pablo Ventura.

Bio: Pablo Ventura has been living and working in Zurich since 1993. He is a choreographer and studied at the London Contemporary Dance School. In 1986, he founds the Ventura Dance Company and focuses on choreography and human-machine relation. His recent dance work "2047" using swarm technology has been developed in collaboration with Daniel Bisig.

Bio: Daniel Bisig holds a Master's degree in Natural Sciences and a PhD in Protein Crystallography, both from the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology. He is currently working both as a scientist and an artist at the Artificial Intelligence Laboratory of University of Zurich and at the Institute for Computer Music and Sound Technology, University of the Arts, Zurich. He is specialising in the fields of computer animation, experimental video and software art.