Contact: Teresa Riordan
triordan@princeton.edu
609-258-9754
Princeton University

Art of Science exhibit opens at Princeton

Virtual gallery goes live as well**; **winners announced

PRINCETON, N.J. -- The top three prize winners of Princeton University's second annual "Art of Science" exhibit were announced at an opening gala today at 5 p.m.

An online gallery show of the exhibit will go live tomorrow:
http://www.princeton.edu/artofscience/

The juried show features prints, videos, poetry, paintings and sculptures ? 55 works in all -- produced in the course of scientific or technical research from more than a dozen different departments at Princeton.

"Much of the work that we find so compelling may be likened to 'found art," said Adam Finkelstein, associate professor of computer science and one of the exhibit organizers.

"Researchers create images or other artifacts in the pursuit of math, science and engineering, and often they turn out to be quite beautiful when viewed as works of art. The question of whether this is serendipity, or perhaps the expression of some deeper connections between aesthetics, order, nature, and complexity remains to be answered by the viewer."

A 3-ton 'sculpture' that was found in a scrap heap at the Princeton Plasma Physics Lab, a U.S. national laboratory dedicated to science and innovation in fusion energy. The found...
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This bronze sculpture by British sculptor Henry Moore was installed on the Princeton campus in 1971. It is 11 feet tall and weights two and a half tons.
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The three top prize winners are:

Qiangfei Xia, a graduate student in electrical engineering at Princeton, who won third place for "Easter Bonnet," a photograph taken with an electron scanning microscope of a tiny piece of metal melted by a laser onto a silicon chip;

Melissa Green, a graduate student in mechanical and aerospace engineering at Princeton, who was awarded second place for "Isolated Hairpin," a computer simulation of turbulent air flow; and

Jennifer Rea, a senior in the history of science at Princeton who took first place for her painting titled "Mitosis," which depicts cell division superimposed on a floral fabric.

The exhibit is installed in the Friend Center, which is part of Princeton University's School of Engineering and Applied Science. Admission is free and open to the public from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Friday. A virtual gallery, which includes captions describing the work of the researchers who created the images, can be found online at http://www.princeton.edu/artofscience/

"The captions include a story behind each image that reveals something of the personality of the scientist who created it," said Andrew Moore, a photographer and filmmaker who is a visiting lecturer in the Visual Arts Program at Princeton and one of the exhibit's organizers.

"These are not just byproducts of research by anonymous people in white coats. They are the results of creative individuals working over a long

period of time, often not knowing where their research is going to lead."

Last year the inaugural Art of Science exhibit at Princeton received international attention. This year's exhibit was organized by Moore, Finkelstein, Alex Halderman, a graduate student in computer science; Kati Lovasz, a graduate student in comparative literature; , Perry Cook, professor of computer science; and Jonathan Harris, a web-based media artist who graduated from Princeton's computer science department in 2001.

The call for entries for this year's exhibit was limited to the Princeton community. However, the organizers said they plan to make next year's competition a worldwide one.

The jurors for the top prizes were Shirley M. Tilghman, president of Princeton University and a renowned molecular biologist; the acclaimed photographer Emmet Gowin, who is a professor in the Program in Visual Arts at Princeton and David Dobkin, dean of faculty and a professor of computer science at Princeton whose research focuses on computer graphics.

A laser pulse melted a tiny piece of metal on a silicon chip, resulting in an unexpected shape that looks like a very, very small Easter bonnet. An unintended dust…
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The 55 exhibited works ? which included six videos, one sculpture, one poem, three canvasses, and 44 digital prints -- were selected from more than 150 submissions.

One of the most unusual pieces in the exhibit ? a solicited work that was not entered into the competition ? is a 3-ton "sculpture" that was found in a scrap heap at the Princeton Plasma Physics Lab, a U.S. national laboratory dedicated to science and innovation in fusion energy.

The found sculpture is a prototype of an electromagnetic coil used in an experimental fusion device. Exhibit organizers noted that the shape of the coil is a kind of mirror image to a sculpture by the famous artist Henry Moore on the Princeton campus.

"When I saw it at the scrap yard over at PPPL it seemed to serendipitously reflect upon the university's Henry Moore sculpture, 'Oval with Points,' so I thought it would be perfect for the Art of Science show," said exhibit co-organizer Andrew Moore (no relation to Henry Moore). "It fits with the whole theme of the exhibit ? that science has this incredible aesthetic component to it."

Cash prizes were given to the top three entrants in amounts calculated by the golden ratio (whose proportions have since antiquity been considered to be aesthetically pleasing):
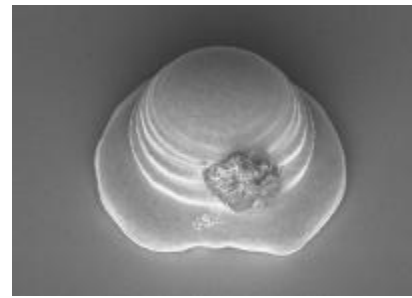
1st Prize -- $250.00

2nd Prize -- $154.51

3rd Prize -- $95.49

The judges decided to award a special video category prize in the amount of $196.53 (the geometric mean of the first and second place prizes) to molecular biologists Jean-Baptiste Boule, Matthieu Coppey, and Thomas Gregor for their work "Drosophilia."

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The Art of Science exhibit is supported by the following departments at Princeton University: the Office of the President, the Office of the Dean of the Faculty, the School of Engineering and Applied Science, the Lewis-Sigler Institute for Integrative Genomics, the Department of Computer Science, and the Council of the Humanities.

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