

BOULDER MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART

1750 13th Street Boulder, Colorado 80302 p. 303 443 2122 bmoca.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 4, 2011

Contact: Jordan Robbins, 303.443.2122, jordan@bmoca.org

Boulder Museum of Contemporary Art Announces Your Brain On Art: Discussions on Creativity and the Mind

Wednesdays, October 12, 19 & 26

6:30 pm

\$5 / Members Free

The Science of Improvisation - October 12

The Science of Visual Perception- October 19

The Science of Neuroaesthetics - October 26

Boulder, CO – How and why do artists create? What knowledge encourages or inspires creativity? How do artists perceive their world, and how do viewers interpret their work?

Boulder Museum of Contemporary Art (BMoCA) presents a three-part discussion series framed around these questions with programs involving artists, scientists, and thinkers. Moderated by William Stoehr, panelists will examine relationships between artistic expression and brain function by analyzing how artists have intuitively made observations and used techniques that scientists are just now beginning to explore and understand through advanced neuro-scanning methods.

The three consecutive Wednesday-evening programs will address the following topics: the science of improvisation; the science of visual perception; and the science of neuroaesthetics. Artists engaged with various disciplines, such as painting, digital media, dance, and photography, as well as a neuroscientist will serve as panelists in each program. Stoehr, a Boulder-based artist, will moderate the discussions and question and answer sessions. Audience members are encouraged to engage in the discussion and interactive presentations.

Stoehr, moderator of Your Brain on Art, reflects, "The connection between art and the brain has long been a mystery to scientists and philosophers but, artists have intuitively known what science is just now beginning to understand - that is, how we create and perceive art."

Shannon Crothers, BMoCA's Director of Education, emphasizes the importance of this new program, saying "This lecture series has the potential for breaking new ground in the field of neuroaesthetics as collectively we, through these discussions, uncover new connections between artists and scientists. The caliber of presenters couldn't be higher. We can't wait to start the conversation."

Your Brain on Art Programs

The Science of Improvisation

October 12, 6:30pm

Panelists will describe, demonstrate, and discuss improvisation and experimentation as art forms and as essential elements in the creative process.

Moderator: William Stoehr

Panelists: Rick Cummings, Dr. Vijay Mittal, Robert Sher-Machhemdl

Rick Cummings, Photographer

Rick Cummings is a fine art and commercial photographer. His work was recently awarded Best of Show at the Colorado Photographic Art Center.

<http://www.rickphoto.com/rickphoto/home.html>

Dr. Vijay Mittal, Assistant Professor of Psychology and Neuroscience and fellow at the Center for Neuroscience at the University of Colorado, Boulder

At CU Boulder, Dr. Vijay Mittal's research focuses on early identification and intervention/prevention with adolescents at high-risk for developing psychotic disorders such as schizophrenia.

<http://psych.colorado.edu/~clinical/mittal/>

Robert Sher-Machhemdl, Choreographer/dancer

Robert Sher-Machhemdl is one of the co-founders of Lemon Sponge Cake Contemporary Ballet. He is a four-time winner of the New York Ballet Builders choreography award and has recently been featured on MTV.

http://www.denverpost.com/entertainment/ci_16931989

The Science of Visual Perception and Art

October 19, 6:30pm

Panelists will examine visual perception as it applies to artistic disciplines including painting and sculpture. The discussion will specifically analyze different ways that the study of visual neurobiology can enhance our ability to create and appreciate art.

Moderator: William Stoehr

Panelists: Dr. Lewis Harvey, Dr. Jennifer Simonson, Mike Womac, Xi Zhang

Dr. Lewis Harvey, Professor and Chair of the Department of Psychology, University of Colorado, Boulder

Dr. Lewis Harvey's area of expertise is sensory and perceptual processing, especially vision and visual perception.

<http://psych.colorado.edu/~lharvey/>

Dr. Jennifer Simonson, Boulder Valley Vision Therapy

Dr. Jennifer Simonson is the clinical director of the Boulder Valley Vision Therapy Center and adjunct clinical instructor for the Illinois College of Optometry. Her interests include visual perception, vision therapy and vision rehabilitation.

<http://www.bouldervt.com/dr.-jen-simonsons-resume>

Mike Womack, Artist

Mike Womack makes sculpture, installation art, and work within digital media. His work has been written about in *The New York Times*, *New Yorker Magazine*, *Art in America*, *Sculpture Magazine*, and *The Village Voice*. He currently teaches at the University of Colorado, Boulder.

<http://www.mwomack.com/>

Xi Zhang, Artist

Xi Zhang is a painter. Kyle MacMillan, Fine Arts Critic for *The Denver Post*, has named Zhang both a Pathmaker (January 2011) and one of the twelve best Colorado artists 35 and under (May 2011).

<http://xizhang.org/home.html>

The Science of Neuroaesthetics

October 26, 6:30pm

The relatively new field of neuroaesthetics examines how genetics and our experiences work together to influence what we perceive as beautiful or interesting and how artists utilize this knowledge in their work.

Moderator: William Stoehr

Panelists: Lynne Bruning, Sara Rockinger, Dr. Tor Wager

Lynne Bruning, Textile Enchantress

Lynn Bruning is an award-winning avant-garde technology based clothing and textile innovator. With degrees in neurophysiology and architecture, her wearable artworks have been published in numerous fashion magazines and web zines.

<http://www.lbruning.com/>

Sara Rockinger, Fiber/Installation artist

Sara Rockinger's work has been included in several national exhibitions including an upcoming traveling fiber art exhibition titled *Innovators and Legends*. Her current work reflects her desires to understand issues of racism in our diverse nation and to explore where "us" and "them" intersect.

<http://www.srockinger.net/>

Dr. Tor Wager, Associate Professor of Psychology and Neuroscience, University of Colorado, Boulder

Dr. Tor Wager serves as Director of the Cognitive and Affective Control Laboratory.

<http://www.colorado.edu/neuroscienceprogram/wager.html>

About the Moderator:

William Stoehr retired seven years ago from his position as president of National Geographic's world-wide mapping operations in order to paint. With a strong interest in neuroaesthetics, Stoehr recently spoke at The American Visionary Art Museum for the Johns Hopkins University Brain Science Institute's program The Science of the Arts. He has served as a speaker, panelist, and moderator at numerous workshops and conferences around the world. Additionally, Stoehr has frequently appeared on radio, cable, and television on behalf of National Geographic.

<http://www.stoehr.us/>

Boulder Museum of Contemporary Art presents Your Brain on Art in association with Boulder Valley Media Alliance.



###

Boulder Museum of Contemporary Art is a dynamic venue dedicated to the presentation of significant art of our time. Through an innovative program of regional, national, and international exhibitions and performances, the museum inspires and educates its communities and visitors from around the world to explore the forefront and evolution of contemporary art.

Boulder Museum of Contemporary Art is located at 1750 13th Street in downtown Boulder, Colorado. The museum's hours are Tuesday–Friday, 11am–5pm; Saturday and Sunday, 11am–4pm; closed Monday. During the Boulder County Farmers' Market, the museum has extended hours on Wednesday (11am–8pm) and Saturday (9am–4pm). Museum admission is \$5 for adults; \$4 for seniors, students, and educators. Free admission to the museum is offered to members and children under the age of 12. Thanks to the generous sponsorship of Xcel Energy, the museum is free on Saturday and on Wednesday from 4pm–8pm during the Boulder County Farmers' Market.
www.bmoca.org