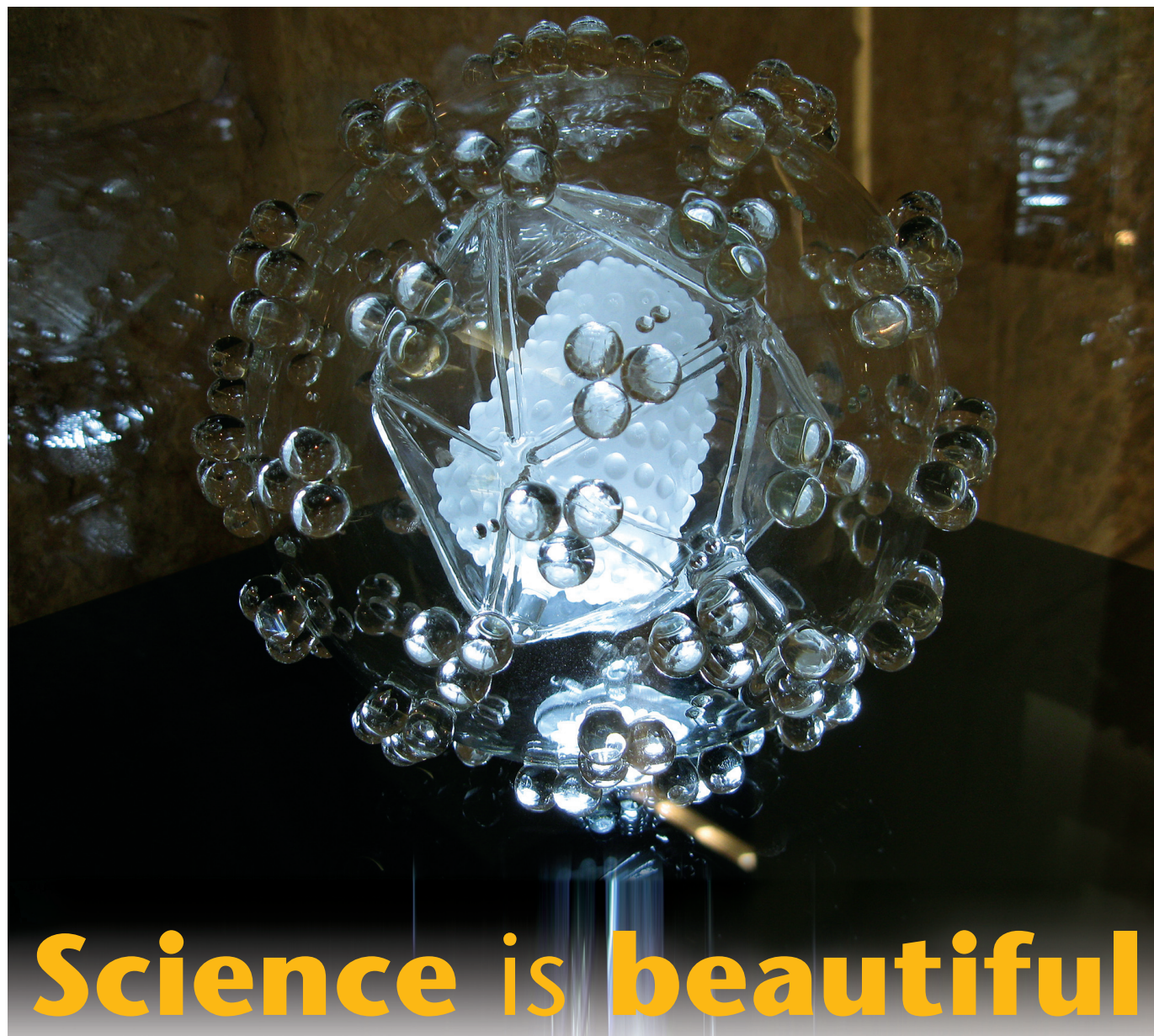




'HIV Virus' by Luke Jerram (Sharon Kanon)

ideal venue for a scientific conference or an exhibition of contemporary art.

Given the global reach of science, the Weizmann Institute has opted for an attractive center to host international events. The original building, designed by Arie Elhanani, a leading architect and designer in Israel's pre-state and early years, is considered a landmark of Israeli architecture. The original donors were tobacco manufacturer and philanthropist Abraham Wix and his wife, Edith. The newly renovated building, a project that took two years to complete, is spacious, with lots of glass, cobalt blue tiles, a cobalt blue entrance wall and white museum walls. The new center is very 21st century.

Focusing on the point at which art and science meet, the artworks in "Intersections" explore a gamut of phenomena, from chromosomes to cosmology. Genetics, alternative energy, environment in stress, the nature of the universe are all subjects for the artists. The task is "to cause us to reflect on science and its relationship to the world." Many of the artworks would not have been possible without the use of advanced scientific know-how and technology.

Video art, sculpture, paintings, graphics, digital photographs and collage are among the 60 works of 34 outstanding contemporary artists from all over the world. The artists are all world class, their works included in important museum collections. Two of the artists – Susan Triester and Conrad Shawcross – have been artists in residence at the Science Museum in London.

"I chose the works because all the artists are interested in science and have a long history of working in this area," says curator Cathy Wills.

The exhibition is a dream come true for Wills, a trustee of the Contemporary Art Society in England. "Many years ago, my parents introduced me to the wonderful work of the Weizmann Institute, but as an art historian I always wondered how I could get more involved," she says.

The germ of the idea grew out of a meeting three years ago with Robert Drake, deputy chairman of the executive board, an avid art aficionado and collector. His daughter, Carolyn, a budding young curator, assisted Wills.

The exhibition was launched with the support of BiArts, a partnership between the British Council and the Israeli Culture Ministry and Foreign Ministry. BiArts, founded 15 years ago, seeks to promote a dialogue and joint creative projects between Israeli and British artists.

"Intersections" shows the common ground between the artist and the scientist, who are driven by their quest

Science is beautiful

Focusing on the point at which art and science meet, the works in 'Intersections' at Rehovot's Weizmann Institute explore a wide gamut of phenomena, from chromosomes to cosmology

• By SHARON KANON

Represented as art, the HIV virus is a crystal-like configuration that sparkles as it catches the light. Equally beautiful is an extraordinary glass sculpture of swine flu.

Artist Luke Jerram's jewel-like glass works are testimony to the successful meeting of science and art. Working in consultation with virologists at Bristol University, the artist's "glass microbiology sculptures" have appeared on the cover of *Nature* magazine and the British medical journal *The Lancet*.

Jerram's sculptures will catch your eye at the beginning of a fascinating exhibition entitled "Intersections: Science in Contemporary Art" at the Weizmann Institute of Science in Rehovot. The exhibition adorns the new David Lopatie

Conference Center.

Formerly called the Wix Library, the building has undergone more than a face-lift, as it has totally changed its function. With information in the digital age taking up gigabytes instead of vast amounts of floor space, the Wix Library was a prime premises to undergo a major transformation. The interior was gutted and totally redesigned. It is now a n

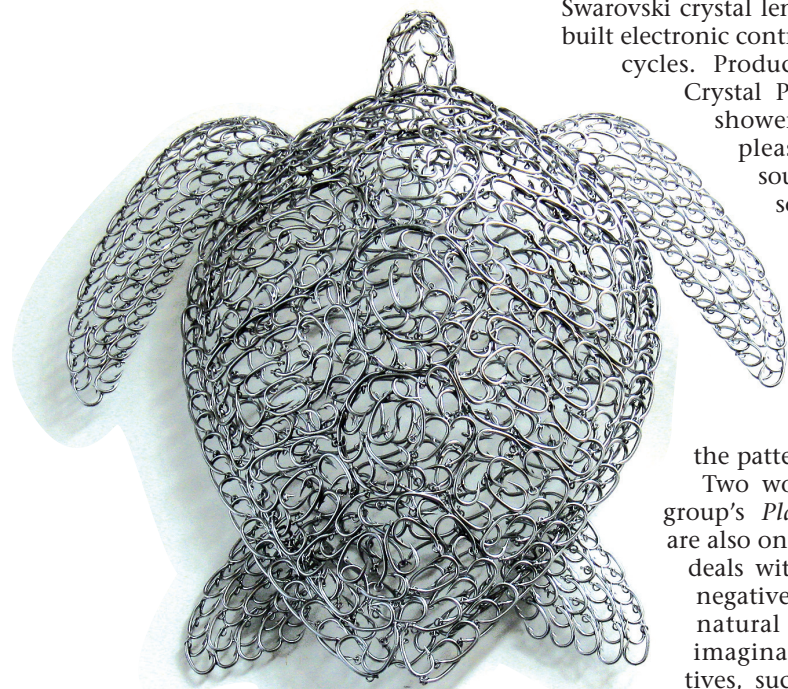


'Break Free from Duality' by Barnaby Hosking (Courtesy Weizmann Institute)



Cathy Wills speaks at the exhibition opening.
(Yael Ilan/Weizmann Institute)

'Green Turtle'
by Vincent Mock
(Sharon Kanon)



to challenge convention and seek new horizons.

Here are a few examples.

Dutch artist Scarlett Hooft-Graafland's *Carpet* is an irregular polygon with vibrant colors made from spices found in Bolivia. Photographed in the Salt Desert of Bolivia, the piece is destined to be blown away by the wind. "We humans think we rule the world. Nature rules everything," says Graafland. The artist, who received a postgraduate degree at the Bezalel Academy of Art and Design in Jerusalem, has also taken some exquisite photographs of the Inuit in the extreme cold of the Arctic.

Daniel Canogar from Madrid used an electron microscope for purely artistic purposes for his series entitled *Blood Streams*. "It allows me to imagine what remains hidden in blood cells," he says. "It taught me that both art and science are technologically assisted forms of human inquiry."

Acid Lava Koan, the work of American artist Liliane Lijn, is a spinning white cone with moving fluorescent lines. A play on the Japanese word *koan*, which is a paradoxical riddle posed to young Buddhist monks as an aid for meditation, it allows the viewer to focus on the lines without having to walk around the piece.

The London-based Troika studio designed *Falling Light* in 2010. Graphic artists Eva Ricki and Conny Freyer and product design and engineering man Sebastian Noel like to think out of the box. Their *Cloud* and *Times of the World* are on display at Heathrow Airport. They have exhibited at MoMA in New

York, where the playful Newton art virus for Mac (Apple) laptops is in the permanent collection. "We use technology as a medium," says Freyer. The inventive *Falling Light* light fixture uses Swarovski crystal lenses and a custom-built electronic control with animation cycles. Produced by Swarovski Crystal Palace, it creates a shower of light and a pleasant humming sound – a multisensory experience as subtle droplets of light fall to the floor. Troika's motto is "Science does not destroy but rather discovers poetry in the patterns of nature."

Two works in the Troika group's *Plant Fictions* series are also on display. The series deals with the inadvertent negative impact of man on natural resources and imaginary plant correctives, such as a plant that decomposes into biofuel.

Michal Rovner's video artwork *Most* (2012) was inspired by Nobel Prize winner Wislawa Szymborska's poem "Microcosmos," which evokes the fascination of peering into a microscope. The video shows chromosome-like figures, undefined forms that move in pairs, split and shift, much like "small creatures." Could they be girls playing hopscotch? The artist says that her works probe ideas of collective identity and explore psychological and physical boundaries. Rovner lives and works in Israel and New York. A 12-meter video wall she designed, *Living Landscape*, is on permanent display at Yad Vashem. In 2011, Rovner had a three-part installation in the Louvre.

Brazilian-born artist Eduardo Kac is

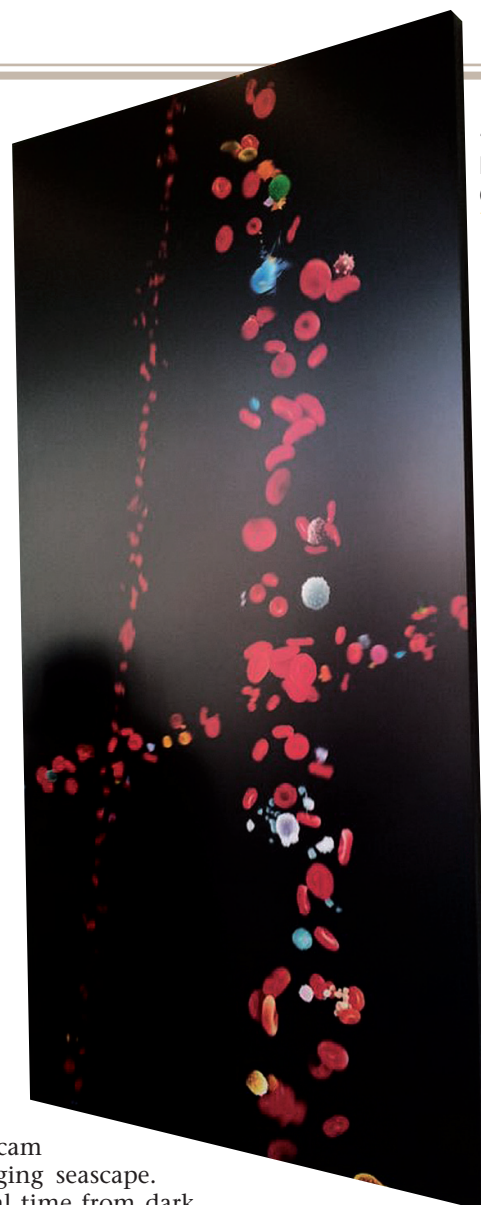
internationally recognized for his bio-art. In 2000, he created his seminal work *GF Bunny*, a fluorescent rabbit that glows with a light from the DNA of a jellyfish. It became a global media star after the *Boston Globe* featured it on the front page, and wire services all over the world proclaimed that this was the first time in history that an artist created a new mammal. *Free Alba* (2011) is the name of Kac's work in the exhibition.

A pioneer in the field of digital art, Susan Collins (director of electronic media at the Slade School of Art, University College, London) used a webcam to capture the changing seascape. Photographing in real time from dark to dawn, she constructed horizontal bands one pixel at a time.

Communicating is an art triggered by certain memories. Jorinde Voigt of Berlin achieves an organic flow by melding beautifully handwritten words and diverse objects (items of clothing, a small lilac chaise longue, a horse) in her collage entitled *Fragments of a Language of Love*. The objects are multidimensional and arranged in a quasi-scientific way, she says.

Strong messages to save the environment are clear in the work of several artists. For example, British artist Mat Collishaw's video work *Sordid Earth* panel shows maligned beauty in decomposing pink flowers. It was

'Bloodstreams III'
by David Canogar
(Judy Weiss)



highly acclaimed when exhibited in London in 2011 and was part of Ron Arad's "Curtain Call" project installed at the Israel Museum this summer.

The Green Turtle, made of hundreds of long-line fish hooks used in the commercial fishing industry today, is a plea to save the endangered marine animals. Amsterdam-based Vincent Mock draws on years of working as a conservationist in Africa to inspire his creations. The turtle is part of the *Hooked on Life* series. "Our oceans, the last vastly unexplored wilderness, demand to be preserved if we are to survive ourselves," he asserts.

Garry Fabian Miller and Susan Derges are leading names in camera-less photography. Derges's *Star Field Queen Anne's Lace* is lovely and quiet. Fabian-Miller's *The Night Cell* is a luminous rich indigo blue with white "stars." Both artists eschew the digital camera in order to restore "the art" to the magic of creating a photographic image.

The simple beauty of Barnaby Hoskins's mixed-media sculpture – a tree branch with a bird and its shadow – bridges the gap between the scientist and the artist. "The mind, like the bird, can give rise to duality," says the artist. "Often, a moment of insight can come to a scientist through a very creative and sometimes poetic way of looking at the world – a way more commonly associated with artists."

"Intersections" is on display in Rehovot until December 7. For information about viewing times, call (08) 934-4505.



Guests view works at the opening. (Yael Ilan/Weizmann Institute)