Art on Campus

Curator: Yivsam Azgad
Contemporary conceptual art, much like the art of science, sprouts from an inner seed, within the awareness of the artist or scientist. Each must then undergo a rigorous process of refinement, isolation and experimentation. Each of these worlds is based on a central tenet of precision and consistency. In this, the ideologies and roots of the two appear not only to approach each other, but to abut in many places.

At the Weizmann Institute of Science, art is seen to be a complementary activity, so that scientists and artists can, together, observe the world from a higher vantage point in a more critical and precise way. In other words, the synergy that occurs when science and art are brought together – when the two worlds meet – can lead to more significant achievements in the enduring quest to understand the world and our place in it.

This catalog offers a sampling from several exhibits that featured the works of both artists and scientists. These were exhibited in lab buildings, hallways, entrances, lecture halls, guest facilities and the conference centre of the Weizmann Institute of Science, all of which have functioned lately as alternative exhibit spaces.
What a Wonderful Place

Kochav Kochavi, Martin Kollar, Tomer Sapir, Thomas Struth and Wikimedia photographers

Four artists toured the Weizmann Institute of Science, as did a group of Wikimedia photographers. Rather like scientists, each was trying to understand what is really happening here. For but scientists, the "here" they want to understand is the world; for the artists the question was “what is really happening here.” But for scientists, the “here” they want to understand is the world and to keep expanding our freedom of information – so that nothing is hidden behind a wall. Round out the exhibit is the work of several volunteer photographers who are part of an effort to "cover" the entire world and to keep expanding our freedom of information – so that nothing is hidden behind a wall.

Great Wonders

Through the cameras of Struth, Kochavi and Kochav, and the Wikimedia group, as well as the Mother of All Wheat presented to us by Sapir, a wonderful place comes into view. For these visitors, the labs are something like the “amazing specimens or artifacts and to amaze their guests.” They see their wonder, and this meshes, in a nearly synergistic way, with the questions that drive scientific research.

The installation was created for Agro-Art: Contemporary Agriculture in Israeli Art, which was exhibited at the Petach Tikva Museum of Art and curated by Tali Tamir. Sapir presents a sort of combination greenhouse, research lab and plant gene depository for that conserves, at least metaphorically, the “wisdom” of thousands of generations of agriculture. The mother of all wheat – the original grass that gave birth to all our cultivated plants – is genetic possibilities for “rebooting” the food chain that has been bred into wheat over thousands of years. The mother of all wheat, the wheat of the future, may well be our future. The mother of all wheat is a blind artist who completed his degree through the “Art in the Community” program of Shenkar College of Engineering and Design, directed by Adi Yekutieli. Despite his handicap, or possibly because of it, he reminds us that there are always new ways to absorb and process reality.

4 artists and 12 photographers who are part of an effort to “cover” the entire world and to keep expanding our freedom of information – so that nothing is hidden behind a wall.

This exhibit was initiated by the French-Jewish photographer Frédéric Brenner. Twelve photographers from different countries traveled around Israel, recording their impressions through the lenses of their cameras. The resulting exhibit, "Great Wonders: Art on campus" presented to us by Sapir, a wonderful place comes into view. This exhibit was presented to us by Sapir, a wonderful place comes into view. For these visitors, the labs are something like the “amazing specimens or artifacts and to amaze their guests.” They see their wonder, and this meshes, in a nearly synergistic way, with the questions that drive scientific research.
Installation, detail

Installation
Thomas Struth, Germany, Weizmann Institute of Science, 2009–2011 Photograph

Tomer Sapir, "Mother of All Wheat," 2014–2015 Installation, detail
Martin Kollar, Germany, Weizmann Institute of Science, 2009-2011
Photograph

Martin Kollar, Germany, Weizmann Institute of Science, 2009-2011
Photograph
The Dead Sea appears as a collection of amorphous blots. (In the series, scales taken from the Physical-Political-Economic Atlas of Dr. Moshe Brawer. The drawings are to scale, so that details are clear, while in an enlargement from the Deganit Berest’s map on the Wall, the Lake of the Dead Sea looks like a “skeleton” that “speaks” and tells us: “You have reached your destination. Please calculate a new route.”)

That scene immediately comes to mind when we look at Deganit Berest’s Atlas series. Images of Eretz-Israel are conscribed within the outlines of maps drawn on different scales taken from the Physical-Political-Economic Atlas of Dr. Moshe Brawer. The drawings are to scale, so that details are clear, while in an enlargement from the map of the world – out to maps of the Universe. The works of scientists and artists are presented side by side, and intellectual abilities of their creators, who have sifted out extraneous details to leave us with a “skeleton” that can show us, with an arrow, where we are on the map.

Map, Map on the Wall – Mapping in art and science, is arranged as a sort of continuous “zoom out” (with a few exceptions). Maps of intracellular processes lead out to maps of the body, the soul, the city, the continent, the world – out to maps of the Universe. The works of scientists and artists are presented side by side and are thus interwoven in our minds as we chart our path, looking for the words: “You are here.”

The secret part of cartography is the fact that it reduces a part of the world to a simple grid. The fact that maps are abstract and streamlined (even to extremes) is testament, more than anything, to the intellectual abilities of their creators, who have sifted out extraneous details to leave us with a “skeleton” that can show us, with an arrow, where we are on the map.

Maps can be guides that help us to understand our place (and not just to find our way from one point to another). We look for the words: “You are here.”

That holds true even on a map that depicts pathways of cell death, such as that of Prof. Adi Kimchi of the Molecular Genetics Department at the Weizmann Institute. The “you are here” in this case is all the points that tell us: “Acha, you are here.” The map is arranged as a sort of continuous “zoom out” (with a few exceptions). Maps of intracellular processes lead out to maps of the body, the soul, the city, the continent, the world, and the Universe. The works of scientists and artists are presented side by side, and intellectual abilities of their creators, who have sifted out extraneous details to leave us with a “skeleton” that can show us, with an arrow, where we are on the map.

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A map of human biological pathways. Each node represents a biological pathway (a set of genes that perform a specific function), and every line shows a connection between pathways. Every connected set is a super-pathway containing several related pathways. The colors represent the information sources from which the pathways were taken. Such mapping enables research to become more efficient when dealing with biological pathways taken from different sources.

Adi Kimchi, "Final Destination"

Road map composed of intricate pathways occurring in living cells that lead to final "no return" destinations. Each final destination represents a different type of cell death.

Dr. Moshe Brawer (ed.) 6th edition, The Dead Sea (with scanner) Color prints, 6 units, 60x45 cm each

Right to left: pp. 4-5, Eretz-Israel, scale: 1:1,250,000; p. 17, Syria and Iraq, scale: 1:5,000,000; p. 36, Mediterranean Countries, scale: 1:10,000,000; p. 48, Europe-Physical, scale: 1:20,000,000; p. 61, Africa-Physical, scale: 1:40,000,000; p. 84, World, scale: 1:80,000,000
Michael Druks, "Druksland," 1974-75
From an album of 25 works on paper, collection of the Tel Aviv Museum of Art


Michael Druks, "Globe," 1971
Art on campus

Massimo Pietrobon, “Pangea Politica,” 2012
Computer graphics
Mapping of all the existing states in the world today, shown on the outline of the original continent – which contained all continents – before tectonic plate movement.

Massimo Pietrobon: “Political Pangaea represents the original condition of unity of the whole of mankind. Beyond the divisions we imagine between countries, races and cultures, the world is one. It was united; thus it will always be.”

Hand-cut reference books

Etamar Beglikter: “Butterflies” 2011-2012
Hand-cut reference books
Beyond the imagined divisions between countries, races and cultures, the world is one. It was once; thus it will always be.”
creativecommons.org
The quest for knowledge is what unites humankind in a very deep way. Philosophers, theologians, artists and scientists—each wants to truly understand the rules of the game by which the "world" operates, how it will react to this or that action. Physicists examine many different "worlds." Some of these are completely theoretical, but each of them can teach us something about the real world in which we live. One such system is called "Field Theory."

The term "field" takes us back to an earlier existence: the farmer's field, the source of bread and sustenance, which grants us the ability to plan for the future. Indeed that ability led society to advance from hunter-gatherers to modern agriculturalists; this, essentially, is what has enabled our planet to support (not necessarily equally) over seven billion people (and more every day).

Agriculture is central to the Field Theory exhibit, displayed in the Faculty of Physics in the Weizmann Institute of Science, a place where physicists deal with the field theory used to construct models for understanding the Universe.

The poet Adam Baruch once wrote about "an Israeli hero who never walked in the fields." Yadid Rubin, represented in this exhibit in three paintings (oil on paper) that are shown here for the first time, walked in the fields. He walked alone, against the grain, against the driving rain, against the Israeliness that had made a U-turn from the field to the city street, from the sweat of nature to air-conditioning. Yadid Rubin walked through fields and tried to expose the their life cycles: plowing, sprouting, growing, reaping. To Rubin, the field needs a set of "operating instructions" that he must decipher with his paintings.

Working the fields takes on an ironic twist in the installation Vacuuming (Yisrael Valley), 2002, by Gal Weinstein. His fields are made of carpet samples and "agricultural work" turns out to be vacuuming. The field, which we think of as a wide open space, is here enclosed between walls. Zoya Cherkassky, in Colorado Beetle, paints a woman bent over in a field, trying to save the fragile plants from being eaten. The beetle, a pest all over the Western US, is treated with biological weapons, and Cherkassky sees this as an omen of a future such as that described by John Christopher in Death of Grass, in which a new virus wipes out all food crops on the planet. An event that at first seems trivial leads to the collapse of civilization. The field, according to Christopher, and Cherkassky as well, is a thin, fragile shell that enables the existence of a natural world order and protects it.

In contrast, as Pinhas Sadeh (sadeh means "field" in Hebrew) wrote in one of his journals not long before his death in 1994 that walking in the open, fresh air in a field instills faith in the future; the happiness we get from uniting with nature belongs to something bigger and more powerful than us.

Walking in the fields, the sign of the "new Israeli," grounded in the earth and supporting himself, appeared in a line from Natan Alterman's poem The Third Mother: "He walks in the fields. He is coming back. He carries in his heart a lead bullet." The title of the novel by Moshe Shamir He Walked through the Fields was taken from this poem, Is the fact that the son of the second mother, and Shamir's Uri, walked in the fields but did not arrive, supposed to teach us something? Why are there no people in the fields of Yadid Rubin? Will Gal Weinstein succeed in vacuuming the dust from these outdated fields? Will Asi Dayan and Iris Yodvat, trapped in time capsules of stills from the films of Joseph Milo, truly understand the souls of Uri and Mika—children of a previous generation? The answer might come to us as we pass by in our car. Thinking our own thoughts on the highway, fields to our left and to our right, on our way, from somewhere to elsewhere in the land of Israel.
Yadid Rubin, "Untitled (1)," 2009
Oil on paper 50x65 cm

Zoya Cherkassky, "Colorado Beetle," 2014
Oil on linen, 120x170 cm
Assi Dayan and Iris Yotvat in film poster
“He Walked through the Fields,” 1967
Director: Joseph Milo

Gal Weinstein, “Vacuuming (Yisrael Valley),” 2002
C-Print

כ Couples (וצמה זורא), 2002
הלך בשדות, 1967
במאי: יוסף מילאו

גל ויינשטיין, ״שואבים (עמק יזרעאל)״, 2002
C-Print
Here Come the Days

Benny Efrat - Time Crack

Benny Efrat doesn’t hide from the tidings. His ‘time cracks’ are seconds ticking to a dismal future. From his point of view there is no great significance to the question of actions, our flawed relationship with our environment and Earth.

In his exhibit in the David Lopatie International Conference Centre at the Weizmann Institute of Science, Efrat continues to sound the alarm, warning us that we are heading for disaster. That the world cannot withstand our industrial abuse very much longer. That “advance” heading for disaster. That the world cannot withstand the ecological holocaust that humanity is bringing upon itself. In 1982, he sent a letter to museums and art centers all over the world, writing: “I request to fix the expected date of my death, 2030, as a starting point for the clock of all our actions.”

That “advance” is not one of the environment’s considerations – it is just a temporary illusion. That it is just a question of time – of the world in which we live. That we pass the point of no return in our relationship with the world in which we live. That despicable continue to be told, and the clocks of all countries continue to tick and to dole out slivers of time – advancing us to the finish line.

Benni Efrat (1940) was one of the first conceptual artists in Israel. He was born in Lebanon, and made Aliyah to Israel at age 11, growing up on Kibbutz Yagur. After completing studies at the Avni Institute of Art and Design, he moved to London, where he studied at Saint Martin’s School of Art. He then moved to New York, and then to Paris at the invitation of the Pompidou Center, which granted him a studio for two years. He then moved to Amsterdam and then to Antwerp, finally returning to Israel in 2009. In 1976, he mounted a mixed video exhibit entitled Putney Bridge at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). There he met Carl Sagan and Phillip Morrison, who drew his attention to the question of ecology and the environment. Efrat began to investigate, to become aware of the ecological holocaust that humanity is bringing upon itself. In 1982, he sent a letter to museums and curators all over the world, writing: “I request to fix the expected date of my death, 2030, as a starting point for the clock of all our actions.”

The exhibit also depicted the approaching end – but one brought about by our own actions, our flawed relationship with our environment and Earth.

Efrat tries to move forward in time and send us messages from the future, in the hope that his future self can get the message to us, as our flawed relationship with our environment and Earth is bringing upon itself. In 1982, he sent a letter to museums and art centers all over the world, writing: “I request to fix the expected date of my death, 2030, as a starting point for the clock of all our actions.”

Efrat’s letter was curator by Dr. Shlomit Shaked in the Israel Museum: “I request to fix the expected date of my death, 2030, as a starting point for the clock of all our actions.”

Benni Efrat doesn’t hide from the tidings. His ‘time cracks’ are seconds ticking to a dismal future. From his point of view there is no great significance to the question of actions, our flawed relationship with our environment and Earth.
Benni Efrat, "Dead Sea 2059," 2011
Mixed media

Mixed media
Benni Efrat, “Zipper, Summer 2057,” 2011
Still from video work
Augmented reality refers to computerized technology that enables the creation of a hybrid existence of sorts: a real-life framework supplemented with "external," possibly fabricated components. The result is capable, among other things, of improving the performance of pilots and surgeons. This architecture - a mold that is reinforced by its filling - also underlies advanced composite materials used, for instance, to manufacture sports equipment or satellite parts.

Augmented reality is used in the work of Dr. Ella Amitay Sadovsky, a graduate of the Weizmann Institute of Science in chemistry and materials science, who relies in her art on the principle of constructing composite materials. But she offers the observer, or "user," the option of an augmented reality - one that veers between dream and nightmare, simplicity and complexity, yesterday and tomorrow, insight and wonder. This is a rollercoaster of discovery, surprising insight and urgent messages knocking on the door of the amygdala, the part of the brain that registers emotion. Amitay Sadovsky writes: "The uterus is a city. The city is a sea. There is a tree in the sea. The sea is a helicopter. The helicopter is a fish. The window is a painting. The floor is a puddle and the ceiling - a dress from the sixties."
In this series, Maty Grunberg depicts the meetings between two cultures, between plenty and want, between softness and toughness, between obsequiousness and rage. These meetings take place between indigenous plants. The two sides sometimes appear to feel one another out from mutual curiosity, sometimes to engage in peace talks, or in an attempt at coexistence, and sometimes as the beginnings of a struggle whose outcome is unpredictable.

The nine encounters in the series – intimate meetings between botanical couples occurring at all hours of the day and night, are shown at four different times of day: daylight, twilight, night and dawn. Accompanying the prints are extracts from the book A Tale of Love and Darkness by Amos Oz. The botanical content was composed with the help of botanist Dr. Michael Avishai.

Maty Grunberg was born in Yugoslavia in Skopje, the capital of Macedonia, in 1943. In 1948 he immigrated to Israel with his family, who had survived the Holocaust. He graduated with honors from Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design in Jerusalem and continued his studies at the Central School of Art and Design, London. From 1969 to 2007 he lived and worked in London. His works have been exhibited in galleries and museums around the world. He has often collaborated with writers and poets: three of his etchings accompany the poetry of John Lennon in The Beatles Illustrated Lyrics Number Two.
In 1801, William Turner (1775–1851) was stopped by guards at the entrance to the Royal Academy of Arts in London. The guards had instructions to check the pockets of the young artist, who was already an Academy member and whose paintings were hung in the exhibit inside. It seems that during the opening of a previous exhibit, he had slipped brushes and paints into the gallery so as to continue working on his painting during the event. For Turner, a painting was never finished.

In 1963, Alan Turing, the father of modern computer science, proved that if one has an arbitrary computer program running on a computer with unlimited memory, it is impossible to say whether that program will ever finish its calculation. This problem, known as the "halting problem," is a classic example of a problem that a computer cannot solve. (Programs running on computers with limited memory either come to a halt or continue running in an endless loop. This is due to the restrictions of the hardware, not the properties of the program.)

Or, as Geoffrey K. Pullum (who penned a Dr. Seuss-style verse about the halting problem) wrote:

No program can say what another will do.
Now, I won't just assert that, I'll prove it to you:
I will prove that although you might work til you drop,
you can't predict whether a program will stop.

Or Raviv is a programmer and a 2013 graduate of the Beit Beryl School of Art. He uses digital media to explore the question of the finish line: How does one know when a piece is completed? How does an artist know when to stop?
The Myth of the Two-Dimensional Plane

Michal Raz

Is the world orderly? Most of us would hope that the answer to this apparently simple question is yes. If the world makes sense, we can look at our picture of the present and know what awaits us in the future. When we identify an order (for example, symmetry or even a fraction of a shape that resonates with symmetry), we know what to expect around the corner, what is hiding just beyond our field of vision. This knowledge calms us and creates in us feelings of harmony, aesthetics and beauty.

So is the world really an orderly place? Order is expressed in patterns. If we can understand the principles of the pattern, we can know how it will continue to develop and which directions it will take. If we limit this question (because our mental abilities are limited) to a two-dimensional system – for example, a plane – then we arrive at a question with mathematical underpinnings that has intrigued humans more or less since the dawn of culture: Can one cover an infinite plane with finite, shaped tiles, without leaving open spaces between them?

Of course there are simple basic solutions to this problem: One can tile a plane forever with squares or triangles. Such tiling exists in nature (honeycombs, for example). But the picture of the "world" becomes a bit more interesting and challenging when the tiles take on added shape, structure or complexity. This is what Michal Raz does in the run of her tiling (or in her burning desire to see the world as orderly). She "forgets" the "first rule of tiling" by redrawing her tiles as she goes along, so that they change shape; yet ultimately they manage to fit together.
Jonathan Goldman is interested, conceptually, in the transformation from sound to image. These works start out on the Western border of Israel: the Mediterranean Sea. To be exact, he begins with the wave breakers and the sound of the waves hitting them, battering the shore endlessly.

The sound of the waves is then converted through a microphone to electromagnetic waves, broadcast and received, altered through various processes, and passed through loudspeakers that reconstruct and transmit sound waves that appear to be the “real thing.” Goldman, who knows that his “product” is, indeed a facsimile, investigates the similarity and difference between the two sound waves, the length of the silences in between.

Diagrams of the sound wave intensity also undergo a transmutation in his hands. A “hilly” diagram, newly minted, slowly transforms until it is a real mountain – one that is cut off from its background, floating, fleeing from the other noises that fill its surroundings. Like the internal dialogue of Carlos Castaneda’s Don Juan, the isolated image represents a single, distilled note that is, possibly, a state one can aspire to attain – now, out loud.

Jonathan Goldman is a graduate of the Multidisciplinary Arts Department of Shenkar College of Engineering and Design. He lives and works in Tel Aviv. His work, including paintings, and sound and video installations, have been shown in the West Border; Dana Gallery for Contemporary Art; Yad Mordechai; Gordon Gallery 2; Herzliya Museum of Contemporary Art; the Wilfrid Israel Museum; The Artists’ Residence, Herzliya; Zemack Gallery; Artstation Gallery and others.

Loudly Now

Jonathan Goldman – Waves, Sounds, Mountains

Jonathan Goldman, "Floating Mountain 2," 2014
Oil on wood, 160x150 cm

2014, "2 חפצים נרואים. בינת לבנונית, Oil on wood, 160x150 cm".
Jonathan Goldman, "The West Border" map series, 2015
Mixed media on treated Israeli coastal navigation map, 100x70 cm

Treated wood assemblage, 250x170 cm
Micha Laury was born on Kibbutz Negba in 1946. Since 1975, he has been living and working in Paris. His works have been exhibited in museums and galleries around the world. Laury expresses in his multi-media works the uncompromising struggle of the individual in social systems that limit human space.

At the Weizmann Institute of Science, Laury exhibited a series of etchings – snapshots that capture “situations” (or dilemmas) over the length of a future history of humanity and the Universe. The journey begins in a realm that is clearly human: a research laboratory, signifying human curiosity and hope. The series ends with the Universe: the final proton decay announcing the nothingness that will be the final death of everything for eternity.

Between these two, he raises some questions: What is wisdom? Does the Universe function as a giant brain? Will humans one day be able to meld their brains to attain synergistic enlightenment? Or might it be preferable and easier to imagine combining innate intelligence with artificial intelligence? How will the relationship of humans to their environment unfold? Can we (or when will we) succeed in colonizing other planets? Will it be possible to teleport people and things directly to other worlds?

Micha Laury, "Exchange Hyper-Intelligence," 2012
Photo etching, spit bite, 28x38 cm

Micha Laury - Present Time and Millions of Years (+10^10)

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"Future Human / Human Robotic," 2012
Photo etching, 28x38 cm

Micha Laury, "Teleportation," 2012
Photo etching, hand coloring, 28x38 cm
"This will make you better." This promise was made by healers of the ancient world in which diseases and their cures were tied to the stars, spirits and witchcraft; and it is made in our own day, as we move toward personalized medicine based on a deep understanding of the mix of genetic, metabolic and psychological components of disease.

The original healers were shamans and magicians; then there were philosophers and priests; today we have those who conduct biomedical research and apply it. The average lifespan has risen in the past century, from 33 years in the Stone Age, to 48 in the Roman Empire, 65 in the mid-20th century and 83 in the first decade of the 21st. In some countries, the average lifespan is already approaching 100.

But one thing remains the same: the suffering that comes with illness and the profound need of the patient to believe that "this will make it better." The doctor may be a specialist – one who still today holds arcane knowledge. If, in the past, it was possible to prescribe a treatment based on reported symptoms and the doctor's experience with such things, in the not-too-distant future, treatments will be based on a test and careful analysis of the patient's DNA. But the patient's trust in his or her doctor – the hope that the problems will find a solution – goes all the way back to the Stone Age.
Eliahou Eric Bokobza  
Two works from the series “Chemical Jerusalem”  
From right to left: Ritalin, mescaline, 2010-2012  
Acrylic on canvas, 90x90 cm each

Handmade weaving with empty pain killer packages, 72-77 cm x 22 m
Iris Irisya Kovalio, above: "Lorastine," right: "Algolysin Forte"
Watercolor on drug packaging

Tamar Sheaffer, "Roaming 5," 2010
Aquarelle, ink and pens on plywood, 60x160 cm

Art on campus

Artem Shirshov, "Roaming 5," 2010
Gouache, watercolor, ink and pens on paper, 60x160 cm

Tamar Sheaffer, "Roaming 5," 2010
Aquarelle, ink and pens on plywood, 60x160 cm

Iris Irisya Kovalio, above: "Lorastine," right: "Algolysin Forte"
Watercolor on drug packaging

Tamar Sheaffer, "Roaming 5," 2010
Aquarelle, ink and pens on plywood, 60x160 cm

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The stills from the film He Walked through the Fields (p. 31) are reprinted courtesy of United King – Moshe and Leon Edri

For the exhibit Composed Materials, Augmented Reality (p. 39) thanks to Gordon Gallery, Tel Aviv

Thanks to Avi Kastro who enabled the exhibition of the work, Chemical Jerusalem by Eliahou Eric Bokobza (p. 56), in memory of his son, Ben (Binyamin) Kastro