

David Nyzio and Ken Feingold at Postmasters

For over 10 years, David Nyzio has been developing an unusual mix of mediums and techniques to create two- and three-dimensional art objects that display an irrepressible spirit of scientific inquiry. He has used such organic materials as bug excretions, butterfly wings and algae.

Nyzio often makes works in pairs, altering a single variable in order to get different results. In the case of his most recent algae photos, *43 Days of Growth Under the Influence of Bacteria Rule*, 10/12/97-11/23/97 and 8/23/98-10/8/98, the variable is the support surface, paper and white glass, respectively. Presenting the words "Bacteria Rule" in illusion-

istically projecting letters, these pieces are made by hanging a light source over a photographic negative suspended above a shallow pool of water; cyanobacteria cultures are added to the water. The cyanobacteria grow more rapidly where light is allowed to come through the negative. The results display delicate color variations. The paper piece is a mossy green, because of the interaction between the algae and the paper. As glass is more inert than paper, the other work maintains a more even cyan hue.

The three-dimensional *Advanced Model in Torpor State* (1998) offers another controlled comparison. Over 6 feet tall, the construction includes two oversized petri dishes placed upright to form a two-sided tondo. Water is pumped into both dishes, where it circulates at different speeds, slowly and smoothly in one, quickly and in bursts in the other. Brightly lit by fluorescent bulbs, blue-green algae grow in response to the movement of the water. A wispy array of fresh and gentle green is created by the dish with the unidirectional flow; in the other dish, the plant has grown thicker and darker due to the water's turbulence.

His most recent work, a 5½-foot steel engraving of the *Discus Thrower*, literally puts a spin on an age-old technique. Rather than use cross-hatching to create form, Nyzio has photographed a cast of the sculpture from many angles and selected seven images to engrave into the steel. The result has the illusionistic effect of a hologram. From certain positions, the steel sheet looks blank or vaguely scratched, but as the viewer passes by, the discus thrower becomes clearly visible and appears to be moving in space.

In the project room, Ken Feingold's *Interior* (1997) involved the head and torso of a mannequin facing a wall-sized film screen. The viewer could touch sensors at intervals on the spine and affect the imagery on the screen, which juxtaposed nightmarish figurative scenes and sequences of music and color intended to produce a blissful state. With technology and process in common, Nyzio's works, which grow, shimmer and move, and

Feingold's computer-interactive installation were a feast for the eyes and mind.

—Cathy Lebowitz



David Nyzio: *Advanced Model in Torpor State*, 1998, mixed mediums, 74 by 50 by 34 inches; at Postmasters.

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