



Laura Emrick's proposal for the first museum on Mars.

Bridging art and science

For her first big job as a guest curator at the Photographic Resource Center, installation artist Jane Marsching was given an interesting and challenging assignment: Find artists that combine photography with science and technology.

"It's the turn of the Millennium, and everybody is wondering where science is going to take us with things like genetics and cloning," said Marsching. "It seemed like a great source of cultural thinking and anxiety to work with."

A self-professed "fanatical Web surfer," Marsching started by searching on line to see how images were being used there.

"I wanted to find artists who were trying to put themselves in the place of the scientist," she said. "I wanted to push the envelope, to have not only people who were using science as a poetic takeoff point but artists that could almost act like scientists, treating their work as a kind of experiment."

She found artists such as New

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New project blends art and science

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York-based Gary Schneider, who is constructing a genetic self-portrait in which he uses advanced technology to document parts of his physiology such as his cornea, sperm, and DNA. His contribution to the exhibit is "Intestinal Flora," a vivid 5-inch-by-7-inch print that displays the contents of his intestine as if they were botanical specimens.

Todd Watts of New York mounts large photos of a farmer's pea field and doctors each photo to show how the same scene would look in the environments of different planets of the solar system.

"We're coming to a time when we can now actually change our planet's atmosphere," he said, "and we have to ask ourselves what that might mean."

David Nyzio, also from New York, takes the concept of the picture as laboratory to literal extremes. He has taken a giant sheet of paper and immersed it in water for a long period of time, allowing algae to form. Over it, he hung the negative of a photo of trees by the famous photographer Ansel Adams. The light shining through the negative recreated the photo in the form

of algae, what he calls a kind of "living photo."

Wenyon and Gamble, two artists in residence at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, mounted cameras facing the mirror of a giant telescope, allowing the device to take a picture of its own workings. The result looks like a series of shots showing a birds-eye view of an amusement park rollercoaster.

Laura Emrick from New York offers a humorous 3-minute movie, narrated by an ersatz Stephen Hawkings-style voice about the prospects of space being the commodity of the future, featuring tongue-in-cheek plans for a museum on Mars.

"My take is that science should be taken as part of the social context of things, not something that is rigid and just part of the scientific community," says Marsching. "I want people to leave this exhibit realizing that science is part of our everyday language, our hopes and our dreams."

"Particle Accelerators" runs Friday-Feb. 25, with an opening reception scheduled Thursday from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. The Photographic Resource Center is at 602 Commonwealth Ave., Boston. Call 353-0700.

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