

NEWS RELEASE

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Art and Science Intersect in 'Molecules that Matter'

Exhibition comes to The College of Wooster Art Museum March 24-May 10

WOOSTER, Ohio – From penicillin to Prozac, some of the most significant chemical combinations of the 20th century will be on display – not in a science lab but in two galleries – when The College of Wooster Art Museum presents “Molecules that Matter” this spring. A collaborative effort conceived by Raymond J. Giguere, 1962 Term Professor of Chemistry at Skidmore College, and co-curated with John S. Weber, Dayton Director of the Frances Young Tang Teaching Museum and Gallery at Skidmore, “Molecules that Matter” brings science to life through art and cultural and historical artifacts. The exhibition, which also features the work of nationally and internationally recognized artists, comes to The College of Wooster Art Museum in Ebert Art Center (1220 Beall Ave.) March 24 through May 10 – the third of four stops on the exhibition’s national tour.

In consultation with a volunteer scientific advisory board consisting of professionals from academia, industry, and the Chemical Heritage Foundation in Philadelphia, the curators selected roughly one organic molecule per decade notable for its impact on humanity during the past 100 years. Along with penicillin and Prozac, those compounds include aspirin, isooctane, nylon, polyethylene, DNA, progesterin, DDT, and the lesser-known buckyball and carbon nanotubes.

Giguere and Weber successfully “blur the boundaries of art, natural science, social science, and other disciplines,” said Philip Glotzbach, president of Skidmore College, and Arnold Thackray, chancellor of the Chemical Heritage Foundation in the forward of the exhibition’s catalogue. “(The exhibition) encourages visitors to become better informed and more highly engaged citizens of our rapidly changing, often troubled world.”

All of the molecules are illustrated by traditional, scientifically accurate ball-and-stick models; each un-traditionally oversized. Interspersed between the oversized molecules are paintings, sculpture, and prints by such artists as Frank Moore, Tony Cragg, Jean Shin, Roxy Paine, Ed Ruscha, Michael Oatman, and Bryan Crockett. In Shin’s stalactite/stalagmite shaped installation, “Chemical Balance 2” (2005), stacked, empty prescription bottles rise up from the floor and drip down from the ceiling, suggesting how pharmaceuticals have become so integrated into our way of being that they seem natural. Bryan Crockett’s “Anger,” “Gluttony,” and “Sloth,” (2001), are enlarged, semi-synthetic marble sculptures of genetically engineered mouse strains developed for medical research, in which Crockett recontextualizes the classic topic of the seven deadly sins by integrating

them with contemporary science and the ethical questions raised by biotechnology. Completing the exhibition are a number of historical artifacts, including memorabilia from classic gas stations where iso-octane made its mark, wartime posters touting the value of penicillin, photos of women raising their skirts to reveal nylon stockings, and bottles of Bayer Aspirin that chronicle the evolution of that historic brand.

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First Add – Art and Science Intersect at ‘Molecules that Matter’

“In the 20th century, our knowledge of substances at the molecular level has significantly refined our world – even life itself,” said Giguere. “How we have changed, and who we have become as a result of this remarkable revolution is the overarching story this exhibition conveys.

“Our goal is to open visitors’ minds to the role of molecular chemistry in all our lives, to provoke new insights, and to make the invisible world of molecules visible,” added Giguere. “We offer this exhibition...as a beginning to a process of discovery, exploration, and enthusiasm for chemistry that will, we hope, extend well beyond the boundaries of this project and into the future.”

“Molecules that Matter” was organized by the Frances Young Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery at Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs, N.Y., in collaboration with the Chemical Heritage Foundation of Philadelphia, and funded by The Camille and Henry Dreyfus Foundation, Friends of the Tang, Sara Lubin Schupf, the Hach Foundation, Amgen, and donors to the Chemical Heritage Foundation. The presentation of “Molecules That Matter” at The College of Wooster Art Museum was made possible by a generous bequest from Muriel Mulac Kozlow, a member of the Class of 1948; the Julia Schoolroy Halloran Fund endowment; Wooster’s Cultural Events Committee; and the Ohio Arts Council.

The opening reception will be Friday, March 27, from 6-8 p.m., featuring a gallery talk at 7 p.m. by curator Ray Giguere. A lunchtime lecture by author Jimmy Wilkinson Meyer, titled “Fashioning the Pill,” will be held on Wednesday, April 1, from noon-1 p.m. There will also be a “Curator’s Tour” with John Weber on Thursday, April 9, from 7-8 p.m., and an artist’s lecture by Bryan Crockett on Monday, April 13, from 7-8 p.m. in Rm. 223, Ebert Art Center. The final event will be a Faculty Roundtable, featuring Jaime Carrejo (studio art), Melissa Schultz (chemistry), Stephanie Strand (biology), Thomas Tierney (sociology/anthropology), and panel moderator, Virginia Pett (chemistry), on Thursday, April 30, from 7-8 p.m. in the Sussel Gallery.

The College of Wooster Art Museum is open Tuesday through Friday from 10:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday from 1-5 p.m. All exhibitions, receptions, lectures, and performances are free and open to the public. Group and class tours are also available.

For more information, call 330-263-2388 or visit www.wooster.edu/Music-and-the-Arts/The-College-of-Wooster-Art-Museum.aspx.

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