

Explode Every Day: An Inquiry into the Phenomena of Wonder



Ryan and Trevor Oakes
Have No Narrow Perspectives (the Bean), 2014
 (Easel on site)
 21 x 20 x 10 in

NORTH ADAMS, MASSACHUSETTS – Visitors will stand in rapt awe when MASS MoCA launches the exhibition *Explode Every Day: An Inquiry into the Phenomena of Wonder* on May 28, 2016.

Over twenty artists exhibit works, including Jonathan Allen, Jen Bervin, Lucien Castaing-Taylor and V er ena Paravel, Jason de Haan, Tristan Duke, Sharon Ellis, Tom Friedman, Christopher Gausby, Hope Ginsburg, Laurent Grasso, Pierre Huyghe, The Institute for Figuring, Nina Katchadourian, Michael Light, Charles Lindsay, Megan and Murray McMillan, Ryan and Trevor Oakes, Demetrius Oliver, Julianne Swartz, Chris Taylor, and Fred Tomaselli.

As exhibition curator Denise Markonish remarks, “the state of wonder agitates, mesmerizes, and is almost forcible and shocking. It is a sudden intake of breath, a gaping mouth, a relinquishing of understanding.” As commonly used, “wonder” is sometimes mistaken for curiosity, which centers on the practice of fact-finding and explanation. In this show, viewers experience a purer state of wonder, a liminal state of being poised between knowing and not knowing, and defined by an experience of something truly new.

Co-organized by MASS MoCA’s Markonish and Columbus, Ohio-based artist Sean Foley, *Explode Every Day* was inspired by a course that Foley taught at Ohio State University, and a long-running discourse between the two. The title for the exhibition was inspired by the writer Ray Bradbury, who often spoke of the need to retain a sense of wonder throughout one’s life. He wrote, “You remain invested in your inner child by exploding every day. You don’t worry about the future, you don’t worry about the past – you just explode.” Markonish’s previous group shows at MASS MoCA include the one-two punch of *Badlands: New Horizons in Landscape*, *These Days: Elegies for Modern Times*, and *Oh, Canada*, about which the *New York Times* noted her “fanatical dedication.”

Harnessing the concept of wonder for an exhibition, the show will feature both existing and new works by twenty-one international artists, each touching on certain facets of wonder, including: the perceptual/visionary, the technological/scientific, the philosophical/meditative, time/cosmos, and illusion/fear.

Accompanying the exhibition will be a comprehensive catalogue that will for the first time gather contributors from diverse fields to investigate this elusive topic and unite them through contemporary art.

About the Artists

Jonathan Allen (London, England) is an artist and writer whose work addresses the figuring of agency, the facticity of the image, and most recently the various magics at play within late modernity. His work has featured in many exhibitions, live projects, and publications, most recently at Tate Britain, Frankfurter Kunstverein, and David Risley Gallery. He is an associate curator at The Magic Circle Museum, London. www.jonathanallen.info

Jen Bervin (Brooklyn, NY) is a visual artist and writer whose works combine text and textiles with conceptual elements and a minimalist's eye for the poetic and essential. Her work has been exhibited at the Walker Art Center, The Power Plant, The Eli and Edythe Broad Museum, and others. Bervin is the recipient of a Creative Capital grant and a Robert Rauschenberg Residency. www.jenbervin.com

Lucien Castaing-Taylor and **Véréna Paravel** (Cambridge, MA) are filmmakers, artists, and anthropologists working at the Sensory Ethnography Lab at Harvard University. Their work has been screened at the AFI, CPH:DOX, Locarno, New York, Toronto, and Viennale Film Festivals, and exhibited at London's Institute of Contemporary Arts, the Centre Pompidou, and the Berlin Kunsthalle. Their 2012 film *Leviathan* was lauded by critics and won numerous film awards.

Jason de Haan (Calgary, Alberta) creates work that concerns itself with the conceptual, poetic, and absurd, often manifesting itself as a combination in the forms of sculpture, installation, performance, drawing, and book works. His projects, he says, always maintain a desire to achieve the positive. De Haan is represented by Clint Roenisch Gallery, Toronto, ON. www.jasondehaan.net

Tristan Duke (Los Angeles, CA) has a background in photography and has long been interested in optics, visual perception, and optical illusion. Through his work with the Museum of Jurassic Technology, Duke became involved in stereoscopic (3D) photography. Most recently he has been exploring laser holography, and hand-etched holograms. www.dadabiti.org/tristan-duke

Sharon Ellis (Los Angeles, CA) is a painter who represents timeless landscapes that highlight the interplay between a visible world and an equally present, invisible one. Ellis juxtaposes light and dark values, creating new sculptural forms coupled with deep spaces. Her subjects – taken from nature – are painstakingly rendered with multiple layers of transparent glazes, resulting in surfaces that are spacious and immaterial. Ellis is represented by Christopher Grimes Gallery, Los Angeles, CA.

Tom Friedman (Easthampton, MA) makes extraordinary works that explore perception, logic, and possibility. His painstakingly rendered sculptures and works on paper inhabit the grey area between the ordinary and the monstrous, the infinitesimal and the infinite, the rational and the uncanny. His work is often deceptive, its handmade intricacy masked by a seemingly mass-produced or prefabricated appearance. Friedman is represented by Lühring Augustine, New York, NY.

Christopher Gausby (New York, NY) is an artist, calligrapher, and writer who has reinvented the illuminated manuscript form to create book works meditating on philosophy and aesthetics. These works are in the collection of the New York Public Library and the Newberry Library, Chicago.

Hope Ginsburg (Richmond, VA) creates multidisciplinary works that take the form of live events that explore the images, objects, and spaces that they generate. Her pedagogical project, *Sponge*, is

headquartered at the Virginia Commonwealth University School of the Arts, where she is an associate professor. Her recent *Breathing on Land* project began at the Robert Rauschenberg Residency in Captiva, FL. www.hopeginsburg.com

Laurent Grasso (Paris, France) has been long fascinated with the visual possibilities related to the science of electromagnetic energy, radio waves, and naturally occurring phenomena. She uses imagery culled from cinema and art history to create works in video, sculpture, painting, and drawing, which set up ambiguous juxtapositions of time and space. Grasso is represented by Sean Kelly, NY, and Galerie Perrotin, Paris. www.laurentgrasso.com

Pierre Huyghe (Paris, France) creates films, installations, and public events that blur the traditional distinction between fiction and reality, revealing the experience of fiction to be as palpable as anything in daily life. His playful work addresses complex social topics, such as the yearning for utopia, the lure of spectacle in mass media, and the impact of Modernism on contemporary values and belief systems. Huyghe is represented by Marian Goodman Gallery, NY.

The Institute for Figuring (Los Angeles, CA) engages in science and making, steeped in the belief that ideas presented in abstract terms can be embodied in physical activities. Founded in 2003, the IFF develops exhibits and programs for museums, galleries, colleges, and community groups internationally such as the *Crochet Coral Reef*, one of the largest science/art projects in the world. www.theiff.org

Nina Katchadourian (Brooklyn, New York) creates works in a wide variety of media including photography, sculpture, video, and sound, playing with notions of the everyday, humor, language, and nature. Most recently, she was part of the 2015 Venice Biennial, and Chronicle Books published *Sorted Books*, a celebration of a 20-year long project. Katchadourian is represented by Catharine Clark Gallery in San Francisco. www.ninakatchadourian.com

Michael Light (San Francisco, CA) is a photographer focused on the environment and its relationship to contemporary American culture. He has published the archival works, *Full Moon* (1999), which used lunar geological survey imagery made by the Apollo astronauts to show the moon as a sublime desert, and *100 Suns* (2003), military photographs of U.S. atmospheric nuclear detonations from 1945 to 1962. www.michaellight.net

Charles Lindsay (New York, NY) is a multidisciplinary artist interested in technology, ecosystems, semiotics, and esoteric forms of humor. He creates immersive environments, sound installations, sculptures built from salvaged aerospace and biotech equipment, videos, and photographs. Lindsay was the first artist in residence at the SETI Institute. www.charleslindsay.com

Megan and Murray McMillan (Providence, RI) have been collaborating since 2002. They make interdisciplinary projects that incorporate video, installation, performance, and photography. They often start their process by building large sets in their studio or on location. That set then becomes the stage for video and photographs with choreographed actors who activate the set in a filmed performance. www.meganandmurraymcmillan.com

Ryan and Trevor Oakes (New York, NY) are twin brothers who have been engaged in a conversation about the nuances of vision since they were children. They explored their mutual fascination with vision

throughout grade school and during college at Cooper Union's School of Art in New York City. Since graduating in 2004, they've continued their dialogue with their jointly built artworks addressing human vision, light, perception, and the experience of space and depth.

Demetrius Oliver (New York, NY) uses prosaic objects such as teakettles, light bulbs, and umbrellas to evoke poetic associations between physical materials and abstract ideas. Both introspective and transformative, Oliver's practice investigates the cosmos from the vantage point of the studio and the gallery. www.demetriusoliver.com

Dario Robleto (Houston, TX) is an artist whose multi-faceted practice links careful research with romantic earnestness and conceptual precision with unorthodox fabrication. His sculptures, prints, and wall-works combine esoteric materials and processes to explore forgotten, little-known or as-yet unfamiliar corners of history, art, and science. Robleto has had over 30 solo exhibitions since 1997, most recently *The Boundary of Life Is Quietly Crossed* at The Menil Collection in Houston, TX. www.dariorobleto.com

Rachel Sussman (Brooklyn, NY) spent nearly a decade developing the critically acclaimed project *The Oldest Living Things in the World*, researching, working with biologists, and traveling all over the world to photograph continuously living organisms that are over 2000 years old. University of Chicago Press published the accompanying book in 2014. Sussman has exhibited her work internationally and received numerous awards including a 2014 Guggenheim Fellowship, has spoken at TED, The Long Now Foundation, and UCLA, among others. www.rachelsussman.com

Julianne Swartz (Kingston, NY) works with sound, kinetics, and a range of lo-tech materials to make sculpture, installations, and photographs. Often using optics, magnetism, and the concepts of space and time in her body of work, her installations invite attentive visitors to slow down and sharpen their senses. She is represented by Josée Bienvenu Gallery, NY, and Lisa Sette Gallery, Phoenix, AZ. www.julianneswartz.com

Chris Taylor (Providence, RI) exploits the friction generated within a material and process that is a production of convention, tradition, and history. Particularly examining glass, Taylor has learned to blow it upside down and also reproduced a 16th-century Venetian goblet, whose technique was lost for over five hundred years, which he planted next to the original in The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Fred Tomaselli (New York, NY) draws upon art historical sources and Eastern and Western decorative traditions to create works that explode with mesmerizing patterns through the layering of resin, pharmaceuticals, and organic materials. More recently he has been transforming the front page of *The New York Times* with gouache and collage. For *Explode Everyday* Tomaselli will show a historic sculptural work from the late 1980s. He is represented by James Cohan Gallery, NY.

Images

A collection of high-resolution images is available here: bit.ly/1emy7Nn.

About the Catalog

The book will consist of essays on the history of wonder; wonder and psychology; and literature, science, and unusual natural and paranormal phenomena; as well as in-depth artist interviews and special artist projects. Contributors to the catalogue include: Lawrence Weschler (author of creative nonfiction), Kay

Redfield Jamison (clinical psychologist and author), Maria Popova (writer and blogger at brainpickings.org), Barbara Maria Stafford (art historian), Jill Tarter (astronomer and former director of the Center for SETI Research), Robin Ince (comedian and co-host of BBC radio's *The Infinite Monkey Cage*), Stefan Sagmeister (graphic designer), Mary Ruefle (poet), Sam Green (filmmaker of *The Measure of All Things*), and the exhibition curators. The catalog will be edited by Markonish and co-published by Prestel.

Sponsorship

This exhibition is supported by the National Endowment for the Arts, with additional support from the Massachusetts Cultural Council.

About MASS MoCA

MASS MoCA is one of the world's liveliest (and largest) centers for making and enjoying today's most important art, music, dance, theater, film, and video. Hundreds of works of visual and performing art have been created on its 19th-century factory campus during fabrication and rehearsal residencies, making MASS MoCA among the most productive sites in the country for the creation and presentation of new art. More platform than box, MASS MoCA strives to bring to its audiences art experiences that are fresh, engaging, and transformative.

MASS MoCA's galleries are open 11am to 5pm every day except Tuesdays through spring 2016. The Hall Art Foundation's Anselm Kiefer exhibition is open seasonally, through November 30. Gallery admission is \$18 for adults, \$16 for veterans and seniors, \$12 for students, \$8 for children 6 to 16, and free for children 5 and under. Members are admitted free year-round. For additional information, call 413.662.2111 x1 or visit massmoca.org.