



CHRISTY RUPP:
Swimming in the Gene Pool

FEB 3 - AUG 25, 2000

EXHIBITION CHECKLIST

Genetically Engineered Insects: 1999

steel and paper -

Double Winged (19x10x9")
Switched (15x11x8")
Shielded (17x16x12")
Vessel Bug (15x9x7")
Target Bug (20x12x10")
Bee with Toxic Pollen (19x14x9")
Biohazard Bug (7x7x6")
Machine Made Bug (17x11x14")
Test Tube Bug (16x24x7")
Glyphosate (Roundup) (31x32x12")

steel, paper, fabric and glass -

Large Weevil Vessel (54x38x28")

Containers: 1999

26 plastic containers with labels (various sizes)

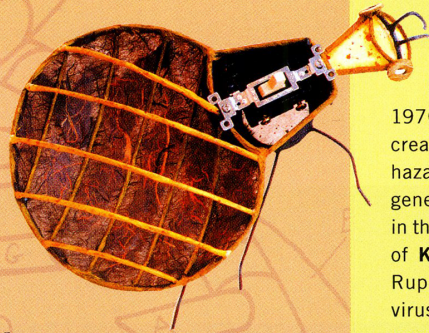
Viruses and Bacteria: 1997

steel and paper -

Tuberculosis (3) (8x8x4")
Diphtheria (5) (8x8x4")
E-Coli Bacteriophage: 3 wall (12x4x9"); 3 floor (24x30x20", 36x30x40", 18x30x20")
Influenza (12x12x4")
Cholera (2) (18x9x5")
Polio (4) (3x3x3")
Rabies (18x10x9")
HIV (20x12x12")
Herpes (12x10x6")
Streptococcus: 1 chain (18x12x4"); 4 indiv. (2x2x2")
Smallpox (8x7x4")
Typhoid: 4 wall (10x10x6"); 3 floor (25x25x28")
Lyme Disease (5x5x18")
Ebola (3) (9x18x4")
Hanta Virus (12x12x5")
Salmonella (9x6x4")

Water:

Fish and H₂O Molecule, 1999: steel and paper: fish (12x12x8"); molecule (24x24x30")
Watertable, 1999: wood, glass, H₂O (27x24x36")
Horseshoe Crabs, 1996-99: 2 steel (24x30x24"); 1 steel and paper (24x30x24")
Metal Frame Salmon (6), 1994: steel (30x12x12")
Zip lock Turtle with Water, 1992: steel, H₂O, plastic (24x24x18")
Red Tide, 1991: steel and plastic (36x40x40")



Not What it Seems

Christy Rupp: Swimming in the Gene Pool

Imagine a world where you trip over E. Coli, stare into the eyes of giant insects, and come face to face with the pesticides that cling to your food. You have now entered the world of Christy Rupp. Since the 1970s, this prolific artist has been creating sculpture that makes invisible hazards, like pollution and the results of genetic engineering, visible. "Swimming in the Gene Pool"—the inaugural exhibition of **Kidspace at MASS MoCA**—includes Rupp's sculptures of water creatures, viruses, bacteria, and her newest work, genetically engineered insects and "labels" for genetically altered food. With this sculpture, Rupp makes a powerful case that in the world around us things are not always what they seem.



Eleven of Rupp's new sculptures depict what she calls genetically engineered insects—fantastic creatures that focus our attention on the unseen and unknown consequences of genetic engineering. Take a look at *Switched*, a bug fashioned of welded steel and delicate, earth-colored papers. The insect's "parts" are in place, but Rupp has made an incongruous addition: in its thorax, between the head and abdomen, Rupp has inserted a light switch. This part insect/part machine is a three-dimensional metaphor for the process by which resistance in crops such as corn, potatoes, and soybeans "can be switched on with [the] application of different chemical sprays." As crops are "turned on," weeds and other natural pests are stamped out, but, as Rupp shows us, this seemingly advanced procedure may have unseen

side effects. With the flip of a switch, man may have the power to alter an entire species. Rupp leaves it for us to decide whether this species will be illuminated or eliminated once the switch has been flipped.

What is really in the food we buy at the supermarket and eat at home? Christy Rupp's container and label series reveal what most food packaging conceals, alluding to what we can't see and just maybe to what we aren't supposed to know. Her store-bought plastic food containers say "Randomly Mutating Food," "Anti-aging Vegetable" and "Weapons-Grade Seed Stock." "Thank you for taking part in our experiment" says it most clearly. We are the unwitting participants in agribusiness's grand science project.

Now close your eyes; can you see the evil menaces that cause your sore throat, your fever, or your flu symptoms? Once again Christy Rupp is working with the invisible—or in this case the microscopic—and making it visible. In *Smallpox* and *E. Coli*, two among many other colorful sculptures of viruses and bacteria, Rupp combines the imaginary and the scientific. Out from under the microscope, it is hard to believe that these beautiful pathogens can make us so sick!



Also swimming in the Kidspace pool are water creatures—sculptures of fish, turtles, and horseshoe crabs. In *Red Tide*, two sea turtles are stuffed with red Tide bottles and fight to survive the pollution they

embody. In *Fish and H₂O Molecule*, a school of brook trout swims around a giant molecule—2 parts hydrogen, one part oxygen. Here Rupp has enlarged the microscopic to the point where it looms over the fish that depend on it, leading us to wonder just how safe this



water really is. These sculptures make tangible the often unseen threats posed to marine life, reminding us once again that what we can't see may cause the most harm to living creatures.

Kidspace at MASS MoCA is a child-centered art gallery where artistic excellence and educational experience are equally and emphatically presented. A collaboration between the Williams College Museum of Art, the Sterling & Francine Clark Art Institute, and MASS MoCA, the Kidspace consortium is eager to expand the role that the art museum can play in the life of its community. Through programming that encourages students to view, analyze, and create art, this project aims to expand young people's knowledge about artists and art-making, and to foster interpretation and communication skills. In its pilot year, all schoolchildren in North Adams, MA, will visit Kidspace, and their teachers will work closely with Kidspace staff. Kidspace is also open to the public during special hours. Call for times.

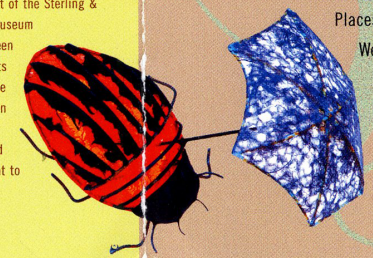
Kidspace is made possible by the generous support of the Sterling & Francine Clark Art Institute, The Williams College Museum of Art and MASS MoCA. Additional funding has been provided in part by the National Endowment for the Arts (a federal agency), the Cherkis family, and the Brownrigg Charitable Trust in memory of Lynn Laitman. Additional support for scientific equipment (for use in the first exhibition) has been provided through the Howard Hughes Medical Institute grant to Williams College. Photos © Kevin Kenefick

CHRISTY RUPP: SELECTED BIOGRAPHY

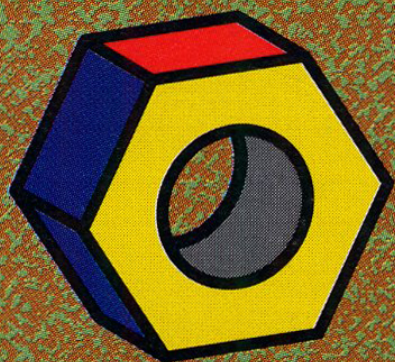
- 1949 Born Rochester, NY
- 1973 B.A. Colgate University
- 1974 M.A.T. Rhode Island School of Design
- 1977 M.F.A. Rinehart School of Sculpture, Maryland Institute College of Art
- 1979 "The Rat Patrol", outdoor poster campaign during garbage strike, Lower Manhattan; "The Times Square Show", NYC
- 1984 "Hire Intelligence", commissioned for Dag Hammarskjöld Plaza, NYC
- 1985 National Endowment for the Arts, fellowship in sculpture; "Americana," Group Material Installation for Whitney Biennial
- 1986 "Social Progress", installed at 23rd St. & 5th Ave., NYC, Public Art Fund
- 1988 Solo Exhibition, "The Permanent War Economy", P.P.O.W. Gallery, NYC
Solo Exhibition, Weatherspoon Gallery, UNC Greensboro, NC
"Committed to Print", Museum of Modern Art, NYC
- 1989 "Insufficient Data Fish", commissioned for Central Park, NYC; "Tidal Filter Fence", Percent for Art Commission, collaboration with Department of Environ. Protection at Coney Island Water Pollution Control Plant, Brooklyn
- 1990 "Sculpture to Last a Lifetime", Solo Exhibition, P.P.O.W. Gallery, NYC; "The (Un)Making of Nature", Whitney Museum of Art; Solo Exhibition, "Natural Selection", Burchfield-Penny Art Center, Buffalo, NY
- 1992 "Rollback Bench", Permanent outdoor site work to celebrate 20 years of endangered species legislation. Commissioned by the State of Washington Art in Public Places Program, Seattle; Solo Exhibition, Williams College Museum of Art, Williamstown, MA; Solo Exhibition, "Nature Held Hostage", P.P.O.W. Gallery, NYC
- 1995 Solo Exhibition, "The Act", Nina Freudenheim Gallery, Buffalo, NY
- 1996 Solo Exhibition, "Moisture Seekers", Dieu Donne Papermill, NYC; "Time Flies", Snail Clock, Municipal Arts Society of Baltimore, MD
- 1997 Hall Clocks for Early Childhood Center #2, the Bronx, NYC. Percent for Art Program
- 1998 Solo Exhibition, "Dirty Work", TZ'Art & Co., NYC
- 1999 Solo Exhibition, "The Landscape Within", Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University, Niagara, NY; Solo Exhibition, Nina Freudenheim Gallery, Buffalo, NY

SELECTED COLLECTIONS

- Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, NY • Burchfield Penny Art Center, Buffalo, NY • Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University, Niagara, NY • Chase Manhattan Bank, NYC • Colgate University, Hamilton, NY • Computer Task Group, Buffalo, NY • C.W. Post College, Long Island University, Brookville, NY • Honolulu Academy of Art, Honolulu, HI • Max Hutchinson Sculpture Fields, White Lake, NY • Martin Margulies, Miami, FL • Museum of Modern Art, NYC • Penny McCall Foundation, NYC • National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC • U.S. Forestry Service, Lake Tahoe, CA • Washington State Art in Public Places Program, University of Washington, Seattle, WA • Weatherspoon Gallery, University of North Carolina, Greensboro, NC



Thank you
for
taking
part in our
present
exhibition



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