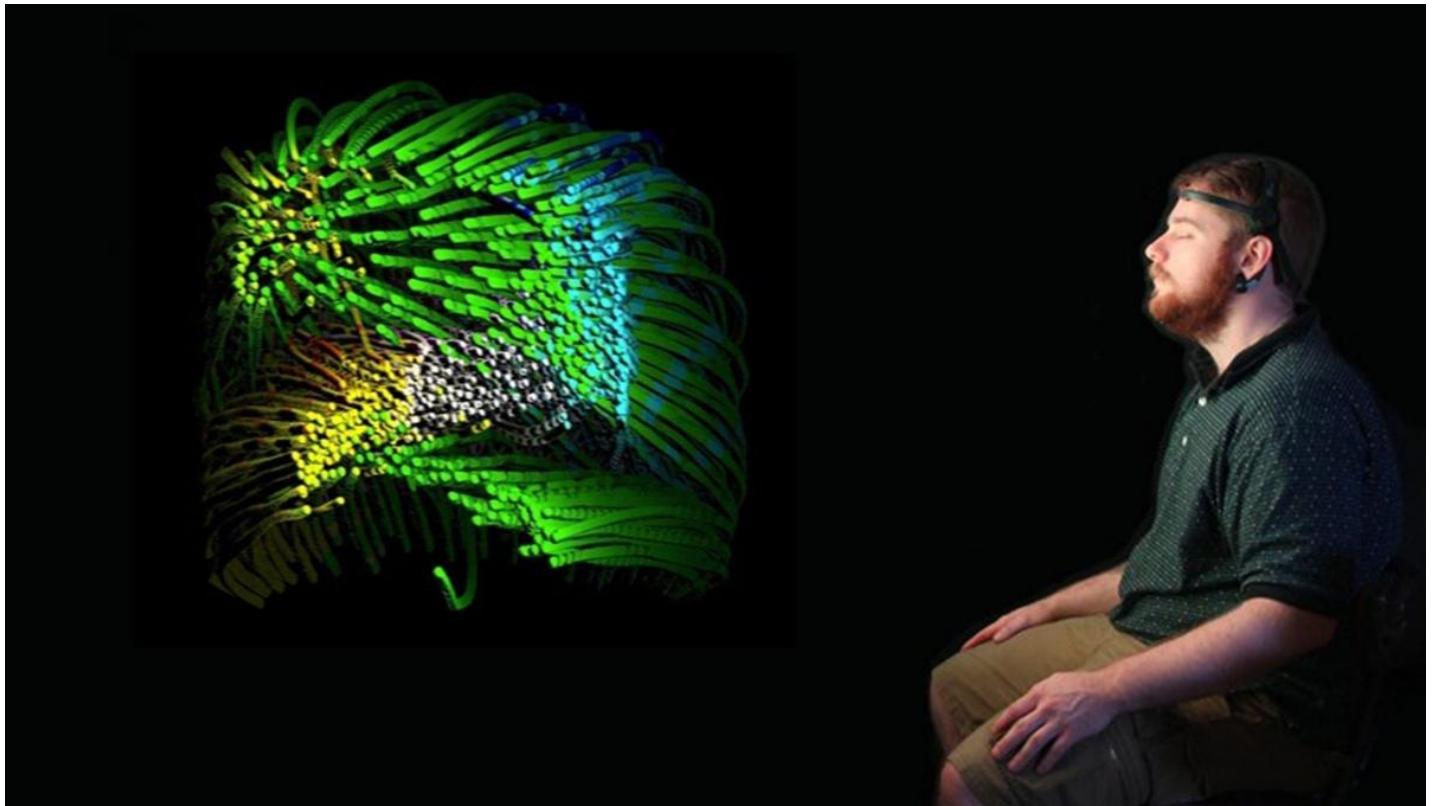


https://lancasteronline.com/features/entertainment/creating-art-with-your-mind---exhibit-opening-friday/article_5a85e4d0-0914-11e7-8980-3b9109421296.html

Creating art with your mind - exhibit opening Friday at PCAD lets you be the artist



KATHY DAMINGER | Staff Writer Mar 15, 2017



"MindDraw," an interactive art installation by China Blue.

An artist's medium of choice is a personal thing. Acrylics, oils or pastels, for instance, are specifically selected to best reflect the creator's vision.

In [China Blue's](#) exhibit "Creativity of Consciousness," opening Friday at [Pennsylvania College of Art & Design](#), the medium is the brain.

And the artist is you.

Blue is a Rhode Island-based artist who has made a career out of integrating what most people consider opposites — science and art. She sees in science limitless inspiration for artistic expression.

Blue's earlier explorations in sound produced soundscapes reflecting subjects as diverse as the 9/11 tragedy and Venice's drip-by-drip destruction by water.

Her current fascination with the nuances of the mind has produced a new body of work coming to the college as part of its series highlighting scientific and technologically inspired artwork.

The exhibit is highly interactive, allowing viewers to become participants and use their minds to create or alter art.

"It's a one-by-one experience," Blue says. "It enables each person to have his own individualized experience."

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Traditional artistic expression can be ambiguous, she says. "What is the artist hoping for you to experience?"

While that can be part of the attraction of art, it can also get a bit overdone, with artist statements, interpretations and rhetoric.

"This gets rid of all that stuff," Blue says. "You don't need the jargon to explain it. Because it's dynamic and unique, the viewer walks away with their own understanding of it."

The exhibit consists of three parts.

"MindDraw" is an interactive work that enables participants to "draw" with their brain waves.

"Imagining Blue" is a hanging sculpture in which hundreds of LED lights are imbedded. It, too, allows viewers to interact with it, changing its lighting by using their brain waves.



A piece from "Memory Network" by China Blue.

And “Memory Network” is part of an ongoing series of paintings that Blue creates as a response to the cruelties of Alzheimer’s disease.

For “MindDraw,” brain waves are measured by a sensor on a headset that participants wear. The noninvasive device measures beta and theta brain waves.

Beta waves are involved in conscious thought and logical thinking, normal everyday things. Theta waves are involved more with relaxation, sleep and meditation.

“When you use the headset, you’ll see an image of spheres rotating (in) almost like a tornado shape,” Blue says. The images will be projected on a wall, so the art is visible to all. Each wave is represented by a color, and a third color is the average of the other two.

The challenge — or fun — is to relax your mind and watch the image change.

“Imagining Blue” uses the same headset and encourages participants to think about the color blue, which Blue says automatically calms the mind. It also causes the sculpture’s multicolor LEDs to glow blue.

The “Memory Networks” paintings are the only traditional elements of the exhibition. Intricate networks created from a shiny, aluminum-infused paint, they are, on the most basic level, responses to a memory.

Blue vividly recalls the first time her grandmother, who had Alzheimer’s disease, didn’t recognize her.

The artist feels almost compelled to paint the networks. “The idea of making it into a proposal to preserve memories is a way of finding beauty in loss,” she says.

“Creativity of Consciousness” is by no means a traditional art exhibit.

And that pleases Blue.

“I feel that art is like any industry, in the sense that any changes or breakthroughs in art are triggered by a process of investigation and innovation,” she says.



Artist China Blue.

“Today art has been infiltrated by new technology. As a result, new ways to make art and experience art are changing what we think of art.”

Blue will give a public artist talk at the college Friday at noon, followed by a panel discussion featuring members of her team: husband Seth Horowitz, a neuroscience researcher, and Chris Konopka, the coder for “MindDraw” and “Imagining Blue.”

“We will speak about the project from the neuroscience, artistic and coder standpoint,” she says.

“It’s all very collaborative.”

IF YOU GO

What: “Creativity of Consciousness”

When: Opens Fri. Artist lecture and panel discussion at noon. Free.

Exhibit cont. through April 28. Mon.-Fri. 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. (Later on First Fridays.)

Where: Pa. College of Art and Design, 204 N. Prince St.

Info: 717-396-7833. pcad.edu/gallery. chinablueart.com.



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