Creativity of Consciousness

at

Pennsylvania College of Art & Design
Lancaster, PA

China blue is captivated by uncovering concealed elements of our world, such as the sounds hidden in the iron of Paris' Eiffel Tower, contained in NASA's Vertical Gun chamber or embedded in our brains she identifies hidden structures and how they are shaping our lives in surprising ways.

"*China Blue is creating a brain aesthetic*,"
Elsa Cameron, Founder of the SFO Museum, San Francisco Airport, CA

Curatorial Statement

Pennsylvania college of Art & Design's Spring 2017 exhibition series features scientific and technologically inspired art work. The interlocking story of science and art is narrated via cutting edge technology, which exemplifies our desire to know more about ourselves and our world. "Creativity of Consciousness" is PCA&D's final show in this 2017 series.

This unconventional exhibition showcases the work of nationally renowned artist China Blue and her team Seth Horowitz and Christopher Konopka. Together they craft an almost transcendent experience through sight and sound, leaving gallery visitors viscerally connected to the inner workings of their minds.

"Creativity of Consciousness" allows visitors to "simultaneously explore both neuroscience concepts and human creativity." states artist China Blue.

Through traditional 2-D paintings and 3-D immersive art installations, participants are provided access to explore how external reality can be formed and manipulated via their internal mental states.

"Creativity of Consciousness" features three distinct sections: two interactive art works and a series of paintings. **"Imagining Blue"** is an interactive brainwave sculpture that responds to a participant's mind by dynamically changing in light, motion and sound. With this sculpture, users are able to watch their brain in action.

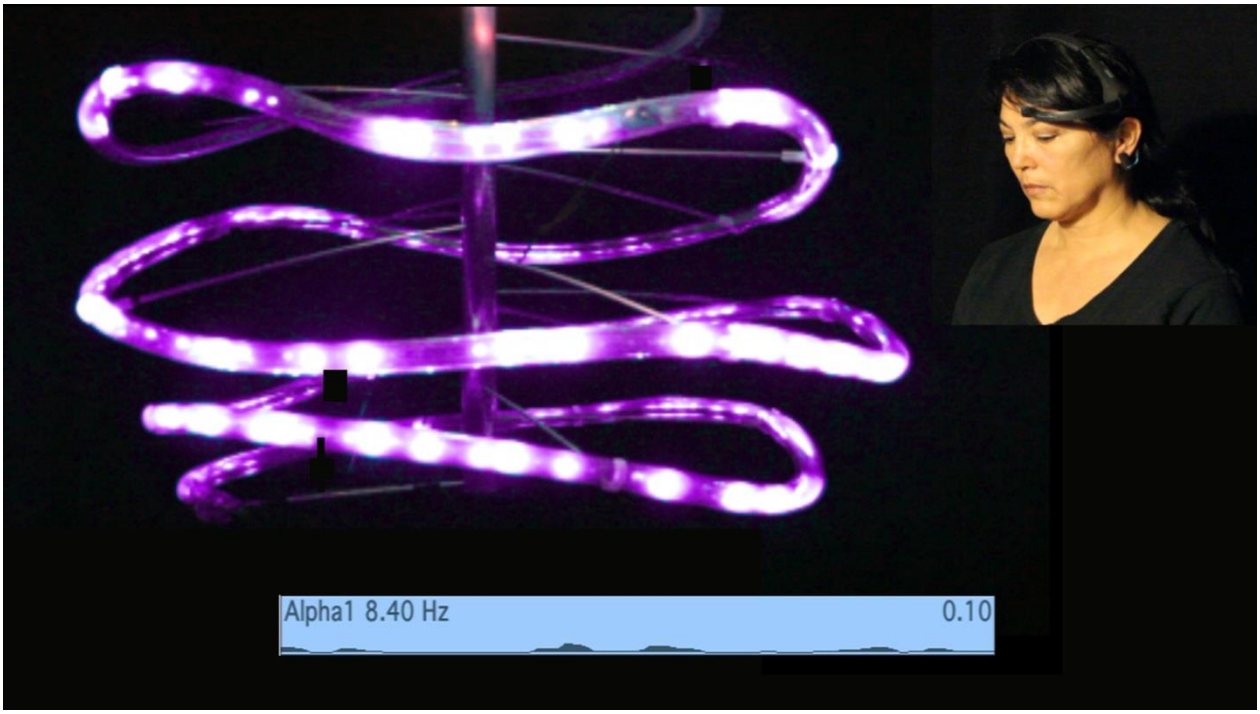
By accessing mental states of relaxation, meditation, focus or excitation **MindDraw** enables participants to drive the shape and speed of projected imagery. The resulting illustration changes in real time reflecting the state of the participant's brain.

"Memory Network" is a series of paintings that reflect how we may connect and hold on to our life experiences. Inspired by the brain scans of Alzheimer's patients, China Blue uses these images as maps, filling the empty spaces with aluminum-based paint. These connected, shiny globules make stunning displays of the delicate, fragile impermanence of our experiences and memories.

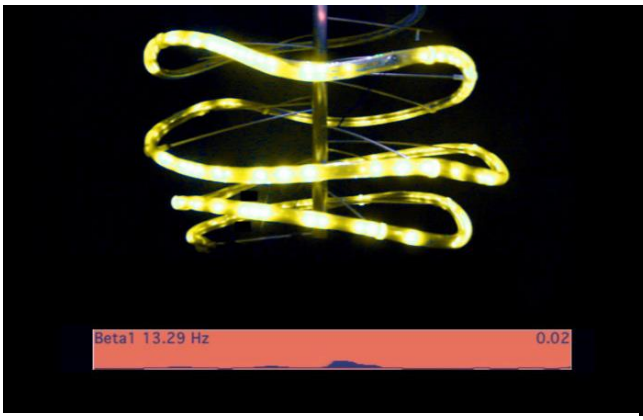
Through the creative practice, brainwaves can be interpreted and experienced in real-time, as aestheticized color and form. As the enigma of the mind begins to fall away, visitors discover a playground of wonder and awe as their own body is illuminated. Quite tacitly, through the creative experience, we become more appreciative of our bodies' nuances as we understand ourselves through the personalized stories narrated through these works of art.

Marnie Benny, Gallery Curator, March 2017

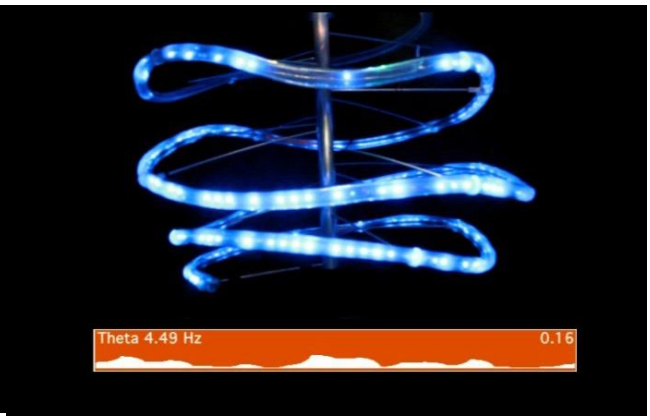
Imagining Blue



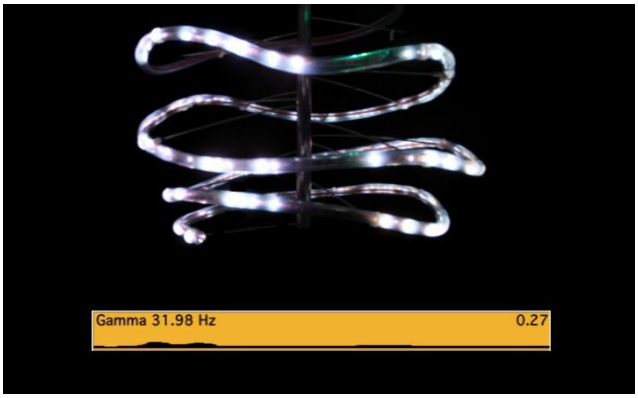
This is an EEG brain sensor based sculpture that responds to brain wave activity by changing the color and sound of the work.



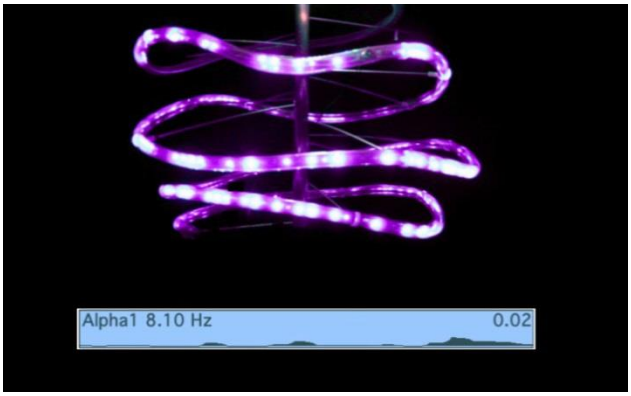
Beta



Theta



Gamma



Alpha

“Imagining Blue” is an interactive brainwave sculpture that uses the participant’s minds to dynamically control the light, the motion and the sounds of the sculpture. This is a mesmerizing art work that gives the audience previously unexplored and intimate views of the workings of their own minds. It enables users to observe their own brain in action. Through the usage of an EEG data sensor brain waves are converted into external changes of color and the patterning of the LED sculpture as well as create music based on the sounds of neurons firing and breathing.

To engage the work, the participant with the help of an assistant sits near the sculpture and simply dons the brainwave sensor headset. In front of them is the “Imagining Blue” sculpture; a large spherical array of hundreds of LEDs and self-contained speakers which is suspended from the ceiling. With the headset in place, the sensor dynamically captures the brainwaves in action and reflects their current internal alpha, beta, gamma or theta state.

The alpha state is observed during wakeful relaxation and is seen when the leds turning purple. The slower theta state is achieved during meditative conditions and is viewed when the leds turn blue. The gamma wave state is the alert and awake condition and is considered a measure of active consciousness. This is seen as a white display. And, the beta state which is carried out during normal, non-focused activities is visualized as yellow.

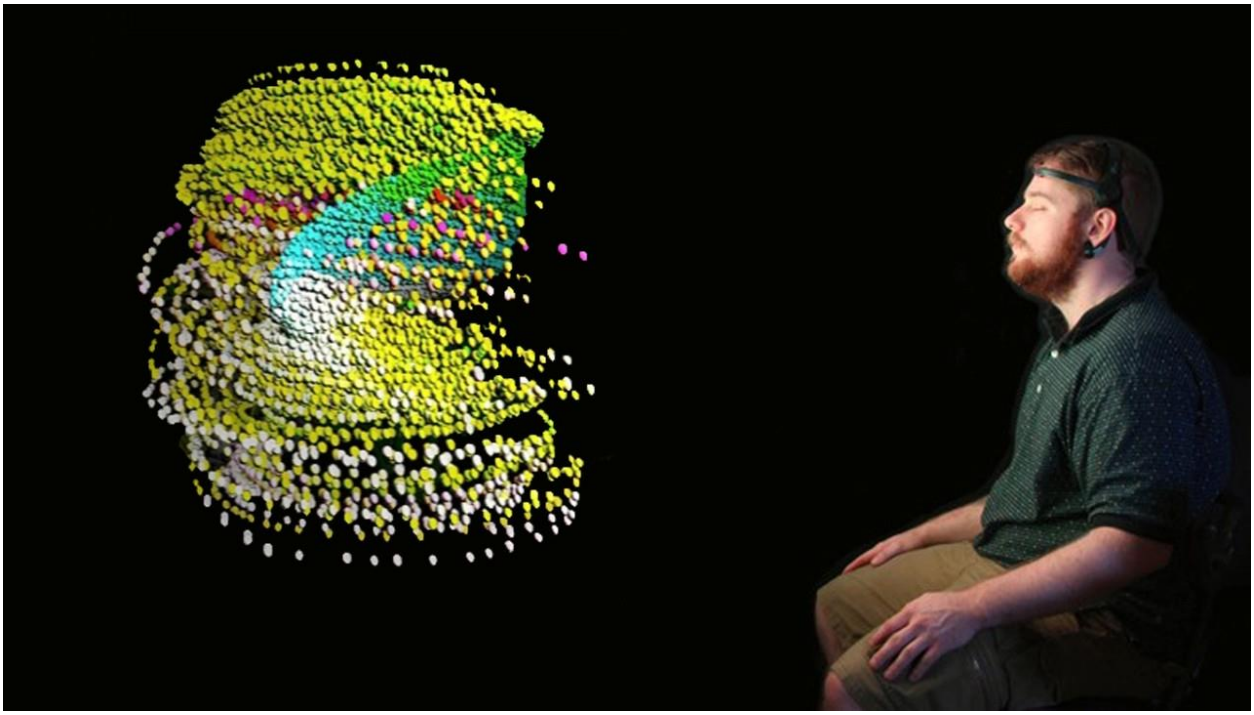
This work is a challenge for the user to try to imagine blue (theta state): that is to alter the lights and sounds by changing their mental state. This will encourage participants to explore their consciousness by and learning how to relax, focus and meditate. In a multiple sculptural array the challenge will be to see if the participants can synchronize their minds and turn all of the works into one single color.

This work defines a personal and fluxing sculpture based on human biology while providing a challenge to see if the participant can achieve deepest theta state and imagine blue (theta state).

To see a video of this work in action go to: http://www.chinablueart.com/

MindDraw

Exploring consciousness by drawing

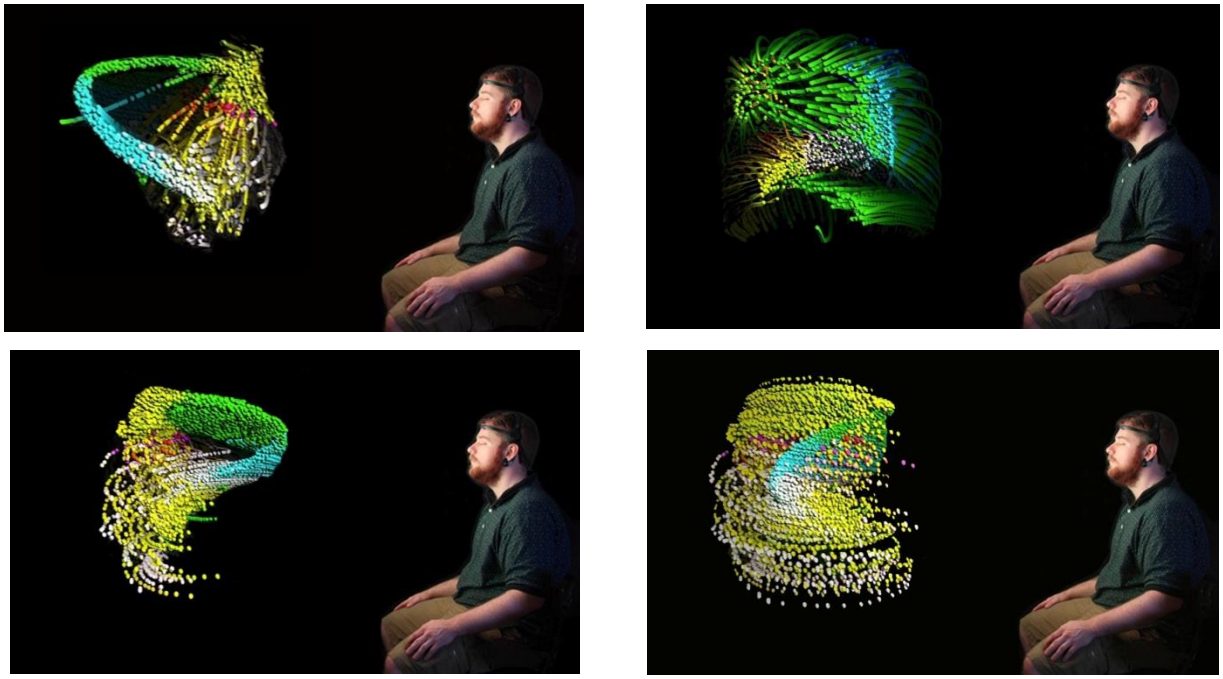


MindDraw enables people to create beautiful real-time brain based images. By accessing their mental states of relaxation, meditation, focus or just by thinking, the participants drive the shape and speed of installation imagery. In addition to the performance installation this work is also designed as a stand-alone, wall-mounted, user interactive work with a self-contained program.

To see a video of the work go to: http://www.chinablueart.com/paintings-and-interactive-works/interactive-work/

Sample Images

Video Projection



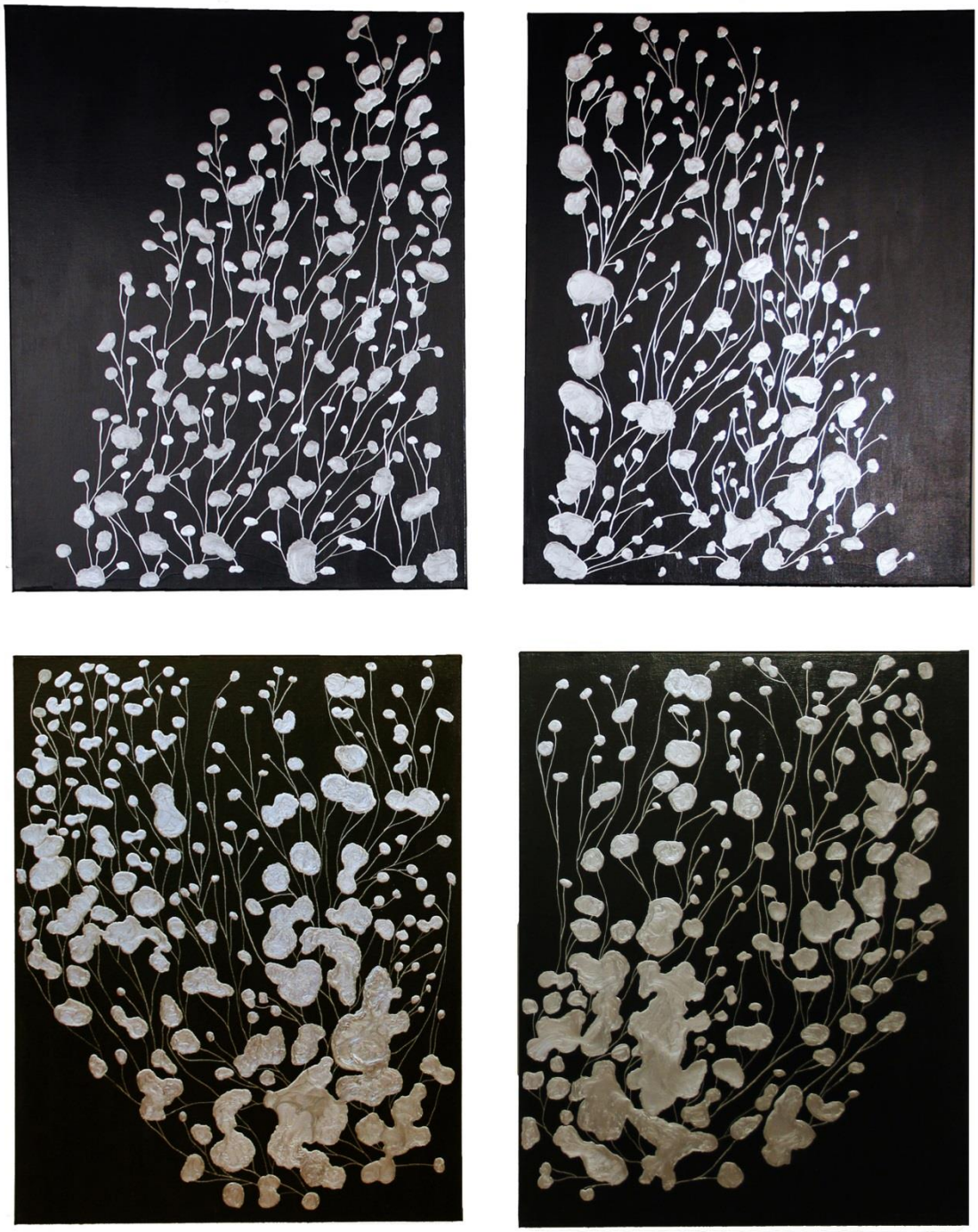
Memory Networks

This group of works explore how we connect and hold on to our history. I propose a theory that uses the model of a net as a means to link together and preserve the fragments while investigating lost thoughts, dreams, failures, successes and experiences.

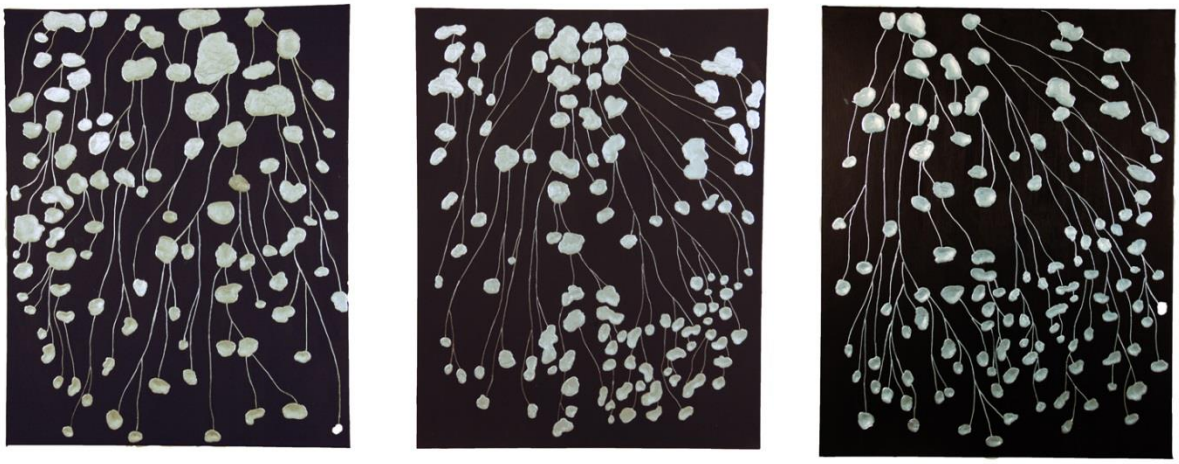
Individual memory is transient. Our recollections occur in fragments that arrive as flashes detached from time. In the age of selfies, photographs help us capture the moments that we do not want to forget. But those images that linger on our SD cards will not always last in our minds and might or might not be called up when someone asks: "do you remember..?"

I often wonder what my Grandmother’s memories were like before she died of Alzheimer’s. I never had the chance to find out. I hope that my work will add to the conversation about saving lost memories.

The shapes in these paintings are based on brain scan images of the voids created by Alzheimer’s. Glossy handmade paint with aluminum used references one a material thought to cause the disease.

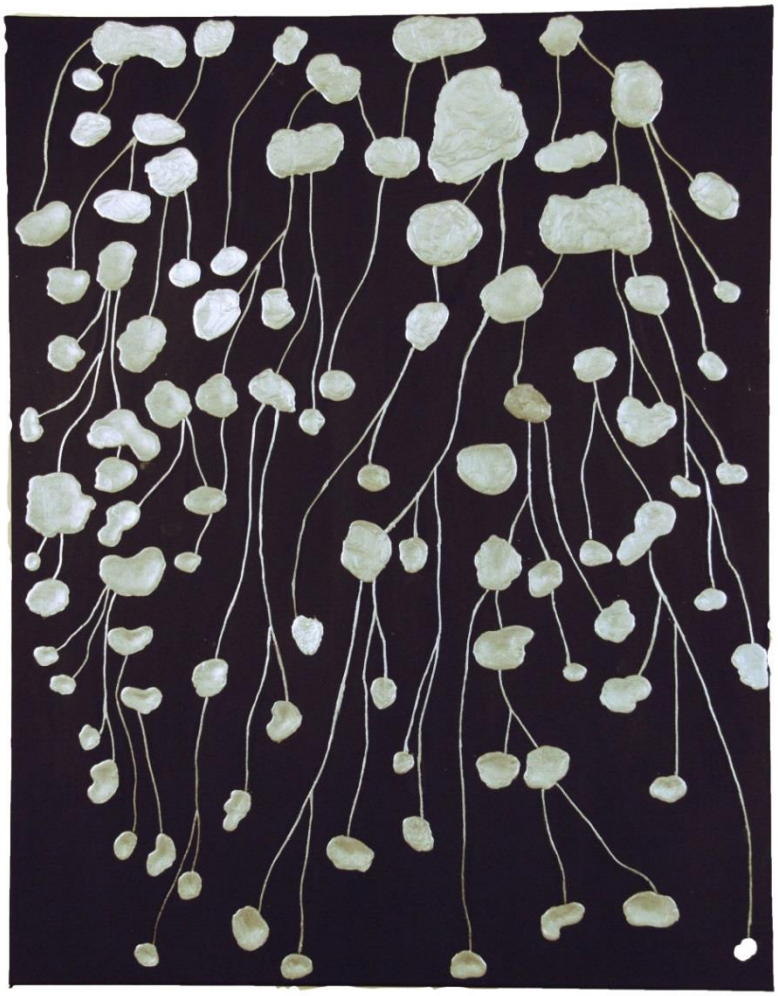


Memory Network I
60” x 45”, 2015

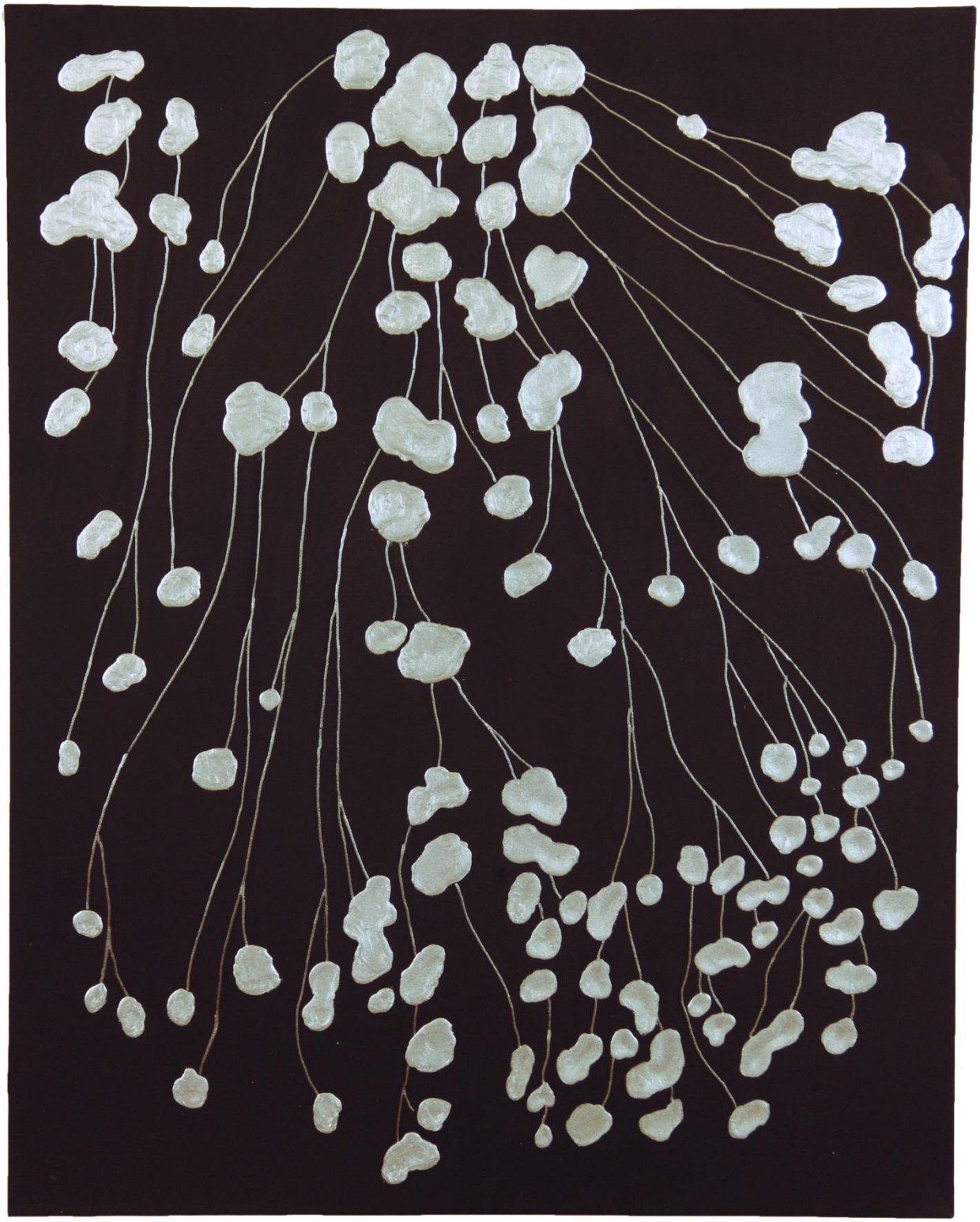


Triptych

Memory Network VI, 28” x 72”

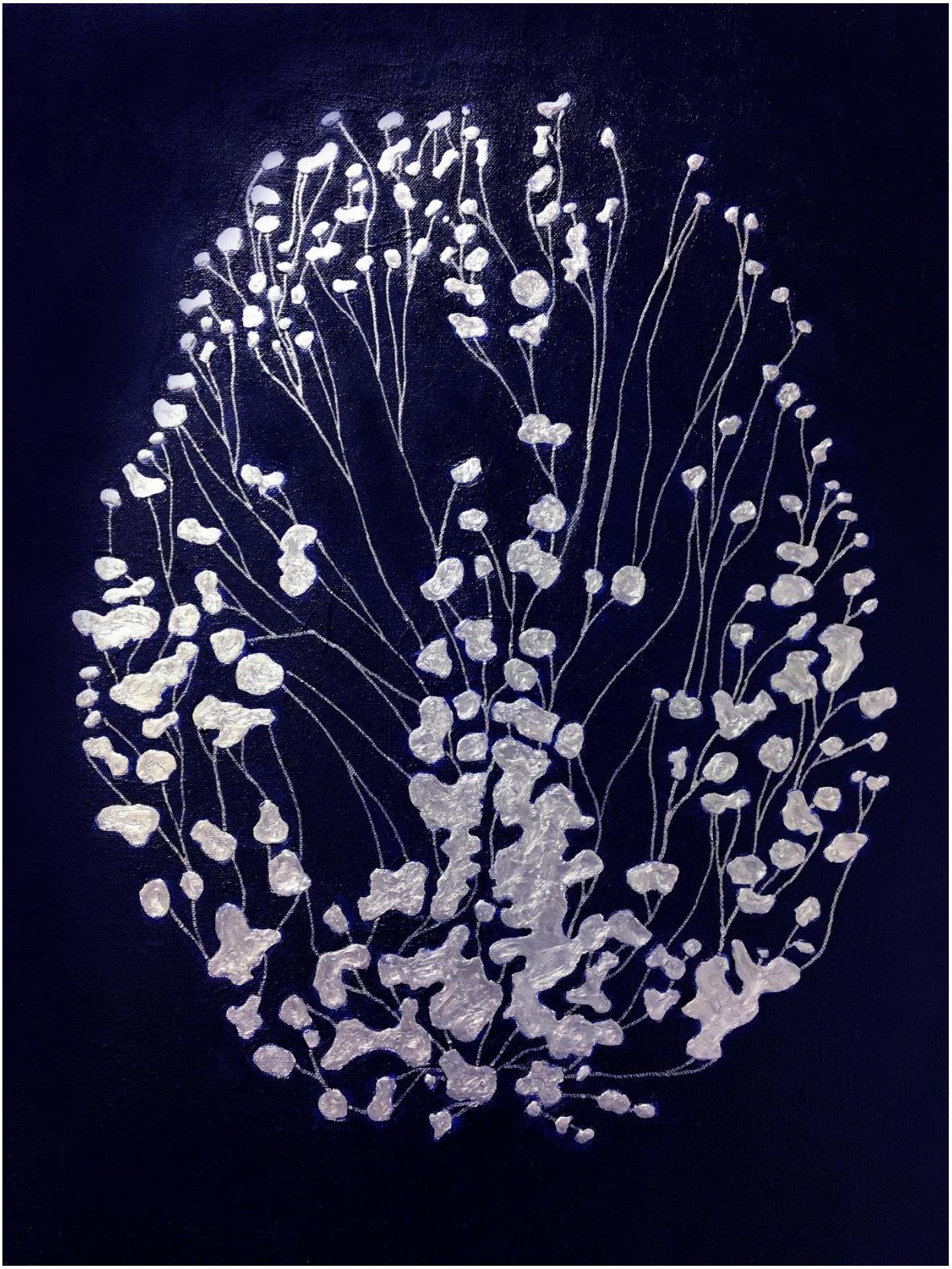


Memory Network VI (Detail 1)
22” x 28”, 2015



Memory Network VI (Detail 2)
22” x 28”, 2015

Memory Network VI (Detail 1)
22” x 28”, 2015

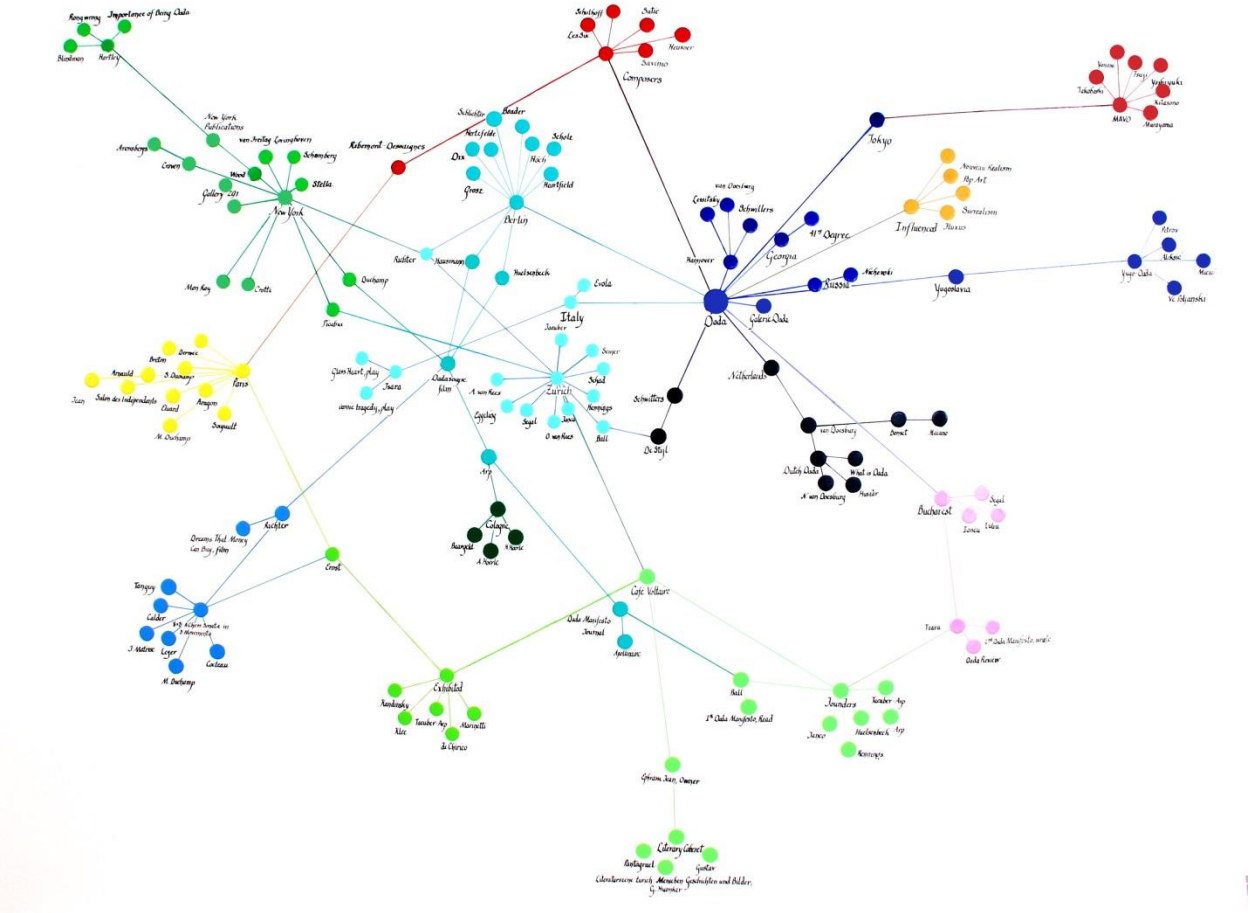


Memory Network II
22” x 28”, 2015

Memory Network III
22” x 28”, 2015

Memory Network IV
22” x 28”, 2015

Dada Connectome



Pigment & urethane on paper, 35” x 72”

A connectome is a comprehensive map of neural connections in the brain, and may be thought of as its "wiring diagram." In this case China Blue uses it to show how the Dada movement was inter-connected. Dada was an art movement of the European

avant-garde in the early 20th century, with early centers in Zürich, Switzerland at the Cabaret Voltaire (circa 1916), in New York (circa 1915) and after 1920, in Paris. It developed in reaction to World War I, the Dada movement consisted of artists who rejected the logic, reason, and aestheticism of modern capitalist society, instead expressing nonsense, irrationality, and anti-bourgeois protest in their works. This work shows the geographical reach of the movement and significant artists who promoted it.

Statement

China Blue is interested in how our world is built from our sensations and perceptions and how this emerging umwelt provides not only a basis for exploring the inner world of the mind, but also how technological extensions of our senses, provide a way to transcend their limits. Her work enhances the audience's perceptual world through her investigations and explorations into bioacoustics, ultra and infrasonic sampling devices, brain wave monitoring, and robotic sensory avatars.

Testimonials

"China Blue's (work) raises many important questions historically, aesthetically, and philosophically about the interrelationships among art, science, and technology." ***Ellen K. Levy****, Co-Director Leonardo's NY LASER an MIT affiliate.*

"China Blue's work… has returned to the subject matter of nature in an effort to find new meaning and create new metaphors…"
Jill Conner*, New York Editor, Whitehot Magazine and contributor to Art in America and Sculpture*

"Great work!" ***Dennis Oppenheim****, Artist*

Biography

China Blue is an art pioneer who has been nominated to a unique two year Artist-in-Resident with the Norman Prince Neurosciences Institute at the Rhode Island Hospital. This residency is the only one of its kind in the nation. China Blue has received two NASA/RI Space Grants. One was for her research of the sound created by NASA's Vertical Gun. The Vertical Gun is a three meter tall meteorite impact simulator which shoots particles at Mach-10. Her project is the first proposal to study sound in the facility which has been in existence for 50 years. She is also the first person to record the Eiffel Tower in Paris and discover her sound. She is a Rhode Island State Council for the Arts, Fellowship recipient and on Rhode Island Congressman Langevin's committee for Art & Culture.

As an internationally exhibiting artist in 2013 China Blue was the US Representative at the Tokyo Wondersite Experimental Art Fair. In 2008 she represented the US at OPEN XI in Venice, Italy an exhibition held in conjunction with the Architecture Biennale. Her exhibition "Firefly Projects" was nominated for the 2012 "Best Monographic Museum Exhibition, Nationally" by the International Association of Art Critics. Her piece "Sonic Ecology of Structures" is published in "Environmental Sound Artists," Oxford University Press, 2016.

Reviews of her work have been published in the Wall Street Journal, New York Times, Art in America, Art Forum, artCritical and NY Arts to name a few. She has been interviewed by France 3 (TV), for the film "Com-mu-nity" produced by the Architecture Institute of America and was the featured artist for the 2006 annual meeting of the Acoustic Society of America. She has been an invited speaker at Harvard, Yale, MIT, Berkelee School of Music, Reed College, Leonardo's NY

Laser an MIT affiliate and Brown University and an adjunct professor and Fellow at Brown University in the United States. She is the Founder and Executive Director of The Engine Institute and is an advisor on Rhode Island's Congressman Langevin's Committee for Art and Culture.

Contact

China Blue
www.chinablueart.com

China Blue
PIONEERING THE INTERSECTION OF ART & SCIENCE