



the space between



LYLIE FISHER
KRISTY SIMMONS
MARCOS SMYTH

Sarah Tanguy, Guest Curator
Reception 7 November 2011
5:30 - 7:30 pm
Gallery Talk 6:30 pm
2 November 2011 - 4 May 2012

The American Center for Physics
One Physics Ellipse
College Park, MD 20740
For viewing information,
call Eva Adams at 301.209.3125

ABOVE TOP: Lylie Fisher, *In Search of Meaning #2*, 2007, digital black and white print, acrylic pigment, and gels, 24 x 36 in, courtesy of the artist.

ABOVE: Marcos Smyth, *Chrysalis*, 2011, wood, plastic, stone, and steel wire, 21.25 x 9 x 8.5 in, courtesy of the artist.

COVER: details of *In Search of Meaning #2*, *Bathtub and Towel*, and *Chrysalis*.

DIRECTIONS
To reach ACP from the Capital Beltway: Take Exit #23-MD 201 southbound (Kenilworth Ave.); follow MD 201 for about 3 miles; turn right onto River Road at light; follow signs on River Road to ACP and Physics Ellipse; will see building on left.
To reach ACP from D.C.: Follow Rhode Island Avenue northbound; turn right onto MD 410 (East-West Highway); turn left onto MD 201 (Kenilworth Ave.); turn left onto River Road at 2nd light; follow signs on River Road to ACP and Physics Ellipse; will see building on left.
Metro: College Park - U. of Md stop on the Green Line.



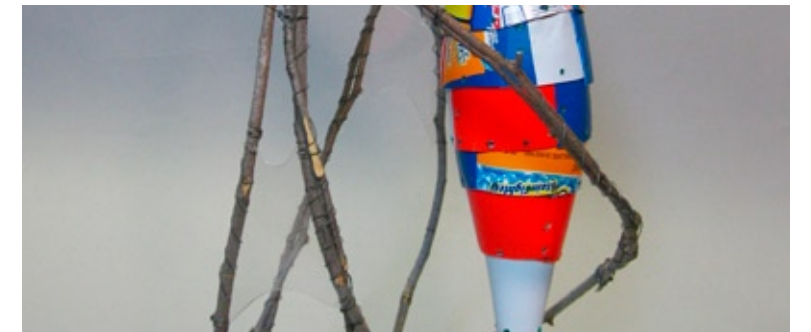
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“The quantum theory of gravity has opened up a new possibility, in which there would be no boundary to space-time and so there would be no need to specify the behaviour at the boundary.”— Stephen W. Hawking

With works by Lylie Fisher, Kristy Simmons and Marcos Smyth, *The Space Between* charts a fluid zone between the seen and the unseen, the known and the unknown, and the temporal and the infinite. In the hands of these artists, distinctions seem to dissolve as time, matter and empty space create an alternate reality, a metaphoric world of the imagination, full of passion, movement and pattern.

Upon seeing Bubble Chamber experiments for the first time, Lylie Fisher instantly marveled at the dizzying tracks of subatomic particles, and saw in them the possibility of a new body of work. Soon after, she gained access to archival rolls of raw images, on loan from Stanford University. She had prints made of eleven of them,



Lylie Fisher, *In Search of Meaning #5*, 2007, digital black and white print, acrylic pigment, and gels, 24 x 36 in, courtesy of the artist.

which inspired the paintings in her series, *In Search of Meaning*. For Fisher, the series prompts a primal dialogue: “Like art, particle physics deals with the invisible. One portrays the emotional and spiritual experience; the other studies the unseen matter and energy. Science is the voice of the rational mind, and art is the reverberation of questioning.”

Fisher remained true to her source material with three notable exceptions. She lopped off the top and bottom of the image to enhance the feeling of looking through a window; she reversed the saturation so that the lines—actually, strings of tiny dots—became white rather than black; and she intuitively colored in the interstices to correspond loosely to the inner emotions that we all share. Layers of acrylic paints and gels bring out the tension between fields and lines, with the spirals, angles and curves representing certainty and structure in contrast to the color passages, stand-ins for indeterminacy and the chaos of everyday life. The resulting topographies, each a variation on the central theme, pulse with dynamic beauty that extends beyond their individual frames.

Like Fisher, Kristy Simmons is interested in textural buildup, but in her paintings and photo-based works, boundaries appear more porous. Inspired by quantum



Kristy Simmons, *Bathub and Towel*, 2009, acrylic on plexiglass, 18 x 24 in, courtesy of the artist.

physics, she draws on the legacy of Cubism and Futurism to create a personalized aesthetic of ebb and flow. The series *Inklings*, whose initial subjects are her bathroom and kitchen “convey[s] the intersection between material reality and the nonmaterial plane,” as the artist explains. Zooming in from a bird’s eye perspective, she orchestrates dizzying vortices from such elements as a shower curtain, bottles, or a towel. Further dissolution is suggested by short brushstrokes loaded with paint. Even as these weave in and out of each other like so many snowflakes in a blizzard, they get caught in layers of iridescent, transparent gel, generating a complex play of light.

In *Inklings 2*, the artist used Photoshop to reconfigure digital photographs taken at different times and places. Movement and communication are now paramount as forms cross over and interpenetrate. In *Old Georgetown Road*, for example,

views of trees, directional signs, streetlights, cars, curtains, and their spectral reflections, all bathed in a sunset glow, fuse the natural and the manufactured



Kristy Simmons, *Old Georgetown Road*, 2011, photo-based art, 18 x 24 in, courtesy of the artist.

physics, she draws on the legacy of Cubism and Futurism to create a personalized aesthetic of ebb and flow. The series *Inklings*,

in one immediate image. While hints of quotidian reality still recognizable, familiar objects lose their specificity and synthesize in new and unfamiliar ways of seeing. Space becomes experiential rather than locative, and visual discovery replaces traditional narrative.

The origin of Marcos Smyth’s sculptures harkens back to his childhood in Brazil: “As a toddler, the sheer beauty of beetles and details of leaves or small plants captivated my imagination. . . my friends and I made many of our toys out of tin cans, wood, and discarded materials.” In his current artistic endeavors, Smyth combines his love for recycling with more recently acquired skills in metalwork and jewelry. Achieving a particular gesture guides experimentation and process. Other than the store-bought copper sheeting and steel wire, he uses driftwood and stones



Marcos Smyth, *Petranome*, 2011, wood, copper sheet, stone, steel wire, and steel screws, 16 x 17 x 8 in, courtesy of the artist.

from the nearby banks of the Potomac River, and bits of plastic and metal, salvaged after daily use.

Petranome takes its cue from swelling sails. Its title—a riff on metronome—suggests tuning rocks rather than instruments to specific frequencies. Two forked branches are bent into the armature for four, soft-hammered arcs of copper, dazzling with an iridescent patina and tethered by steel wire. At the base, a river stone lends stability to the spring-like construction. By contrast, *Chrysalis* creates a tripod from three forked branches, one of which nestles a river

stone. Out of their intertwined spiral “grows” a brightly colored cocoon, patched from plastic detergent containers and held together by wax pins to lend a riveted look. Clear plastic plates give the work added structure and further complicate the play between negative and positive shapes.

Taken together, the works on view suggest an inter- and intra-dimensional terrain, where definitions and identities are in constant flux. Like the term, *passe-partout*, French for passkey or all-purpose, the artists unlock an in-between art, one that encompasses both realism and abstraction in its exploration of the unknown, while collapsing multiple modalities of being and time.