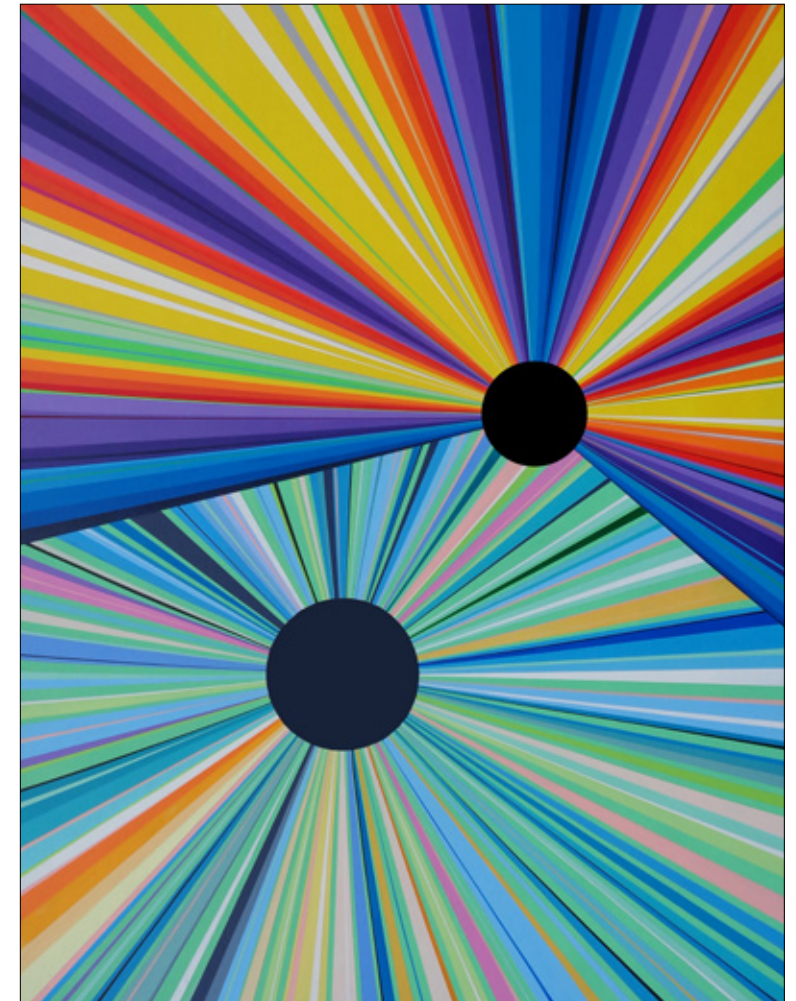


INTERTWINED



“We are made up of the same atoms and the same light signals as are exchanged between pine trees in the mountains and stars in the galaxies.” –Carlo Rovelli



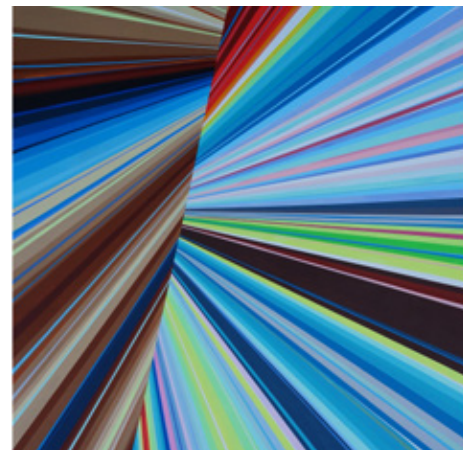
THE AMERICAN CENTER FOR PHYSICS
One Physics Ellipse
College Park, Maryland 20740

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.



INTERTWINED

TRAVIS CHILDERS
JOHN GRUNWELL
STEPHEN SPARTANA
SARAH TANGUY, CURATOR

Reception 23 April 2019
5:30 - 7:30 pm
Gallery Talk 6:15pm

The American Center for Physics
One Physics Ellipse
College Park, MD 20740

15 April 2019 – 25 October 2019
For viewing information,
call 301.209.3000

Above top: Stephen Spartana, *Heart of a Rose*, 2019, digital archive print on Bamboo paper, 20 x 30"; courtesy of artist.

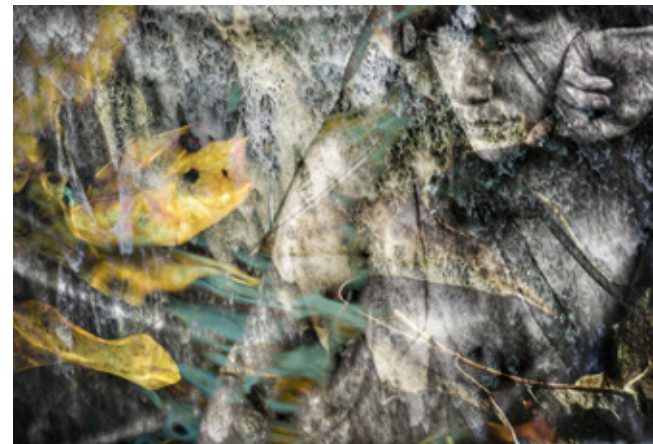
Above: *Entelechy 78*, 2019, acrylic on panel 48 x 48 x 3"; courtesy of artist.

Cover: *Entelechy 63*, 2017, acrylic on panel 48 x 36 x 1.5"; courtesy of artist.

In this exhibition, Travis Childers, John Grunwell, and Stephen Spartana explore the concept of interconnectivity and the unifying principle of energy, with sculpture, painting and photography. Through scale and planar shifts, the artists make manifest our inexorable link to our surroundings in both make-up and interaction. Ranging from abstraction to representation, the works visually re-imagine underlying relationships between nature and us and our interface on a macro and micro level with the cosmos.

Travis Childers juxtaposes common materials to create sculptures that reveal overlooked absurdities of quotidian life. Growing up on a farm and now living in the suburbs, the artist mines our conflicted ties to the natural world in works that question our propensity to knowingly or not, self-destruct. Research and process are paramount to generating meaning as he draws parallels between the disappearance of the individual in society and the use of multiples and repetition in his practice. Often tinged

with humor and irony, his work encourages a different way of looking at daily routines and activities: “My inspiration doesn’t come from the extraordinary but the everyday and the mundane. And



Stephen Spartana, *Flow of Water*, 2018, digital archive print on Bamboo paper, 20 x 30"; courtesy of artist.

in that I find endless amounts of inspiration.”

In his *Brickscapes* series, Lilliputian landscapes on top of bricks highlight the role of this construction material in displacing nature to form the built environment. Devoid of humans, the works reference Alan Weisman’s, *The World Without Us*, a non-fiction book that explores what would happen if humans suddenly disappeared. Meanwhile, his use of model train landscape materials underscores the environmental consequences of mass transportation in contrast to the innocence of a childhood activity. The contemporary workspace informs his recent *Staplerscapes*, where once again, scale is reversed and artifice and reality engage in counterpoint. In *Staplerberg*, icebergs, carved from foam core—a construction material posing sustainability issues—rest on a stapler to create an uneasy



Travis Childers, *Brickscapes*, 2016-ongoing, bricks, model train landscape material, carving foam, gel medium, dimensions variable; courtesy of artist.

stalemate alerting us that the tool’s intended action will ruin the artwork.

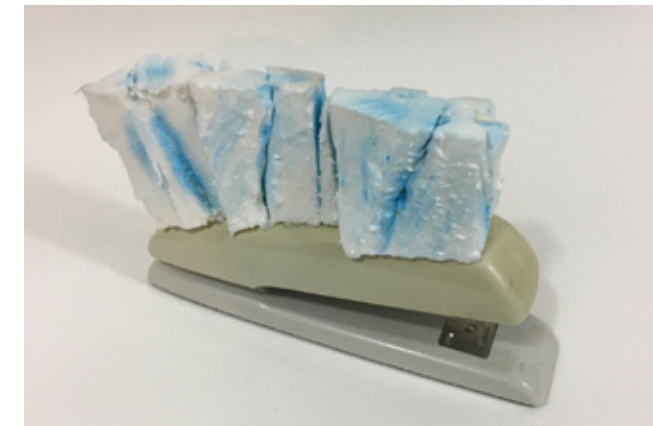
At first glance, John Grunwell’s geometric abstractions dazzle with their bright colors and bold diagonals. Often radiating from one or more vanishing points, the fields of energy suggest parallel or folded universes on a macro level. On the more tangible realm of our physical world, his scapes forego biographic, social or political data, and instead, act as metaphors for “the energetic forces that shape our lives—Newtonian and quantum phenomenon, astrophysical/cosmological events, and our kinship with the entirety of existence.” For Grunwell, the process of creation, a series of events that eludes our full comprehension, hints at how the present moment results from a sequence of actions harkening back to the birth of our universe and foreshadowing our “ultimate destiny.”

In his *Entelechy* series, the artist seeks to access the vast potential of forces that guide the development of the cosmos. Formally, the ongoing series improvises on the modernist tenets of abstraction and the Washington Color School. In earlier examples like *Entelechy 63*, the presence of black holes provides anchors, while in his more recent works, including *Entelechy 78*, the vanishing points are hidden from view. His technique, however, has stayed the same: once Grunwell locates the points of convergence, he uses hand-drawn lines and FrogTape to map out the compositions, and then selects his color scheme through intuition and experimentation. In the final works, prismatic rays and shifting planes butt up against each other heightening our sense of motion and perspec-

tive as the eye navigates the soaring dynamics of his singular geography.

In his photographs, Stephen Spartana interweaves figurative and natural elements to mine our symbiotic relationship: “We are of the earth, and how we treat our environment affects us all.” Each image represents an admixture of chance and design, resulting from various analog films, digital media, computer software, and printing surfaces. Up close, recognizable details emerge from his impressionist dreamscapes: a limb here and a hand there gracefully mingle with bits of moss and trees, leaving traces of time’s passage. Seminal influences include photographers Henri Cartier-Bresson’s “decisive moment” and Pete Turner’s belief that transparency “isn’t the end but the beginning,” and Georgia O’Keefe’s floral paintings, whose sensuous forms evoke the female body.

The element of transparency drives the autumnal, *In the Canopy, Reflections From Below*, where hints of a figure share the same space with a forest and rocky outcroppings, the model’s smooth skin a foil to the stone’s grainy texture. In *Flow of Water*, the use of reflection ties together the image of a pensive figure lifting the veil on a scene of blurry, golden and orange leaves folding seamlessly into water bubbles. The treatment grows increasingly abstract in works such as *Heart of a Rose*. Shot through glass bathed in loose acrylic swirls, the sensuous curves of the petals synch with those of the human body even as they conjure an undulating mountain range. Here as elsewhere, jumps in scale and focus create



Travis Childers, *Staplerberg*, 2018, stapler, carving foam, 5 x 2 x 6"; courtesy of artist.

lush topographies, beckoning us to both peer through the surface and marvel at the surface complexity.

Whether a forest, science fiction or a childhood toy, the artists in *Intertwined* draw inspiration from an array of

sources to imbue everyday experience with dramatic tension. Though their approaches differ, their works affirm the role of art as a catalyst to gain greater appreciation of alternate perspectives on one hand, and on the other, a deeper understanding of our relationship to each other, our environment, and the big beyond.