SymBioitic ART & Science:  
An Investigation at the Intersection of Life Sciences and the Arts

A conference jointly sponsored by  
the National Science Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts  
February 28-March 1, 2011

at the National Science Foundation, 4201 Wilson Blvd., Arlington, VA

[Please use visitors’ entrance for Stafford I building, at the intersection of N. Stuart & N. 9th Sts.  
You will get your ID badge there and be directed to Stafford II, Room 555]

Monday, February 28

9:00 AM  Welcome by NSF and NEA principals: Joanne P. Roskowski, Acting Director, Biology Directorate, NSF & Joan Shigekawa, Senior Deputy Chairman, NEA

9:15 AM  Introduction to meeting purpose and process by co-principal investigators: Dr. Chris Comer, U. of Montana, & Ellen McCulloch-Lovell, Marlboro College

9:30 AM  Introduction of graphics facilitator Patricia Hilton and participants

9:50 AM  Discussion #1: ORIGINS -- moderator: Chris Comer

• What motivated you to cross disciplines and how did you do it?
• If you work with a science or art partner, how did you identify that person/persons?
• What do artists gain from working with life scientists; what do scientists gain from working with artists?
• How frequently are these collaborations happening and why?

Introductory speaker: Felice Frankel (5-10 min.)  
Discussion (55 min.)  
Summation speaker: Bevil Conway (5 min.)

11:00 AM  Discussion #2: PROCESS – moderator: Mel Chin

• What is the state of interaction among the arts and the life sciences?
• How is the creative process the same or different in dance, literature, visual arts, and the life sciences?

Break into small groups by dance, literature, and the visual arts, with artists and cooperating scientists in the same groupings (60 minutes with 10-minute reports from three groups @ conclusion of breakout sessions).

12:00 PM  Reports and discussion
12:30 PM  LUNCH
1:15 PM  Animated Keynote: Choreographer Liz Lerman with biologist Laura Grabel, with video, discussion, and audience participation

2:30 PM  Discussion #3: ADVANCES—moderator: Muriel Poston
  • What new knowledge is being generated by collaborations among the arts disciplines and the life sciences?
  • What novel or unforeseen possibilities, including new methods of working, are created by collaborations (with examples from participants)?
  • How have new technologies opened collaborative possibilities?

  Introductory speaker: Roger Malina (5-10 min.)
  Discussion (45 min.)
  Summation speaker: Kathy High (5 min.)

3:30 PM  BREAK

3:45 PM  Discussion #4: TOPICS—moderator: Ellen McCulloch-Lovell
  • Based on the above discussion, what are the topics that have surfaced that bear further discussion, research, and investigation?
  • How will evolutionary theory and neuroscience add to our understanding and teaching of the arts?
  • What does the concept of embodied knowledge mean for scientific understandings?

  Introductory speaker: Patrick Hogan (5-10 min.)
  Discussion (60 min.)
  Summation speaker: Lisa Zunshine (5 min.)

5:00 PM  BREAK

6:00 PM  Working Dinner @ Dan & Brad’s at the Arlington Hilton Hotel with keynote on Creativity + Discussion by Robert Root-Bernstein

Tuesday, March 1
9:00 AM  Introduction: Brief recap of first day and two keynotes, discussion, issues

9:15 AM  Discussion #5: VISION—moderator: Susan Sgorbati
  • What would a truly integrated study of the arts and life sciences look like?
  • How would it shape knowledge? Teaching? Civic participation?

  Introductory speaker: Stuart Kaufman (5-10 min.)
  Discussion (60 min.)
  Summation speaker: Claudine Brown (5 min.)

10:30 AM Discussion #6: IMPLICATIONS—moderator: Bill O’Brien
  • What are the implications of what we have been discussing and discovering?
  • What do we know about other art/science collaborative efforts?
  • How can inquiry be taught? Can creativity be taught?

  Break into small multidisciplinary groups (60 minutes, w/ 10-minute reports from three groups @ conclusion of breakout sessions).

11:30 AM  Reports and discussion

12:00 PM  LUNCH

12:45 PM Discussion #7: STRATEGIES—moderator: Ellen McCulloch-Lovell
  • Why is collaboration important to the arts and to the sciences?
  • What are the fertile areas for collaboration and discovery?
  • What are the next steps for stimulating this work?

2:30 PM  Observations and summation by invited writer Peter Turchi

2:45 PM  Conclusion: COMMUNICATION & PUBLIC DISCOURSE—moderator: Chris Comer
  • How are we going to produce a report and potential recommendations?

3:15 PM  Adjournment