Liquid
Stuart N. Larson

Crystal
Mark O. Eisenhauer

Kemper Room Art Gallery
Paul V. Galvin Library

January 17 - February 26, 2005

reception and gallery talk:
January 26, 5:30 - 8:30 pm

exhibition hours:
Monday - Friday: 12 noon - 10 pm
Saturday: 8:30 am - 5 pm
Sunday: 2 - 10 pm

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The world within is much more complex than what we can perceive when only the surface is observed - a closer look at the uncommon patterns formed by common substances.

curated by:
Robert J. Krawczyk, Illinois Institute of Technology

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IIT Office of the President, Lew Collens, President
IIT Art Board, Judith Carr, Chair

Images: Endurance by Stuart Larson and cle0376 by Mark Eisenhauer
Liquid Crystal

A closer look at the not so common patterns formed by very common substances. The world within is much more complex than what we can perceive when only the surface is seen.

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Illinois Institute of Technology
35 West 33rd Street, Chicago, IL 60616

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Endurance by Stuart Larson and ab0316 by Mark Eisenhauer
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This exhibit looks at the not so common patterns formed by some common substances. Both of these artists attempt to express the beauty they see when their view is focused on subjects that seem to be simple but are capable of exhibiting surprisingly complex patterns. When scale and human reference is removed, another dimension of form appears. The world within is much more complex than what we can perceive when only the surface is visible.

These artists incorporate a method that entails a great amount of experimentation, a high degree of discovery, and the lure of the unexpected occurring. The smooth flows, the sharp edges, the effect of texture, lighting and color; these all contribute to the patterns captured. These patterns have the ability to trigger our own imagery, totally unrelated to the actual materials used. Even though the materials they use are very different, their artistic vision is very similar.

Stuart N. Larson

Stuart creates images from household liquid products. To accomplish this, he pours a liquid right onto the glass of a normal digital flatbed scanner. So the liquid won't seep into the electronics, he epoxied a guardrail around the bed of the scanner. Scanning a liquid creates an extra layer of tension in the work, as we normally try to keep liquids as far away from electronics as possible.

The first liquids he scanned were all beauty products. Instead of looking at the beauty created by the use of these products, he started looking for beauty in the products themselves. The titles of the prints come from descriptions on the product labeling. By naming the products by their descriptions and not their product names (i.e. shampoo, conditioner), he is calling attention to the artifice of marketing that makes us choose one product over another.

This exhibit includes images from such liquids as: hand conditioning dish soap, liquid dish detergent, glitter body gel, shampoo plus conditioner, bubble gum scented conditioner, plain conditioner, shape and spiking gel, active care shaving gel, sport endurance gel, wet look styling gel, and milk of magnesia.

Stuart feels that art is a visual language that helps us understand the very nature of our human condition. Part of the requirements of any language is a starting point at which to create a much deeper dialog. He thinks of these liquid scans as digital abstract expressionism.

There are a number of dynamic factors that are involved in his work. Each liquid has a different viscosity and reacts uniquely depending its reflective properties. Some of these factors he has control over, and some he does not. In his earlier images, Stuart looked for pattern, texture, balance, visual flow, and unity. In the later ones, his focus turned to finding positive and negative shapes and the illusion of form.

Stuart is a graduate of the Visual Studies Workshop, Rochester, New York and the Kansa City Art Institute. He is currently an Assistant Professor of Graphics Design at the University of Houston Clear Lake. He has exhibited his work in a variety of galleries across the United States. Further information about his work can be found at: www.stuartart.com/liquid.html

Mark O. Eisenhauer

Mark is a photographer who uses a camera and a polarizing light microscope to produce colorful images of chemical crystals. Polarized light microscopy has been used for many years by geologists and chemists to study the structure and form of rocks, minerals and chemical substances. Mark uses this same technique to uncover structure, form and color, but his approach is from an aesthetic direction.

The process consists of taking household chemicals, heating them till they melt, and then placing them between microscope slides to cool. Once cooled the chemical crystallizes and is then magnified fifty times to begin to reveal its inner structure. This process is called “photomicrography”. Mark searches the crystals for interesting structure and forms. The area photographed is about the size of the period at the end of this sentence.

For color, Mark uses polarized light filters. His microscope is equipped with two polarizing filters, one positioned in the light path before the crystal, and the other between crystal and the camera. By rotating these filters he has control over the intensity and hue of the colors produced depending of the properties of the crystals.

This exhibit includes images from crystals developed from: p-dichlorobenzene, the active ingredient in moth balls; urea, used in plastics, fertilizers, hair conditioners and lotions; vitamin C, ascorbic acid; photographic bleach, used in Cibachrome processing; and potassium chlorate, used in disinfectants, bleach, and fireworks.

Mark was drawn to photomicrography because of his dual interest in both art and science. He notes that all too often we tend to see one or the other, but miss how merging art and science can produce an unexpected reward; it is unfortunate that many of the great photographs made by researchers are never seen beyond the lab.

Mark is a graduate of the State University of New York at Buffalo in biology and a self-taught photographer. His work in photomicrography began in the mid-1970s. He has exhibited at a variety of juried art fairs and galleries in the Chicago area for the past fifteen years, where he has received numerous awards for his images. Further information about his work can be found at: markeisenhauer.home.att.net