Epic Tales of Earth An Art-Science Integration Post-Renaissance

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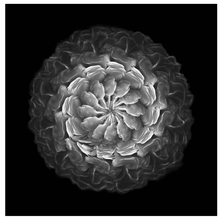
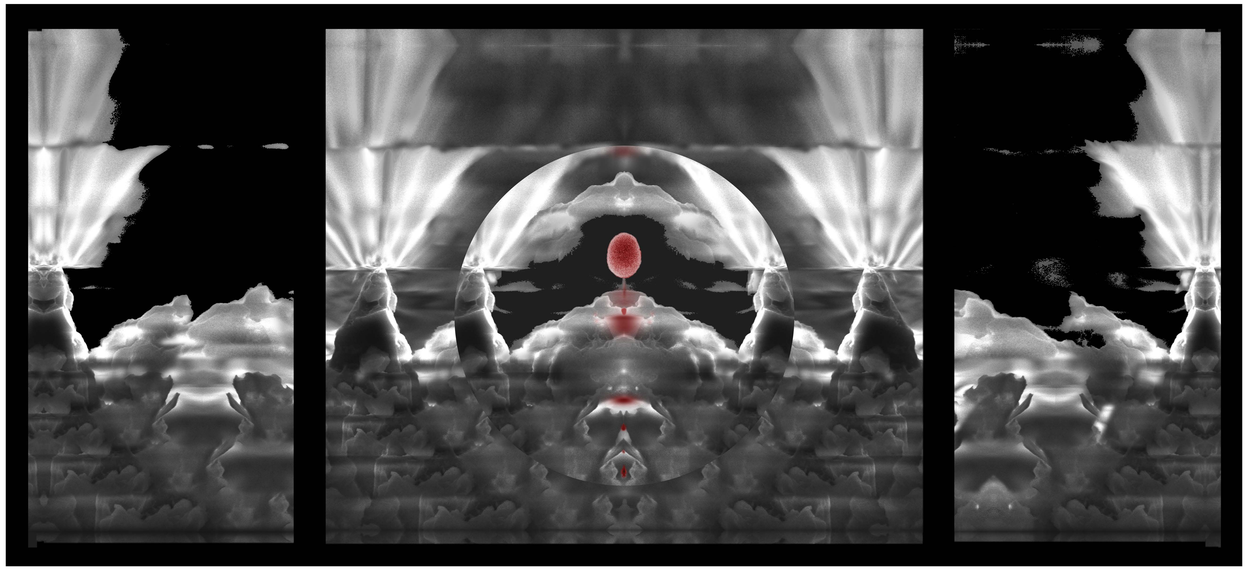
Introduction and Purpose

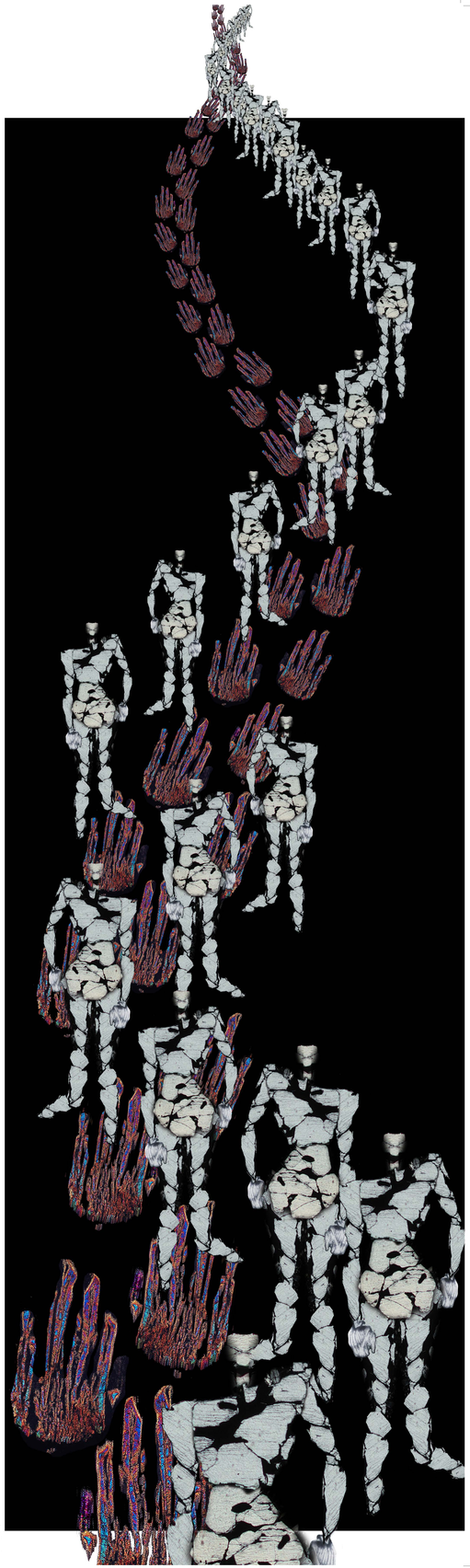


The geosciences address the big questions of humanity such as origins, and life and planetary co-evolution. A challenge of engendering cognition in this discipline is that many geo-processes occur at rates, intensities and over periods of time that are beyond human experience. What can be even more befuddling to the non-geoscientist is the way in which the smallest of mineral and rock fragments and their chemistries reveal epic stories of Earth, and the emerging clarity with which planetary processes and events are unfolding though most are hidden from view.

To address this challenge, this project uses the integration of art and science, imagination and realism, as a way of making some of the less tangible concepts of the geosciences more accessible. The thesis and impetus for this work is that experiences in the visual arts engender emotional engagement with the subject matter that builds bridges between information, knowledge and cognition.1-4



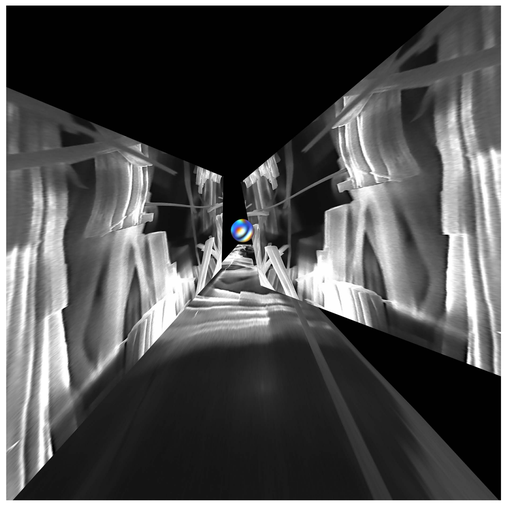
First Life, 2017, Photomontage, Original size 24 x 36, metallic paper print.



We are of Earth, 2017, Photomontage, original size 26 x 64, digital print on silk.

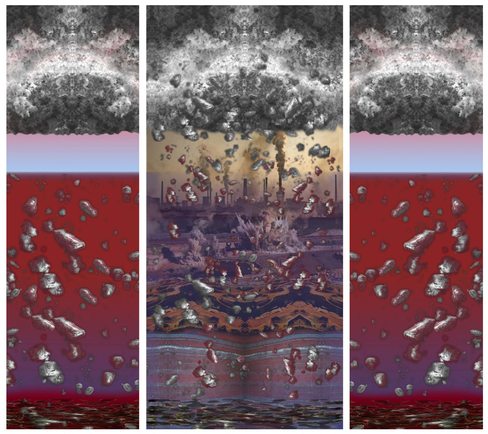
Methodology

The work is an interactive and multiple media art installation, *Origins and Endgames*, that takes participants on a geo-tour beginning with the origin of the universe to the ultimate extinction of Earth.
Individual pieces are montages melding fragments of mega- and micro-imagery to produce new visual narratives about Earth history. Pieces are rendered as woven and printed tapestries, film prints in lightboxes, paper prints, and ceramics. Individual pieces were designed to stand on their own or to be included in the larger installation. Each piece is presented with a "field guide" dissecting the story garnered from these fragments of earth materials. Participants also receive a guide to the entire installation taking them on a circuitous but chronological tour through installation.



Origin of the Universe, 2017, Photomontage, Original size 24 x 24, presented onbacklit film in lightbox.

Zircon Scroll, 2018, Photomontage, original size 8.5 x 11, digital print on cotton paper.



Oxidation of the Oceans and Aftermath, 2017, Photomontage, Original size 48 x 52, film in lightbox.

Results and Impact

Three iterations of this work were exhibited in solo shows, and parts have been included in six group exhibitions. Though the impact has not been studied scientifically, informal feedback from my students suggests that the exhibition experience helped them to "see" what they were learning in class. One student commented, "Thank you for giving me a new view of such large concepts in such a beautiful, visceral, and engaging manner." Visitors to a public showing commented, "It is hard to describe the emotions I felt wandering through this incredible exhibition," with another indicating, "I think I will still be thinking about this for a long while..."

References

1. Gooding, D. (2004) Interdisciplinary Sci Rev, 29, 278-294.
2. Kepes, G. (1965) Daedalus, 94, 117-134.
3. Kinsella, E.A., and Bidinosti, S. (2016) Adv in Health Sci Educ, 21, 303-322.
4. Veis, N. (2017) Nature, 543, 490.

Origin of the Moon and Consequences, 2017, Photomontage, original size 62 x 38, digital print on backlit film.