

## Students Question Students

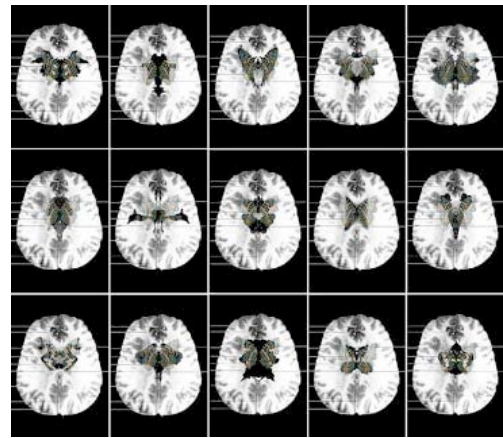
### *Head Shoulders Genes & Toes*

Critical thinking questions authored by students to challenge fellow students to thoughtfully engage with the artwork presented in the exhibition.

By: Valerie de León, Morgan Szymanski, Sarah Daiker, Kat Bennicoff –Yundt, Caitlyn Cooney and Annie Booth

1. According to Jonathan Keats, “The sciences lift us outside of experience, so that we can more clearly survey it. The arts immerse us in experience, so that we can more fully encounter it.” What does Keats mean by this? How are art and science alike? How are they different? People often say that art is a reflection of culture; how does that notion translate to science? How do art and science collectively allow us to understand humanity better?

2. Suzanne Anker’s installation *Butterfly in the Brain* blends MRI images of the brain with overlapping images of butterflies and constellations to represent a dialogue between structures produced by nature. Most MRI images are generally not considered art, yet Anker’s approach sheds a new light on medical and science photographs. Her process is non-traditional, using MRI scans, microscopes, and telescopes to make this image, yet her large-scale arrangement and images, like superimposed butterflies, do place this piece within an artistic context. In viewing this installation, what aspects do you think make her use of medical or science photography more or less acceptable in the art world?



Suzanne Anker, *Butterfly*



Paddy Hartley, *Spreckley 1 & 2*

3. In addition to Paddy Hartley’s artistic career, he is recognized for his work in the fashion industry. His reconfigured garments are featured in magazines all over the world. Well-known artists, like Lady Gaga, have been seen wearing his creations. When “stars” wear his artwork, what statement does this make about society as a whole? How does this add to the meaning of the work, to what Hartley is trying to say through his art?



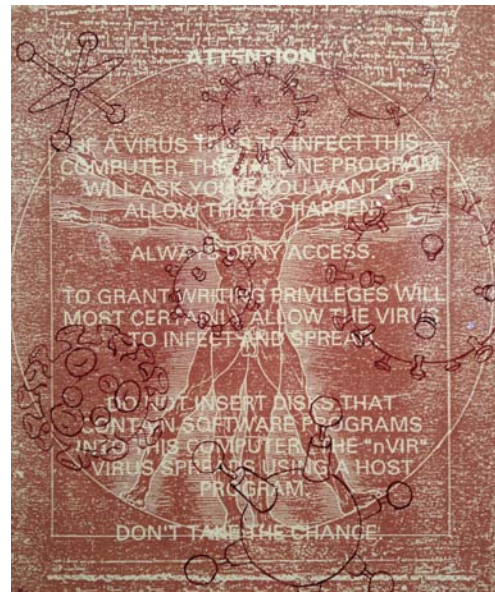
Erik Geschke, *Latitude and Longitude*

5. Erik Geschke creates works that “seem familiar at first,” but upon further inspection they change our perception of the modern world in which we live. What ordinary items and concepts are depicted in his artwork? What about them is then altered to stand out as “absurd” or out of place? How is your perception changed by looking at these pieces?

6. In *Latitude and Longitude*, Erik Geschke artistically examines the human body as a collection of parts. Geschke’s piece is realistic, even lifelike, and yet it is disconcerting and surreal. What is the meaning behind the title of the work? How does the title’s meaning affect your perception of the surreality of the work? Characterizing his work Geschke writes, “an awkwardness is created in which the elements of both comedy and tragedy exist.” What aspects reflect comedy and which tragedy?

7. Botanical illustrations depicting the anatomy and features of plants have been a longstanding tradition, with the earliest examples dating to the sixth century. Contemporary artist Robert Sherer creates botanical illustrations using HIV negative blood (that he draws from himself) and HIV positive blood (donated by a friend of Sherer’s who wishes to remain anonymous.) Many of these illustrations include human genitalia incorporated into plant forms. Sherer states, “Botanical illustration and sexuality are intertwined. Flowers are the beautiful genitals of plants.” What connection can you establish among Sherer’s use of HIV+/- blood, his botanical illustrations, and his representations of human genitalia?

8. One of Robert Sherer’s works features Leonardo da Vinci’s *Vitruvian Man* juxtaposed with illustrations of viral entities, possibly images of the HIV virus. The image is overlaid with text warning against allowing a virus to infect your computer. The last line of the text reads, “Don’t take the chance.” What do you think Sherer is trying to communicate to viewers about sexuality and sexual attraction and the risks that come with it? Does his equation of the HIV virus with a computer virus diminish or strengthen his warning?



Robert Sherer, *Vitruvian Man*