Redefining Spaces

The D.C. Art Science Evening Rendezvous (DASER) is a discussion forum organized by Cultural Programs of the National Academy of Sciences (CPNAS), held 4-6 times annually. DASER fosters community and conversation around the intersections, and interweaving, of art, science, and culture. DASER is part of a larger international network of cross disciplinary salons called the Leonardo Art Science Evening Rendezvous that are fostered by Leonardo: The International Society of Art, Science, and Technology. There are now close to 30 similar salons that are part of this growing network. June’s DASER explored how we think about the spaces we inhabit and how those spaces impact our perception and how we think, function, and innovate within those spaces. Speakers were Phillip K. Smith III, Stephen M. Fiore, Mika Yoshitake, and R. Benjamin Knapp (please see page 5 for biographies). The discussion was moderated by JD Talasek. The program was live-streamed and a recording is available on the NAS account at https://livestream.com/NASEM/june2017daser. Videos of the presentations are available on CPNAS’ YouTube channel at: http://www.YouTube.com/CPNAS.
In his presentation titled, “Light, Change, and the Environment,” Palm Desert-based artist Phillip K. Smith III investigated the idea of universal beauty via three of his large scale, outdoor, temporary installations. He is interested in creating art installations that directly uses and engages the light, scale, transformation, and beauty of the natural environment. Smith’s work challenges the viewer to reimagine their environment and connect with one another through basic shared human emotions.

The next speaker asked us “Where does cognition begin and end?” When thinking about thinking, if we think about such things at all, most of us view it as something happening in the space “between the ears.” In his talk, “Collaborative Cognition: Redefining Spaces to Extend Cognition,” Stephen Fiore discussed what cognitive science thinks about thinking – how it is both something that extends beyond the brain, and even the body, as well as how collaboration affects it. He described how an interdisciplinary science of space is being developed to examine how the built environment can be better designed to augment cognition.

R. Benjamin Knapp described creativity and innovation inside the “Cube.” Faculty at Virginia Tech’s university-level Institute for Creativity, Arts, and Technology (ICAT) have collaborated to transform a four-story black box theatre into a one-of-a-kind immersive environment. The Cube, as it has become known, combines a massive speaker array with motion capture cameras and novel projection techniques to enable scientists, engineers, artists, and designers to collaboratively create performances, installations, and new worlds of discovery.

While artist Yayoi Kusama’s career has been extensively documented, the narrative arc of her Infinity Mirror Rooms is a story that remains to be told. The final speaker of the evening, Hirshhorn Curator Mika Yoshitake highlighted Kusama’s unique world of self-obliteration from a strategy of radical connectivity and political liberation during the Vietnam War to a shared condition of social harmony in the present. She shed light on Kusama’s importance as a pioneer of early kinetic, participatory, and performance art practices while offering insight into how the Infinity Mirror Rooms allow us to reassess the artist’s practice through a new critical understanding of our tactile relation to objects and immateriality of virtual space.
The intersections of viewpoints are always surprising and created new pathways for me to contemplate and understand.

I like the focus on STEAM and open discussion!

I like to stay informed.

I DIDN'T ANTICIPATE: Kusama's and Smith's work being similar. Broadening my view.

THE REASON I ATTENDED TONIGHT:
I attend and enjoy DASER events and the topics seemed interesting.

To see the presentation by Mika Yoshitake.

I WOULD COME BACK BECAUSE:
The content is always unexpected and always good. Phillip K. Smith III-incredible! Great lecture.

I DIDN'T ANTICIPATE:
Kusama's and Smith's work being similar. Broadening my view.

THE SPEAKER NAILED IT WHEN:
Dr. Stephen Fiore showed evidence backing up the hypothesis that architecture influences collaboration.
Art and Science Intersect at the National Academy of Sciences’ DASER

J.D. Talasek and Alana Quinn are on a mission to not only help artists and scientists connect but to redefine how their two worlds intersect. To accomplish this feat, each month, Talasek and Quinn organize and host DASER, the DC Art Science Evening Rendezvous, as part of the Cultural Programs of the National Academy of Sciences also known as CPNAS.

“Science is the new avant-garde,” says Talasek, Director of CPNAS. What he and Quinn, Senior Program Associate for CPNAS, are doing is radical and experimental. Located within the illustrious halls of the National Academy of Sciences building, DASER brings together creators—artists and scientists who use similar processes of discovery and problem-solving to bring about positive transformation within themselves and the world around them.

The intersection of the two worlds is critical. An example is climate change; to bring about positive change, scientific data is crucial but so too is the message of empathy. It is in the latter domain in which artists reign. Paper engineer Matthew Shlian who spoke at a 2016 DASER event, helps designers and engineers create solar cells using kirigami, the ancient Japanese art of paper cutting, to produce the next level of solar energy design.

Talasek and Quinn not only invite world-class artists and scientists to speak at the DASER events but they also allot time for audience member interaction with the panel. One may stand before a microphone and be heard by scientists, artists, along with those listening to the live broadcast around the world. It is in this moment you can share your ideas, put out a call for collaboration, for funding and to bring life to the next chapter of your project.

June’s DASER event themed Redefining Spaces included speakers Mika Yoshitake, curator of the Hirshhorn’s wildly popular exhibit Yayoi Kusama: Infinity Mirrors and Dr. R. Benjamin Knapp, director of Virginia Tech’s Institute of Creativity, Arts, and Technology (ICAT). June’s theme Redefining Space is indicative of DASER’s approach to the intersection of arts and sciences, technology, human interaction, and connectivity.

Just as DASER produces an alternative to conference style academic lectures by scientists for scientists, so does Yoshitake in her response the same tired definition of Kusama’s work viewed solely within the context of the artist’s mental illness. In an interview at the Hirshhorn Museum, Yoshitake speaks of Kusama’s sense of radical connectivity, pushing people to rid themselves of ego and letting go of seeing people as “the other”—a form of self-obliteration, if you will.

Yoshitake, like Kusama, encourages redefining the artist’s role. Kusama has worked constantly to redefine herself since her first widespread success in the early 1960s and the artist herself places emphasis on breaking down barriers within our minds and in the world around us. Although they come from different generations and career paths, Yoshitake, Kusama, Talasek, and Quinn all view redefinition as inevitable and the intersection between art and science as crucial for a more connected conversation about the contemporary world.

Benjamin Knapp agrees. What he is directing in Blacksburg, VA is a similar confluence of ideas and dreams come to life in a structure simply called The Cube. Paralleled by only a handful of buildings throughout the world, The Cube is a teaching tool that uses an immersive audio and video based reality to bring about positive change.

Under the direction of ICAT, Knapp views his role as providing people with permission, space and time to create a nexus of art, design, engineering and science. Knapp’s own research built technology that created music by streaming people’s emotion and physiology. Now, at The Cube, he manages the space to allow projects by students such as teaching robots to have a heart or creating albums such as Dark Side of the Moon as an interactive experience within the The Cube.

Check out upcoming DASER themes and dates. The next event takes place September 21, 2017. It’s theme: Artists in the Lab, Scientists in the Studio.
Phillip K. Smith III received his Bachelor of Fine Arts and Bachelor of Architecture at the Rhode Island School of Design. From his Palm Desert, CA studio, he creates light-based work that draws upon ideas of space, form, color, light + shadow, environment, and change. Featured in hundreds of online and print publications, he is known for creating large scaled temporary installations such as Lucid Stead in Joshua Tree, Reflection Field and Portals at the Coachella Music and Arts Festival, ¼ Mile Arc in Laguna Beach, and The Circle of Land and Sky at this year’s inaugural Desert X exhibition. His public artworks are sited in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Kansas City, Nashville, Oklahoma City and beyond; and the artist was recently commissioned to create permanent, light-based works for the cities of West Hollywood, California and Bellevue, Washington.

Dr. Stephen M. Fiore is Director, Cognitive Sciences Laboratory, and Professor with the University of Central Florida’s Cognitive Sciences Program in the Department of Philosophy and Institute for Simulation & Training. Dr. Fiore is Past-President of the Interdisciplinary Network for Group Research and a founding committee member for the annual Science of Team Science Conference. He maintains a multidisciplinary research interest that incorporates aspects of the cognitive, social, organizational, and computational sciences in the investigation of learning and performance in individuals and teams. His primary area of research is the interdisciplinary study of complex collaborative cognition and the understanding of how humans interact socially and with technology. He has contributed to working groups for the National Academies of Science in understanding and measuring “21st Century Skills” and was a committee member of their “Science of Team Science” consensus study.


R. Benjamin Knapp is the Director of the Institute for Creativity, Arts, and Technology (ICAT) and Professor of Computer Science at Virginia Tech University. ICAT seeks to promote research and education at the nexus of art, design, engineering, and science. For more than 25 years, Knapp has been working to create meaningful links between human-computer interaction, universal design, and various forms of creativity. His research on human-computer interaction has focused on the development and design of user-interfaces and software that allow both composers and performers to augment the physical control of a musical instrument with direct sensory interaction. He has co-authored over 100 papers, holds eleven patents and was the co-inventor of the BioMuse system, which enabled artists to use gesture, cognition, and emotional state to interact with audio and video media. His work has been discussed in popular media ranging from CNN to the Wall Street Journal to Omni Magazine. He earned a doctorate and master’s degrees in electrical engineering from Stanford University and a bachelor’s degree in electrical engineering from North Carolina State University. He teaches at the undergraduate and graduate levels, including doctoral students.
LIVESTREAM WEBCAST REPORT

Live Overview

Filters

Time: from 06/01/2017, 01:04 PM to 06/30/2017, 01:04 PM
Timezone: (GMT-04:00) Eastern Time
Event: DASER - JUNE
Destination: All Destinations

Live Viewers

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Total Views

29 days, 0 hours

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TWEETREACH SNAPSHOT FOR DASERDASER

ESTIMATED REACH

189,685 ACCOUNTS REACHED

EXPOSURE

736,902 IMPRESSIONS

ACTIVITY

265 TWEETS
100 CONTRIBUTORS
10 DAYS

TOP CONTRIBUTORS

MOST RETWEETED TWEETS

PHOTO CREDITS

Page 1: From left to right, Benjamin Knapp, Yayoi Kusama/Hirshhorn Museum/David Zwirner Gallery, Phillip K. Smith III. Pages 2-7: All photos by Kevin Allen Photo.