

March 4th, 2006

Systematics: Theologies of Complexity

A fine art exhibition presented by Echo Long Beach

Curated by Jonathan Anderson, MFA

Located at CSULB, Werby Gallery

Opening reception March 19th, 2006 5pm-7pm

On Display March 19th- March 23rd

Curator Jonathan Anderson, has teamed with local arts non-profit Echo Long Beach, to present a fine art exhibition entitled **Systematics: Theologies of Complexity**, an exhibition highlighting nine local artists exploring in new ways the sacred space that emerges from recent complexity-theory thinking.

Complexity thinking is revealing a world more dense, more intricate, and more unpredictable than we had ever presumed it to be, a world over which we do not have authority and within which we do not have the final say. Not surprisingly, this has challenged traditional theological notions of the sacred (representing simplicity and order). However, it seems that intellectual honesty demands a renewed posture of humility on our part, and perhaps it prompts us to question the extent to which these recent meditations have in fact been theological in nature. After all, the three basic questions at the root of all theology certainly remain: "Why is there something and not nothing?", "Why is the world comprehensible?", and "Why do we find meaning and value in everything?"

Participating in this exhibition are 9 artists from the greater Long Beach area: Jonathan Apgar, Christopher Barnard, Laurel Dailey, Heidi Gibson, Virginia Katz, Zachery Kleyn, Matt Maust, Duncan Simcoe, and Matt Ulrich. These artists are conducting, in diverse ways, a meditation on systems—whether natural, societal, psychological, or otherwise. And in the end, we are left to ponder the uncontrollable, sacred space that emerges.

Systematics: Theologies of Complexity will be on display at the Werby Gallery, California State University of Long Beach. The Werby Gallery is part of a collection of galleries just off of East Campus Road near parking lot 8A on the CSULB campus in Long Beach.

The exhibition will be on display, March 19th through March 23rd. Gallery admission is free. Gallery is open MONDAY THROUGH THURSDAY 12noon - 5pm (open until 7pm on Wednesday night). Echo Long Beach is a Long Beach-based non-profit currently sponsoring exhibitions and community arts programs in the Long Beach Area. For more information, or to schedule a viewing contact Echo Long Beach at 888. 316. 9947 or info@echolb.org.

Sponsor Contact

Echo Long Beach

www.echolb.org

888. 316. 9947



Curator's Statement:

Systematics: *Theologies of Complexity*

"The eternal mystery of the world is its comprehensibility." - Albert Einstein

From pop culture to quantum physics, from economics to molecular biology, the paradigm through which we think about and explain the world has been changing in recent years. Traditionally, theological notions of the sacred have been equated with a kind of stable simplicity: oneness, wholeness, timelessness, orderliness. We find ourselves today, however, living in a time and a culture whose defining ideas and characteristics emerge from an overwhelming complexity: plurality, open-ended networks, rapid change, randomness. We are immersed within irreducibly complex networks of systems—overlapping systems of information, perception, and production—which simultaneously shape us and are shaped by us. Simply put, we have come to recognize that our world is just not simple.

Not surprisingly, previously-held theologies of the sacred have been thrown into tension, and perhaps this tension should be welcomed. Complexity thinking is revealing a world over which we do not have authority, within which we do not have the final say: it is denser, more intricate, and more unpredictable than we had ever presumed it to be. It would seem that intellectual honesty thus demands a renewed posture of humility on our part. And perhaps it also prompts us to question the extent to which recent meditations on complexity have in fact been theological in nature. After all, in the wake of complexity thinking, the three basic questions at the root of all theology certainly remain: the ontological question ("Why is there something and not nothing?"), the epistemological question ("Why is the world comprehensible?"), and the axiological question ("Why do we find meaning and value in everything?").

This exhibition brings together artists who are conducting, in diverse ways, a meditation on systems—whether natural or societal, psychological or biological, perceptual or linguistic. In the end, we are left to ponder the uncontrollable, sacred space that emerges out of current "complexity" thinking.

Jonathan Anderson, Curator

Sponsor Contact

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