

I N S E C T A

*Magnifica*

March 23 through June 2, 2002

Wave Hill Glyndor Gallery



A fascination with insects is integral to the artworks in *Insecta Magnifica*. Though small in stature and often dismissed with the brush of a hand, insects serve as a barometer for the well-being of our ecosystem. This exhibition hints at the range of reactions to the diversity and sheer number of species in the class Insecta. While some artists study insects from a scientific perspective, others explore the cultural perceptions and assumptions about these complex creatures. A sense of obsession that mirrors the activity of the insect itself is inherent in the effort to document and categorize, or in the actual making of the artworks. Many of these art works are part of larger projects to observe and understand the natural world and our relationship to it.

---



### **Susan Rowe Harrison**

Born, 1965, Chicago, IL

Lives in New York, NY

*Procryptic (Lime Swallowtail)*, 2002

acrylic paint, dimensions variable

Courtesy of the artist

Susan Rowe Harrison's wall painting in the symmetrical entry foyer is based on the notion of a Lime Swallowtail butterfly enveloping the enclosure with its wings. Working from direct observation of the specimen, she reinterprets its color, lightness and infinite variability of pattern. The biological term "procryptic," in the title, describes a pattern or coloration adapted for natural camouflage. The painting transforms the architecture to mimic this natural form of adaptation.

### **Hyungsub Shin**

Born 1969, Seoul, Korea

Lives in New York, NY

*Smash!*, 2001

umbrella, steamer; plastic

*Centipede*, 2002

umbrella, steamer; dimensions variable

Courtesy of the artist

Hyungsub Shin's elegant centipede, located in the stairwell, is constructed from umbrella ribs and vegetable steamer sections. It hints at the complexity of the centipede's movement and elevates a creature that is often the focus of disgust. The *Smash!* series preserves the human impulse and common reaction to the sight of a "pesky" bug.





## Cynthia Carlson

Born 1942, Chicago, IL

Lives in New York, NY

Selections from *Insects: A Guide*, 1983

*Spotted Cucumber Beetle*

*Black Beetle with Yellow*

*Queen Termite*, dimensions variable

Courtesy of the artist

Cynthia Carlson's loud, exuberant, boldly colored paintings celebrate creatures that are ordinarily considered pests. Black beetle, dwarf

spider, hairy burying beetle, queen termite, robber fly, and spotted cucumber beetle — the names alone conjure a reaction. These selections from *Insects: A Guide* were first shown at the Pam Adler Gallery in New York in 1983. With this project, Carlson became absorbed by the subject of insects and the way that they are traditionally presented in natural history museums.

## Sue Johnson

Born 1957, San Francisco, CA

Lives in Lexington Park, MD

*Specimen Collections (southern green stink bug—bottom bird)*, 1999

intaglio print with unique gouache and watercolor painting, 12" x 9"

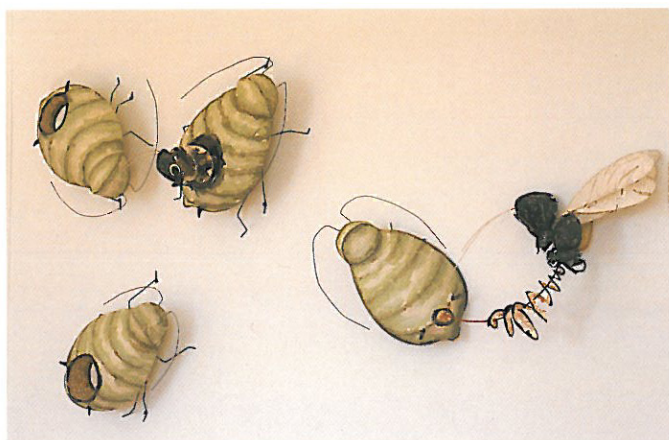
Courtesy of the artist

Sue Johnson's expansive project, *The Alternate Encyclopedia*, draws on the Victorian fascination with nature tourism, collecting and preserving.

The "Specimen Collections" refer to the pastime of collecting specimens during an excursion and pressing them into a diary with watercolor renderings of the visit. Here, each specimen is meticulously painted with watercolor and surrounded by a hand-colored, etched border. Accuracy and humor combine in depictions that veer toward an alternate world of hybrid creatures.







### Christy Rupp

Born 1949, Rochester, NY

Lives in New York, NY

*Predatory Wasp Laying Eggs in Live Aphid*, 2000

steel, paper, dimensions variable

Courtesy of the artist and Frederieke Taylor Gallery, New York, NY

Christy Rupp makes visible the invasive hazards of pollution and genetic engineering, along with curious aspects of animal behavior. She is concerned with the ecological and economic forces affecting habitats and species adaptability. Toward this end, *Predatory Wasp Laying Eggs in a Live Aphid* illustrates species interdependency. At first appearance, these bugs seem larger than life, but, in the genetically altered future, is that so far-fetched?

### Mary Ting

Born 1961, Glen Cove, NY

Lives in New York, NY

*Shroud with Five Poisons*, 2002

cut, burnt paper with soot and thread,

8' x 6' x 8", approximate

Courtesy of the artist

This project is made possible with support from the New York Foundation for the Arts, the American Craft Council, and the MacDowell Colony.

Mary Ting's *Shroud with Five Poisons* is sewn, fragmented, burnt paper, a decaying vestige of a previous life and time. Swarming in a densely entangled pile below are soot-covered, poisonous creatures—centipedes, scorpions, toads, snakes, and spiders. In Shanxi and Shaanxi Provinces of Northern China, these creatures, known as "The Five Poisons," are depicted in folk objects to ward off evil and sickness. But even as they evoke dying folkways, these creatures arouse very contemporary, living fears.



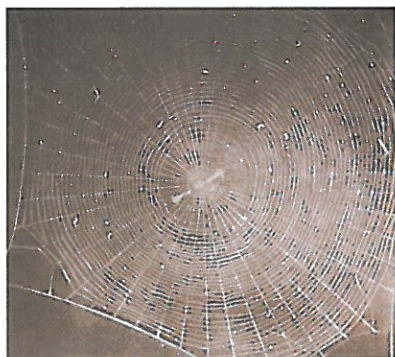
### Jacquelyn McBain

Born 1954, Tucson, AZ  
Lives in Los Angeles, CA

*Hallucigenia and Saint Hilary for  
Backward Children*, 1997  
oil on panel, 14 1/2" x 14 1/2" framed  
All works courtesy of the artist  
and Littlejohn Contemporary,  
New York, NY



Jacquelyn McBain's series, *Experiments Useful for the Cure of Men's Minds*, pairs insects with plants and fruits to interpret the lives of the Saints. These intense images depict the complex fight for survival. The series demonstrates the artist's keen observation of the natural world and intuitive response to 17th and 18th century Dutch floral painting, as well as direct observation and experience of nature as a way to understand the world.



### Vija Celmins

Born 1938, Riga, Latvia  
Lives in New York, NY

*Web #2: Mezzotint*, 2000  
mezzotint on Hahnemühle  
copperplate, 18" x 14 3/4"  
Courtesy of McKee Gallery

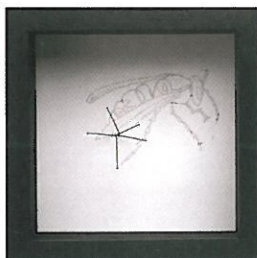
Vija Celmins is well known for her intense observation of natural phenomena. She has been working

with the subject of spiders for several years. Her print, *Web #2*, provides an interesting counterpoint to the actual webs made by orb weaving spiders in Lars Chellberg's work.

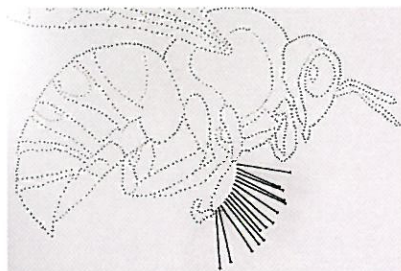
### Kirsten Cole

Born 1971, Chicago, IL  
Lives in New York, NY

*Dissect (bee)*, 2002  
entomology pins, pinholes, and  
shadow boxes, dimensions variable  
Courtesy of the artist



Kirsten Cole's simple diagrammatic drawings of bees are rendered by a line of pinholes and entomology pins. As in nature, the viewer must look closely to comprehend these minute creatures. Cole is a volunteer beekeeper at Wave Hill and has an intimate knowledge of the garden's insect life.







## Barbara Broughel

Born 1956, Hartford, CT

Lives in New York, NY

*Selections from Studies in Perspective, Optics and the Legibility of Nature*, 2001  
mixed media, dimensions variable

Courtesy of the artist and  
Frederieke Taylor Gallery,  
New York, NY

Barbara Broughel has assembled insect catchers and ink paintings from *Studies in Perspective, Optics and the Legibility of Nature*. These homemade devices recall 18th-century instruments that aid in the observation of nature. Wryly humorous and slightly sinister; they appear to be made by an obsessive investigator, who records the trapped creatures through meticulous Nihonga ink paintings. Although the paintings appear to be highly representational, quirky individualized aspects are depicted that belie the naturalist's eye and hand.

## J. Morgan Puett

Born 1957, Hahira, GA

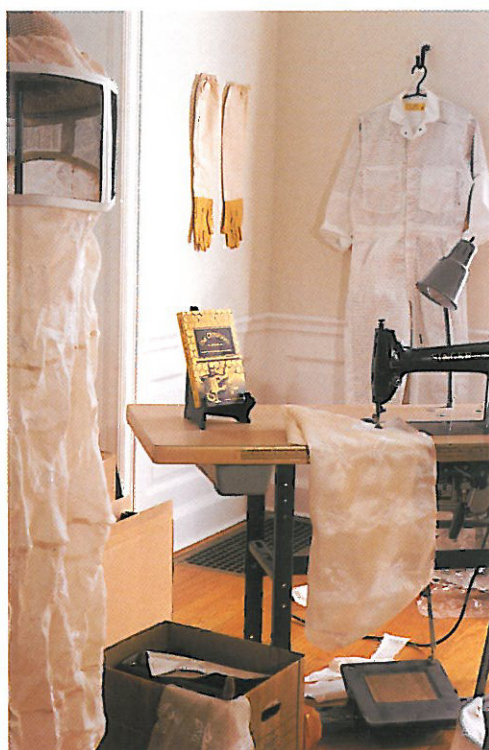
Lives in Beach Lake, PA

*The Grafter*, 2002

mixed media,  
dimensions variable

Courtesy of the artist, with  
bee grafting performance and  
presentation by Barry Puett

J. Morgan Puett has assembled a beekeeper's books, tools and supplies along with a seamstress' sewing machine. The workspace tableau includes a custom-designed beekeeper's veil embroidered with diagrams of the queen bee's reproductive system. A white overall with text outlining the bee care and lore hangs on the wall. The artist's sister, Barry Puett, a queen breeder, will demonstrate the art of grafting, or creating a queen bee, while wearing this outfit. These objects will be transferred to *The Grafters' Shack*, on the grounds in July.



### Lori Nix

Born 1969, Norton, KS

Lives in Brooklyn, NY

*Salvazana*, 2002

chromogenic print,

40" x 30" x 1 1/2"

Courtesy of the artist

Lori Nix's photographs signal the range of emotions that insects engender. Each scene depicts insects in a garden setting where the presence of people is implied. The nocturnal activity of moths appears irresistibly magical and fantastic in *Salvazana*. To create

these works, Nix builds a diorama

using varied "unnatural" materials in her studio. Then she documents the scene with a large format camera and represents the vivid, intense color as a photograph.



### Joseph Scheer

Born 1958, Heidelberg, Germany

Lives in Hornell, NY

*Arctia Caja Americana, Great Tiger Moth*, 2001

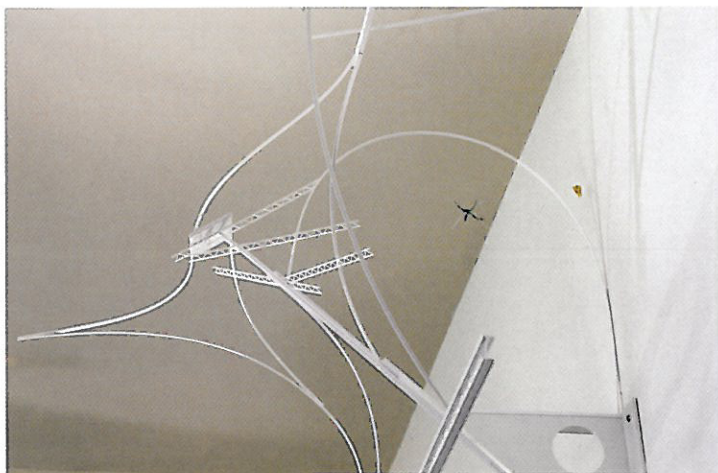
Iris print, 34" x 46"

Courtesy of Institute for Electronic Arts at Alfred University

Joseph Scheer has developed a method of directly scanning moths to create large-scale, 34" x 36" digital prints on watercolor paper. More exacting than photographs, these prints convey a high level of detail, similar to what one would see under a 150x microscope. To date he has scanned approximately 1,000 species found within a 20 mile radius of Alfred University in New York, where he teaches. These are presented on the accompanying computer.







### **Lars Chellberg**

Born 1962, Detroit, MI

Lives in Brooklyn, NY

*Untitled, 2002*

Styrene, spidersilk, steel,  
dimensions variable

Courtesy of the artist and Lance  
Fung Gallery, New York, NY

Lars Chellberg explores the complex relationship between people and insects by enlisting insects as collaborators. He has devised a simple polystyrene structure on which large orb weaving spiders build their sizable web. Elements will be added to the sculpture to chart the course of the web spun by the spider.

The Visual Arts Program grows out of Wave Hill's mission to explore the interaction of human culture and the natural world. The program is integrated with the education and public programs enabling visitors to broaden their view of nature through the arts. Thematic group exhibitions are curated in **Glyndor Gallery**. Through **generated@wavehill** an artist creates a temporal work for the grounds. This year, J. Morgan Puett's project, *The Gifter's Shack*, will be on view in beginning in July. Solo shows by emerging under-recognized artists are mounted in **Wave Hill House Gallery** which this spring features *Menagerie Recovery at Wave Hill* by Alexandra Sax.

Principal funding for the Visual Arts at Wave Hill is provided by the Stephen and Cathy Weinroth Charitable Trust. Additional support is provided by the Hess and Helyn Kline Foundation. Thank you to the artists for creating and lending their work and to Lance Fung Gallery, Littlejohn Contemporary, McKee Gallery, Frederieke Taylor Gallery, all of New York, NY and the Institute for Electronic Arts at Alfred University, Alfred, NY.

### **Wave Hill**

West 249th Street  
and Independence Avenue  
Bronx, NY 10471  
718.549.3200  
[www.wavehill.org](http://www.wavehill.org)



Curator: Jennifer McGregor Design: Bethany Johns Photography: Eva Heyd