THE CITY OF PASADENA | art and science intertwined . . . like strands of DNA
What is AxS?
The Intersection of Art and Science

AxS 2011 is a festival celebrating Pasadena's remarkable heritage as "The City of Art + Science."
Pasadena's world-renowned arts and science institutions are uniquely intertwined — like strands of DNA — and the AxS Festival is designed to showcase this rare alchemy with two weeks of art, dance, music, theater, performance and provocative conversation.
AxS 2011 explores the eternal, elemental themes of FIRE and WATER — epic forces that continue to inspire and terrify us in equal measure. These twin and opposing gifts not only have shaped and defined the physical and psychic landscape of our region, but they continue to resonate powerfully through the events of the day and also in the persistent cultural artifacts of our scientists and artists.
AxS Festival 2011 | Fire and Water | October 1 through 16, 2011
RAIN AFTER ASH | a multidisciplinary theater installation

This two-character multimedia performance uses the Greek myth of Demeter and Persephone as the frame for a dramatic exploration of the poetry and life of Craig Arnold—a talented but troubled artist who disappeared in May 2009 while hiking on the slope of Kuchinoerabu-jima, a volcanic island off the coast of Japan.

Written and directed by noted theater artist Corey Madden (with sound design by Bruno Louchouarn), the work will be developed in partnership with geological scientists from Caltech and scholars and a museum curator, and will include live performers, soundscapes and projected installations. This work is conceived to be experienced collectively by the audience in a museum setting, as live performance, and more privately and personally as a guided tour using interactive museum “audio guide” technologies.

enMESHED | public art installation by visual artist John O’Brief

An art / science hybrid that results in a set of objects in which science and art intersect and inform one another. enMeshed features a computer controlled light projection chamber with an interactive interface (drawings/touch screens) and projections of natural FIRE and WATER phenomena (erupting volcanoes / glacial formations) which emanate from within the chamber and respond to gestures of the viewers.

This public artwork will be sited in a Pasadena storefront where it can be experienced by persons passing by on foot and in their vehicles.
SOUNDSTREAMS | curated by visual and sound artist Steve Roden

*Soundstreams* is a performance series curated by visual and sound artist Steve Roden, featuring three performances developed specifically for FIRE and WATER by interdisciplinary artists Carole Kim, Yann Novak and Mark So. *Soundstreams* features multiple media layers including multi-planar translucent screens, real-time cameras, live performers, soundscapes and music.

*Soundstreams* is a site-specific work designed for and mounted in the WindTunnel Gallery at the Art Center College of Design South Campus Graduate Media Center.

untitled | public art project by muralists Christian Alderete and Arturo Gomez

The fourth commission for AxS 2011 | FIRE and WATER is a mural project engaging the diverse communities of Northwest Pasadena in the creation of an Aztec-themed mural using fire and water elements.

Muralists Alderete and Gomez and community members will design and paint this work during the Festival period – transforming a public space and acting as a catalyst for community development and personal empowerment.
enMESHED | John O'Brien

enMESHED is a public art installation conceived by visual artist John O’Brien – an art and science hybrid responding to the AxS 2001 theme of FIRE and WATER.

enMESHED is designed to be sited in a public storefront with two separate window chambers – one featuring a computer-controlled interactive interface (sculptural objects and drawings overlaid with a gesture-sensitive screen), and a light projection display chamber with still and video images emanating from within the storefront.

The images in the projection chamber will be natural phenomena such as erupting volcanoes and moving glacial formations, triggered by the viewer’s interactions with the built environment (gesture screens). The artist will work closely with geologic and climate scientists to create the data sources for these natural forces.

This very public artwork will be sited in a vacant or existing commercial storefront in downtown Pasadena – a high traffic area – where passersby can be captivated (“enMESHED”) in the simple yet surprising gestural triggers and their actions on the “substrata” of geological life underlying the work.

enMESHED will function as a provocative attractor for the site, visible to both pedestrian and vehicle traffic.
enMESHED | about the artist

John O’Brien was born in Sagamihara, Japan. He currently lives and works in Los Angeles, California and Umbria, Italy. His practice is grounded in historical abstraction, interpretation and translation, and includes works on paper, installations and object ensembles, and public art. He draws from objects, images and environments around him and transforms them through different physical processes to create a visual archeology.

John has had numerous solo and group exhibitions around the United States and internationally, including projects at The Brewery in Los Angeles, Angel’s Gate Cultural Center, Sayama Space in Seattle, the Lummis House in Los Angeles, and exhibitions in galleries throughout Italy.

He also works as a curator, and has organized shows at Cal Poly Pomona, Art Center College of Design, the Armory Center for the Arts, Highways Peformance Space in Santa Monica, and many shows in Umbria, Italy.

“I try to make art objects that, at first glance, strike the imagination. I am interested in beauty as an ineffable quality. However, I am equally interested in how art can inform and illuminate the act of classifying and interpreting that precedes the understanding we have of a given object or environment. In my artwork, therefore, I aim to create a combination of visual elements that traces my speculation into how we give meaning to objects and environments in the world around us. I am interested in how we interpret them to our own ends.”
AXS \ak-sis\ FESTIVAL 2011 | FIRE AND WATER

www.axsfestival.org
www.pasadenaarts council.org

October 2011 | the city of pasadena
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Delve along the charged axis of FIRE and WATER.

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Yann Novak: In Residence 6 (2009) 4-channel sound and video installation

Richard Selesnick and Nicholas Kahn: Litoff, from the Apollo Prophecies series (2002-06)

Carole Kim and Jessey Gilbert: Spectral Jam (2010) Interactive software system generating real-time 3D animation

Credits for artworks shown on this page

AxS is a collaboration among Pasadena-area arts and science organizations, produced by the Pasadena Arts Council.

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