

## Curators' Statements

In science, failure is a necessary precondition of discovery. This neat aphorism takes many forms, from the everyday failures that all scientists face simply because science is hard, to the grand-scale failures that contain the essential seeds of Kuhnian-scale, revolutionary progress. Unfortunately, the mundane failures far outnumber the dramatic, sweeping ones. Despite clichés of ponderous scientists solving life's riddles with arrogant certitude, the work of science is perhaps better characterized as an exercise in failure interrupted here and there by scattered, momentary breakthroughs.

With failure brings humility. We are humbled by the sheer complexity of the world, and by our own ignorance, which we face every day when one experiment after another ends in ambiguity. In science, ambiguity is a form of failure.

As scientists we are compelled to find trends, to seek out general rules from specific experiments. But where experimentation and failure may provide a neat platform for dialog between art and science, this compulsion to make rules and draw conclusions finds a steady counterpoint in art. It is tempered by art's invitation to embrace—even cultivate—ambiguity. Here perhaps the arts invite us to fail again, and if this makes the scientist squirm, it can only be a good thing.

If the only conclusions to be drawn from this show are fragments of association, and not comfortable generalizations, could art be doing science a favor? And if the articles of scientific exploration, the images, equations and methodologies, provide fresh material for the artist to refract and re-assemble, could it call us to question the value of certainty? A show of this nature begs for grand conclusions about the art-science connection. But both art and science are ultimately the products of people, experimenting, reaching, and, yes, failing. Here, then, the “dialog” between art and science becomes not a celebration of our achievements toward a deeper understanding, but a discourse on elements—shared or not—that make up the pursuit itself.

—*Scott Lokey, Chemistry and Biochemistry*

Full Disclosure is an exhibition composed of collaborative projects between Arts and Science faculty. Participants were asked to show something about their work and offer a glimpse into their process and exchange. We did not want to restrict outcomes by forcing a premise that suggests the projects will “blur the lines” or exact a miscible solution between the two disciplines. Nor would we want to confine projects to exploring a divide between the two cultures because it is my observation that both enterprises involve a merging of empirical and creative activity and analysis. This is what the projects in *Full Disclosure* may reveal.

But, if one were to entertain the idea of a dialectical relationship between science and art, of oil and water, let's say, then this show, I hope, will position you, the viewer, as an emulsifying agent.

— *Melissa Gwyn, Art*