

ByronRich.com

Byron Rich was born in the city of Calgary, Alberta, Canada, on the eastern edge of the Rocky Mountains located in Western Canada. After graduation from the University of Calgary with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in New Media and Photography, he spent time working at TRUCK Contemporary Art in Calgary, then traveling before beginning his studies towards a Master's of Fine Art in Emerging Practices at The State University of New York at Buffalo. Rich is currently Assistant Professor of Digital Art & Painting at Allegheny College in Meadville, PA.

Project Website: imperialis.org

Education

2013 Master of Fine Arts (Emerging Practices), Visual Studies Program, State University of New York at Buffalo, NY

2009 Bachelor of Fine Arts (New-Media), University of Calgary, Calgary, AB, Canada

Awards and Honors

2013
Teaching Fellowship, State University of New York at Buffalo, NY

2012
Teaching Fellowship, State University of New York at Buffalo, NY

Curatorial

2009 #Garden, TRUCK Contemporary Art in Calgary, AB, Canada

Board Positions

2013-2012
Treasurer, Emerging Practices Research Forum, State University of New York at Buffalo, NY

Selected Exhibitions

2014
Inter-Society for the Electronic Arts, Dubai, United Arab Emirates

2013
Benign Nor Hostile: Merely Indifferent, Big Orbit Gallery, Buffalo NY

Tell Me I'm Pretty, State University of New York at Buffalo, Visual Studies Gallery, Buffalo NY

VitalSigns2012, The New York Hall of Science, Corona, NY

2012
MFA NOW NE, Siskind Gallery, Rochester NY

Public Performances and Lectures

2014
Art & Science Cabaret, Hallwalls Contemporary Art Center, Buffalo NY

2013
Art+Science, University of British Columbia Okanagan, Kelowna, BC, Canada

Selected Bibliography

"Byron Rich:Protista Imperialis." Mapsart.com, June 2013.

"Designer Byron Rich Creates an Interactive Bio-Sculpture Map of the World." Greenliving.org, July 5, 2012.

Foran, Jack. "Byron Rich's Installation at Big Orbit

Exhibition Checklist

Protista Imperialis (v 2.1), 2014, bioreactor unit contains algae, arduino, LED array, air pump; digital and computer components include microphone, webcam, computer and live network links.

Operation: (1) Computer monitors Instagram for the hashtag #climatechange (2) For each use of #climatechange, the projected image of the ocean encroaches 10pixels into the continents (3) A webcam hanging over bioreactor provides a live view of the algae which defines the color of continents and enhances ocean color in the projections. (4) A live

Outstanding Student Achievement in Contemporary Sculpture Award (Nominee), Sculpture Magazine

2012-2011
Dean's Fellowship, State University of New York at Buffalo, NY

2010-2009
Director of Programming, Mountain Standard Time Performance Art Festival, Calgary, AB, Canada

The Vermillion Stained, Basement Gallery, Center for the Arts, State University of New York at Buffalo, NY

Touchpoints, Bath Galleries, Bath and North East Somerset, United Kingdom

Art Doesn't Understand You Either, galleriesNFS, Buffalo NY
DRAG BAR, Center for the Arts, State University of New York at Buffalo, NY

2011
Digital Art Showcase, Soundlab, Buffalo NY

Garden Graffiti, TRUCK Gallery-CAMPER Project, Calgary, AB, Canada

Peer Learning Groups, Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY

Here+Now, Squeaky Wheel-Buffalo Media Resources, Buffalo, NY

2012
Visiting Artist Series, State University of New York at Buffalo, NY

Gallery." *Artvoice*, Vol. 12, N. 15, April 11, 2013.

Foran, Jack. "MFA students show their work at UB Center for the Arts gallery." *Artvoice*, Vol. 11, N. 17, April 26, 2012.

Kirkpatric, Erin. "The Protista Imperialis Sculpture by Byron Rich Spreads Awareness." Trendhunter.com, July 6, 2012.

stream of tweets and Instagram images using the #climatechange is shown in the projection (5) A microphone monitors activity around the piece (6) The LED array providing a light source for the algal growth is triggered with human interaction (7) The air pump provides a constant source of sound triggering the LED array (8) Air pump circulates CO2 into bio-reactor William Henry Bartlett, *Falls of Niagara*, inset vignette on Map of North America from the Portfolio *W.H. Bartlett's The History of the United States of America*, 1856, engraving with hand color, 12" x 10" inches. Castellani Art Museum

Professional Experience

2014-current Assistant Professor of Digital Art & Painting at Allegheny College, Meadville PA.

2009 Programming and Engagement Assistant, TRUCK Contemporary Art in Calgary, AB, Canada

2008
Independent Thought Award, The University of Calgary Visual Arts Department, AB, Canada
BMO (Bank of Montreal Financial Group) Art First Award (Nominee), Montreal, Quebec, Canada
Purchase Award, The Nickle Museum, University at Calgary

2007
Vice President, Calgary Urban Initiative, Calgary, AB, Canada

2006-2004
Director, Calgary Urban Initiative, Calgary, AB, Canada

2009
Calgary/Banff Month of Photography, Gerry Thomas Gallery, Calgary, AB, Canada

1111 Exhibition, Temporary Spaces, Calgary AB, Canada

2008
Spanning, The Little Gallery at The University of Calgary, Calgary, AB, Canada

Passages, Burst and Bloom Galleries, Calgary, AB, Canada

BFA 2008, The Nickle Art Museum, Calgary, AB, Canada

Calgary/Banff Month of Photography, Gerry Thomas Gallery, Calgary AB, Canada
Post-Miniature Show, The Little

EATS Workshop Series, Buffalo, NY

2010
Botanical Measures v1.0, Calgary, AB, Canada

2009
Botanical Measures v1.0, Calgary, AB, Canada

Miszaniec, Debbie. "Is that a gold star on your BFA? University of Calgary grads surprise in diverse exhibition." *fastforwardweekly.com*, 2008.

"Protista Imperialis: Bio sculpture seeks human presence for growth." *Gizmochunk.com*, 2012.

"Protista Imperialis: Bio sculpture seeks human

of Niagara University Collection. Generous Donation from Dr. Charles Rand Penney, partially funded by the Castellani Purchase Fund, with additional funding from Mr. and Mrs. Thomas A. Lytle, 2006.

J. Marchant, *Falls of Niagara Inset on map, North America, Drawn and Engraved by J. Rapkin, from Montgomery Martin's The Illustrated Atlas, and Modern History of the World*, 1851, steel engraving with hand color, 13" x 10" inches. Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University Collection. Generous Donation from Dr. Charles Rand Penney, partially funded by the Castellani Purchase Fund, with

Libraries, Calgary, AB, Canada

2007-2006
Jason Lang Scholarship for exceptional academic achievement, University of Calgary, Calgary AB, Canada
Millennium Scholarship, University of Calgary, Calgary AB, Canada

2004
Director, Kiwanis Club of Carleton, Ottawa, ON, Canada

Gallery, University of Calgary, Calgary AB, Canada

Mossy Hill, Visual Studies Workshop, University of Calgary, Calgary AB, Canada

2007
Calgary/Banff Month of Photography, Gerry Thomas Gallery, Calgary, AB, Canada
Primatemea, University of Calgary, Calgary, AB, Canada

2006
Spectaculo: A Theatre Event, Reeve Theatre, Calgary, AB, Canada

Post-Miniature Show, The Little Gallery, University of Calgary, Calgary, AB, Canada

Garden Graffiti 1.0, Calgary, AB, Canada

Beta Test, Alberta Printmakers Society, Calgary, AB, Canada

2008
Unexpected Athletics, Bowmont Park, Calgary, AB, Canada

presence for growth." #48855, Notcot.org, 2012.

Sharma, Desh Raj. "Designer Byron Rich Creates an Interactive Bio-Sculpture Map of the World." *Inhabitat*, July 5, 2012

Steph, "Algae World Map Demonstrates Need for Environmental Care." *Web Ecoist*, 2012.

additional funding from Mr. and Mrs. Thomas A. Lytle, 2006.

John Rapkin, *Niagara. United States. Illustration in a Comparative View of the Principal Waterfalls, Islands, Lakes, Rivers and Mountains, in the Western Hemisphere from Montgomery Martin's The Illustrated Atlas, and Modern History of the World*, 1851, steel engraving with hand color, 12" x 9" inches. Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University Collection. Generous Donation from Dr. Charles Rand Penney, partially funded by the Castellani Purchase Fund, with additional funding from Mr. and Mrs. Thomas A. Lytle, 2006.

TopSpin

Artists of the Buffalo/Niagara Region

The museum's Tops Gallery—dedicated to the exhibition of work by local and regional artists—presents the **TopSpin** series. **TopSpin** features a broad range of visual expressions, varied in media as well as message, and focuses mainly on new and emerging artists.

TopSpin is made possible through the generous Support of Tops Friendly Markets, LLC.

I would like to extend a sincere thank you to the following individuals who helped realize this project: Michael J. Beam, Heather Brand, Dan Calleri, Ben Van Dyke, Natalie Fleming, Kate Koperski, Steve Kurtz, Jean-René Leblanc, Dom Licata, Gary Nickard, Stephanie Rothenberg, Jeff Sherven, Chris Siano, Jessica Thompson, Paul Vanouse and Michael Ebbole & Derek Zeller, Niagara University Multimedia Technicians.

TOPS



Byron Rich: *Protista Imperialis* (v 2.1) made possible by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature.

Catalog design: JCharlier Communication Design



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TopSpin
Artists of Western New York and Beyond

Byron Rich: *Protista Imperialis v2.1*

August 3, 2014-February 8, 2015

Opening reception, with artist talk at 3:00 p.m., Sunday, August 3, 2:00-4:00 p.m.



byronrich



Byron Rich: *Protista Imperialis* v2.1

Protista Imperialis v2.1 is the second iteration of a series begun in 2011. The work conflates digital space and physical space fostering a discussion of what is “reality” and the moral implications of participating in the unsustainable practice that is contemporary life. The piece acknowledges the physical and digital divide by integrating digitized interaction with biological processes. Two distinct realities are merged and moral questions arise as viewers determine the value of maintaining the digital and physical microcosms.

The digital microcosm: A computer system monitors Instagram in real time parsing every image with the hashtag #climatechange. With every use of this hashtag the boundaries of the contents incrementally give way to the surrounding digital ocean, questioning whether the proliferation of environmental sentiment is merely an empty gesture or the underpinning of deeper societal understanding of the threat posed by climate change.

The color of the digital continents and undertones of the digital ocean are provided via a live webcam feed of the algal bloom within the bioreactor, metaphorically merging the physical and digital microcosms. Viewers can interact with the destruction of the digitized planet by uploading images from the gallery using the hashtag #climatechange. The act of taking a selfie or broadcasting the viewer’s activities via Instagram negatively affects the digitized planet. Additionally they become part of the microcosmic digital world by being captured by the webcam as they observe the work.

The physical microcosm: While observing *Protista Imperialis*, the viewer’s interaction is monitored through a series of microphones and is digitized. The digital signal is translated into a light source

providing nourishment for the algae in the bioreactor. With the presence of the viewer (as determined by the computer through conversation and observed sounds such as footsteps), an LED array below the bioreactor is triggered. Without the presence of the viewer the algae is not provided with a necessary light source.

The viewer is situated in the space between the microcosmic environment setup in the bioreactor, and the macro projection of a digital earth and the real-time Instagram feed. Like the algae, the viewer represents the physical world while also being digitized via the microphones and their participation in the Instagram feed. The carbon dioxide exhaled by the viewer is scrubbed by the algae within the bioreactor adding an additional layer of complexity to the relationship between the digital and physical microcosms that are *Protista Imperialis* v 2.1.

Ultimately this work has been designed to encourage dialogue surrounding the implications of increasingly digitized interpersonal interactions, and whether further digitization of experience is, or can be an agent of positive environmental awareness. In *Cosmos* Carl Sagan said, “It is all a matter of time scale. An event that would be unthinkable in a hundred years may be inevitable in a hundred million.” Thirty pages later he continues, “Do we value short-term advantages above the welfare of the Earth? Or will we think on longer time scales, with concern for our children and our grandchildren, to understand and protect the complex life-support systems of our planet? The Earth is a tiny and fragile world. It needs to be cherished.” The aim for *Protista Imperialis* v2.1 is to have those who see it question their sense of scale, time, and the profound interconnectivity between the constituents of physical reality and digital world.

My practice is multi-disciplinary, embracing scientific amateurism and critical analysis of societal trends. I attempt to integrate biological science, computing, interactivity, digital media, photography (digital and wet) and sculptural elements to convey my conceptual motivations.

The work I produce attempts to critique corporatization and institutionalization of emergent biotechnologies and digital communication and the complications presented on identity politics and environmental issues through technological misappropriation. Pieces such as *Benign Nor Hostile*, *Merely Indifferent* and *Protista Imperialis* urge viewers to consider the role that mechanisms of the techno-landscape shape their relationships to the natural world, and their perceptions of individuality.

Decay, image degradation, and the notion of scientific objectivity play a consistent role in my production methods. I design systems that offer moral conundrums to my viewers, and present questions relating to their personal relationships to technological apparatuses of digitally mediated inter-personal communication, and biological malleability.

The scientific technologies I utilize are established tools of bioengineering and scientific analysis, yet the methods in which I deploy and manipulate them are radically outside typified notions of scientific process. This atypical nature allows the work to exist on the margins of fiction and reality, engaging a hyper-real connotation symbolic of contemporary techno-culture.

