

SciArtExchange - Design Your Habitat 2020

Helen Schell – Visual Artist

Web links: <http://thenewbridgeproject.com/portfolio/helen-schell/>
<https://stfc.ukri.org/news-events-and-publications/whats-happening/moon-shot-collides-art-and-science/>

STFC Fascination Article, Ely Moon-shot project 2019

http://www.esa.int/Our_Activities/Space_Engineering_Technology/Art_from_lunar_3D_printing_contest_winner_at_UK_science_festival **ESA Moon Garden 3D print 2019**

Artist's Quote

'The Human Spaceship – I believe art and science must collaborate for humanity to fully understand that we live in a space-faring society and are witnessing the most astounding change in 'being-human' through astronomy and space exploration in the 21st century.' Helen Schell

Artist's Statement

The Human Spaceship – Off Balance

Introduction - Highlights

After 12 years of specialist art projects collaborating with space scientists from UK universities, 2019 reaped prestigious awards for my art career inspired by space exploration. Early in the year, I won ESA's (European Space Agency) Moon 3D Printing, International Competition for a Moon garden design. Moon-shot: Woman on the Moon, solo show at Ely Cathedral won the IAU100 Moon Landing 50 Prize for Most Innovative Event, worldwide. I also had the distinction of being the first artist to be presented with the Sir Arthur C Clarke Award for Outreach for my contribution to space exploration.

To develop 'The Human Spaceship' art project and my linked research into visual perception in 'altered gravity', I visited lead scientists from NASA's Human Spaceflight Program at Johnson Space Center and was guest artist at Rice Space Institute, Houston, in September 2019. This opportunity was connected to receiving a Pollock Krasner Foundation grant, in 2016, initiating visits to UK and European space institutions aiming to unite art and space science, making it accessible to artists.

Art Practice & Processes

My artwork is inspired by 21st century space exploration and science. The space themed artworks were first developed during an MA in Glass in 2007, University of Sunderland, UK and take the form of large mixed media installations, paintings and Smart Materials costumes creating optical illusions to depict space environments. Previous artwork was informed by sacred geometry, religious rituals and buildings expressing why humans wish to reach beyond our earthly existence. These ideas progressed into using space technology as inspiration to connect the themes. They are presented under the umbrella project of 'The Human Spaceship', inventing geometric optical illusions to manipulate colour, form and light. The aim is to destabilise the spectator as they affect the brain depicting visual vibration of solid forms to create a sensation of being off balance.

STEAM Education Projects

For 11 years, I have devised and presented space themed workshops and talks for schools and communities using STEAM methods. These activities reach 2000-4000 school children and non-specialist adults annually, and art exhibitions for 30,000+. My outreach projects include ESERO-UK, Science Museum, RAS, IoP, and Cambridge (SunSpaceArt led by Dr Helen Mason, STFC), Durham (Celebrate Science) and Northumbria (NUSTEM Sun, STFC) universities. The aim is to engage diverse audiences of all abilities from across the UK and internationally.