Full STEAM ahead: Infusing Art into STEM

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Combining art with science makes scientific research more accessible to general audiences. These exhibits generate buzz, lure guests into the library, and encourage broader interest in the sciences.

The Elegance of Science annual art contest began in the fall of 2008 to support the libraries' overall mission to serve as places of contemplation and discovery. The exhibit also serves as a showcase for the research conducted at UF.

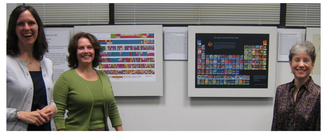
Two-dimensional images are submitted each fall, and an awards ceremony with prize money is held each spring. The winning entries are displayed in the Marston Science Library and the Health Science Center Library.

A 2010 winner poses with her entry.

Reception attendees view the exhibit.

A 2011 winner, "Oxpecker on Giraffe"

We have brought in the "Places and Spaces: Mapping Science" exhibit (below, left) and continue to display a Menger sponge created by UF students (below, right).


"Places and Spaces" map reproductions surrounded the main floor of the library.

An origami class assembles a Menger Sponge as a final project.

The completed Menger sponge has stood for 6 months so far!

The main reef as displayed in April 2011.

A close-up of sea rods in the reef.

Each coral above is crocheted with equal amounts of orange and blue yarn, illustrating hyperbolic growth. We get 21 rows from the first color but only 4 from the second color.

Sea anemones below have been christened Dilbert (left) and Beaker (right).

Jellyfish hang from the ceiling.

The Gainesville Florida Reef, a satellite of the Worldwide Hyperbolic Crochet Coral Reef, is on display in 2011. The exhibit serves to:

- Foster scientific communication through the visual arts
- Raise awareness of the fragility of our coral reefs and the entire ecosystem
- Support learning by creating physical models of geometric principles
- Connect several areas on campus, including fine arts, mathematics and ecology and environmental sciences through collaboration and mutual interest
- Encourage local community and alumni involvement through creating, observing and learning

Details at: tinyurl.com/crochetreef

Success measures:

- **Established Marston Science Library Exhibits fund to defray expenses and to generate support**
- **Elegance of Science draws new entrants each year**
- **Collaboration with university-affiliated retirement community**
- **Graduation photos taken at coral reef**
- **Endowment established and permanent coral display tower (below, right) purchased in memory of former colleague**

On Wednesdays at lunchtime, we crochet and teach in the lobby.

Non-hyperbolic shapes include a tube sponge.

Members of the "bleached reef" serve to educate viewers about coral reef protection.

A list of contributors is posted in the main display.

The knitted octopus steals the show.

The permanent memorial tower will display corals on a rotating basis.