CULTURE THAT SURROUNDS YOU

HERE

FEBRUARY 2010

"YOUR FRIENDS ARE IN DANGER, PETER." P9

Julian Voss-Andreae
Quantum Man, 2009
Stainless steel
126 x 55 x 25 inches

Artful Quandary

Science and art collide in the mind of artist Julian Voss-Andreae. The Bravern reaps the benefits.

by Tim Appelo

Julian Voss-Andreae's new sculpture at the Bravern, *Quantum Man*, is beautiful to look at, but that's not the point. The idea of the piece is to convey one of the most bewildering ideas in modern physics: that nothing is really the way it looks, that all matter can be seen as a bunch of particles or as a collection of waves. It cannot possibly be both, yet somehow it is.

Voss-Andreae, who grew up playing with Lego blocks in Germany, first decided to be an artist. Then, at the University of Vienna, he switched to quantum physics and started playing with buckyballs, tiny soccer-ball-shaped icosahedrons made of sixty carbon atoms. They're called buckyballs because they look like the geodesic domes designed by R. Buckminster Fuller, the famous cousin of Seattle Art Museum founder Richard Fuller. Voss-Andreae's team won fame by shooting a single buckyball through two openings at once, each a hundred times farther apart than a buckyball is wide. Impossible! But that's quantum physics for you.

Inspired by Roger Penrose's book *The Emperor's New Mind*, Voss-Andreae again changed his mind and switched back from science to art. Then, propelled by an irresistible physical force – love for his wife, neuroscientist Adriana Voss-Andreae – he relocated to Portland, Oregon, and studied sculpture at Pacific Northwest College of Art. In 2004, he started making giant buckyball replicas in bronze and other science-themed sculptures: ion channels, antibodies, quantum waves in iron atoms. Voss-Andreae swiftly became an art star, celebrated in both art and science publications from here to India to Russia. Everybody from the Scripps Research Institute to Nobel Prize winner Roderick MacKinnon bought his sculptures.

But the coolest is *Quantum Man*, a human figure

made of parallel slices of steel. "When approached from the front or back," says Voss-Andreae, "the sculpture seems to consist of solid steel, but when seen from the side it dissolves into almost nothing. This effect provides a striking metaphor of the dual nature of matter with the appearance of classical reality on the surface and cloudy quantum behavior underneath."

He loves how his man looks in Bellevue. "This mall is really well designed and beautiful," he says. "The location of my piece is fantastic. I like that the first view of the piece for the people coming up the stairs from the street level is the exact side view where the sculpture almost disappears. I positioned the piece to maximize that effect. I also like that this particular piece is close to Microsoft, a very scientifically oriented company with – despite all the criticism, which is partly justified – excellent products that have revolutionized the use of computers."

What's a scientist doing getting mixed up with art? Voss-Andreae justifies himself by quoting Albert Einstein: "If we trace out what we behold and experience through the language of logic, we are doing science; if we show it in forms whose interrelationships are not accessible to our conscious thought but are intuitively recognized as meaningful, we are doing art. Common to both is the devotion to something beyond the personal, removed from the arbitrary."

Ultimately, Voss-Andreae's now-you-see-him, now-you-don't man at the Bravern has one goal. "I want to increase the audience's capacity to intuit the unfathomable deeper nature of reality." And once you've fathomed it, it's time to go shopping. •

The Future of Architecture Comes to Bellevue

Open Satellite's Supermodel competition showcases the students who could be shaping our cities for years to come.

by Seth Kolloen

Set yourself on architecture's cutting edge at Open Satellite this month, when the downtown Bellevue art space will display four models of contemporary architecture by Portland-based architects Allied Works, alongside models created for Supermodel, Open Satellite's new competition for student architects.

"Architectural modeling is an art form in and of itself," says Open Satellite director Yoko Ott. "I think the exhibition will be quite beautiful."

Allied Works will show models from two very recent projects: the Clyfford Still Museum, which is being built right now in Denver, and a just-completed private residence in upstate New York. These models will form the centerpiece of the exhibition.

The students' models are concepts – ghosts of architecture future, you might say. They include models of a modern-day bathhouse, modular housing for migrant workers and a school for the blind.

"I love building real, physical models [as opposed to] the computer graphics that are so popular right now," says Chelsea Gorkiewicz, who designed the migrant-worker housing for her master's thesis at the University of Washington architecture school.

The thirteen student models will be placed along the walls of the space, each with a 150-word student-written description of the project. One student will win a $1,500 cash prize for his or her project, with four $250 awards going to honorable mention winners.

The Supermodel show is the first in what will be a biennial competition. This year's competition was open only to students in the Pacific Northwest; future competitions will be for students in other areas of the country. Ott believes that the show is the only student architecture competition on the West Coast.

Supermodel is also the first traditional architecture exhibition at Open Satellite, which was founded three years ago by Bellevue developer John Su. Previous architecture shows had skewed toward the experimental end of the spectrum.

"The goal is to reach out to the architecture community and support the student community," Ott says.

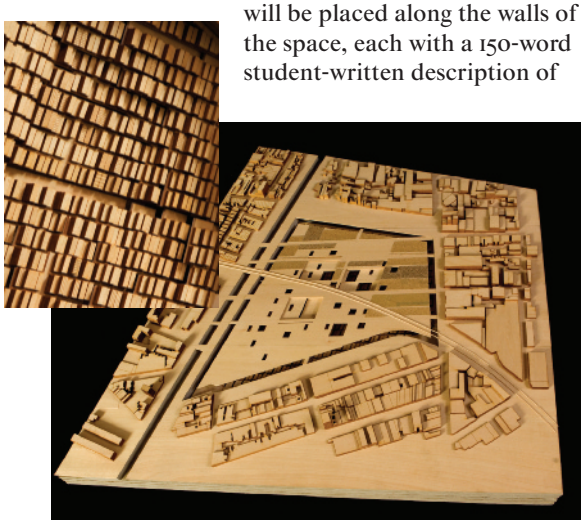
As part of that support, Open Satellite did not specify a theme or direction for the students.

"Not having a guiding theme allowed me to choose my best work, rather than having to try to reimagine a project to comply with a theme," says Gorkiewicz.

Ott likens a competition without a theme to an unrestricted arts grant. "You feel like your mission is what's being supported rather than the giving organization's mandate," she says.

And for the exhibition attendee, the lack of one central theme will make for an intriguing mix of architectural ideas. •

Supermodel will run from February 3 to March 13 at Open Satellite. Winners of the competition will be named at an opening-night event from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.



Juan Lau, Urban Market (detail inset)