

# BRIDGETTE MAYER GALLERY

Immediate Release

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Bridgette Mayer Gallery

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## **Rebecca Rutstein Mounts Solo Exhibition at The Science Center's Esther Klein Gallery Exploring the Effects of SARS-CoV-2**

**July 29, 2021- Philadelphia.** The Science Center's Esther Klein Gallery is reopening for the first time since April 2021, with *Socius*, a new solo exhibition by Gallery Artist Rebecca Rutstein. Rutstein recently completed a BioArt Residency designed in partnership between the Science Center and the biotech company Integral Molecular, where she spent three months working alongside laboratory scientists. The culmination of this residency is an exhibit of large and small-scale paintings and a multi-media installation.

Inspired by the Latin word for "bond" or "interaction" and deriving from *societas*, the derivative for "society," Rutstein's work is an exploration of the effects of SARS-CoV-2 virus both at the cellular micro level, and also at a macro level amongst the community.

Many of the works on view are inspired by microscopic observations of networks that living cells create, as well as cells fluorescing as they are infected with the virus using Integral Molecular's Reporter Virus Particle (RVP) technology. Using fluorescence, RVPs allow us to visualize human cells being infected upon interactions of viral spike proteins with receptors on the cell surface, and have been a tool for discovering protective antibodies that neutralize the virus. At the macro level, two paintings which track data of infections and deaths show racial inequities and disparities during the pandemic, and the contrasting effects on different minority communities.

Also on view is Rutstein's immersive sculpture, light and sound installation. *Sub Surficiem*, inspired by the artist's observance of living cells through a microscope, is a sculptural installation backlit with LED lights programmed to simulate a video time-lapse of living cells fluorescing as they become infected with SARS-CoV-2 using Integral Molecular's RVP technology. *Confluence* is the sound component to *Sub Surficiem* and its macro counterpart. This five-minute piece is a sonification of data that tracks COVID-19 cases, deaths and vaccinations in Philadelphia, each set of data its own track layered into the composition. The digital rendering of a full range of stringed instruments was created in collaboration with Mexican composer Mauricio Rodriguez, NEA fellow and Doctor of Musical Composition from Stanford University. Philly-based musician, Frank Masciocchi (part of the Integral Molecular team) also contributed interpretive guitar sounds creating ambient dissonance within the piece.

This immersive installation takes the viewer from micro to macro as they "listen" to the data of the Philadelphia community, reflecting on the positive impact of vaccines while acknowledging the uncertainty that remains.

*Socius* opens on August 5th with a reception and artist talk at the gallery by Rutstein herself. A closing reception with a live performance will be held on September 23rd. <https://sciencecenter.org/events/socius-rebecca-rutstein-ekg>

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The BioArt Residency is made possible through a grant from the Edna Andrade Fund of the Philadelphia Foundation.

## **About the Artist**

Multidisciplinary artist Rebecca Rutstein works at the intersection of art, science and technology. For over twenty years she has created painting, sculpture, interactive installation and public art inspired by geology, microbiology and marine science, and has joined scientists on several expeditions exploring the deep sea. Rutstein is passionate about creating visual and immersive experiences that connect the viewer with hidden environments, deepening their connection with the natural world. Her collaborations have been funded by the National Science Foundation, National Academies of Science / Keck Futures Initiative, Ocean Exploration Trust, Schmidt Ocean Institute and the Edna Andrade Fund of the Philadelphia Foundation. She has received a Pew Fellowship in the Arts, Independence Foundation Fellowship, PA Council on the Arts grant, is an MIT Ocean Discovery Fellow, and was recently named the Delta Visiting Chair for Global Understanding at the University of Georgia. Rutstein's work can be found in the collections of the Philadelphia Museum of Art, Georgia Museum of Art, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts Museum, Yale University, University of New Mexico and the US Department of State. She has been represented by Bridgette Mayer Gallery in Philadelphia since 2001.

## **About Bridgette Mayer Gallery**

Since its establishment in 2001, the Bridgette Mayer Gallery has represented and exhibited artists whose work displays the variety and genius of contemporary art now being created in the US. The gallery represents artists working in painting, sculpture and photography with an emphasis on innovative process and content-driven ideas that speak to beauty, technology, culture and the contemporary landscape. With a public gallery located at 709 Walnut Street in Philadelphia and an art advisory firm based in Philadelphia and Orlando, Bridgette Mayer is a leader in the Philadelphia arts community, actively partnering with local organizations to support fundraising initiatives and generating opportunities for artists to engage with the public.

## **About the Science Center**

Established in 1963, the Science Center is a mission-driven nonprofit that commercializes promising technology, cultivates talent, and convenes people to inspire action. With partnerships across top academic and research institutions, industry, and healthcare systems, the Science Center is helping life-saving technologies transition from bench to bedside and nurturing a workforce that supports a 21st century economy. For more information, visit [sciencecenter.org](http://sciencecenter.org) and follow @UCScienceCenter.

## **About the Esther Klein Gallery**

The Esther Klein Gallery (EKG), which opened in 1977, uses the creative arts as a platform to explore relationships between art, science and technology. EKG seeks to positively impact the cultural life of both its immediate neighborhood of West Philadelphia and the broader Philadelphia community. EKG programming is designed to explore the range of art, science and technology exhibitions, and includes gallery talks, panel discussions, and education programs. For more information, visit [www.sciencecenter.org/discover/ekg](http://www.sciencecenter.org/discover/ekg)

## **About Integral Molecular**

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Integral Molecular ([www.integralmolecular.com](http://www.integralmolecular.com)) is the industry leader in discovering and characterizing therapeutic antibodies against membrane proteins, an important group of drug targets found on the surfaces of cells and viruses. Integral Molecular's technologies have been integrated into the drug discovery pipelines of over 400 biotech and pharmaceutical companies to help discover new therapies for cancer, diabetes, auto-immune disorders and viral threats such as SARS-CoV-2, Ebola, Zika, and dengue viruses.