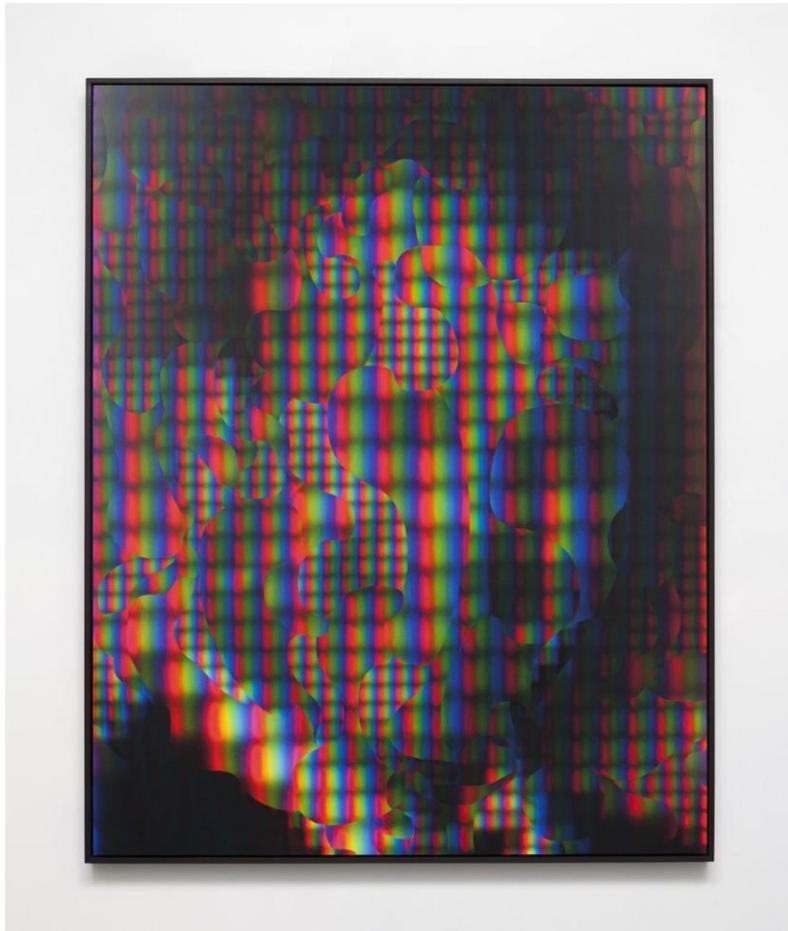


Published *The Times Argus/Rutland Herald*, Feb. 29, 2020

## ‘2020 Vision’: Technology abounds in Vermont art institutions

By Mary Gow Arts Correspondent



*Jeroen Nelemans' "Unrequited Love 2" from Helen Day Ars Center's "Love Letters" (through April 18)  
Courtesy Helen Day Art Center*

A weasel in its white winter fur stands posed with a vole in its mouth — dinner about to happen — in one of the Fairbanks Museum’s taxidermied natural history specimens. Now, for the first time, visitors and staff at the Museum can see what’s happening under that furry coat. Recent X-rays

reveal the wire structure that replaced bones, except the skull, holding cotton batting that fills it out.

The weasel is among the creatures, many dating back to the 1800s, now on display in both taxidermied form and in X-rays in the exhibition “Inside Out:

Hidden Art in Natural History Collections” at the Fairbanks Museum in St. Johnsbury.

Love is the theme at Stowe’s Helen Day Art Center. In “Love Letters,” a group exhibition, artists working during and before the digital age celebrate love and relationships. On March 12, a panel of artists and scholars will discuss, “Love Letters: Art, Innovation, and Relationships Through the Lens of Technology.”

At the Montshire Museum of Science in Norwich an interactive exhibition explores the intersection of science and design in “Elements of Glass: From the Workshop of Simon Pearce.”

“Inside Out,” “Love Letters” and “Elements of Glass” are among exhibitions scheduled at 36 museums and galleries in a statewide project, “2020 Vision: Seeing the World Through Technology.” Organized by the Vermont Curators Group, this collaboration includes galleries and art, science and history museums.

The exhibitions explore ways that technology has changed and is changing our world and open conversations about innovation and culture.

Five exhibitions of “2020 Vision” are open now, with new ones coming every month. At any time in 2020, multiple shows in the project are available. To encourage visitors to experience this statewide buffet, “Vision 2020” features a passport program. As visitors log in at each exhibition they visit, they are entered in drawings for prizes at the end of the year.

“Vision 2020” is the first project of the Vermont Curators Group, a network of museums, galleries and cultural centers founded in 2016.

Andrea Rosen, curator of the University of Vermont’s Fleming Museum, launched the organization soon after she moved to the Fleming from her previous position at Bowdoin College’s Museum of Art. In Maine, Rosen had worked with a statewide curators’ group and seen the success of their shared efforts.

In Vermont, “It seemed like there were opportunities for better communication among us, to get together to know what’s going on at each other’s institutions and to explore collaboration,” Rosen recalled.

From a small initial group, Rosen said, “We looked at what we wanted the group to be. We have always had a big-tent approach, to involve not only art institutions but history and science societies and museums – all kinds of exhibiting institutions, small to large.”

The Vermont Curators group, which has grown to over 60 cultural institutions, began looking ahead to this kind of statewide program from 2017. “2020 Vision” technology theme was brought forward by Sarah Laursen of Middlebury College’s Museum of Art.

“Technology has changed how we see the world. With the diverse array of exhibiting institutions in Vermont, we can have timely, culturally relevant conversations about it,” said Gillian Sewake, “2020 Vision” project coordinator, noting the depth and

creativity that the curators have brought to the exhibitions.

Central Vermont is a hub of “2020 Vision” activity. Studio Place Arts in Barre presents group exhibition “Futures” opening March 17, featuring artwork with a science fiction bent. With 18 exhibitions and lectures beginning in April, BigTown Gallery in Rochester offers 10 months of “A Year in Photography: Exploring the Assault on the Best of Man & Nature.”

A light-based public art project “Bright Lights Little City” will be installed in downtown Montpelier this summer at multiple locations, viewed from dusk into evenings. Also in summer, Vermont Arts Councils’ Spotlight Gallery presents “Skylab: A World View that Inspired,” artwork by Pat Musick, who drew inspiration for this body of work from the unique perspective of looking up at the night sky 40 years ago, seeing Skylab 4 in orbit with her husband astronaut Jerry Carr as its commander.

In Middlebury, the Henry Sheldon Museum of Vermont history presents “Sewing, Spies, and Steam Engines,” from April 1. The Middlebury College Museum of Art brings work by a Tokyo-based collaborative to their galleries in “Into the Screen: Digital Art from teamLab” including two immersive digital works along with traditional 17th to 20th century screens and prints that inspired them.

[mgow@gmavt.net](mailto:mgow@gmavt.net)