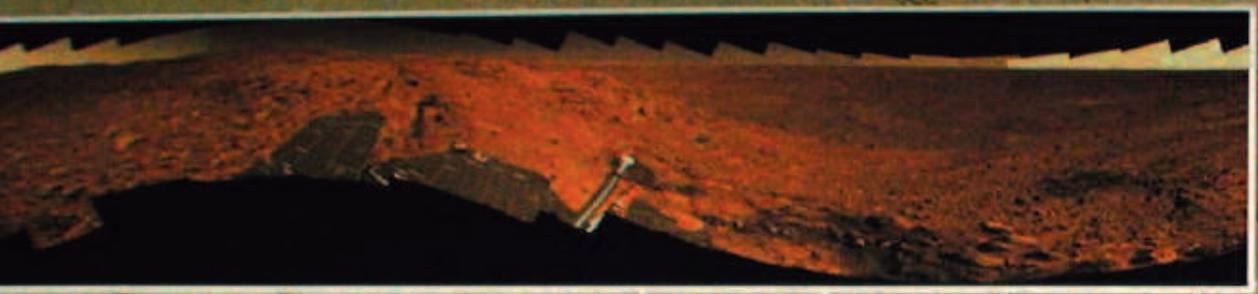


THE JOHNSON MUSEUM'S MANY ANGLES ON SCIENCE





Kevin Stearns/CU



Kevin Stearns/CU

When people think of the Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, they think of art. This is certainly one of the things we do: exhibitions of paintings, sculpture, drawings, prints, and decorative arts from around the world, installed in a landmark building (designed by I. M. Pei more than 30 years ago) with some of the most beautiful views of any museum in the world. This is what brings most of the 90,000 visitors through our doors every year.

Art isn't all that we do, however, and it isn't the only reason to visit us. When one learns about art, one learns inevitably about its context, the society that created it—its religion, history, values—and science. It is the museum's mission to provide avenues into every possible subject, from Tibetan tangka paintings to photographs of Mars, for our students and for everyone who lives in or visits Ithaca.

TAKEN TOGETHER,
THESE MUSEUMS TELL US
THAT THE WHOLE HISTORY
OF HUMAN INTELLECTUAL
ACHIEVEMENT IS
FASCINATING AND
ACCESSIBLE TO EVERYONE
AND THAT DIFFERENT
SUBJECTS—SCIENCE OR
ART—ARE NOT SEPARATE
FROM EACH OTHER BUT
ARE EQUAL PARTS
OF A LONG, POWERFUL
STREAM OF INQUIRY
AND EXPLORATION.



Kevin Stearns/CU

Frank Robinson, director of the Johnson Museum, at the *Rover Landings: Cornell on Mars* opening reception.

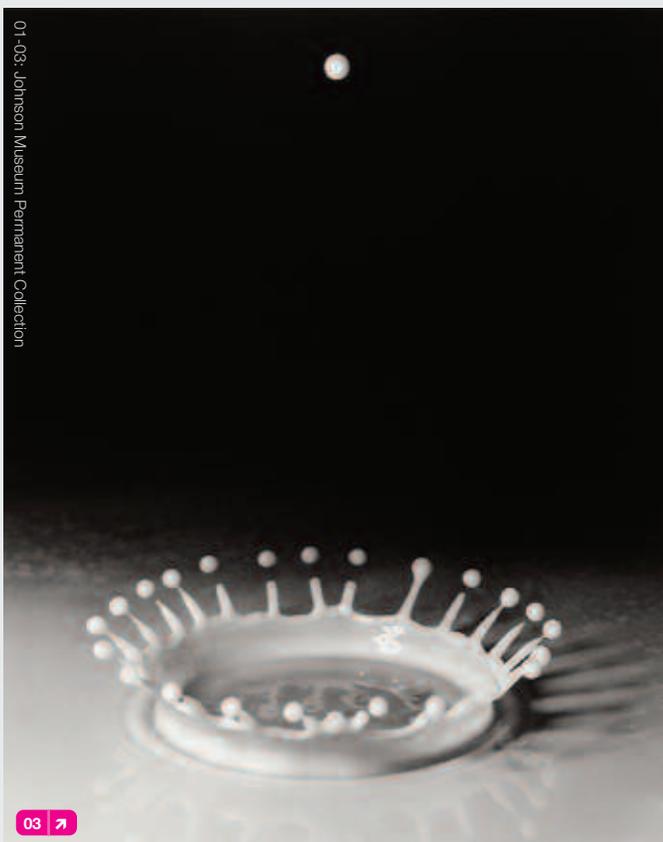
A spectacular example of this took place last spring. In April 2005, we presented the extraordinary photographs of Mars taken by the two Mars rovers, Spirit and Opportunity. Thousands of children, students, and members of the general public

came to see these unique images from Cornell's own Steven Squyres and his colleagues, principal scientists for the Rover Mission. Museum visitors roamed through the lobby, where two photomurals more than 30 feet wide dominated the dramatic space, with other images continuing into a gallery. Zoë Learner, one of Squyres' graduate students, spoke at the opening to a packed house. Children came to a Saturday morning "Journey to Mars," which included art making, theater, and dance.





The Johnson Museum has shown many science-oriented exhibitions in the last few years.



- 01. Thomas Eisner, *Insect's Eye View*, 2000 (C-print)
- 02. Anna Botsford Comstock, *Two Incarnations (The Tiger Butterfly and the Tiger)*, engraving
- 03. Harold Edgerton, *Milk Drop Coronet* (gelatin silver print)

01-03: Johnson Museum Permanent Collection

The Johnson Museum has shown many science-oriented exhibitions in the last few years, and we want to do more. In 1999, we displayed the photographs of the MIT scientist and artist Harold Edgerton, who captured the milk drop and revealed the hidden world of a speeding bullet and a tennis swing. Another hidden world, the secret life of insects, was explored in a remarkable series of photographs taken by Edgerton's friend and colleague, Cornell's Thomas Eisner, the creator of the field of chemical ecology. The writer Diane Ackerman spoke at the opening of the exhibition, in awe of these haunting images of a tiny, teeming world.

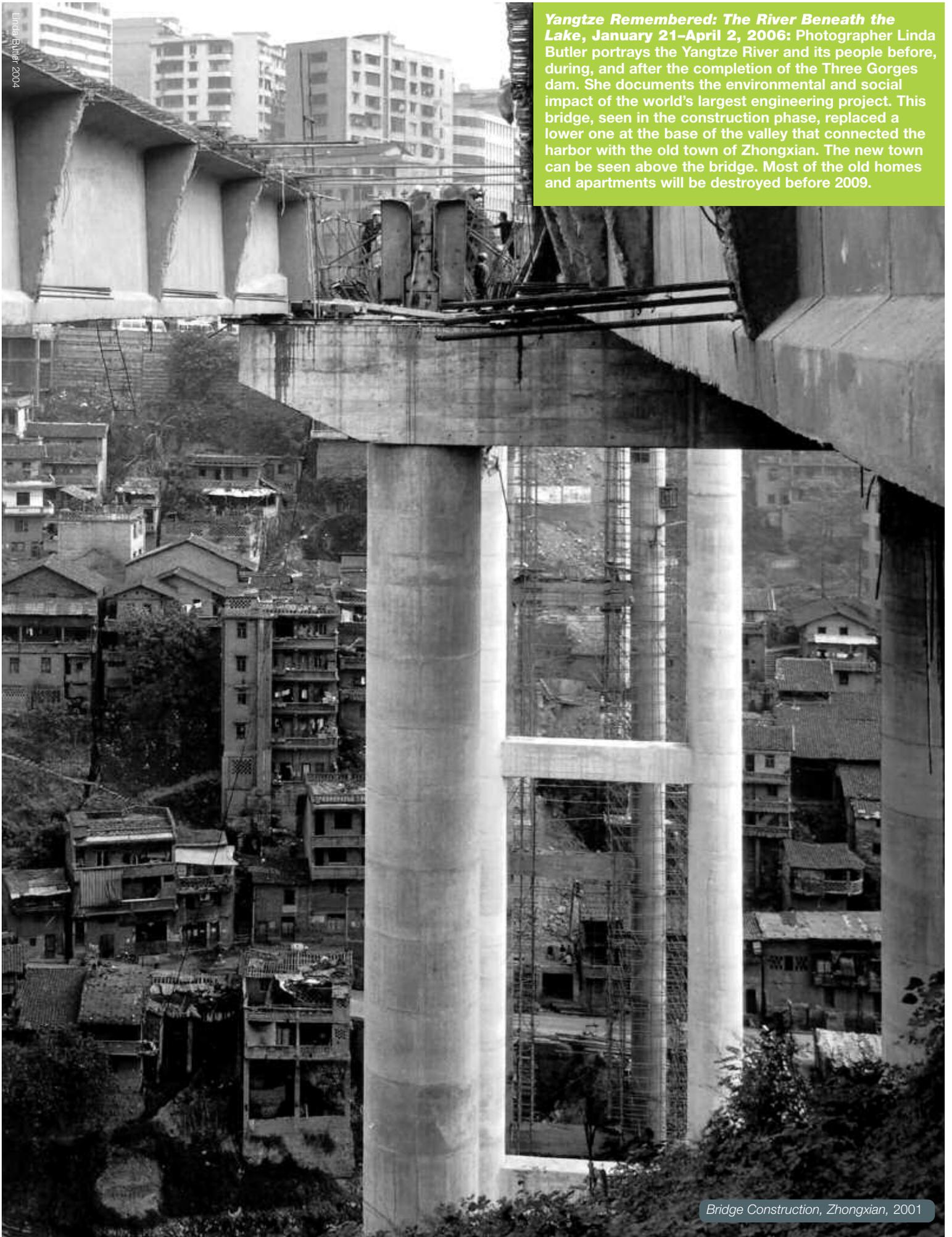
Other exhibitions celebrated the elegant—and scientifically precise—botanical drawings of Anna Comstock and Bente King; the paintings and prints of birds by Audubon and Fuertes; old master prints of the stars and the planets; and actual models based on Leonardo da Vinci's visionary drawings of future inventions. A recent display demonstrated how chemistry helps professional conservators restore and preserve works of art, and Roald Hoffmann, Nobel Laureate in chemistry, showed his poems, and Vivian Torrence her watercolors, in “Chemistry Reimagined: Reflections on Science,” a remarkable event in the Johnson's galleries.

One of the museum's most striking shows brought together selections from Cornell's many research and teaching collections, from Renaissance books on witchcraft to Nabokov's butterflies, massive meteorites, and the perfectly preserved brains of several Cornell professors. In the coming year, the museum will present exhibitions of the photographs of Robert Parke Harrison, who deals with environmental issues, and Linda Butler, who has documented the building of the Three Gorges dam in China, one of the great engineering projects of our time.

The Johnson has a seminar room, the study gallery, where small groups of 20 works can be installed for study by a class. This is where Marcia Eames-Sheavly from the Department of Horticulture examined historical prints of flowers and where Kate Gefell's honors chemistry class at Ithaca High School used the museum's collection last spring to view how different kinds of paper can change over time, affecting the appearance of a work of art.

The Johnson Museum itself is a place for original scientific research. The museum's digital photography studio, which from its inception has been at the forefront of digital technology and digital collections management, collaborates with the Visual Neuroscience Lab of David J. Field, Psychology.

Yangtze Remembered: The River Beneath the Lake, January 21–April 2, 2006: Photographer Linda Butler portrays the Yangtze River and its people before, during, and after the completion of the Three Gorges dam. She documents the environmental and social impact of the world's largest engineering project. This bridge, seen in the construction phase, replaced a lower one at the base of the valley that connected the harbor with the old town of Zhongxian. The new town can be seen above the bridge. Most of the old homes and apartments will be destroyed before 2009.





Rover Landings: Cornell on Mars: In April 2005, we presented the extraordinary photographs of Mars taken by the two Mars rovers, Spirit and Opportunity. Thousands of children, students, and members of the general public roamed through the lobby—where two photomurals, more than 30 feet wide, dominated the dramatic space—and into a gallery.





Zoë Learner, one of Squyres' graduate students, spoke at the opening.

Graduate student Daniel Graham is using digitized images from the museum's archives in an analysis of visual perception and the statistical properties of different classes of images. Initial results of this research were presented at the European Conference on Visual Perception in Coruña, Spain, in August 2005.

Art Meets Science

Johnson Museum



This radiograph of the upper center of the panel shows an old crack that has been filled. The grid of bars is the wooden cradle affixed to keep the panel from bowing.

The museum staff wheeled a gurney laden with two painted panels from a Spanish Renaissance altarpiece, circa 1490, into the Cornell University Hospital for Animals. With the help of hospital imaging manager Tony DeLaurentis and his staff, radiology resident Kevin Winegardener, and veterinary graduate

student Amy Zeigler, the 56 x 30-inch wood panels were imaged in a series of overlapping x-rays to determine the panels' construction, look for hidden cracks and fills, and reveal areas of previous restoration. The x-ray films were digitized and will be assembled to form a complete radiographic image of each painting. These images will be crucial for guiding the works' continuing conservation efforts.

Johnson Museum

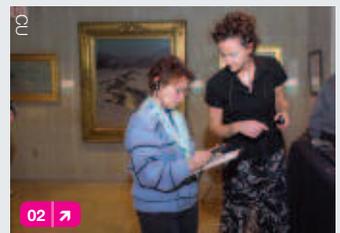


The Johnson Museum's assistant curator Andy Weislogel and staff member David Ryan lift an altarpiece panel depicting the Franciscan St. Ausias while veterinary technician Renea McNeill of the Cornell Animal Hospital slides an x-ray film cartridge beneath it to image the illuminated area.

Gerri Gay, Communication, and her team of Cornell students in the Human Computer Interaction Group worked with the museum staff to produce tours on handheld computers for the exhibition of the Arts and Crafts colony, Byrdcliffe, and the fifth floor Asian art galleries. One tour was specifically for third graders of Groton Elementary School. The students became "museum detectives" and used the computers in their hands to find and understand works in the galleries. These tours proved to be especially effective for children with learning disabilities.



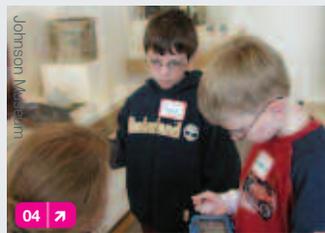
01 ↗



02 ↗



03 ↗



04 ↗



05 ↗

01 & 02. The museum featured a handheld computer tour at the opening reception for *Byrdcliffe: An American Arts and Crafts Colony* (October 2004).

03. Visitors can pick up audio wands at the front desk and use them as they walk through the fifth floor galleries to listen to poetry and music from the cultures of the paintings and sculptures on exhibit.

04. & 05. Museum detectives

Johnson Museum



Art for Lunch: Diane Bollen, Athena project coordinator, leads a lunchtime tour.

The Johnson collection is particularly useful because of the diversity and quality of its digital archive. About two-thirds of the museum's collection has been digitized and is accessible via the Luna Insight browser, available through the Cornell website. It can also be accessed through the Cornell Library Gateway.

The Johnson Museum is an active member of the Discovery Trail—a consortium of seven museums and the Tompkins County Public Library working together on various projects, particularly K–12 education and Discovery Month (May). Five of the eight institutions are science museums, so scientific disciplines and ways of thinking are never far from our minds at the museum. This past spring, three of the directors—Warren Allmon, the Museum of the Earth; Don Rakow, Cornell Plantations; and Charles Trautmann, the Sciencenter—participated in a series of gallery tours of the Johnson's collection, giving their unique perspectives on the paintings on our walls.

Just by having these eight institutions in Ithaca—and visiting them—we can get an extraordinarily broad education or self-education, outside the classroom and for the rest of our lives. The subjects range from butterflies to birds, from geology, flowers, and fundamental principles of science to history and art and the world's literature. Taken together, these museums tell us that the whole history of human intellectual achievement is fascinating and accessible to everyone and that different subjects—science or art—are not separate from each other but are equal parts of a long, powerful stream of inquiry and exploration. This is the great opportunity that museums give us, and Ithaca, fortunately, is unusually rich in them.

We are creating an interactive program for adults on the evolution of Buddhism, along with an enhanced visual catalogue of the museum's Asian collection, which is available online. These activities take advantage of an extraordinary project that the museum has been involved in for the last seven years, which is the digitization of the Johnson's collection of more than 30,000 works of art. These projects have been generously supported by institutions and individuals, including the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, Susan Lynch, Maria and Donald Cox, and an anonymous donor.

Connections between art and science and our community will continue to grow as we complete the new wing on the north side of the building, which will have expanded education and study facilities. In this way, the Johnson Museum fulfills its

mission as the intellectual, cultural, and social center of the Cornell campus and the community. The museum brings together art and science, history and literature, and the full range of human achievement for students and visitors to study and enjoy for generations to come.

*Frank Robinson
The Richard J. Schwartz Director
Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art*

Journey to Mars: Children learned more about Mars through art activities and creative movement at a museum workshop.



For more information:



www.museum.cornell.edu