



PRESS RELEASE

July 2017, for immediate release

BIOART AND BACTERIA: an artistic journey through antibiotics and the microbial world



ANNA DUMITRIU: BioArt and Bacteria

Museum of the History of Science

28 September 2017 – 18 March 2018

BioArt and Bacteria is a contemporary art exhibition by internationally renowned artist Anna Dumitriu which explores our relationship with the microbial world, antibiotics and technology.

Bacteria lie at the centre of Dumitriu's ground-breaking work, which combines traditional artistic media with contemporary science to produce artwork that is not only about bacteria but actually fused with them.

The exhibition at the Museum of the History of Science plots an artistic journey from the sanatorium movement to the arrival of antibiotics, as well as exploring newer innovations in science such as whole genome sequencing, the microbiome, and the field of synthetic biology.

'I work hands-on with the tools and techniques of microbiology and synthetic biology to create intricate artworks that reveal strange histories and emerging futures', says Dumitriu. 'My obsessions with the history and treatment of infectious diseases, medical ethics, antibiotics and antibiotic resistance, ancient remedies and the evolution of drug discovery make for an emotionally affecting experience.'

A feature piece in the exhibition, **Microbe Mouth**, was created using 'teeth' grown in a lab using an extremophile bacterium from the genus *Serratia*. The work, which was created in collaboration with

PRESS RELEASE

July 2017, for immediate release

scientists Melissa Grant and Rachel Sammons, poses the question are we ready for teeth made from microbes? Also on display will be a **Pneumothorax Machine**. Originally designed to forcibly collapse the lungs of tuberculosis patients to give them 'a rest', the machine has been transformed by Dumitriu through the use of intricate carving and engraving.

The exhibition grew out of Dumitriu's bespoke artwork, **Ex Voto**, which was created for the Museum of the History of Science as part of its *Back from the Dead: Demystifying Antibiotics* exhibition. Produced by the artist in tandem with visitors to the Museum, **Ex Voto** represents individuals' experiences of bacteria and antibiotics. The work, which developed in form and size through *Back from the Dead*, will take on a new presence in **BioArt and Bacteria** and continue to develop with new additions from the public during the exhibition.

The Director of the Museum, Dr Silke Ackermann, says: 'To have the opportunity to display Dumitriu's innovative art in the Museum after having worked so closely with her during *Back from the Dead* is a great privilege and a pleasure. By displaying such thought-provoking art alongside our unique scientific collections, we aim to attract visitors both with an interest in the arts and in the sciences'.

NOTES TO EDITORS

Exhibition: Anna Dumitriu: BioArt and Bacteria

Dates: 28 September 2017 – 18 March 2018

Admission: Free

Press viewings and tours of the exhibition by Anna Dumitriu are available on 26 September 2017 by appointment. To book please contact Robyn Haggard at robyn.haggard@mhs.ox.ac.uk.

CAPTIONS (LEFT TO RIGHT)

Microbe Mouth

by Anna Dumitriu, in collaboration with Dr Melissa Grant and Dr Rachel Sammons

2016

© Anna Dumitriu

Pneumothorax Machine (close up)

by Anna Dumitriu

2013

© Anna Dumitriu

Ex Voto (close up)

by Anna Dumitriu

2016/7

© Museum of the History of Science, University of Oxford

PRESS IMAGES

Images for editorial use are available for download via Dropbox at: www.bit.ly/dumitriu-bioart

PRESS RELEASE
July 2017, for immediate release

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Robyn Haggard, Public Engagement Officer
Museum of the History of Science, Oxford, OX1 2AZ
e: robyn.haggard@mhs.ox.ac.uk
t: 01865 287406

ANNA DUMITRIU is artist-in-residence on the [Modernising Medical Microbiology Project](#) at the University of Oxford; at the Department of Computer Science at The University of Hertfordshire, and at the Wellcome Trust Brighton and Sussex Centre for Global Health Research. Dumitriu has an international exhibition profile, having exhibited at venues such as the V&A Museum, London; the Picasso Museum, Barcelona; The Science Gallery, Dublin; The Beall Center for Art & Technology LA; Waag Society, Amsterdam; Art Laboratory, Berlin; the Eden Project, and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Taipei.
w: <http://www.normalflora.co.uk/>

MUSEUM OF THE HISTORY OF SCIENCE houses an unrivalled collection of early scientific instruments in the world's oldest surviving purpose-built museum building, the Old Ashmolean on Broad Street, Oxford. The Museum is a research and teaching department of the University of Oxford, offering free access to its permanent displays and a programme of special exhibitions, family-friendly events, talks and tours, along with taught sessions for schools.
Open: Tuesday – Sunday, 12-5pm
w: www.mhs.ox.ac.uk

RELATED EVENTS

This exhibition will be accompanied by a rich public programme, including tours and evening talks. For more information see www.mhs.ox.ac.uk/events.

THE EXHIBITION IS SUPPORTED BY:

The EPA Cephalosporin Fund
Wellcome Institutional Strategic Support Fund