

FIG. 1 is a perspective view of the device. It shows a central vertical shaft (30) with a conical, ribbed upper section (23) and a lower section (24). A horizontal arm (42) is attached to the side of the central shaft. The arm has a rectangular base (41) and a vertical end (62). A horizontal plate (50) is positioned above the arm, and a vertical plate (60) is positioned below it. A small, pointed, conical structure (94) is mounted on top of the central shaft. The entire device is supported by a base (62').

FIG. 2 is a side view of the device. It shows the central shaft (30) and the conical sections (23, 24). The horizontal arm (42) is shown in profile, with its base (41) and vertical end (62). The vertical plate (60) is shown in profile, and the horizontal plate (50) is shown in profile. The small, pointed, conical structure (94) is shown in profile. The device is supported by a base (62').

FIG. 3 is a top view of the device. It shows the central shaft (30) and the conical sections (23, 24). The horizontal arm (42) is shown in plan view, with its base (41) and vertical end (62). The vertical plate (60) is shown in plan view, and the horizontal plate (50) is shown in plan view. The small, pointed, conical structure (94) is shown in plan view. The device is supported by a base (62').

ELLEN K. LEVY

DISPLACED:
TEARS IN THE FABRIC OF THE UNIVERSE

AUGUST 29 - SEPTEMBER 27, 2026

68 PRINCE STREET GALLERY, KINGSTON, NEW YORK

cover, detail: TRANSMISSION, 2019, acrylic over digital collage on archival Hahnemühle paper, 59¼ x 40¼ inches

Ellen K. Levy, Astute Interdisciplinary Artist

ESSAY BY BARBARA LONDON

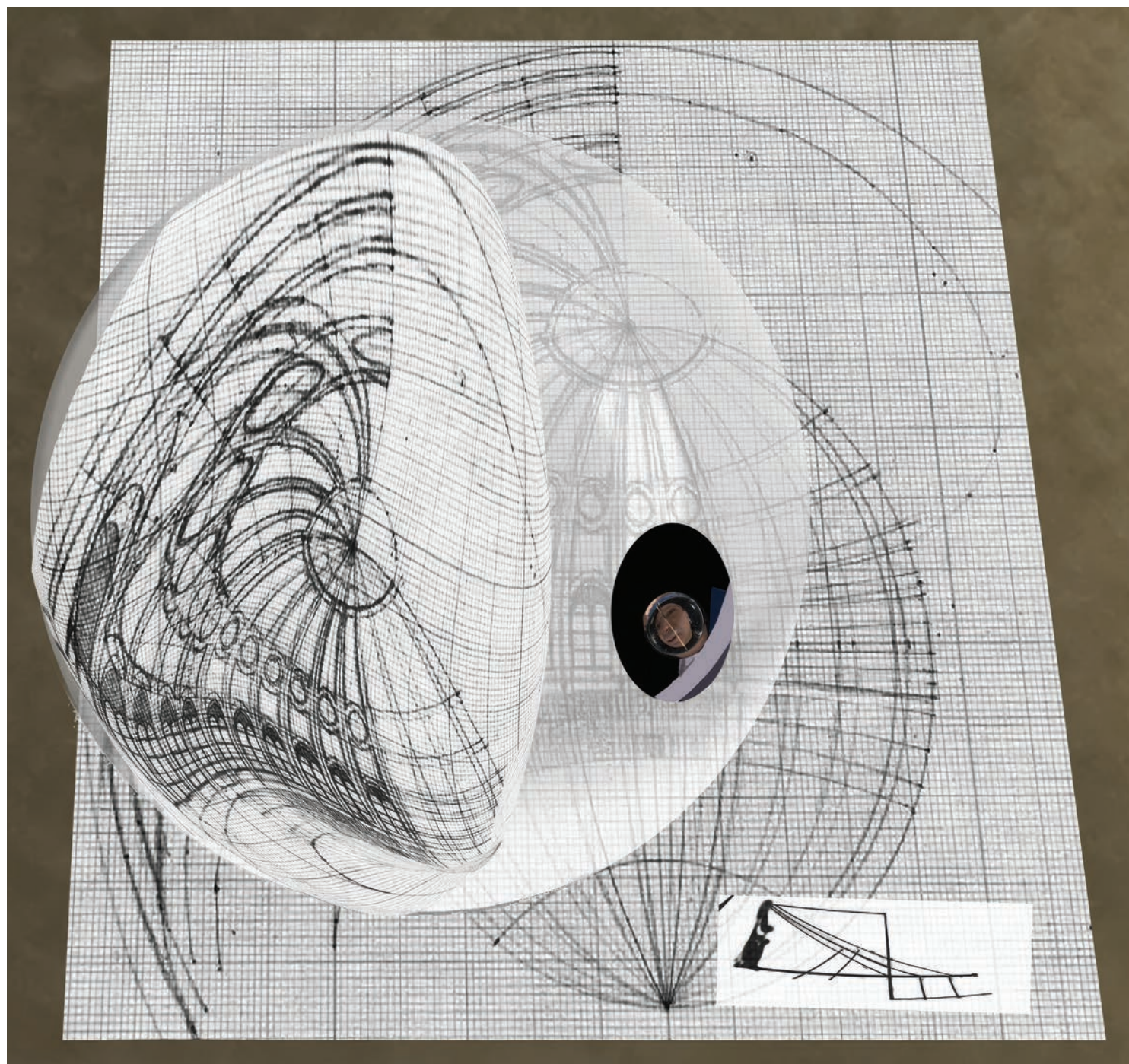
I grew up in a family of Idiosyncratic inventors, adults who tinkered alone at work benches pursuing their dreams. My elders experimented with enough stamina to keep trying no matter what.

Decades later I had a sense of familiarity upon meeting Ellen Levy. Here was a distinguished artist who moves resolutely between art and science, someone who pursues new ideas and novel mediums as she experiments and updates her practice in tandem with evolving methodologies. Levy received a B.A. in Zoology from Mount Holyoke College, a diploma in Visual Arts from the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and a Ph.D. focused on the relationship between art and neuroscience from the University of Plymouth in the United Kingdom. Her broad interests tend to revolve around how technology and art interact with each other and generate social and political movements on macro and micro scales.

It was during the 1980s and 1990s that Levy’s work as a microbiology technologist triggered an appreciation for Alexander Fleming (1881-1955), the discoverer of penicillin, and his germ paintings. With Fleming as a model, Levy would paint and photograph organisms, including those that she grew in Petri dishes. She developed ways to generate images undergoing growth and transformation. Following this, Levy went on in her artwork to emphasize the interdisciplinarity of design across engineering, art, and technology, informed by then emergent scientific ideas, especially complex systems.

Persistent and always gracious, Levy asks what is contemporary art’s role in public discourse in a rapidly shifting world? She combines this curiosity with a commitment to academic initiatives. Between 2004 and 2006, she served as president of the College Art Association, the professional organization that promotes excellence in scholarship and teaching in the visual arts. In addition, over the last two decades Levy has generously co-directed informal meetings of the science, art and music magazine Leonardo’s LASER (Leonardo Art Science Evening Rendezvous) talks in her Manhattan loft. Open to everyone in the fields, the lively conversations investigate topics that are ripe for exploration and contribute to better understanding of relationships between art and science.

A subject on Levy’s mind for many years has been how our understanding of outer space advances. It is believed that way before biblical times, “As above, so below” was the ancient philosophical and mystical axiom positing that the macrocosm (the universe, the spiritual realm, the divine) and the microcosm (the physical world, the human body, the earth) mirror each other. It was believed that what happens in the sky corresponds to what happens on earth. Thus, the gods in the sky may conceivably have been disgruntled and brought about the global floods that destroyed life on earth, or so the lore in early cultures goes.



Myth aside, one of Levy's profound interests has to do with how (and why) the concept of outer space has changed our views of earth and the cosmos. In our recent era, revised observations are seemingly the result of recorded images taken from the earliest airplanes, followed decades later by the images taken from orbiting satellites. Interplanetary space probes now introduce a new topological methodology to perspective, an analytical and conceptual approach that prioritizes connectedness, relationships, and spatial structure over institutions as NASA's Art Program on Space.

Today, many of Levy's images are based on views of earth taken from the International Space Station (ISS), the massive, habitable satellite, the orbiting research laboratory that serves as a home in space for rotating crews of astronauts and cosmonauts. For her work, Levy studies the views available from ISS research, as she tries to envision what space outside earth looks and feels like. She also considers the more mundane adaptations humans need to make in order to live and pursue research in zero gravity in outer space. For example, this means NASA's inventing a coffee cup that keeps liquid from floating away. Also, how to deal with the ramifications of astronaut tears in a zero-gravity situation. Human tears are spherical and pool rather than flow downward.

Levy has explained that what is envisioned through ISS research is topological perspective, a framework that prioritizes relational connectivity, proximity, and structural properties over rigid geometric metrics like distance or specific angles. Topological perspective examines how components relate to one another and emphasizes features that survive continuous deformation, such as groupings, boundaries, and sequences.

Delving into topological perspective in her work, Levy works first by generating digital prints. The sources include her own drawings and photographs, those drawn from NASA, and ones selected from databases of government-issued patents. The patent images provide a time-based inventory that she integrates with visualizations of past and present events, all of which she transfers to printed sheets. She next applies acrylic paint on top of her digitally rendered images. Her process bears some correspondence to the practice of Robert Rauschenberg, Anselm Kiefer, and Gerhard Richter, artists who have worked with appropriated images beneath or on top of their paintings, as well as with their work on paper. Contemporary artists like these articulate new ideas as they pursue new methods.

In a similar way, Levy's practice is characterized by stimulating invention. For example, several of the recent works on view at 68 Prince Street Gallery / Kingston, NY, are sculptural. Levy achieves dimensionality by curving a page back on itself, a kind of physical helix that suggests new pathways. Other work she lays flat on long tables and places small, blown glass spheres on top of 15th and 16th century perspective drawings, giving the

left: STUDY: ASTRONAUT TEARS: IN, ON, AND THROUGH #1, 2026, work on paper



viewer an elegant way to study the change from linear perspective to non-Euclidean space. A depicted viewer may gaze inside a depicted black hole on top of the glass sphere, creating a Piranesi-like feeling of disorientation. In addition to its sensuous qualities and references to Russian constructivism, viewers discover that Levy’s work is imbued with ideas, which in some ways align her practice with conceptual art, a movement that emerged in the 1960s and shifted focus away from traditional aesthetic qualities and craftsmanship toward the intellectual message.

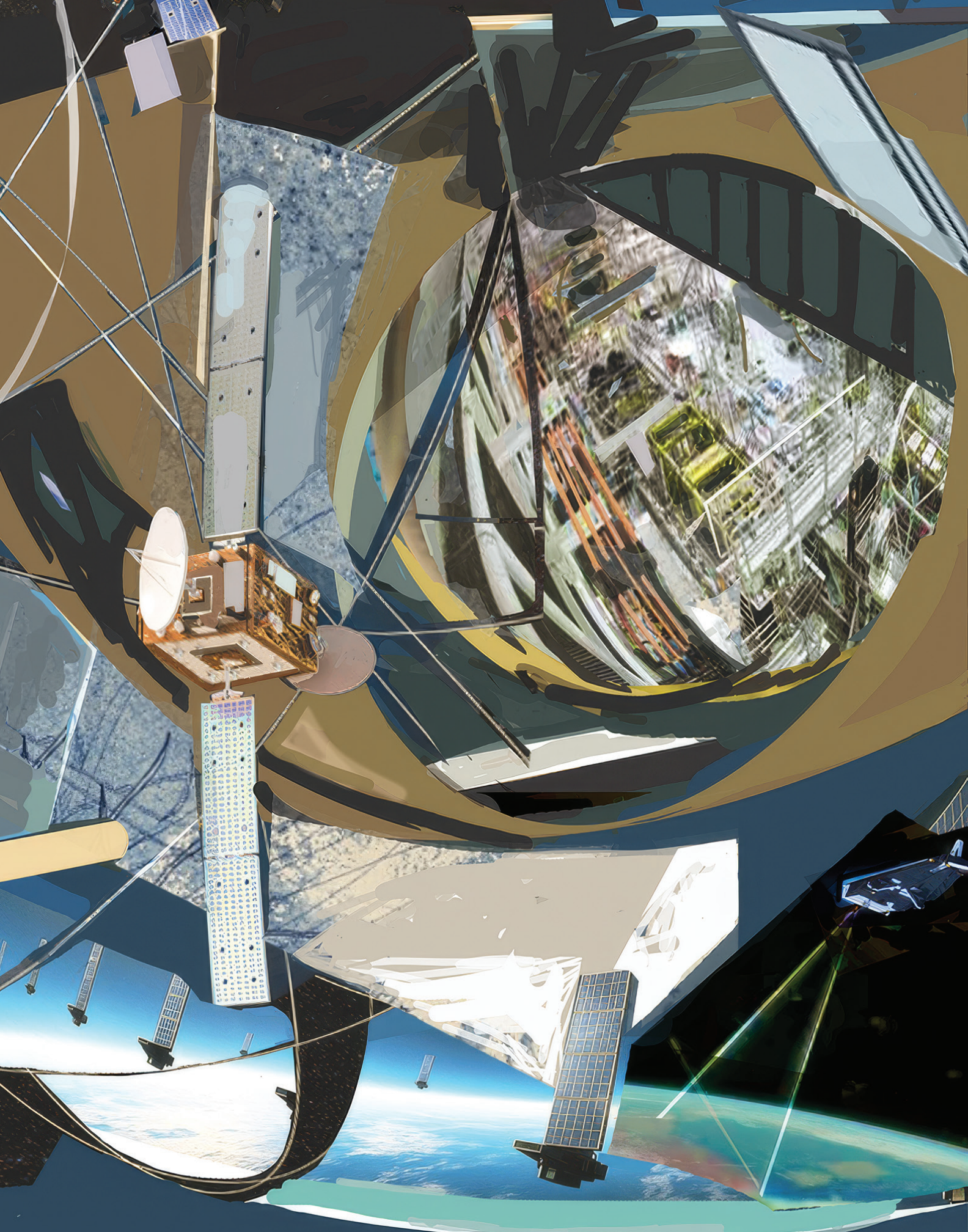
“Reversing the Earth’s Polarity,” uses an interactive stationary bicycle that is reminiscent of those used by astronauts to maintain muscle mass in space. For the duration of the exhibition, as an exhibition viewer pedals, his or her kinetic energy activates a five-minute animation that is projected on a screen, accompanied by the dynamic sound of Steve Reich. The animation suggests the reversal of polarity of the earth’s magnetic field. And similar to Spielberg’s *ET*, the bicycler seemingly appears to leave earth. Content and images found in Levy’s planar and sculptural works undergo further transformation in an artwork that engages the viewer as an active participant.

Through her work, Levy considers how ideas come together and advance, especially around space innovation. Invention and innovation are related: the practical implementation of new ideas, methods, or products that create value, solve problems, or improve efficiency. Levy explains that she is investigating the convergence of biology and information systems and the borders of the animate and inanimate, envisioning hybrid solutions as we cope with environmental disruption.

Ellen Levy’s artwork asks the viewer to consider what is overlooked within the vast amount of information now available to us. The artist aims to offer new ways to address perception as she generates forms and utilizes methods that have a connection to nature. Posing questions is an important step. Levy’s art is a way of capturing reality, going beyond the limitations of art itself. Can art change behavior? Through her art, she responds to this question with a lot of wit, nerve, and especially verve.

Barbara London is an internationally acclaimed curator, advocate for the arts, and writer with a practice that revolves around media, installation, and sound art produced internationally. Recent projects include the exhibitions *Seeing Sound* (Independent Curators International, 2020-25); “Dara Birnbaum,” the Prada Foundation, Milan (2023); and the podcast series, “Barbara London Calling,” 2020-2025. London’s book, *Video Art: The First Fifty Years*, (Phaidon, 2020/2024) is in its third printing.

left: TEAR CATCHER #3, 2026, painted and printed folded work



ARTIST STATEMENT:

The space program, a recurrent subject in my art over decades, offers both terror and wonder, not unlike Edmund Burke’s description of the sublime. In zero gravity, the unexpected must be anticipated. The astronaut must exercise daily to prevent her muscles from debilitating atrophy. The sheer immensity of outer space displaces us, yet the space in which we must live is highly restrictive. I imagine what such a life might be like. Famed science fiction writer, Cixin Liu, who imagined humanity living underground commented “You do not need to leave a room that has wi-fi. You can spend all your life in an internet.”

My fascination stems from the vantage point outer space offers. We must imagine what enables us to live, work, and interact under trying new circumstances. For one, the threshold between speculative fiction and reality is ever more porous, in large part due to our technology. Routine pleasures necessarily become extraordinary in zero gravity, and are made possible by technology (e.g., inventing a coffee cup that does not spill). Since my NASA art commission (1985) during which I witnessed the Space Shuttle Atlantis night launch, I repeatedly visualize aspects of the new life that may await us. As Newtonian perspectives give way to non-Euclidean geometry, space will likely transform how we see. Circles, glass spheres, and nets predominate in the works exhibited. Astronaut tears in zero gravity assume the form of spheres like stars and planets. The view is “in,” “out,” or “through,” depending on the context. Culture and commerce (signified by patented inventions) intersect. In the exhibition, the bicycle rider will trigger a video that provides an illusion of control in a hazardous world. Some of the older works in the exhibition explore the ethical dimensions of technological progress. They allude to the prospect of a diminished earth seen through the window of the International Space Station.

It’s tempting to imagine that art can help prepare us for planetary habituation. This is not likely unless (as with some Zero Gravity artist groups) it includes physical conditioning to mitigate microgravity’s effects and technical proficiency with spacecraft systems. However, art’s potential to help foster psychological resilience may remain on the table as artists juggle facts with fiction.

left: SPACE NETS, 2026, acrylic over digital collage on archival Hahnemühle paper, 62¼ x 42½ inches



MESSENGER 1, 2019, acrylic over digital collage on archival Hahnemühle paper, 62 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 41 $\frac{3}{8}$ inches



SIMULATOR, 2019, acrylic over digital collage on archival Hahnemühle paper, 59½ x 40½ inches



MESSENGER, 2019, acrylic over digital collage on archival Hahnemühle paper, 62 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 41 $\frac{3}{8}$ inches



STRUCTURE AND FAILURE, 2003, acrylic over digital collage on archival Hahnemühle paper, 60⁵/₈ x 40³/₄ inches



ANIMATION STUDY #1, 2025, acrylic on digital collage on archival paper, 22 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 32 $\frac{3}{8}$ inches



ADRIFT, 2026, acrylic over digital collage on archival Hahnemühle paper, 60⁵/₈ x 40³/₄ inches



SPACE HABITAT, 2025, acrylic over digital collage on archival Hahnemühle paper, 70 x 42 inches



SPEAK TO ME #2, 2019, acrylic over digital collage on archival Hahnemühle paper, 60⁵/₈ x 40³/₄ inches



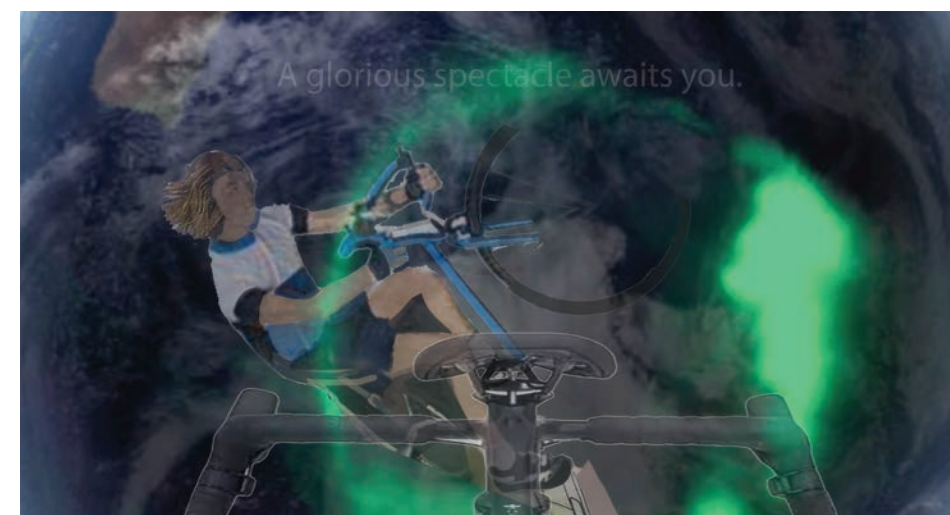
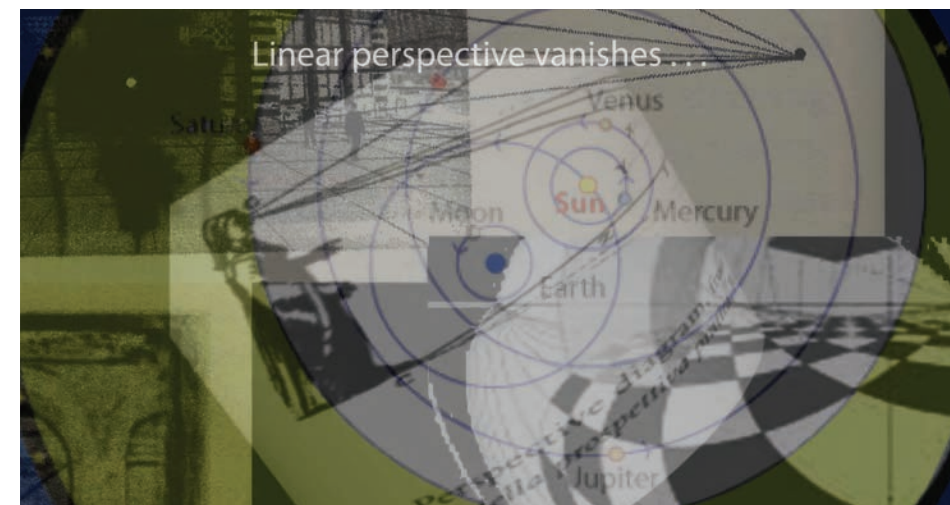
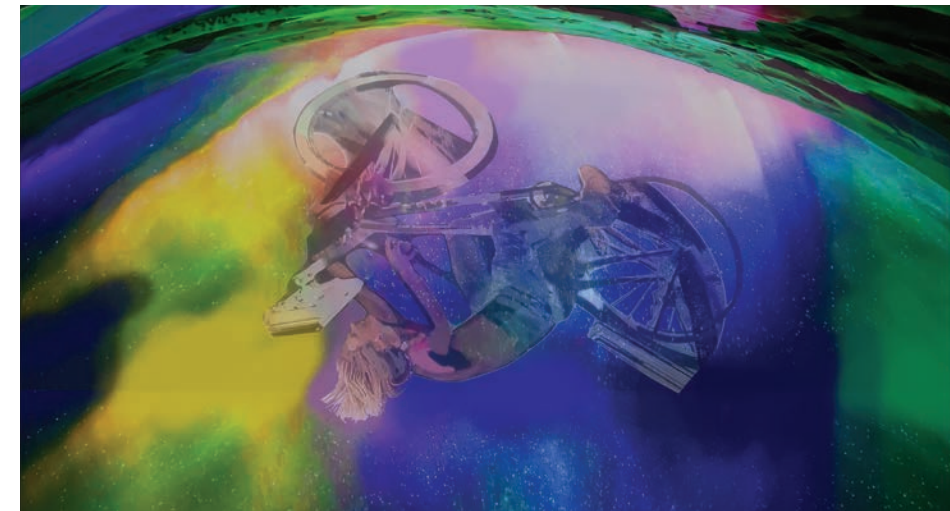
left side: PORTRAIT AS AN ASTRONAUT, 2019, acrylic over digital collage on archival Hahnemühle paper, 81 x 20 $\frac{1}{8}$ inches



right side: COCA COLA COLONIZATION, 2019, acrylic over digital collage on archival Hahnemühle paper, 81 x 18 $\frac{3}{8}$ inches



SPACE NET SCROLL, 2026, acrylic over digital collage on archival Hahnemühle paper, 82 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 22 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches



right: A selection of screenshots from Ellen Levy's video, "REVERSING THE MAGNETOSPHERE." The video of this interactive work is activated by pedaling on a stationary bike, and it recalls the routine exercises of astronauts to maintain muscle mass in space.



STUDY: PALLADIO IN SPACE, 2025, photomontage. Palladio incised his diagrams into several of his architectural columns (note his incision in the upper right).



ASTRONAUT TEARS are handblown glass spheres. They are placed on a table over a time line on graph paper that marks technological inventions. Images are airbrushed and pasted on the glass, ranging from 3 - 4½ inches diameter. The spheres are mounted over redrafted 15th and 16th century perspective drawings.

BIOGRAPHY:

Ellen K. Levy, PhD, is a New York-based multimedia artist, writer, and educator who explores the intersections of art, science, and technology. Her works probe the influence of scientific paradigms on visual culture and the reverse. In numerous exhibitions (e.g., Michael Steinberg Fine Arts, Associated American Artists) and publications (e.g., *Art Journal* (1996), *Bloomsbury* (2021), and *Routledge* (2013)), she engages themes of invention and space exploration. She co-edits an art and science special book series for *Routledge, Taylor & Francis*. She was a Distinguished (Luce) Visiting Fellow at Skidmore, recipient of an AICA award, co-recipient of a seed grant from the Burroughs Wellcome Fund, and three times an invited participant in Robert Wilson’s Art and Neuroscience Watermill Workshop. Career highlights include a NASA commission and solo exhibitions at the New York and National Academy of Sciences (DC). Her art is in collections of NASA, Smith College, and The Ringling Museum among others. She has been in landmark group exhibitions overseen by Lucy Lippard and Martin Kemp. Her art was part of the Getty’s PST Art and Science Collide Initiative (2024) about invention. Her co-edited anthology about the legacy of D’Arcy W. Thompson in the arts was longlisted by the British Association of Historians. While President of the College Art Association she expanded interdisciplinary conference discussions and opportunities, and she was instrumental in publishing guidelines for the protection of animals used in artworks. <http://www.complexityart.com/>; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ellen_Levy

CATALOGUE ESSAY: **BARBARA LONDON**

CATALOGUE DESIGN: **SUSANNA RONNER GRAPHIC DESIGN**

USE OF RECORDING FROM “MUSIC FOR EIGHTEEN MUSICIANS”: **STEVE REICH**

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE: **JOSHUA GOLDBERG, YVETTE KING, AND DAVID LEVY**

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