D.U.Quark

Volume 4
Issue 1 *Fall 2019*

Article 18

11-14-2019

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Emma Shirey

DuQuark

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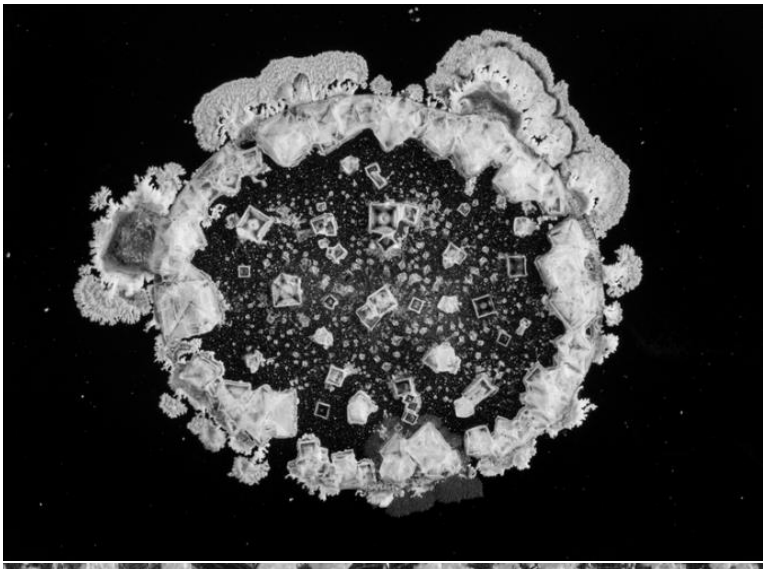
By Emma Shirey

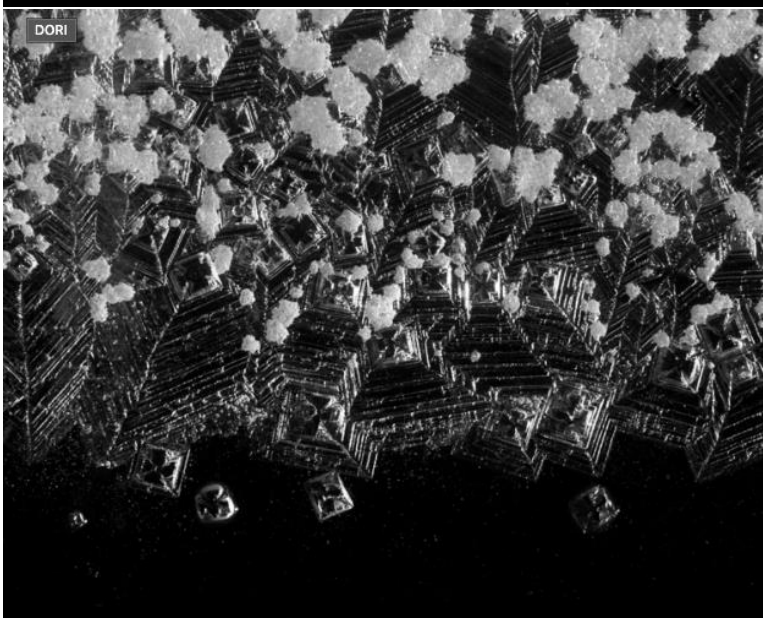
D.U.Quark Year 2019. Volume 4(Issue 1) pgs. 60-61
Published November 14, 2019
Opinion Piece

Christine Lorenz teaches classes at both Point Park University and Duquesne University. In these classes, she emphasizes to her students the importance of noticing patterns throughout art history and in particular images. One day in 2014, Lorenz was working with her son on his science fair project about salt crystals. "We tried to follow the directions that you find online about making a salt solution in glass with a paperclip on a string and hang it. Nothing grew… we got close to the time he was going to have to turn it in, so we started to experiment with making it grow faster." This experiment got her son's project in on time and also showed her the beauty of salt crystal formations.

For the last five years, Lorenz has been maintaining her "Salt Garden," her small home studio where she photographs salt formations on glass. By using different techniques and manipulating variables such as heat, time, water, etc., she has photographed many salt formations with a macro lens. "My process is not really a scientific process" she reminded me, "It's a matter of curiosity and experimentation. I call my studio my Salt Garden, because it's way more like gardening than it is like chemistry, as I learned chemistry." I would argue, however, that Lorenz' process of hypothesis - *maybe this will photograph well,* experimentation - *let's try it in the oven at 200 degrees Fahrenheit,* and curiosity are processes that a scientist could relate to.

Lorenz told me that scientists and artists work under the same ideas: "wonder and curiosity." "Wonder is the fascination and appeal attached to mystery" she explained to me, but "curiosity can't accept the mystery. How does the thing *actually work?"* Artists who work with science must maintain the fascination of wonder while pursuing the curiosity that inspired them in the first place. Scientific artists must ask questions of science while also remedying these questions with aesthetic appeal. This aesthetic appeal, which acts as Lorenz's "how," are found in the patterns that the salt crystals make. The kinds of geometric variations that they make are especially interesting to Lorenz because of the "geometrical form of the square. These squares are imperfect, they are being disrupted, they are overlapping. They're always trying to be a perfect form that they never quite get to. Meanwhile, you get other formations which are not square or geometric at all." The unpredictability of salt formations appeals to Lorenz and the art world. Whether in a lab or a 'Salt Garden', curiosity draws people in all disciplines to experiment, play and create.





The photos are from her 2014-2016 Salt Collection

http://www.cmlorenz.com/salt/e1wz9rj8g4m1jo69lab2iqqj89l87o

Shirey, E. 2019. Salt Gardening The Science Behind the Salt Photography of artist Christine Lorenz. *D.U.Quark,* Volume 4(Issue 1). Retrieved from https://dsc.duq.edu/duquark/vol4/iss1/article12