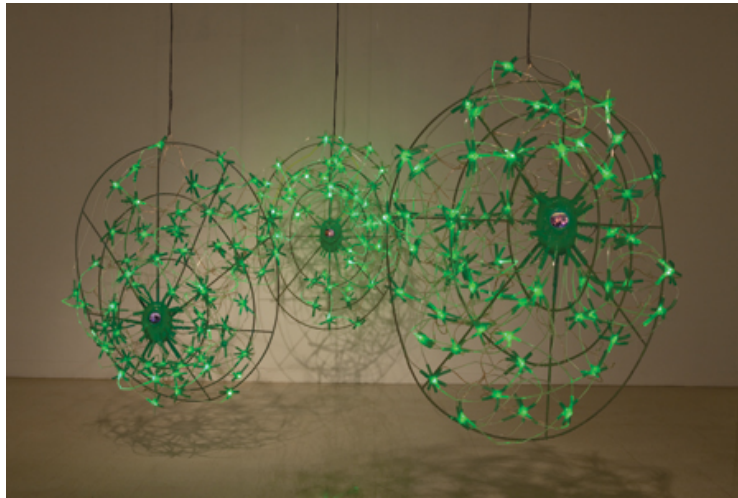


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Deborah Aschheim: "feeling-of-knowing"
at San Diego State University Art Gallery



June 10, 2007 Steel, plastic, LEDs, 3 videos

Photo: courtesy of the artist and San Diego State University Art Gallery

In communication networks, a node is a connection point. Deborah Aschheim fabricates nodes by assembling plastic tubing, LEDs, wire and speakers into complex rhizome-like sculptures that function as three-dimensional diagrams--mapping not places and routes, but memories. Aschheim draws from myriad sources and investigates the way information is processed and stored and later visualized and re-presented. "Feeling-of-knowing," the title of her five-year survey, is a clinical term that refers to the sensation that occurs when knowledge is just beyond grasp. How to hold onto memories is the subject of Aschheim's investigations. Within the rooms of the exhibition her sculptures hang from the ceiling or grow out from the walls or the floor. Often the sculptures are coupled with drawings that illustrate the complex relationships and pathways in the three-dimensional works. For example in *June 10*, (2007), three assemblages of intertwined glowing green nodes, encircled by wire armatures hang from the ceiling. Each contains at its center a small video monitor on which loops a fragment from home movies taken during the artist's birthday parties in 1965, 1967 and 1970. The accompanying drawings--mind maps--articulate the associations and memories triggered when the artist watched the clips.

Earworm (node), 2008 suspended from the ceiling by fishing line, could be thought of as a giant bright blue trombone with multiple horns extending out in all directions. Wires weave through the piece, holding its parts together while simultaneously allowing current and sound to travel through the work. Plastic funnels containing LEDs as well as speakers become a network of sound and light. The piece is magical and musical. Its sound is an interpretation of the word 'node' by Aschheim's collaborator, musician Lisa Mezzacappa. Many of Aschheim's sculptures have a sound component that deepens the emotional impact of the work. In the *Earworm* series, each sculpture and song references one of 25 words selected by Aschheim as a type of reserve should she ever lose her memory. While there are many sculptures with sound, only one piece is on at a time. This encourages viewers to listen to each work on its own and for its full duration before moving on to the next.

Weaving together research and aesthetics in a unique and innovative fashion, Aschheim's works can be appreciated on a purely visual level. And as such, they are enigmatic and evocative. But considering Aschheim's involvement in memory study and neural science, the works blossom into visual and meaningful interpretations of the workings of the human mind.

by jody zellen