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UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND / FEARLESS IDEAS



AN EXHIBITION AND LECTURE BY
ROB KESSELER

Tuesday, January 23, 2018

Artist lecture at 5 p.m.

Exhibition and reception to follow

Bioscience Research Building, Room 1101

RSVP by January 16 at go.umd.edu/worldswithin

WORLDS WITHIN exposes the generally unseen world of plants and their internal architecture, textures, patterns and functions. It reveals repeating patterns in nature: generic structures and forms, which recur on a macro and micro scale. Since the publication of Robert Hooke's *Microraphia* in 1665, the living world under the microscope has been a primary focus for scientists and inspiration for artists. Rob Kessler (1951–) creates hand-colored botanical micrographs of seeds and pollen and stained sections of plant tissue that form a remarkable visual bridge between the conventional purpose of scientific illustration as used in scientific and educational materials and the aesthetic interpretation of scientific imagery in contemporary art.

To move out into another's territory, to engage with their discipline in a way that goes beyond the superficial, to share ideas and to explore areas of commonality and difference is a

privilege. Rob Kessler's accompanying lecture, *Convergent Territories*, will reveal some of the histories and processes that have united art, architecture and science, from the earliest microscopic images of Robert Hooke to plant geneticists at the John Innes Plant Science Centre generating 3D forms to reveal flower development.

ROB KESSLER (FRMS FLS FRSA) is a visual artist and Chair of Arts, Design & Science at the University of the Arts London. A former NESTA Fellow at Kew and Research Fellow at the Gulbenkian Science Institute, Portugal, he has collaborated with botanical scientists and molecular biologists for the past 19 years to explore the living world at a microscopic level. He exhibits and lectures internationally and his publications include an [award-winning series of books on pollen, seeds and fruit](#) with Madeline Harley and Wolfgang Stuppy. He is a fellow of the Royal Microscopical Society, The Linnean Society and The Royal Society of the Arts.

Employing a variety of imaging processes and styles—from digital photography and scanning electron micrography to spontaneous ink drawing—Kessler's work reflects the way in which the natural world migrates into many aspects of our daily lives and seeks to reveal a micro-cosmos of complex structures and ornamental patterns. Extending the long and illustrious history of artists working with flowers and plants, Kessler seeks to reveal a hidden world lying beyond the scope of the human eye producing work that lies somewhere between science and symbolism, in which the many complexities of representing plants are concentrated into mesmeric visual images and objects. Learn more about his work at robkessler.co.uk.

If you have any questions about the event, please contact Abby Robinson at abbyr@umd.edu or 301-405-5845.

Acknowledgements

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Images from Fruit, edible, inedible, incredible. Kessler & Stuppy. Publ. Papadakis. (Top) Calotis breviradita, Burr rayed daisy. Hand coloured micrograph. (Bottom) Polygala arenaria, Sand milkwort. Hand coloured micrograph.



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