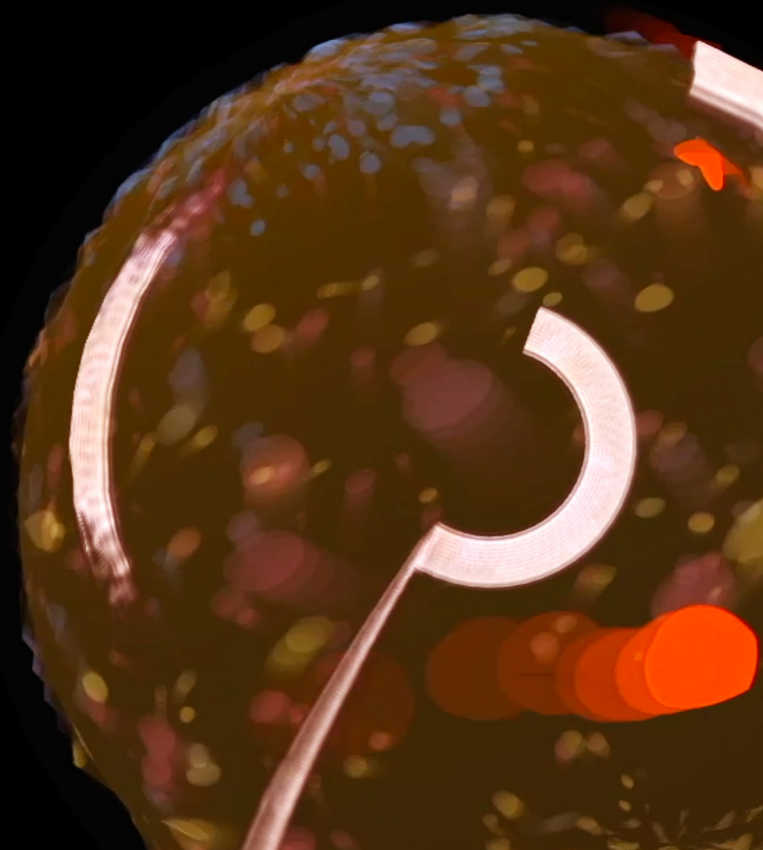




# *SuperCellular*

Carolyn Healy & John Phillips

January 30 - March 25, 2023



ROWAN UNIVERSITY  
**ART GALLERY**

**SuperCellular** is a site-specific immersive art gallery experience that combines sculpture, light, sound and moving imagery as a reflection of the astonishing and almost incomprehensible density and activity of the chemical molecules in our bodies. Inspired by neuroscience, cellular biology, and genetics, the installation contemplates the complexities and intricacies of living processes and the mysteries of cellular interactions.

Found objects are Healy's primary source of material in creating her sculptural forms. Some have accumulated over time in Healy's studio, with some added for this project from junkyards, recycling centers, the "street," and various industrial sources. Some are complete and unaltered objects, not so much prefabricated and standing alone, as "combined," with the hope that disparate things produce new meanings by juxtaposition. Other times, more generic or neutral raw materials are "assembled" into sculptural forms. The use of recycled industrial debris, although central to Carolyn's practice since the beginning, seems rather like how living cells constantly make and remake their parts. The confluence of method and subject is welcome serendipity.

Phillips' videos are projections on the sculptural forms that bring the installation to life by animating the objects. Imagery used includes a slowly undulating web of filaments reminiscent of neuron cells, while other visuals can be seen as membranes and molecules interacting in transparent globes. Overall, these projections are inspired by the immense number of complex actions performed by the trillions of molecules that make up living organisms. The associated soundscapes are composed from over 450 digital sound files, both acoustic and electronically produced, which create an active, buzzing aural environment.

The overlapping projections and three-dimensional sculptures represent a variety of micro cellular elements such as chromosomes, electrical synapsis and threads of the nervous system, white blood cells and hemoglobin, and dividing cells from simple to complex. The objects, video, sound, and sculpture are abstracted organic imagery meant to be metaphorical, not scientific, and are a reflection of the marvel and intricacies of living processes.



**Carolyn Healy** is an installation artist who began her career exhibiting small, abstract assemblages at the Marian Locks Gallery, Philadelphia, in 1979. Since creating a stage set for a performance of Molly Bloom's soliloquy from James Joyce's *Ulysses* in 1987, she has concentrated on large site-specific installations, many in collaboration with sound and video artist John Phillips. Some of these have been settings for performance events and many have been created for dilapidated industrial or historic buildings. Materials found on location have been incorporated whenever possible, along with other recycled or common objects. The projects have been seen nationally and internationally in museums, university galleries and theaters, as well as numerous alternative sites. Carolyn has received five individual Artist Fellowships in Interdisciplinary Art from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, a grant from the Pollock-Krasner Foundation, an NEA New Forms Regional Grant, as well as numerous project support grants from the Leeway Foundation, the Dietrich Foundation and the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts.

**John JH Phillips** is a sound and video artist. His work has included interactive sound installations and audio-visual performances in museums, art galleries, and non-traditional spaces in this country and abroad. Since 1987 he has collaborated extensively with sculptor Carolyn Healy on site-based installations. His musical compositions have been presented at dance and theater venues, on the nationally syndicated radio program *New American Radio*, and at national and international electronic art festivals such as ISEA and ICMA. His live sound and video performances have been seen in numerous venues in Philadelphia and also in New York City; his composing has been supported by American Composers Forum (collaboration with Pauline Oliveros) and the Millay Colony (composer in residence). To pursue his video work, he has enjoyed residencies at the Experimental Television Center and at Signal Culture, both in Owego, New York. Grants include a fellowship in Sound Art from the National Endowment for the Arts, and several in Media Arts from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts.

Highlights of the artists' collaborative projects include: a performance/ installation on a river barge with tugboat for Whitman at 200, Philadelphia; an entire cellblock in historic Eastern State Penitentiary, Philadelphia; stage set and sound for performances at LaMaMa and Symphony Space, NYC and the Cini Foundation, Venice, Italy. Installations incorporating artifacts found on site include historic Disston Saw Works and Globe Dye Works, both in Philadelphia, and the Museum of American Glass at WheatonArts in Millville, New Jersey. The artists have created four installations for the Philadelphia Live Arts and Fringe Festivals: in a storefront, warehouse, loft and elevator shaft, as well as commissioned works for the International Computer Music Conferences in Ann Arbor, Michigan and in Beijing, China, and at Suyama Space, Seattle, Washington; Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh; and the Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia.





### Acknowledgements

Rowan University Art Gallery is honored to present this exhibition and we greatly appreciate Carolyn Healy and John JH Phillips creating a new installation for our space. Additional thanks go to our Gallery Coordinator Kristin Qualls, our Art Installers Steven Weber and Tyler Klein, and our Student Assistants Emma Butts, Isabella Cristinzina, Victoria Esquilin, and Reid Higgins for their support. This exhibition was made possible in part with funding from the Joseph Robert Foundation and the New Jersey State Council on the Arts and is a Rowan University Art Gallery production curated by Mary Salvante, Director, Rowan University Art Gallery.

Photography courtesy of John JH Phillips and Rowan University Art Gallery.

### Resources and Inspiration

#### Books

- Harold Blum, *Time's Arrow and Evolution*, 1951  
 Bill Bryson, *A Short History of Nearly Everything*, 2004  
 Richard Fortey, *Life: A Natural History of the First Four Billion Years of Life on Earth*, 1999  
 Robert Kelly, *The Fifth Beginning: What Six Million Years of Human History Can Tell Us about Our Future*, 2016  
 Joseph LeDoux, *Synaptic Self: How Our Brains Become Who We Are*, 2003  
 Siddhartha Mukherjee, *The Gene: An Intimate History*, 2017 and *The Song of the Cell: An Exploration of Medicine and the New Human*, 2022  
 Robert Sapolsky, *Behave: The Biology of Humans at Our Best and Worst*, 2017  
 Larry Swanson, *The Beautiful Brain: The Drawings of Santiago Ramon y Cajal*, 2017  
 E.O. Wilson, *Diversity of Life*, 2001  
 Carl Zimmer, *Life's Edge: The Search for What It Means to Be Alive*, 2021

#### Video Lectures

- Dr. Robert Sapolsky, Professor of Biology, Neurology, and Neurosurgery at Stanford University  
 Dr. Stephen Nowicki, Professor of Biology and Neurobiology at Duke University