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Kal Spelletich

The New York Times

Art in Review | 'Weird Science'
By Ken Jonson
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If the essence of science is the development and testing of theories about reality, then you can't say that the artists in this unfocused but intriguing show are doing science, weird or otherwise. Where the two domains can overlap, though, is in playing with technology. A short film by Daria Martin in which naked dancers interact with robotic devices in an artificial-intelligence laboratory is emblematic. The machines imitate human actions, while the humans mirror the machines' movements.

Technology's dark side emerges in Matt Heckert's "Handheld Flamethrower," which is just what its title says it is. It is accompanied by instructions for making your own.

"Space Measurer," by Kal Spelletich, is a scrappy construction involving small mirrors and blue laser light. It resembles a homemade apparatus for measuring the speed of light; in fact, it functions as a Breathalyzer. According to gallery personnel, it really works.

Dave Hardy investigates structural ideas in assemblages made mainly of glass sheets and foam-rubber slabs. His constructions look alarmingly precarious — Richard Serra's prop sculptures come to mind. But because the foam pieces have been infused with cement, they are actually fairly stable.

Jessica Rath addresses natural history with a quartet of lovely, dark-gray-glazed porcelain sculptures of a type of apple considered one of the world's oldest surviving species. Jeff Williams looks back too. His "Conservation Fountain (Cibolo Creek Fossil)" has a pump system continuously showering water over a big chunk of fossilized plant material. Among other things, it's about time.