

“You are hitting on the magic of the synergy that results from the artistic and scientific collaborations...you want those unexpected ideas and innovations, the intersections generated by a common passion for a world on fire.”

exhibition *Cerol* in 2023 at Beacon Gallery that examined “the surreal and dangerous role of consumerism, industrialization, and societal mores,” Fornasaro binge watched several of Sterman’s videos posted on YouTube. “I became slightly obsessed,” admits the Brazilian-born artist. So, when she saw the list of participating scientists for the Umbrella’s exhibition Fornasaro says, “I immediately contacted Stephanie and said I wanted in.” Since then, the artist attended two of Sterman’s classes at MIT. Afterwards, they discussed ideas for the collaboration. According to Fornasaro, Sterman gave her nearly complete creative license for the project. “He would finish every sentence saying, ‘you’re the artist, whatever you want to do is OK.’” He did have one request, however, that gave Fornasaro pause: he wanted the piece to be uplifting. “I debated how close I wanted to represent his bathtub analogy. It was hard to imagine something that was positive and have a literal translation of what he was putting out there,” says Fornasaro.

Her solution was to place the bathtub analogy in a world that gets it right, asking herself, “What happens if the perfect environment exists in the future? What if we take the right steps and we have a regenerative outlook of the planet?” The result is a beautiful sculpture of a bathtub constructed entirely of fallen pine tree branches that Fornasaro collected and wove together. The water for the tap will be fed by a rain barrel and native New England seedlings, representing natural greenhouse gas emission mitigation, will bud on nearly every inch of its surface.

Most of the exhibition will be comprised of outdoor installations displayed on the Umbrella’s front lawn. Other exciting works found



Above, clockwise from top: An installation view of *Tapped In*; *Wave* by Lisa Barthelson, with Juliana Birnbaum, senior editor and program director, Project Regeneration; Mags Harries, *Mushrooms*. Opposite: *Regenerate*, Raquel Fornasaro, with John Sterman, Director MIT Sloan Sustainability Initiative. Images courtesy of The Umbrella Arts Center.

there will be a tower of mushrooms created by multimedia artist Mags Harries who is collaborating with a senior scientist from Beyond Meat, a manufacturer of plant-based meat alternative food products. Teaming up with Juliana Birnbaum, the director of programs at the environmental organization Regeneration, multidisciplinary artist Lisa Barthelson is sculpting a giant ocean wave constructed from plastic waste collected largely within the Concord community. The show will extend inside the Umbrella’s main gallery for supplemental educational materials and paintings by Ilana Manolson who partnered with Janine Benyus at Biomimicry 3.8.

Asked to describe the synergy that results from the artistic and scientific collaborations, Sweeney replies, “You are hitting on the magic of it...you want those unexpected ideas and innovations, the intersections generated by a common passion for a world on fire.”

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