

SPOTTED

Spotted: 'SciArt' storm; college crisis

BY KATIE MOISSE

13 MARCH 2015

WEEK OF MARCH 9TH

'SciArt' storm

#sciart olfactory bulb inspired mini quilt **#artforsale** pic.twitter.com/xgk93WD9mO

— Textile Wrangler (@artcollisions) **March 5, 2015**

Have some time to kill? Check out the mesmerizing feed of scientific art that **took Twitter by storm** last week. Toronto-based artist **Glendon Mellow**, who runs the *Scientific American* blog **Symbiartic**, invited artists to tweet three science-inspired paintings, cartoons or sketches each day for a week using the hashtag #SciArt. "The goal of this is to share the variety and importance of art as it relates to science," Mellow wrote in a 1 March blog post. Scroll down to find my favorite: an **olfactory-bulb-inspired mini quilt**.

SOURCES:

Twitter / 05 Mar 2015

#sciart olfactory bulb inspired mini quilt **#artforsale**

<https://twitter.com/artcollisions/status/573520091788222465>

Honor roll

The Curt Stern Award recognizes outstanding achievements in human genetics. But there's a catch: These achievements must be made in the first 10 years of a scientist's career. It's a hard

award to qualify for, let alone win. But **Mark Daly**, associate professor of medicine at Harvard University, took home the prize for 2014. In his short tenure, Daly has helped to peel back the layers of **genetic complexity in autism**. **Benjamin Neale**, assistant professor at Massachusetts General Hospital, says Daly's intellect and imagination are matched only by his kind and caring nature. "To possess either quality is rare, but to have both is truly unique," Neale said in an **announcement of the award** published 5 March in *Cell*.

SOURCES:

Cell / 05 Mar 2015

2014 Curt Stern Award Introduction: Mark Daly

<http://www.cell.com/ajhg/pdf/S0002-9297%2814%2900524-2.pdf>

College crisis

We often talk about the **dearth of support** for people with autism as they transition into adulthood. A study published 4 March in the *Yale Journal of Biology and Medicine* examines the special challenges for **college students on the spectrum**, some of whom immerse themselves in coursework to avoid the social aspects of school. "In retrospect, I used my isolation to justify taking academics more seriously, but this didn't help me achieve more academically. My social life was nonexistent," one study participant said.

SOURCES:

Yale Journal of Biology and Medicine / 04 Mar 2015

A comprehensive survey of current and former college students with autism spectrum disorders.

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/25745374>

Poignant performance

Musical funnyman "Weird Al" Yankovic drew a standing ovation last week at the "**Night of Too Many Stars**" — an annual benefit to support autism programs. He was joined on stage by **Jodi DiPiazza**, a 13-year-old singer and pianist with autism, for a surprisingly **moving version of "Yoda"** (a spoof of The Kinks' "Lola"). "He is sooo funny," DiPiazza wrote of the duet in a **blog for Autism Speaks**.

SOURCES:

Autism Speaks / 08 Mar 2015

Amazing Girl with Autism Talks Performing with Katy Perry and Weird Al

<https://www.autismspeaks.org/blog/2015/03/10/amazing-girl-autism-talks-performing-katy-perry-and-weird-al>

Calcium link

A new study adds to mounting evidence that tiny channels that allow calcium to flow into cells are **crucial for cognition** and may play a role in autism. The study, published 4 March in the *European Journal of Human Genetics*, describes 16 individuals with **mutations in the gene CACNA1A**, which belongs to a family of genes that encode calcium channels. The individuals have a spectrum of conditions, including **epilepsy**, cognitive impairment, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and autism. Mutations in a related gene, **CACNA1C**, cause the autism-linked disorder **Timothy syndrome**.

SOURCES:

European Journal of Human Genetics / 04 Mar 2015

CACNA1A haploinsufficiency causes cognitive impairment, autism and epileptic encephalopathy with mild cerebellar symptoms.

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/25735478>
