



Neuroculture

VISUAL ART AND THE BRAIN • EXHIBITION CATALOG

ANATOMY OF THE BRAIN

Brains and their anatomies have always been captivating subjects for observation and study. To date about one hundred anatomically and molecularly cortical areas have been identified and catalogued as distinctive aspects of brain functions. Currently, sophisticated brain imaging techniques not only allow the mapping of the brain's intricate structure, but also the visualization of its processing in real-time. Neuronal activities can now be viewed in what

is regarded to be the brain in action, or as some theorists would say, the activity of the mind. At a rapid pace, scientific laboratories throughout the world are producing images of firing neurons. Some of these actions in specific areas of the brain are attributed to behaviors as various as maternal or romantic love, distress from social loss, and religious or aesthetic experiences. This technology is remarkably ambitious in that it aspires to visualize mental functioning as process.

Andrew Carnie's slide-dissolve installation, *Magic Forest* (2002), shown here for the first time in the U.S., is the result of his collaboration with neuroscientists at the Medical Research Centre for Developmental Neurology, Kings College, London. In this scientifically inspired installation, Carnie creates a "lightning field" of images fading in and out of vision. Small-scale neuronal firing is turned into a forest, an energy field of large-scale proportions.



Steve Miller, *Self-Portrait Vanitas (Glass)*, 1997, pigment dispersion and silk-screen on canvas, 44 x 32 in., courtesy of the artist.

Steve Miller has been working with medical imaging devices since the 1980's. Employing silkscreen on canvas, his work transforms medical iconography into a poetic meditation on the invisible realities of consciousness. His *Self-Portrait Vanitas (Glass)* (1997), speaks to our own awareness of temporality and the great mysteries that lie beyond.