



Written, directed, and produced by Elizabeth McClellan

Production design by Elizabeth McClellan

Photography: Erica Nix
Logo design: Cara Stewart
Original music: Lauren Klotzman
Video editing: Daniel S. Abramson and Lauren Klotzman
Writing Consultant: Olfa Masmoudi
Technical Consultant: Ryan Hawk
Sound Installation: Michael Fernstein
Fabrication Assistance: Clare Surgeson

Models and Video Performance:

EchindaLabs C.E.O. Sophie von Ettienne: Olfa Masmoudi
EchindaLabs H.S.: Elizabeth McClellan
Allison Foust
Kira Matica
Gracelee Lawrence
Julia Neal

Live Performers:

Roni Chelben
Kira Matica
Olivia Jimenez
P!nkstar

Special thanks to Wunderman advertising and the UMLAUF staff.

UMLAUF sculpture
garden
& museum

605 Robert E. Lee Road, Austin, Texas 78704
Tues-Fri 10-4; Sat & Sun 12-4
umlaufsculpture.org

The UMLAUF Sculpture Garden & Museum is a non-profit organization founded around a vast collection of work by American sculptor Charles Umlauf. The UMLAUF exhibits his work and other contemporary sculptors and provides educational experiences that encourage the understanding and appreciation of sculpture.



This project is supported in part by the Cultural Arts Division of the City of Austin Economic Development Department.

This exhibition is supported by Mo and Richard Anderson.



UMLAUF Prize 2016:
EchindaLabs®
by Elizabeth McClellan



Juror Statement

Don Bacigalupi, Ph.D.

It was truly an honor to juror the 2016 Umlauf Prize. I want to thank my gracious hosts and colleagues for this occasion to return to Austin, to revisit the extraordinary UMLAUF Sculpture Garden & Museum, and to reconnect with my two time Alma Mater, the University of Texas.

Now, on to the artists. The pleasure of being in the studios of such bright and promising graduate students made the assignment both joyous and remarkably challenging—to choose a single prizewinner, that is. They were each generous with their time, forthcoming with their stories, and capably articulate when expressing the inspiration and trajectories of their work. In my view, each is worthy of our attention. Hearty congratulations, many thanks, and very best wishes to each of you.

Elizabeth McClellan's Welcome to EchindaLabs!

EchindaLabs is a complex, multi-faceted Gesamtkunstwerk by Elizabeth McClellan that reflects the extraordinary boundary-breaking creativity seen in some of today's most advanced and cross-disciplinary art practices. In communicating about her artistic practice, Elizabeth McClellan has an easy manner about her; her cheery explication of such complex and foreboding subjects as CRISPR-CAS9 and other gene editing technologies is disarming. And her work operates similarly. The work is inviting—bright and engaging—yet underpinned by a cautionary sense of looming danger. It falls to the dedicated and inquisitive viewer to seek out the darker hidden corners of the work and absorb their metaphors. Complex ethical issues abound in the real world of rapidly advancing genome-editing technologies, and McClellan capably invites us in for consideration. Situated within a fabricated space suggesting both laboratory and lux medical spa, EchindaLabs succeeds as both installation and audience-centered play/performance. Stepping into the waiting room, a visitor is confronted with the slick advertisements of the lab's product offerings. Borrowing from the visual language of both the global cosmetics industry and designer big pharma, these print and video ads mimic their real world counterparts even to the fine print warnings and side effect disclaimers.

The uncanny experience is deepened by the presence of seductive audio and video elements, which further invite the viewer into an engagement with the "lab" and its hostess. The artist describes the titular corporation as an actual character in the work, a sentient corporate being who is developing and learning through her interactions with us. This nightmare scenario posits a nearly omnipotent presence accumulating the very data that makes us who and what we are — and holding the key to alter and control our bodies and our futures.

While the built environment initially suggests a utopian future of beneficence and cutting-edge medical progress, the slippages in the system are manifest in the work's outdoor elements. Here the unmanageable aspects of a messy and vengeful nature persist in muddy and untamed shadows, beyond the reach of the ostensibly controlling EchindaLabs. She may promise better living through bio-engineering, but buyer beware!

Welcome to EchindaLabs, indeed.

About Don Bacigalupi

Don Bacigalupi earned his Ph.D. in Art History from the University of Texas at Austin in 1993. He is the Founding President of the Lucas Museum of Narrative Art. He has led a number of cultural institutions across the United States, occupying the roles of President and CEO of the Toledo Museum, Executive Director of the San Diego Museum of Art, and President of Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art. During his time at Crystal Bridges, Bacigalupi spearheaded an ambitious exhibition, *State of the Art: Discovering American Art Now*, where he embarked on a 100,000 mile quest to find unnoticed American artists. It culminated in an exhibition featuring over 100 American artists who previously had limited exposure. This project is in keeping with the goals of the UMLAUF Prize: to provide access to art made by those who live and work in our communities.



About Elizabeth McClellan

Elizabeth McClellan is a multimedia artist with a background in set design and theater arts. Her work centers on environmental storytelling, drawing on elements of news, science, and geographic histories to create immersive worlds that deeply explore sites of cultural change. Inspired by her professional experience in film and theater, she employs collaboration as a form and subject for her art, working with artists across fine arts and theatrical media to create multimedia projects that exist both physically as installation and as digital records. Based in Austin, Texas, McClellan is originally from Los Angeles, California. She received her MFA in painting from the University of Texas at Austin and has shown work in Chicago, Austin, New Orleans, New Haven, Providence, and Southern California. She has worked with theater and film collectives including UnderBelly Theater Collective in Austin (Church of the Passionate Cat) and Court 13 Arts Collective in New Orleans (*Beasts of the Southern Wild*), among others.

Welcome to EchindaLabs!®

Welcome to EchindaLabs!® is a multi-media work of immersive theater. The story centers on the fictional world of EchindaLabs, a young genetics company that sells modified designer viruses to enhance health and beauty. The audience is invited to EchindaLab's inaugural trade show in the main gallery of the Umlauf Sculpture Gardens. From there, the narrative unfolds in a multimedia environment that includes video, live performance, ibeacons for ios devices, and sculpture. Audience can walk through the gallery and go on a scavenger hunt through the gardens to discover the full story. They can play along by making live appointments with our lab technicians and follow the evolving narrative online.

At the core of EchindaLabs, virus is a metaphor to explore fear of, desire for, and contact with other people. Drawn from current news and scientific breakthroughs, the narrative becomes a container for conversations with other artists and audience about connection, contagion, and the sticky stuff we're made of.

