



Datascapes and Flower Power: Images of Science

Walk through the structure of lungs. Learn why identical twins develop physical differences. Look at microphotographs of cell forces. These are just some of the winners of the 2009 International Science and Engineering Visualization Challenge. Co-sponsored by the [NSF](#) and [Science Magazine](#), these and others show art can be used to convey scientific principles.

The representation of lung cells forming capillaries would arouse jealousy in the heart of any macrame artist. Created by biologist Peter Lloyd Jones and architect Jenny Sabin, the 3.5 meter tall sculpture of colored wires represents 5 snapshots of a computer simulation of the process. This is a magical approach to illustrate a very complex and detailed set of data. The 3-dimensional datascapes provides a tactile and functional picture much more manageable and understandable than graphs could ever be.

In "The Epigenetics of Identical Twins", Harmony Starr and Molly Malone illustrate how different life choices and environments change the actual genetic makeup of people who start out identical. With props like cotton clothesline pieces, glass-topped pins and a rolling pin, they bring understanding of complex genetic concepts. Sometimes we can achieve clarity with very simple props.

A photograph made during a study of forces that cells can exert yielded a photograph that could easily serve as a quilt pattern. Taken by Russell Taylor, Briana Whitaker and Brian Carstens during a study of cells can stitch together skin wounds, it exhibits a lovely hexagonal symmetry in a flower design.

Complicated scientific ideas can be visualized in marvellous ways. Check out all the winners.

And for the bigger picture, check out the [Astronomy Picture of the Day](#), which always has marvelous images of astrophysical science.