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Sitting on the Intersection of the Arts and Sciences
New York Stem Cell Foundation Unites Arts and Sciences at Spring Benefit

By Rebecca Bratburd
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The arts and sciences usually exist in two separate worlds, but on Thursday evening The New York Stem Cell Foundation united the two at its first spring benefit at the newly renovated New York Genome Center in SoHo.

Representing art, Dorothy Lichtenstein, Michael Joaquin Grey, Yigal Ozeri and Donald Sultan sat on a panel alongside NYSCF scientists Valentina Fossati and Scott Noggle.

Ms. Lichtenstein said she and her husband, the late pop artist Roy, shared an interest in science.



“I have always been interested in science, and that's what Roy read all the time,” she said.

She added that his interest revolved around technology and alternative energy, and that she is curious about DNA.

“I'm really interested in the role that DNA plays because it seems to be the basis of all living things,” Ms. Lichtenstein said. “I love that mistakes, which turn out to be mutations, are in fact beneficial and drive evolution.”

Behind the panel, Ms. Fossati's vivid images of cells were displayed. NYSCF CEO Susan L. Solomon said she considers them to be art.

“I think they're beautiful. I think the human body is art. When [scientists] choose images, they are very aware of creating beautiful images,” she said.

Mr. Sultan said he was, at first, skeptical of the evening's theme. “I was afraid it was going to drift off into something nonsensical but it stayed within the crux of, 'You work until you find something, and then you follow that,'” he said. “That's what everybody does, whether it's in the arts or sciences.”

One of the questions presented by the evening's moderator, journalist Paul Goldberger—and Ms. Solomon's husband—concerned the influence science has over art.

“Science is such a part of the way we live. I'm very fascinated by it, but it's not something I use in my art,” Mr. Sultan said.

Mr. Ozeri agreed. “The only thing scientists and artists have in common is pushing the boundaries and creating a better world,” he said.

Nonetheless, Ms. Fossati said that as a scientist, she found value in the evening's conversation.

“Scientists don't often have the opportunity to connect over art,” she said. “It's important to think outside the box and get inspiration from the world. All of these experiences can turn out some inspirations.”

Cocktails, dinner (which was donated by local restaurateurs) and a silent auction featuring artwork donated by the artists followed the panel. The funds raised will be used to continue NYSCF's research toward finding cures for maternal mitochondrial disease, diabetes, bone diseases and other areas of stem cell research.

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