

Katja Seltsmann/Irene Moon

Irene Moon Laboratories/ Begonia Society

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Artists Statement

Description and History:

Since 1997, Scientifically Speaking with Irene Moon has been presenting The Lectography: musical lectures about insects and other arthropods. About 30 different lectures have been performed on about 500 occasions. This includes two European tours and one Australian tour near the end of 2000. Also, live radio broadcasts dealing with entomological topics on WFMU in New York and on the World Wide Web are presented and archived at <http://www.wfmu.org>. The most recent activities of Irene Moon are listed through the Begonia Society website at: <http://www.begoniasociety.com>.

I received my Masters degree in Entomology/ Evolutionary Biology in 2006. This experience as a Graduate student at the Department of Entomology at the University of Kentucky and a technician in Entomology for ten plus years creates an interesting platform for science and art, focusing on the process of academia and the laboratory aesthetic. The laboratory aesthetic is brought in front of alternative audiences (art galleries and music venues), in the form of an absurd, however truly factual, presentation about insects. The present power point presentation is a New Wave lecture on cockroaches titled "You, the Charmer." Other recent lectures include "The Social Hour," an introduction to insect sociality and its comparison to human etiquette at social high society social functions, "Their Stinging Hairs," a big band and torch song presentation about irritating hairs of certain moth larvae and "I'll Be Seeing You, Dreadful creature," a reenactment of blood-feeding moths in Asia that are often pests of zoo bovines.

Statement of intent:

History has often given us the mimic, or the fool, to show us our own folly.

The natural sciences are an imperfect art, idealized and often misinterpreted by the public. Irene Moon's installations, happenings, and films, presented under a scientific pretext, introduce chaos and decadence into this assumed sterile realm, revealing underlying dependences in society on progress and the images symbolizing the advancement of humankind. The educational goals are general science, entomology and the Moon aesthetic. Recent work explores communication of scientific thought, idiosyncrasies and stereotypes of the scientists/lecturers and the assimilation of scientific advancement into our daily experience. This is primarily expressed through a series of factual lectures, with video/powerpoint presentations, handouts, demonstrations, original music, and lives specimens. Pop quizzes and torch songs for larvae accompany Irene Moon.

Irene Moon, the public persona of the Begonia Society, was created as a synthesis of a stereotypical high school algebra teacher and one of the Lennon sisters in the early days of the Lawrence Welk Show. She is quite strict, verbose, well articulated—and always dressed to perfection. Under the name Irene Moon I have proceeded in creating multimedia environments, film, happenings, and music: "for your pleasure or perhaps only just for mine."

Art and Education:

Although arguably Scientifically Speaking with Irene Moon is primarily artistic in nature, the presentations have a strong educational impact upon the unknowing students. The Moon audience generally consists of members in the art community, experimental radio listeners, and frequenters of the late night music clubs. This audience, generally mid-20s to 40, tends to be very surprised and receptive of the educational opportunity they are given. Elemental entomology is taught through humor and music, speaking in a colorful and vibrant visual language that holds the interest of this fast-minded generation of music videos and wireless Internet. Often the person walks away with a greater understanding of insect diversity and complexity, combating the common misconception that the only good bug is a dead one. Besides concrete appreciation for the individual organisms in the presentation, it is a primary focus to highlight the dedication and creativity of individual Entomologists whom are great contributors in the field. Now, professionally, this ability to explain scientists attitudes and feelings visually has put me in a role as biologist in a software development project called morphbank <www.morphbank.net> as designer and communication liaison between the software developers and the needs of the scientists.

Education:

September 2006

Hymenoptera Short Course, Portal, AZ. Participated in weeklong course in Hymenoptera taxonomy and collecting.

January 2002—December 2005. University of Kentucky, Department of Entomology, Dr. Michael Sharkey. Received a Masters of Science with a concentration in Entomology. Masters Program in Insect Systematics with a focus on bioinformatics.

Winter 1993-Winter 1998

University of Georgia, Bachelor of Fine Arts with a concentration in drawing/painting

1995-1996

Ecole d'Art d'Aix en Provence, France.

Guest student and artist's assistant at this institute for art and technology, Department of New Media.

Fall 1990-Spring 1992

North Carolina State University, Zoology Student

Entomology Research:

Florida State University, School of Computational Sciences.

Curator and Biologist for Morphbank Project April 2006-Current.

Work with Morphbank biological image database.

<<http://www.morphbank.net>>. Provide a biological perspective in development of tools for future implementation into the Morphbank system, assist in uploading large image collections and associated data and development of software tools..

Related Research 2005-Current

1. Online version of key to Nearctic Chalcidoidea; written in PHP and using images deposited in morphbank to populate key. <<http://www.codex.begoniasociety.org/chalcidkey/>>
2. Image database and of apterous/ brachypterous Hymenoptera of the world.
3. Creation of Web native key using mx <<http://sourceforge.net/projects/mx-database>> and the Wharton Key Builder (M.J. Yoder). Including a description of a new genus with speculation on the adaptation of the loss of ocelli in myrmecophilous Hymenoptera.

Graduate Research Assistant. University of Kentucky, Department of Entomology. Dr. Michael Sharkey, January 2002- March 2006.

Development of interactive keys to the Hymenopteran families using D.E.L.T.A. (DEscription Language for Taxonomy). Photograph key characters using automontage by Syncroscopy© and database these characters as part of the Large Scale Phylogenetic Analysis of the Hymenoptera project funded by the National Science Foundation. Make these keys available on the Internet for use by researchers, extension specialists and the community.

Research Technician , University of Georgia, Department of Entomology

Dr. Charles W. Berisford, March 1998-January 2002 Microsporidia LD50 studies with the US

Forest Service, Dr. James Hanula Involving a pathogenic protozoan in the class Microsporea, similar to *Nosema sp.* Spruce Coneworm, *Dioryctria amatella*, second instar larvae inoculated with set concentrations of microsporidia are allowed to develop on uncontaminated diet. Survivorship and pupal weights are recorded. Moribund pupae and deceased larvae are dissected, determining the presence of spores. Presently, infected female *D. amatella* and non-infected males are paired in hopes of evaluating effectiveness of trans-ovarial transmission. Maintenance of a colony of *Dioryctria amatella* .

Roptrocerus xylophagorum project with Brian Sullivan

Responsibilities included maintenance of a continuous reared colony of pine beetle parasitoid *Roptrocerus xylophagorum* and pine beetle host *Ips granicollis*. Supplying the insects with basic needs, assessing the colony vigor, and diagnosis of present or potential problems within the colony. Bioassays using a Y-tube

olfactometer, experiencing female *R. xylophagorum* prior to experimentation, observing and recording behavior and behavioral changes in *R. xylophagorum* and *I. grandicollis*.

Research Assistant , University of Georgia, Department of Entomology

Dr. Michael Adang, May 1997-1999

Primary job rearing a *Bacillus thuringiensis* resistant, sustainable, colony of *Heliothis virescens*, bioassay the colonies progress, carry out selection and fecundity experiments, observe and diagnose current and potential problems in colonies and rearing techniques.

Rearing multiple species of insects including *Manduca sexta*, *Ostrinia nubilalis*, *Diabrotica virgifera*, *Spodoptera exigua*, *Heliothis zea* and *Plutella xylostella*

Dissection of insects to obtain the larval mid-gut. Mid-gut and whole insect body isolation of brush border membranes, qualified enzyme activity in insect tissue and determination of protein concentration by quantitated aminopeptidase Bradford Assay.

Research Assistant , North Carolina State University, Department of Entomology

Dr. Fred Gould, 1989-1992

Worked primarily with graduate student Tracy Johnson

Responsibilities included colonies of *H. virescens* parasitoids, *Campoletis sonorensis* and *Cardiochiles nigericeps*

Laboratory and field observations of parasitoids and behavioral interrelations with *H. virescens* on toxic plants and/or in the presence of other natural enemies

Entomology Professional Publications:

Online Publication Links <<http://codex.begoniasociety.org/>>

Seltmann, Katja & M. Sharkey. 2007. A new genus and species of apterous Doryctinae (Hymenoptera: Braconidae) from Costa Rica. *Zootaxa*. 1415: 17-24.

Nowak, John. T., Christopher J. Fettig, Kenneth W. McCravy, Christopher S. Asaro, Katja C. Seltmann, Richard C. Reardon & C. W. Berisford. 2001. Guide to Common Natural Enemies of the Nantucket Pine Tip Moth. United States Forest Service, Forest Health Technology Enterprise Team.

Sullivan, Brian T., Eva M. Petterson, Katja Seltmann, & C.W. Berisford. 2000. Attraction of the Bark Beetle Parasitoid *Roptrocerus xylophagorum* to Host-Associated Olfactory Cues. *Environmental Entomology* 29(6): 1138-1151.

Sullivan, Brian T., Katja Seltmann, & C.W. Berisford.1999. A Simple and Continuous Rearing Technique for the Bark Beetle Parasitoid, *Roptrocerus xylophagorum*. *Journal of Entomological Sciences* 34(2): 260-264.

Entomology Professional Presentations:

April 2007

Invited Speaker. New York Botanical Gardens. Bronx, NY. Morphbank project.

April 2007

Invited Speaker. American Museum of Natural History. New York, NY. Morphbank project.

March 2007

Invited Speaker. Invited Speaker. Partnerships for Enhancing Expertise in Taxonomy meeting, Athens, GA. Morphbank project.

January 2007

Invited Speaker. American Museum of Natural History, Washington, DC. Morphbank project.

December 2006

Entomological Collections Network Meeting, December 2006. Indianapolis, IN. Morphbank project.

May 2004

Summer Symposium of the Center for Ecology, Evolution and Behavior. *Interactive keys for insect identification.*

November 2003

Entomological Society of America Meeting. *Building an Interactive Key for the Hymenoptera.*

November 2003

Entomological Society of America Meeting. Insect Art and Culture Symposium. NewWave Entomology and the Post Modern Lecture.

May 2002

Summer Symposium of the Center for Ecology, Evolution and Behavior. Building a Pleasing Key to the Families of Hymenoptera

Artistic Aspect:

Performances/Selected Exhibitions (1996-2007)

<<http://begoniasociety.org/archive.php>>

2007

UbuWeb is now archiving many of the films from the Begonia Society, including the early Super8 films and the films of the Auk Theatre <<http://www.ubu.com/film/moon.html>>

April 2007

WFMU Listener Hour broadcast. Archive online

<<http://www.wfmu.org/playlists/LH>>

April 2007

No Future Fest++, Chapel Hill, North Carolina

April 2007

Anthology Film Archives. New York, NY. Entomelodical Opportunity: An Evening of Film, Insects, Fables and Electronic Moodsapes from Irene Moon and Marcia Bassett

November 12 2007

Films being shown as part of the Colour out of Space Festival Brighton, England

October, 2007

Club short Florida tour with Wolf Eyes and John Wiese, Auk Theatre

March, 2006

MonkeyTown Gallery, Brooklyn, New York

in each of three bathrooms, 25 artists, musicians, and criminals have each submitted tracks between 60 - 90 seconds. Monkey Town's Bathroom Sound Series was curated by Dr. Robert McNeill, of the Country Teasers. Includes: Sarah Bernat, Climax Golden Twins, Leighton Crook, Shannon Fields, Dan Hougland, Alex Hubbard, Hurray, Caroline Linder, Lucas & Friends, Alastair Mackinven, Michael Mahalchick, Robert McNeill, Angela Means, Rob Millis, Irene Moon, Scott Mou, Sophie Politowicz, Tom Roe, John Fell Ryan, Amir Shoat, Skills on Ampex, Tom Travelute, Benedict Wallers

March 2006

EDUCATION ART: The Afterschool Supplemental, Ontario College of Art & Design. Performance evening.

January 2005

Scientifically Speaking, Auk Theatre and the Hymenoptera Images are all being presented at the Asheville Fringe Festival

Many shows including two tours with an August 2005 tour of the Northeast United States with Eyes and Arms of Smoke (Hair Police) and a October 2005 tour with Mudboy and Wizzards (Bug Sized Mind, Lightning Bolt)

December 2005

Scientifically Speaking with Irene Moon presents at this years Entomological Society of America meeting in Fort Lauderdale Florida during the Student Awards Banquet.

May 2005

IGNIVOMOUS PRESENTS: ART*^<!? WORK. New York, NY. Artists set up in office cubicles on Eighth Avenue Between 36th and 37th Street. Artists Include: Brian Alfred, Bengala, Yoav Bergner, Kevin Bewersdorf, Evan Greenfield, Sabrina Gschwandtner, Elana Langer, LoVid, Tony Luib, Cat Mazza, Tom Moody, N.I.N.E., Douglas Repetto, Michelle Rosenberg, Erika Somogyi

April, 2005

Modern Formations Gallery and Performance Space, Pittsburg, PA.

March 2004

Alteractive series at the Cincinnati playhouse

February 2004

International Noise Conference, Miami Florida

May 2003

Improvised and Otherwise Festival, Brooklyn New York

January 2003

Gallery Free 103, New York with Monotona and Zeek Sheck

January 2003—2006

Weekly entomological radio series and music on WRFL 88.1 fm in Lexington, and web streaming at <http://128.163.156.148:9000>

November 2002

Gallery Eyedrum (www.eyedrum.org), video installation, "This is a lovely way to spend an evening," Atlanta, GA.

January 2002

Began Masters research at the University of Kentucky in the Department of Entomology (see Entomological resume)

May 2001

Artist's of Art and Science, public works, Atlanta GA
"Larva at camp," sound installation with giant *Manduca sexta* larva.

October 2000

"Parasitoid and Our Best Behavior" Australia Tour

Including: radio interview on Australian Radio National, Other Worlds with Brent Clough Newcastle, This is Not Art Festival: Sidney, Mumeson: Perth, Melbourne and Adelaide.

October 2000.

Very Nice-DJ/Cabarett, "Roving Polka Party"—Endless loop tapes, card board sausages, leiderhosen, record players and beer. Athens, Ga.

September 2000

"Lovely Moth", Lecture/Northeast Tour.

Including: Live at the Stork Club, WFMU radio, NY, Good/Bad Art Collective, Brooklyn, NY, Fort Thunder, Providence, RI and Barking Legs Theatre, Chattanooga, TN.

May 2000.

Suddenly Affordable ."Goastshow with Byrd Kalymegraph" Large Ghost puppets, lab equipment and mood lighting. Gallery Eyedrum, Atlanta, GA. (www.eyedrum.org)

March-April 2000

"You The Charmer", Lecture/European Tour

April 25. Club 2, Munchen, Germany.
April 23. Reithalle, Bern, Switzerland.
April 22. Eisenbahn Werkstatt, Stuttgart, Germany.
April 20. Bastard, Berlin, Germany.
April 19. Hai Fish Bar, Braunschweig, Germany.
April 18. Meanie Bar, Hamburg, Germany.
April 16. Live Radio Hamburg, WFSK, Germany.
April 15. De Kalenderpanden, Amsterdam, Netherlands.
April 14. The Pits, Kortrijk, Belgium.
April 13. Extra Pool, Nijmegen, Netherlands.
April 8. Klub Shabu, Wien, Austria.
April 7. Angi Pub, Trento, Italy.
April 5. KSET, Zagreb, Croatia.
April 4. Druzba, Linz, Austria.
March 30. Astra Stube, Hamburg, Germany.
March 26. FZ Friesenstr.
March 25. Silke Arp, Hannover, Germany.
March 24. Hafen Klang, Hamburg, Germany.
March 23. Vera, Groningen, Germany.

February 2000.

"Ill Be Seeing You Dreadful Creature", lecture for Here, Kitty Kitty, Nexus Contemporary Arts Center, Atlanta, GA.

Jan 15-February 26, 2000.

"Educational Opportunity #29" presented at Here, Kitty, Kitty. Insect television, live insects, and insects dressed in human clothing. Nexus Contemporary Arts Center, Atlanta, GA.

October 1999

Very Nice-DJ/Cabaret, preformed with Hans-Joachim Roedelius, Tasty World, Athens, GA.

August 14-September 6, 1999.

"Low Frequency Advances in Pre-Teen Intelligences", video installation with live insects and associated lecture on the comparison of "Moth vs. Mothman", Eyedrum, Atlanta, GA.

March-April 1999

"The Social Hour". Lecture/European Tour with Melted Men and Mr. Quintron and Miss Pussycat

March 25. Gallerie Berlin-Tokyo, Berlin Germany.
March 27. Rahoord, Amsterdam, Holland.
April 8. Molotow, Hamburg, Germany.
April 9. Silke Arp, Hanover, Germany.
April 10. AJZ, Bielefeld, Germany.

March 26-April 10, 1999.

“After Hours at the Rearing Room”. Sound sculpture with live Manduca sexta moths, freestanding house, and preserved insect specimens dressed in clothing, Eyedrum, Atlanta, GA.

January 1999.

“Outdated Behavioral Experiments and Museum Mounted Specimens”, Installation/lecture with paintings, photos, and preserved specimens dressed in human clothes presented historically. The Empire Exchange, Athens, GA.

October 1998.

“Eva Gabor and Ootheca”. Mixed-media installation including paintings, insect cages and sound. Presented at the Athens Film Festival, Gold Star.

September 1998

“Pleasantly Planarian” and “Ill Be Seeing You Dreadful Creature. Lecture/Northeast Tour.

Including: Fakeshop, Brooklyn, NY., Other Music, New York City, The Knitting Factory, New York City. Gallery Insekt, Boston., Good/Bad Art Collective, Denton, TX., and the Zeitgeist Gallery, New Orleans, LA.

December 1998.

“Pleasantly Land Planarian”. Installation/lecture with photographs, air pumps, colored liquid and sound, Gold Star, Athens, GA.

August 1997.

“Dedicated to Wigglesworth, Excerpts from Field Station A”. Mixed-media installation/lecture including insect cages, live specimens, paper mache and film loops. Lamar Dodd School of Art, Athens, GA.

August 1997.

“The Preferred Host”. Lecture, preformed at the Improvisational Festival, Birmingham, AL.

July 1997.

“The In-Laws Prefer Separate Accommodations”, Multi-media installation with belljar, transparent images and live specimens. Lowery Gallery, Watkinsville, GA.

June 1997

“I’m Forever Blowing Bubbles”. Lecture/tour.

Including: The Cave Gallery, Brooklyn, NY., New Arts Salon, Philadelphia, PA. and the Salvador Dali Museum, St. Petersburg, FL.

October 1996.

“Lifecycle of an Unknown Bacterium”, live mosquitoes and blow flies, 16mm film loops, glassware, cheesecloth cages, paper mache rodents and eyeballs.

June 1996.

“Habitat”. solo exhibition at Gallery Garcia, Marseille, France.

May 1996.

“Pas L’Amour, mais de Films”. Original showing of the “Insectavore” 16mm film buried with maggots to decompose image, Gallery Roulette, Marseille, France.

April 1996.

“Life Span”. Wall sculpture, ceramic and photomontage, CIRVA exhibition, Marseille, France.

March 1996.

“Habitat”. Installation with plastic insects moving in an environment, power and sound provided by two reel to reel players, Laboratoire, Espase, Intelligent, Language exhibition at Ecole d’Art d’Aix en Provence, France.

December 1995- February 1996.

“The Collection of the Late Howell Bend”. White ceramic insects as projection screen for 16 mm decayed film, Gallery Gudde, Koln, Germany.

Musical Releases:

Irene Moon and the Begonia Society has been creating musical releases on CD, record and cassette since 1997. Collaborations on these releases are numerous but include: Hair Police, People Like Us, Ergo Phizmiz, MudBoy and Warmer Milks. A list of recordings are available here:
<<http://begoniasociety.org/recordings.php>>