FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

UCLA Art|Sci Center presents
Seres: Inhabitants of the Land of Silk

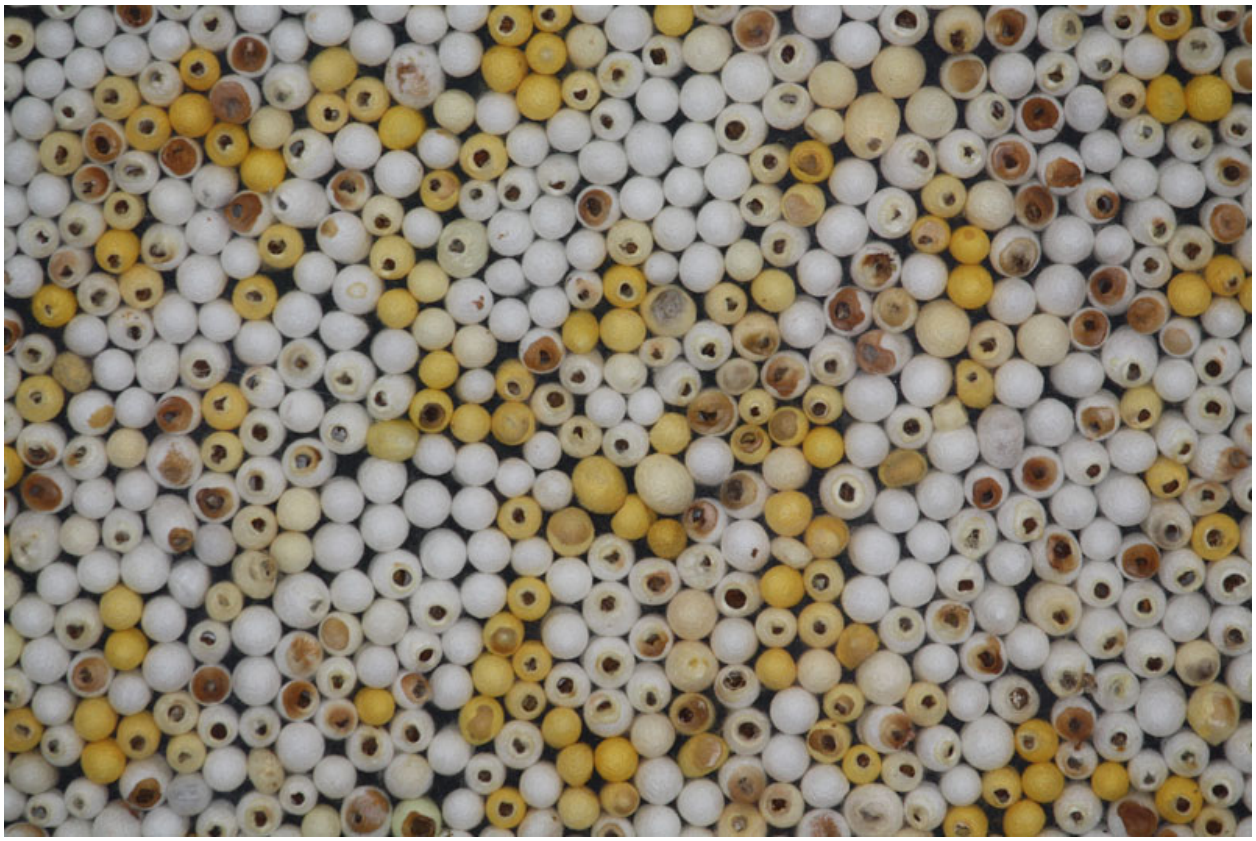

Image: *Untitled*, Jason Fahrion, silk cocoons, plexiglas, 2014

Title: *Seres: Inhabitants of the Land of Silk*
Exhibitors: Jason Fahrion, UCLA iGEM and Art|Sci Collective
Curator: Mick Lorusso

Opening: October 2, 5-7pm

LASER (Leonardo Art Science Evening Rendezvous): 7-9pm
Speakers include Jason Fahrion, UCLA iGEM, Ryan Straka, and Fabian Wagmister

UCLA Art|Sci Gallery
Room 5419, 5th floor
CNSI (California Nanosystems Institute)
UCLA, 570 Westwood Plaza,
Los Angeles, CA 90095

artsci.ucla.edu

UCLA Art|Sci Gallery is pleased to present the exhibition *Seres: Inhabitants of The Land of Silk*, named after the ancient Roman term for the people who lived in a region of what would be present-day Northwestern China, people who cultivated and traded silk. Additionally, the word “seres” in Spanish means “beings”, an apt reference to the many organisms that produce silk, and to the human beings involved in the mass fabrication of this fiber. Silk has long been coveted for its softness, its temperature regulation, and its shimmering, evanescent appearance. In *Seres: Inhabitants of the Land of Silk*, artists and scientists explore the processes behind the creation of silk, including the manner in which different organisms such as the silkworm and spider spin out unique forms of silk. Young scientists in the UCLA iGEM (a team in the International Genetically Engineered Machine competition) are working to reproduce these processes with bacteria and microfluidic devices, to develop varieties of silk with properties that could be useful in medicine, fashion, and even for self defense. The artist Jason Fahrion, whose work will be shown along side iGEM’s, sources local mulberry leaves to raise silkworms for visual arrangements of cocoons that create energy field patterns in both natural and UV light.

Jason Fahrion embarked on a multiple year long enterprise to incubate, hatch, and nurture thousands of silkworms in his garage, fed with immense quantities of leaves that he gathered from local mulberry trees in Orange County. What he describes as a concentrated effort in consciousness and diligence resulted in large panel arrangements of silkworm cocoons in plexiglas cases with an aesthetic somewhere between abstract expressionism and nano-scale imaging of cells or molecules.

The undergraduate scientist team of UCLA iGEM imagines the myriad of applications that engineered fluorescent spider silk could have, from fashion to medicine. In the show, we get a glimpse of some of those future applications, while examining samples from their laboratory process to create synthetic silks using genetically modified bacteria.

Art|Sci Collective members exhibit stories, books, images, and ideas about silk. Stories of people’s relationships to silk—including imagery from the Silk Museum and silk markets in Shanghai, stories of raising silkworms as children in China and in the United States, and treatises on the art of silk cultivation—combine with musings on silk from the iGEM scientists and live silk worms from Fahrion’s collection.

Seres: Inhabitants of the Land of Silk evokes the ancient human relationships that we have formed with silk worms, and now with bacteria as the "chassis" for the production of silk in the iGEM project.

Following our opening night reception on October 2nd from 5-7 pm, *Seres: Inhabitants of the Land of Silk* will run from October 3rd to October 22nd, and is open by appointment only.

To schedule an appointment or for more information contact:
artscicenter@gmail.com