

Natural Selection

A NEWSLETTER OF THE ROCKEFELLER UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY

Book Review:

***Entering an Unseen World: A Founding Laboratory and Origins of Modern Cell Biology 1910-1974*, by Carol L. Moberg, The Rockefeller University Press, 2012**

JOSEPH LUNA

The birth of a scientific field often combines new technology with bold hypotheses, unexpected collaboration, and a healthy dose of luck. There's also time, that ultimate arbiter of the significant, upon which a new field grows and matures, from puzzling first glimpses to textbook diagrams and beyond. Increasingly in today's world, inhabited by 90% of all the scientists who've ever lived¹, the pace has quickened, but the basic arc remains the same: new tools are seized upon with fresh minds, and the results are often breathtaking.

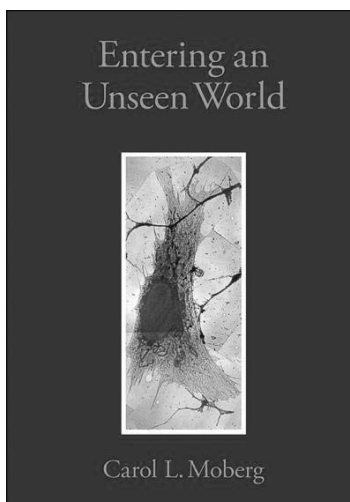
The story of modern cell biology in the twentieth century presents a fascinating case study of this trajectory, considering the strides made by its predecessor, cytology. Tracing a direct route from van Leeuwenhoek's first microscope to Hooke's descriptions of cork (from which the term "cell" was coined) in the seventeenth century, cytologists by the 19th century had the impression that cells were worlds unto themselves, with analyses of visible structures such as mitochondria, golgi bodies, and nuclei, and with microscopic descriptions of processes such as cell division. But by the early twentieth century, the resolving powers of the light microscope had reached their limit, and the study of the fine structures of cells remained out of reach, if they existed at all. There wasn't much to counter the argument that while cells were the basic units of life, they were largely devoid of subcellular structure.

Entering an Unseen World: A Founding Laboratory and Origins of Modern Cell Biology 1910-1974, written by Steinman lab Senior Research Associate Carol L. Moberg, picks up the tale from here and tells the story of how everything changed, starting in 1910, and originating in one laboratory at the then newly created Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research. That was the year when James B. Murphy joined the laboratory of Peyton Rous to study cancer. Within a year, Rous published his famous discovery of an infectious sarcoma of chickens that upended traditional views of cancer as uncontrolled and spontaneous cell growth. Murphy disagreed with the viral cause of these tumors, as he could see no reason for some other stimulus to provoke cancer. This question, on the viral or chemical origin of cancer, divided the two researchers, who eventually drifted apart when Murphy was promoted and put in charge of his own laboratory. Part of what made Murphy's doubt fruitful over the next two decades was that it forced him to ask an even more basic and heroic question: notwithstanding the cause of cancer, if its basis lay within the cell, then what precisely was inside the cell?

This line of thinking, to break cells open and study their normal structures, functions, and dysfunction during disease, formed the roots upon which cell biology formally sprouted in the 1940s, when Keith Porter and Albert Claude (members of Murphy's laboratory) working with Ernest Fullam, applied the use of the electron microscope (EM) to study the fine structure of cells. Their first EM picture, one that graces the cover of this book, is widely cited as the formal genesis of modern cell biology. Yet while the proverbial "and the rest is history" may apply, Dr. Moberg refreshingly goes much farther beyond the narrative history of the young science to highlight the motivations that drove its key figures—Porter, Claude, and later George E. Palade—to invent, shape, and standardize the nascent field. For them and the many beyond living memory, Dr. Moberg's expertise as a science historian pieces a comprehensive and detailed, yet readable and exciting, history. Combined with entertaining anecdotes from Porter, Claude, Rollin Hotchkiss, and others, the result is an immediate and human portrait of cell biology as a distinct Rockefeller creation.

This history is further brought to life in the second part of the book. Since 1995, Dr. Moberg has also assembled and edited an impressive roster of voices to tell the story of cell biology at RU in their own words. Often told in the first person, these histories offer a glimpse of Rockefeller amid the excitement of the 1950s through the 1970s, when the workings of many organelles were figured out under the "Palade model" of combining cell fractionation experiments to probe function, and EM to probe structure. And what a remarkable model it turned out to be: during this period were made the discoveries upon which a quarter of the university's 24 Nobel prizes are based.

In this atmosphere, we journey with Christian de Duve to discover, purify, and characterize the lysosome in vivid detail. We witness James Jamieson, then a struggling 4th year PhD student, strike gold with an experiment that determined the direction of protein synthesis from the endoplasmic reticulum to the golgi apparatus and beyond. We get a glimpse of what it was like for Mary Bonneville, the first female graduate student of the university, to work with Porter and produce the Porter-Bonneville Atlas, a popular reference of all known EM structures at the time. Perhaps the most thrilling example, however, is Ralph Steinman's account of the discovery of the dendritic cell—where the tools of cell biology proved decisive in allowing him to characterize DCs as the bridge between the innate



Credit: RU Press.

and adaptive immune responses.

For biologists of all stripes, there is much to learn from these histories of a field maturing into an important and firmly grounded discipline within biology. And the tones of many of the contributors, while at times wistful, remain forceful in conveying the exhilaration of being at a beginning. Ultimately, this book is a celebration of great science, and a celebration of a principal scientific legacy of this university.

In his 1974 Nobel lecture, at the book's thematic close, Albert Claude offered his view of the significance of the field he helped create. "We have entered the cell, the Mansion of our birth, and started the inventory of our acquired wealth." *Entering an Unseen World* presents a rich and inspiring history for all students of biology to inventory in one sumptuous volume. For this student, it is a poignant reminder of the Rockefeller University that was, and is. ☉

References:

- 1) David Goldstein—The Big Crunch (http://www.its.caltech.edu/~dg/crunch_art.html)
- 2) Albert Claude—Nobel Lecture: The Coming Age of the Cell. Nobelprize.org

Available in hardcover (\$40) and eBook (\$20) at books.rupress.org. RU employees can receive a 25% discount by entering code RUEMPLOY in their shopping cart prior to checkout.

Natural Selections

Editorial Board

EDITORIAL BOARD

Daniel Briskin
Cynthia Duggan
Carly Gelfond
Melina Herman
Jim Keller
Aileen Marshall
Engin Ozertugrul
Christina Pyrgaki
Susan Russo

selections.rockefeller.edu
nseeditors@rockefeller.edu

CULTURE DESK: Abstraction in Art and Music—Reviews of Various Recent Museum Exhibitions and a Concert at Carnegie Hall

BERNIE LANGS

The basic definition of abstraction, gleaned from the ubiquitous Internet encyclopedia, is "a process by which concepts are derived from the usage and classification of literal ('real' or 'concrete') concepts, first principles, or other methods. 'An abstraction' is the product of this process—a concept that acts as a super-categorical noun for all subordinate concepts, and connects any related concepts as a group, field, or category." Furthermore, "Abstraction in philosophy is the process in concept-formation of recognizing some set of common features in individuals, and on that basis forming a concept of that feature." This is by way of introducing some thoughts on recent art exhibitions featuring abstract art as compared to those of representational art, and the process of philosophical abstract musing while listening to a live classical music concert.

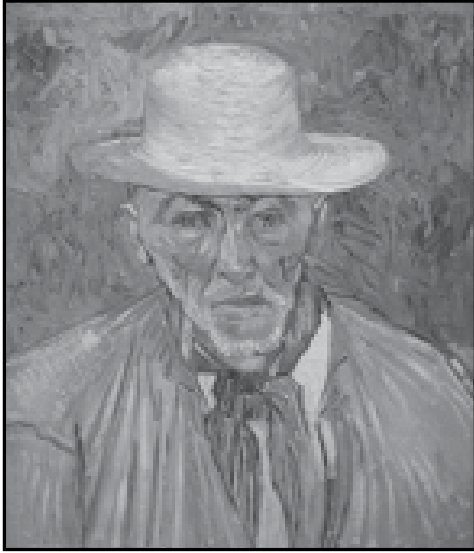
Abstract art is defined as "art unconcerned with the literal depiction of things from the visible world." But that is not to deny that representational art can evoke abstract thoughts in the viewer. And that's the rub. The exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), "Inventing Abstraction, 1910-1925" (through April 15, 2013) has its share of excellent paintings, but left me wanting more in terms of being thought-provoking or exciting. I don't go by the creed, to bastardize Jane Austen's idea (on dancing), that "any savage can scribble on the page and call it art." I love abstract art because, when it's done well, it's a very quick conduit to a silent, near-mystic place of ideas and pure concepts. Buddhist sutras warn that "Emptiness is not empty," but while strolling through this exhibition, I kept hoping for and craving better and more stimulating works of art. I felt that the place in my thoughts where I wished to find a peaceful mindset from the removal of "real" images was filled instead by a feeling of disappointed dullness and a longing for more intellectual substance.

For example, the necessary paintings for the show's theme by Piet Mondrian depicting the evolution of his grid-style paintings are finely represented and were given a nice little corner in the exhibition, but they are only of historical interest. After seeing Mondrian for years, he's now been reduced for me to just an educational tool on the history of painting, whereas Picasso, who remained representational while redefining and capturing an object's abstract essence, continues to be vibrant and exhilarating. The Duchamp pieces I'd dreaded in the MoMA exhibition were among the best in the show. Duchamp remains chilling, stimulating, and an idea machine, often in a very dark and frightening way, yet also with a touch of black humor. The artists Arp and Malevich both have fine examples of their work represented in the exhibition. In terms of education, the show works, but the many pieces that aren't very exciting made me realize that I don't go to the museum for a textbook art history class, I go to see paintings that communicate something rare and precious. This wasn't really happening for me at this show.

Uptown, at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, I had a similar reaction to the exhibition, "Matisse: In Search of True Painting" (running through March 17, 2013). The very idea of getting to the essence of true painting, or the Platonic "form" of a painting, is an interesting, abstract one, but it wasn't interesting here. The amusement of seeing how Matisse re-worked certain ideas and images wore thin for me quite quickly. It was a slideshow at best, another history lesson. As I was leaving the museum, I happened to go through a gallery and found myself facing a large, ancient sculpture of the torso of a fully armed Roman general; it was a dumbfounding moment. Here was a beautifully chiseled piece that summed up an entire era of history—that of Imperial Rome, and

my thoughts raced on the complexities of the history of Roman warfare, on the concepts of honor and fame, on the Empire in all its bloody glory and shame, all conveyed by the hand of an anonymous craftsman. Hundreds of years of living, breathing history wrapped up magnificently in a single sculpture.

Van Gogh's *Portrait of a Peasant* at The Frick Collection (no longer on view) was equally startling. I'll never tire of musing on



Portrait of a Peasant by Vincent Van Gogh. Credit: Wikipedia.

and learning from Van Gogh. I delight in his revolutionary thick paint thrown onto the canvas, and my thoughts, outside of general wonder and appreciation, run the gamut: what is it that makes a Van Gogh so enlightening? What is it about his technique that is so enticing? How had he conceived of his style, which turned on like a light switch to add color and texture to the dull, nineteenth century world? Why is Van Gogh's portrait more vibrant and alive than others of this period? How is it able to deliver the soul of the sitter?

What constitutes a quantum leap in art and what is its relationship to the society of its time?

Lastly, classical music, a genre which I enjoy but of which I have limited knowledge, has its abstract schools, often related to Modernism of the early and mid-twentieth century. I noted two years ago in these pages that I attended a New York Philharmonic performance of Shostakovich's *Fifth Symphony* at which I let my mind soar to abstract ideas, mostly by closing my eyes and letting my mind's inner workings freely roam. In January 2013, I was treated to a performance by the Philadelphia Orchestra and my host had garnered a ticket in such close proximity to the musicians that the concert experience changed for me. We sat in the first tier, hovering over the stage. I could see the very notes on the orchestra members' music pages and, for the first time, continuously through the evening, could see the facial expressions of the conductor, the young and extraordinary Yannick Nézet-Séguin.

Being able to see every nuance was a game-changer; I never shut my eyes. The music became something pure in itself. Music is pure abstraction to begin with. It's the random collection of the bleating of reconstituted metals (horns) or the physics of stroking strings stretched on wooden frames and so on. The grand total of all these organized sounds during the Shostakovich was beyond anything I've ever heard in classical music. I didn't experience imaginative "ideas" racing through my head nor did I reach a pseudo-Nirvanic state. It was just an incredible, overwhelming, melodic, joyful tour de force of powerful sound, which led to a plethora of emotional reactions.

At the conclusion of the piece, my friend turned to me immediately and said, "I'll remember this for the rest of my life." The crowd gave the orchestra and Mr. Nézet-Séguin an ovation the likes of which I've never heard before at any musical performance. We'd all been together for a very special experience and we all wanted to show our deep appreciation and to give unbounded thanks to the orchestra.®

For Your Consideration—Crystal Ball Edition

JIM KELLER

With February's Academy Awards quickly becoming a distant memory, let's gaze into the crystal ball and see what 2013 has in store. There, we can see shimmering particles slowly come together to create what will become concrete images, baring the faces of tomorrow's contenders. What controversy awaits? What new names will become second nature? Here are some films debuting this year that could be the answers we look for.

Gravity (director: Alfonso Cuarón):

Why you might like it: The lone survivor of a space mission to repair the Hubble telescope desperately tries to return to Earth and reunite with her daughter.

Why I've got my eye on it: Besides fea-

turing Oscar winners Sandra Bullock and George Clooney, Cuarón earned critical acclaim with 2006's *Children of Men* and 2001's *Y Tu Mamá También*.

August: Osage County (director: John Wells):

Why you might like it: A family overcomes their differences when their alcoholic patriarch goes missing.

Why I've got my eye on it: Meryl Streep is the lead in this Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award-winning play.

Twelve Years a Slave (director: Steve McQueen):

Why you might like it: Based on the 1853 autobiography of Solomon Northrup, it tells

of Northrup's tragic kidnapping in Washington DC in 1841, where, despite being born free, he was forced into slavery in Louisiana until his rescue 12 years later.

Why I've got my eye on it: McQueen is always one to watch and has reunited with *Shame*'s Michael Fassbender. It also features Brad Pitt, Benedict Cumberbatch, and Quevanzhane Wallis, among others.

Saving Mr. Banks (director: John Lee Hancock):

Why you might like it: Author P.L. Travers travels from London to Hollywood in this untold story of how Disney's *Mary Poppins* made it to the big screen.

Why I've got my eye on it: Emma Thompson as Travers and Tom Hanks as

Walt Disney? Sold!

Inside Llewyn Davis (director: Joel & Ethan Coen):

Why you might like it: You're a fan of the Coen's unending talent.

Why I've got my eye on it: While the film's synopsis is simple: a singer-songwriter navigates the 1960s folk music scene in New York's Greenwich Village, Coen brothers films are often complex, and with Carey Mulligan in tow, they can't go wrong.

The Wolf of Wall Street (director: Martin Scorsese):

Why you might like it: After a brief

hiatus with 2011's *Hugo*, the director returns to form with this adaptation of Jordan Belfort's memoir, which chronicles his refusal to cooperate in a large securities fraud case involving Wall Street corruption, the corporate banking world and mob infiltration.

Why I've got my eye on it: Scorsese is at home with anything mob-related, and Leonardo DiCaprio is Belfort—a man with a hard-partying lifestyle and tumultuous personal life, which included drug and alcohol addictions.

Untitled (director: David O. Russell):

Why you might like it: Russell has been on fire lately with 2010's *The Fighter* and last

year's *Silver Linings Playbook*.

Why I've got my eye on it: It features Christian Bale and Amy Adams as partners in crime forced to work in an FBI sting with an out-of-control, Federal agent (Bradley Cooper) to bring down con artists, mobsters and politicians in the 1970s.

Foxcatcher (director: Bennett Miller):

Why you might like it: It is the true story of the murder of an Olympic wrestler by John du Pont (Steve Carell).

Why I've got my eye on it: There's something thrilling about seeing Carell portray a paranoid schizophrenic and heir to the du Pont chemical fortune. ☉

Directed Acts of Kindness: A Citizen's Weapon Towards a Better Society

CHRISTINA PYRGAKI

The Wednesday before Nemo hit NYC and after a successful journal club meeting, which involved a good balance combination of good science, brainy company, and fine liquor, I left the university with two friends and colleagues of mine at around 8 p.m. The three of us strolled in the cold evening all the way from The Rockefeller University to the grocery store on 60th Street and York Avenue; after we shopped for snacks, we headed to my friend's place to have a glass of wine and chat.

It was probably around midnight when I returned home. I was tired, tipsy, and ready to go to bed, but as part of my every night routine, I checked my email. (Granted that I stay up fairly late, my compulsive need to check my email before I go to bed is somewhat ridiculous;) no important emails are going to populate my inbox at 1 a.m. and most of the emails in there contain information that is not going to be used in any way until the next day. I have long promised myself that I will give up technology at least a couple of hours before sleep, as it is recommended by any self-respecting health website, but I have yet to keep my promise. That Wednesday night, sleepy as I was, it took me a couple of tries to log in to my email, and when I finally got my password right, at the top of my inbox, was an email with the subject "I found your wallet." I got worried for a split second, but then I thought that this was probably a classified ad and it was not my wallet the

sender found; it was someone else's wallet. As I was about to delete the email I noticed that the email was addressed to me, but how was that possible? I had my wallet in the grocery store and I distinctly remembered putting it in my purse. So, my wallet was right...My thought was interrupted as, shuffling through my overloaded and disorganized purse, I realized that my wallet was not there. My wallet was missing! I hastily opened the email that contained the simple message: "I found your wallet on the street and I would like to return it. Best, RJ." My brain raced for a second or two with "what if" scenarios. Had my wallet been lost forever? Forget the credit cards that I would have to cancel and replace, and forget the cash that was in my wallet, it was the wait at the DMV to get a new driver's license that made my skin crawl. I could not even bear to think of the endless list of paperwork that I would have to fill out, and the endless hours of waiting at the immigration office that I would be subjected to in order to get my green card replaced. But, irrational as this might be, it was losing my black wallet decorated with Jack Skellington from *The Nightmare Before Christmas* that hurt most. It was a gift from a dear friend of mine and the thought of parting with it was overwhelmingly distressing. I was so focused on my "what-if" scenario and so upset with myself—how the heck did I manage to drop my wallet?—that, for a minute, I lost sight of the fact that due to a kind strang-

er, I was spared the catastrophe. I suspect that the reason that, albeit momentarily, I chose to focus on the unfortunate incident of my dropping my wallet, rather than my good luck, was the fact that I would soon be forced to admit that my husband was right! I do not even remember how many times he yelled, "Close your purse!" and shook his head in disapproval, watching me leave the apartment with my purse half open and stuff hanging out of it! Now an "I told you so" was in order and, what's worse, I totally deserved it! A couple of minutes into my self-blaming session I came to my senses and started realizing what was important here. I had just experienced a deliberate act of kindness from a complete stranger, in a big city that, according to the stereotype, is populated with self-centered, self-absorbed citizens. Well, my experience was one of those instances that triumphantly prove that the stereotype of the egocentric and inconsiderate New Yorker is nothing but a stereotype! New Yorkers know how to step up and do the right thing when the occasion arises.

The lady who found my wallet lives in midtown, and she just happened to be walking in my neighborhood on Wednesday night. She could have ignored the wallet, avoiding the inconvenience of picking it up altogether; she could have handed the wallet to a police officer, avoiding a further inconvenience for herself; however, she did

continued on page 5



This Month Natural Selections interviews De'Veatrice Bryant (DeeDee) works for Restaurant Associates at the CRC Café. She has a Culinary Arts Degree in Professional/Commercial Cooking from Star Career Academy and she is a New Yorker, born and raised.

New York State of Mind

1. How long have you been living in the New York area? I have lived in New York my entire life.

2. Where do you live? I currently reside in West Harlem.

3. Which is your favorite neighborhood? I grew up in Spanish Harlem and have lived in the Bronx, Queens, and Brooklyn, but I would have to give my thumbs up for West Harlem as my favorite neighborhood because I can walk only a few blocks from where I live to hear Jazz at the Cotton Club, dine on the most delicious, authentic, Southern soul food, shop, get a mani/pedi, and visit a museum—all in a five-block radius.

4. What do you think is the most overrated thing in the city? And underrated? The most overrated thing in New York City is celebrating New Year's Eve in Times Square. It's freezing, overcrowded,

and not worth the aggravation of trying to get out of there after it's over.

I think that the simple, wonderful, and meaningful things are underrated and too much attention is paid to money. Life itself seems to be losing the battle to Fashion Week and the new iPhone.

5. What do you miss most when you are out of town? Convenient transportation.

6. If you could change one thing about NYC, what would that be? The crowds of people walking through the streets with ear buds and them not saying "excuse me."

7. What is your favorite weekend activity in NYC? Sunday Gospel Brunch at Sylvia's.

8. What is the most memorable experience you have had in NYC? When I won first place at the City College Top Chef competition.

9. If you could live anywhere else, where



would that be? Virginia Beach—I love the water and it's still close enough to NYC to come back whenever I want.

10. Do you think of yourself as a New Yorker? I am a native New Yorker, die-hard New York sports fan and I have an official New York accent! ☺

Directed Acts of Kindness, continued from page 4

none of the above. She picked up the wallet, went to the trouble of looking up my name online, found my email, and she emailed me right away to let me know that my wallet was found and that it was safe, thus saving me the trouble of cancelling my cards and, potentially, the inconvenience of a sleepless night. Not only did she do the right thing, but she went above and beyond to make sure that the mishap would not cause the careless owner of the wallet any unnecessary distress.

I emailed RJ back the same night, and early the next day my wallet was in my hands, along with all the cards, documents, and cash that was in it when I dropped it. While walking home after picking up my wallet, a question kept nagging me: would I have done exactly the same thing if I were in her shoes? Of course I would have. Why was I, then, so surprised with the thoughtful stranger's kindness? And then it hit me: acts of kindness do not get as much publicity as human failure does. It is the reproachable, criminal, and downright evil behavior that we see more of in the news, potentially because despicable acts attract more attention and it is easier to capitalize on shock and fear than on kindness and inspiration!

This overwhelming coverage of negative over positive behavior on the news creates the illusion that doing the right thing is a rare occurrence in our society, and we should not let that illusion fool us.

Losing my wallet was the best reminder that we can still count on each other. This society, with all its faults and shortcomings, is comprised of good people who will do the right thing, not because of fear of punishment or because of sheer obligation, but

because doing the right thing to serve a fellow human is a reward in itself. Building a better world is just a direct act of kindness, and I was so happy to be reminded of that, in a way. It was hard to ignore. Although from now on I make a point to carefully close my purse before I leave the apartment (mainly to avoid my husband's judgmental looks), I have a renewed faith in this city, its residents and humanity in general. And how inspiring such faith is! ☺

NATURAL SELECTIONS



NEEDS YOU!

Narrate your story, send us your memorabilia, share with us your interests!

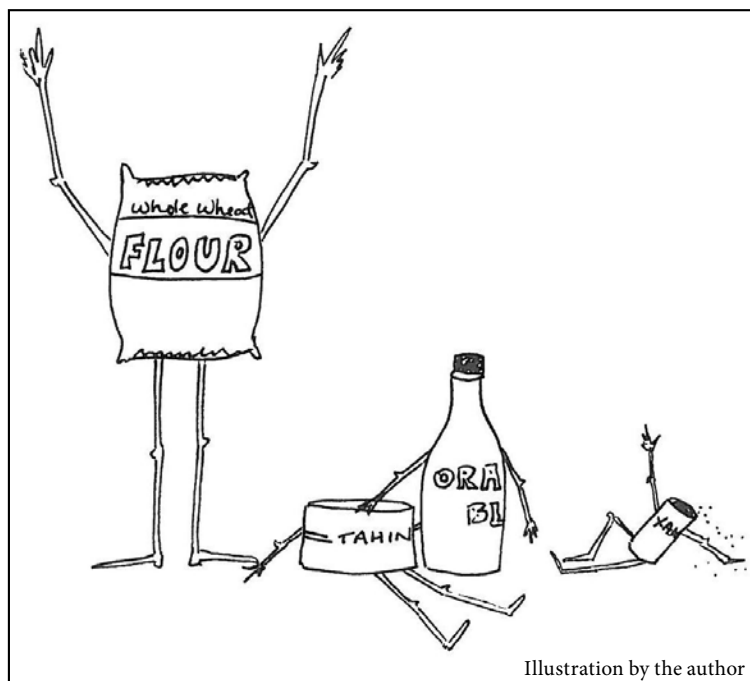
Enrich us by describing your country, culture and living!

Share your experiences here and bring in your unique viewpoints!

Email: naturalselections@rockefeller.edu

Natural Confections

CARLY GELFOND



I think it's safe to say that most of us have a "thing" about something. You're looking at me funny, but I know that you know what I'm talking about: that feeling of distaste you get—the intensity of which is illogical—when confronted with that certain something, whatever it is, that you just can't stand.

For me, that something is wastefulness. In the shower, I use a bar of soap until it's a miniscule sliver of its former self that dissolves in my hand. ("It's like you're using doll soap," John tells me). "It's still perfectly good," I say. "It just needs a little extra time to lather." Which is true. I won't apologize.

I swish water in the seemingly empty laundry detergent bottle and use the soapy water for hand washing clothes. I take stale Wheat Thins and pulse them in a mini food processor to encrust a filet of fish. I get chills watching the faucet run while someone is brushing his teeth, and I wash out Ziploc baggies to get a few extra uses out of them.

Now this is the part of the story where I tell you about my kitchen, which is extremely well-stocked with lots of oddball items left over from this or that recipe. I am absolutely certain I should not throw any of them away because one day, I will go looking for that packet of xanthan gum, and I will be so grateful that it has sat those three worthwhile years on my shelf. The same goes for the hijiki dried seaweed, ground flax seed, brown rice flour, orange blossom water, tub of sesame tahini—and oh, I will spare you what's in the freezer.

Also, there is a five-pound sack of whole-wheat flour in one of the cabinets. This sack of flour I likely bought by accident (too long ago for me to recall) as I don't often bake much with whole-wheat flour. I find it dense and, to be honest, not worth the health benefits (which are actually substantial since it turns a baked muffin into something I don't want to eat.)

Then, last month, I came across a recipe by Mark Bittman in *The New York Times Magazine* that piqued my interest. It was for Whole-Wheat Focaccia, and some food stylist had done a heck

of a job because in the photo it actually looked like something I DID want to eat. The recipe appeared to take little time (most of it hands-off), and called for just five ingredients, one of which was whole-wheat flour—three whopping cups of it, in fact. A way to dispose of a good portion of my flour stash without wasting it was too good a chance to pass up. I went to the cabinet and—behind the enormous bottle of fish sauce—took down a packet of instant yeast.

This bread—bread made after work and before bedtime; have you ever heard of such a thing?—was easy-peasy, and even I have to admit, more than just edible. It was actually good. I may just make it again. Now if I could only find a way to incorporate the xanthan gum.

WHOLE-WHEAT EVERYTHING FOCACCIA

Adapted from Mark Bittman via *The New York Times Magazine*

Yield: 1 loaf

Ingredients:

3 cups whole-wheat flour

About 2 teaspoons instant yeast (*I used a packet of Fleischmann's Rapid Rise yeast and it worked fine, but the internet jury seems to still be out on whether "instant" and "rapid rise" are the same.*)

2 teaspoons coarse salt

1 cup warm water

3 tablespoons plus 1 teaspoon olive oil

More coarse salt for sprinkling

Freshly ground black pepper

2 teaspoons poppy seeds

2 teaspoons sesame seeds

2 teaspoons dried minced onion

2 teaspoons dried minced garlic

Combine flour, yeast, and salt in a food processor. Turn the machine on and add 1 cup warm water (I heated mine for a minute in the tea kettle) followed by 1 tablespoon of the oil through the feed tube.

Process until the dough comes together, about 30 seconds. If it's too dry, add more water a tablespoon at a time, and continue to process a few more seconds. Drizzle the teaspoon of oil into an empty, medium-sized bowl. Shape the dough into a ball and roll it around the bowl until the dough is coated with the oil. Cover bowl with clean kitchen towel (preferably not a good one because it will get stained) until the dough almost doubles in size, about 1½ hours.

Coat a large baking sheet with another tablespoon of oil. With your palms, press the dough into the baking sheet, leaving it about a ½-inch thick; dimple the top with your fingertips and coat with another tablespoon of olive oil. Sprinkle with salt, pepper, poppy seeds, sesame seeds, onion, and garlic. Cover with the towel. Let the dough sit for about 1 hour, but after the 30-minute mark, pre-heat the oven to 500 degrees.

After the full hour has passed, remove the towel. Bake until golden all over and springy to the touch, 10 to 15 minutes. Let cool in the pan before cutting into squares. •

PDA Corner

CLAUDIA SCHECKEL AND ISMAIL ISMAILOGLU

You are probably familiar with the academic responsibilities of the PDA, like organizing the postdoc retreat and the Tri-I seminar series. Similarly, our social events, like the holiday, summer or Super Bowl parties, are well-established and attended by many postdocs. But the PDA has one additional, less visible, role: to form a bridge between the postdocs and the administrative departments at Rockefeller. To fulfill this role, we regularly survey the community, determine common problems, and discuss solutions with department directors. In January, we performed a life satisfaction survey and met with President Marc Tessier-Lavigne, VP Virginia Huffman, Associate VP of Facilities Alexander Kogan, Dean Sidney Strickland, Associate Dean Emily Harms, and Director of Immigration and Academic Appointments Maria Lazzaro to discuss the results.

The housing department plays a big role in the lives of Rockefeller postdocs and a number of survey respondents reported problems in this area. We are happy to report that the department has decided to activate an online feedback system. In the near future you will start receiving a feedback form after each online work order, which will give you a direct way of reporting the speed and accuracy of your maintenance request. This will help the department to detect problems quickly.

Due to the popularity of studio apartments, the waiting list for these units remains very long. In our survey we asked if people on the waitlist would be interested in having the option of sharing a two or three bedroom apartment on a permanent basis, rather than staying in temporary housing. We received a number of positive responses. At the moment we are working with the housing department to provide this option. We hope that this new unit sharing program will reduce wait times for studios.

The waitlist is a significant problem at the Child and Family Center (CFC) too. Unfortunately, there is no quick fix for this, because the facility is running at capacity. However, we have been assured that efforts in expanding the CFC are ongoing. We are following up on this issue and we will provide more details when we have them.

Finally, a significant number of survey respondents told us that they would like to see improved communication between members of different labs. We currently have a number of events that are aimed at remedying this problem, such as our ongoing



PDA Super Bowl Party. Credit: Claudia Scheckel.

Tri-I seminar series, our planned summer seminar series, and the upcoming postdoc retreat. Attending these events and chatting with your fellow postdocs will give you the opportunity to find out what is happening in other labs. Human resources is also planning to provide opportunities for new postdocs to meet each other during their orientation.

Thank you for your participation to the survey and keep in mind that you can always reach us with your problems, concerns and suggestions. ◉

Life on a Roll



Berylline Hummingbird on a Wire by John Ratliff III, Falls Church, VA



Double Rainbow in Denver by Christina Pyrgaki

