Questions, questions, questions. As I roamed the countryside with my uncle Francesco, I peppered him with questions. Isn’t the desire to know natural? Aren’t you curious to know, as I was, how bird’s fly? Questions—and their solutions—consumed me. Years later Eadweard Muybridge followed in my footsteps. In 1872, he photographed a horse to unravel the mystery of motion, and to answer the question, “When trotting, does a horse ever have all four feet off the ground?”

I regret that I could not be with you today. But, remember: My legacy lives on in the artists and scientists in this exhibition. Be curious, practice diligent observation, understand what you see, and dare to imagine, and you, too, like contemporary photographer Julie Anand, will walk in my footsteps.

Your friend, Leonardo da Vinci

Art and Science Observation and Imagination
August 22, 2006 – February 4, 2007

Find a work of art about which you are curious and write down three questions you would like to ask about it.

1. 
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Text by Sara Otto-Diniz, Curator of Education, UNM Art Museum. Copyright 2006

UNM Art Museum
UNM Center for the Arts
Central Ave. and Cornell NE
Albuquerque, NM 87131-1416

UNM Art Museum Hours: Tuesday-Friday 9am-4pm, Tuesday evening 5-8 pm, Sun. 1-4pm, and most events at Popejoy Hall.
Free admission.

For information and to schedule tours, call 277-3001

Paid parking is available in the Visitors’ Parking Lots and Structure, east of the Center for the Arts

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Mi amici della futura (My friends in the future),
I write to you from years past, but my advice will serve you still in the 21st century. I was a passionate observer all my life and I truly believe that all our knowledge has its origin in our perceptions. You should always keep a notebook with you to sketch in and write your observations as I did. Please join me in this exhibition. You can use this Gallery Guide to heighten your own powers of observation and imagination by drawing what you see, reflecting on what you think, and posing questions to the artists and yourself. Let’s go...


Have you ever really looked at a flower? I have, but not until you have drawn a flower do you really see it. And, because we often see what we look for, it helps to understand the purpose of a flower and how it works. So you need to be both a scientist and an artist, like Edward Skeats. Look carefully at his watercolor paintings to see how he shows different points of view, and highlights details. He learned that from my work. Now use this space to make your own careful drawing of a plant.


In my time, scientists believed that the moon generated its own light. But, I observed the moon through special glasses I designed to see it large and concluded that it has no light by itself. The moon can’t shine without the sun. In fact, the moon reflects light like a spherical mirror. Scientists and artists continue to study and observe the moon, and I hear that astronauts have even visited the moon. Sir Howard Grubb took this photograph View of the Moon through a telescope in Melbourne, Australia.

Sir Howard Grubb, View of the Moon through the Melbourne Telescope, c.1865, from an album of the Amateur Photographic Association. Albumen silver print. Purchased with funds from the Friends of Art. 78.178.5.

Observe the moon each Monday (“Moonday”) for a month, sketch its changing shape, and write your reflections about it here.

Consider the beetle. Scientists have identified more than 350,000 species of beetles or Coleoptera (meaning “sheathed wing”). They appeared on earth 265 million years ago and can be found on every continent except Antarctica. And, now, be an artist and wonder with Jo Whaley. She photographs insects in imaginative environments made of rusted metal, crumpled paper, glass. These masters of camouflage blend into newly constructed habitats to survive, but she questions if humans can adapt as well.


Can you be a scientist and an artist? Choose an animal about which you are curious, observe it, learn all you can about it, and then use your imagination to wonder. What would happen if it became highly magnified, changed color, moved to a different habitat, altered its diet? Show your predictions as an artist.