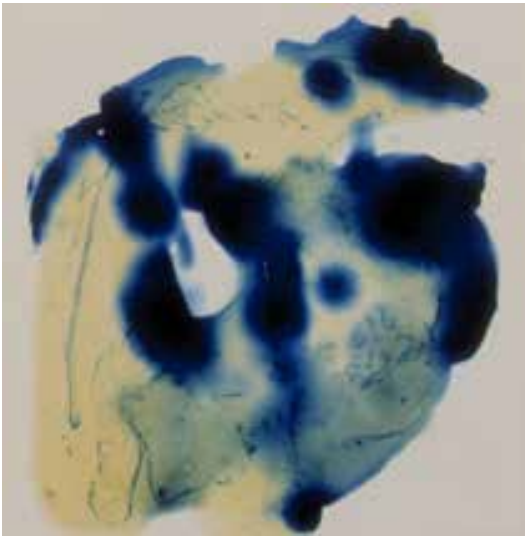


LIVING ART



For every artist, picking a medium is an important part of the creative process. Some work in ceramics, metals, or glass, while others prefer pastels, charcoals, or acrylics. For davidkremers, a visitor in aerospace at Caltech, his choice is bacteria. An artist who eschews the use of capital letters in his name as a modern and practical response to the lack of case sensitivity in email correspondence, and who combined his name into one word because he has a common first name, davidkremers creates “living” works of art using genetically engineered bacteria.

“Artists no longer make meaning from the world so much as they assemble life,” says davidkremers. Using single-celled organisms engineered to produce a color in response to certain compounds in the air as they grow, he paints the colorless bacteria onto large clear plates, then places them in a room that is kept at a constant temperature ideal for bacterial growth. As the bacteria mature, colored images start to appear. The pieces are then cooled, and air is sealed out with a synthetic resin, leaving the bacteria in stasis.

davidkremers’s work is part of permanent collections at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, the Denver Art Museum, and the Armand Hammer Museum of Art and Culture Center at UCLA. Find out more about his work at davidkremers.caltech.edu.—AA