

Engaging young engineers, artists in new worlds

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Boulder artist and visiting CU-Boulder professor Martha Russo, left, talks with a student during her engineering and art course, Art: Aesthetics to Engineering, at CU-Boulder during the fall 2016 semester. (Photo by Haley Gray)

New CU Course Marries Art & Engineering

Martha Russo is on a mission. The Boulder County artist and visiting CU art professor wants to engage young engineers in the world of art and introduce budding artists to the world of engineering.

Technology is increasingly seeping into the art world, and vice versa. That's why Russo taught a contemporary art class called "Art: Aesthetics to Engineering" at CU this fall. The class is a collaboration between the engineering and art departments, and students from both departments work alongside each other at CU's Idea Forge—a technology space that features everything from a computer hardware lab to a 3-D printer to a woodworking shop.



The Idea Forge is a cross-disciplinary space filled with everything from sketching tables to a woodshop to an electronics lab. It's open to CU staff and students, and is the home of Martha Russo's new course that marries art and engineering, introducing students from both disciplines to the intersection of the two fields in contemporary art. (Photo by Haley Gray)

Engineers are crucial to modern museums, Russo points out, as they oversee exhibit installations and the maintenance of collections. The Denver Art Museum, for example, has five engineers on staff. And contemporary artists working in oversize sculpture and multimedia installations will increasingly depend on engineering and fabrication shops, like Denver's Demiurge and YetiWeurks, to bring their visions to fruition. Thus, Russo's students either apprentice with an installation artist throughout the semester, like large-scale sculptor Michael Deitz, or they intern for Demiurge or YetiWeurks.

You can view her students' works during a **Dec. 9 showcase from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Idea Forge on the CU campus.** The show is free and open to the public.

—Haley Gray