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APRIL 2003 Vol 4 No 4



About the cover

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April 2003 vol 4 no 4
'Clear thinking'

By April Tsui, (<http://lab.usc.edu/~aprilla>)

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April 2003 vol 4 no 4

'Clear thinking'

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April Tsui is holding a piece of aerogel, certified as the lightest solid on Earth by the Guinness Book of World Records. Used in NASA's Stardust mission to capture cosmic particles for analysis on Earth, aerogel is 1000 times less dense than glass, being composed of 99.8% air. In her collaboration with Jet Propulsion Lab (JPL), April is experimenting with marrying non-traditional materials with machining and rapid prototyping methods. The cover image is a brain laser-etched on aerogel.

April studied advertising at the University of Texas at Austin (B.Sc., 1998) and worked as an art director at an advertising agency (1998-2000). She has been a graduate industrial design student, focusing on product and environmental design, at the Art Center College of Design (Pasadena, California) since 2001. This program encourages students to explore their creative process through traditional and scientific understanding of thought and creation. Lecturers from the California Institute of Technology and JPL enrich the program with classes on the scientific foundations of brain evolution, neuroscience, and aerospace research.

One of April's projects is currently exhibited in The Art of Thought (Los Angeles), a show curated by K. Abeles. This exhibition celebrates the processes of thought, through displays that range from brain scans to expressions of creative thinking. April's 'Personal Museum' celebrates the human body with an entire collection of miniature radiological scans embedded in the thickness of five metre-long acrylic bars. The refraction of the embedded images reveals the exhibition only at specific angles, requiring a viewer's interactive exploration of the museum piece.

April is also working with USC's computational neuroscience laboratory. In particular, she is designing and modelling the mechanical components of iLab's Beobot autonomous mobile robots. Her latest project is an interactive aerogel exhibition at the California Science Center (Los Angeles).

URLS:

- aerogel, see: <http://stardust.jpl.nasa.gov/spacecraft/aerogel.html>
- Art Center, see: <http://www.artcenter.edu/>
- California Institute of Technology, see: <http://www.caltech.edu>
- JPL, see: <http://www.jpl.nasa.gov>
- USC iLab, see: <http://iLab.usc.edu/>
- April's page, see: <http://iLab.usc.edu/~aprilla>

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