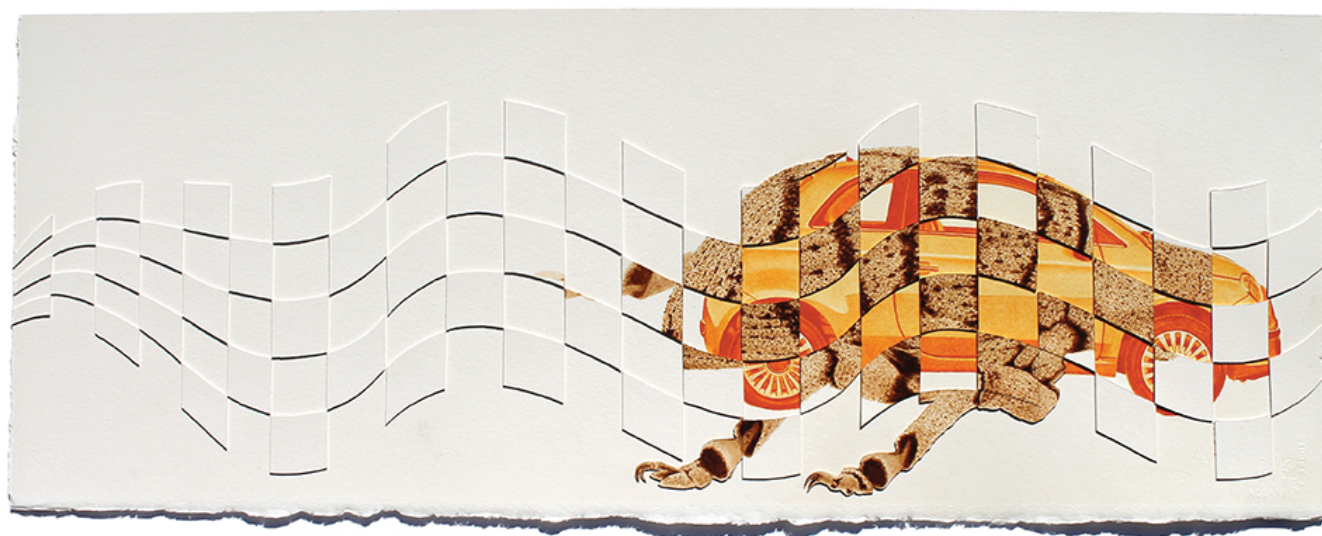


## Paul Paiment

The celebrated American artist is featured at *Etoile Toy-Florence Visual Arts* hosted by the Florence Dance Center and directed by Marga Nativo and Keith Ferrone.

by **Adelinda Allegretti** curator of *Paul Paiment: A Modern Wunderkammer*  
translated into english by Jonathon Soto

Anyone who stands in front of the works of Paul Paiment (whether they are familiar with his *Hybrids* series or not) always experiences a perceptual short-circuit. The act of looking and recognizing seems like an eternity; a temporary gap that varies from person to person. It is dictated by cultural background and familiarity/knowledge of the animal and technological worlds. Of course, it's because everything is played on a marriage that is so strikingly original (and, historically brought into fashion by Baroque thought) that the natural and artificial, come together to form the wonderful.

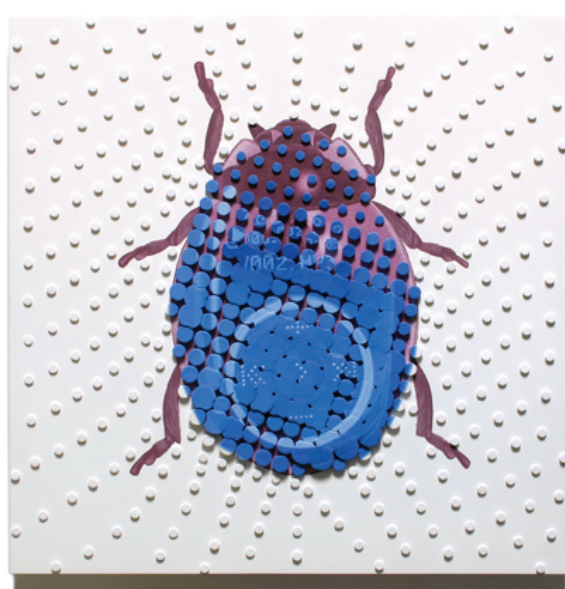


*hybrids h-eupholus fiatcinquecento*, 2013, watercolor/collage on Arches, 30 x 11 inches (77cm x 30cm)

As it happened in the *Wunderkammer*--a sixteenth century German term for a prince or aristocrat that traveled the world and collected objects (either natural or cultural artifacts to look natural). The objects were either rare animal remains or artificially created to "look like" primordial beings that may have become extinct, but were no longer scientifically verifiable. The motivation to collect such "artifacts" was to create "surprise" and "wonder" in the select few that were privileged to view these collections. The collections of the *wunderkammer* became, what is known today, as the precursor of the modern museum.



Paul Paiment, Adelinda Allegretti, Fabrizio Borghini  
Daniela Pronesti and Marga Nativo



*hybrids h-coccinella pebbleus*, 2006, egg tempera on panel  
18 x 18 inches (46cm x 46cm)

Paiment's inquiry follows this direction. And, his large-scale "paintstallation" *Hybrids I-Musca Ducatica*, 2013 illustrates this concept consisely. Its epic scale engulfs the viewer while Paiment's technical virtuosity tweeks the curious. It's here, that the "wonder" doubles. It is Paiment's brilliant technical ability that enables him to layer two separate entities (a common housefly and a Ducati motorcycle) into a new reality—in perfect harmony. The first is natural, the second technological. The original meaning of both entities is altered and introduces a third reality: the hybrid. A good comparison (for those belonging to my generation) is David Cronenberg's film *The Fly*, 1986. At the end of a teleportation experiment, Jeff Goldblum's character (clearly inspired by an episode of *Star Trek*) is found not to be man or fly, but *ubrido*—a mixture of both entities DNA. In part, the works of Paiment are exactly this—horrific implications.



*hybrids h-hyalphora xboxcontrolerae*, 2009, watercolor/collage on Arches, 14 x 18 inches (61cm x 45cm)

On the contrary, upon reflection, this new entity has positive value. Nature does not make itself scientific but, technology enables us to imitate the perfection of nature. Now the time has arrived to research the technology like the Renaissance did for mankind. Hermes Trismegistus said "as above, so below." Then, perhaps humanity would develop a technology more ethical to nature. In this sense, made by beings/creatures in symbiosis and in complete reciprocal respect.



Paiment has shown widely in solo and group shows in New York, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Canada, London, France, Austria, Japan, Chicago, and Southern California, including The Laguna Art Museum, Laguna Beach, CA; The Centr  d'Art Contemporain, Pont-Aven, France; The Arnot Art Museum, Elmira, NY; The Armory, Pasadena, CA; and the Oxford Castle, Oxford, England. His work was featured in *Natural Blunders* at the de Saisset Museum of Art in Santa Clara, CA. Additional notable group shows include *Collezionando* at Chiesa di Santa Maria dei Laici, Cubbio, Italy; *Animal House* at Oxford Castle, Oxford, England; the international traveling exhibition *Miniature* in London and Tokyo; and in *Cyborg Manifesto* or *The Joy of Artifice* at the Laguna Art Museum.

In addition, his work has been prominently featured in the traveling museum exhibition *Tools As Art: Work from the Hechinger Collection*. This exhibition has been consistantly touring museum's around the United States since 2007. Paiment's work has been featured in several publications including *La Toscana* (Italy), *Art in America*, *Artillary*, *ARTnews*, *Artscene*, *Modern Painters*, *Artforum*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *Art in America*, *ARTnews*, *Artscene*, *Modern Painters*, *Artforum*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *The Orange County Register*, *Statement*, *Artweek*, *SF Weekly*, and the *New Art Examiner*. The book *Hybrids 1.0 - 3.5* was published by Laguna Wilderness Press in association with Paiment's solo exhibition at the Laguna Art Museum in 2005 and received a design award from Communication Arts International. In the United States, he is represented in Europe by Adelinda Allegretti (Rome, Italy). Paiment received his MFA from the University of Southern California in 1995. He currently is on the full-time faculty (painting, drawing) at Cypress College in Orange County, California.