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## Behind the Cover

Julie Orr

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## Behind the Cover

### Abstract

Julie Orr's artwork - Daze Ablaze - for the cover of this issue of The STEAM Journal.

### Keywords

Art, STEAM

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## Behind the Cover Art

*Julie Orr*

Why do we see art and science as separate disciplines? During the Renaissance, Leonardo DaVinci was a Scientist and Artist who used science to understand art and art to understand science. They were, and still are, in- separatable disciplines in countless ways. For example, artists create anatomical drawings for medical texts to help readers understand the parts and physiology of the human body. And artists must have a well-versed understanding of bone and muscle structures to create a proportional depiction of the human body. Like scientists, artists explore through experimentation and trial and error, especially with mixing and applying mediums to create various effects. When it comes to adding mediums to oil paints or curing resin, for example, an artist must understand how chemicals relate and interact with one another. Different “mediums” can be added to paint to create various effects like texture, gloss, and translucency. Probably any artist can attest to using a medium incorrectly more than once and failing to get the desired result! Typically, scientists experiment to come up with new ideas, as artists do.. And both scientists and artists often begin with ideas they execute through experimentation.

Nowadays, computer technologies are an integral part of an artist’s process. In my own work, I use computer software to create compositions for my paintings. However, beyond being just a tool, to add another layer, my work criticizes the impact of technology on our society, for example, through the colorful depiction of a cell phone on fire. Technology has allowed us to connect virtually with our smartphones, mass produce (largely wasteful) products, and consume media information. But it’s evolved faster than we can control or fully understand it’s impact. There is a duality in this “advancement.” It keeps us more connected virtually but can also inhibit our motivation to connect in person. We have greater access to information, but that information is more aggressively and expediently thrown at us through advertisements and videos. The information can overpower our minds. Our brains can become overwhelmed with dopamine hits from the external resources, keeping us wanting more and more. We are often consuming so much virtually that we start living the world through our digital screens. We live in a non-reality through online videos, ads, social media posts, texts, emails and more.

In my art, I aim to gain perspective on our participation in a bigger societal system. We are participants in modern practices like buying single use plastics and using smartphones, without fully understanding them. There is messy reality behind sleek designs and clean screens that I want to dissect. I will continue to make sense of our relationship to technology, while science can provide the data.

**Daze Ablaze**

**By Julie Orr**

**acrylic on canvas, 6" x 4", 2022**

