A picture is worth…

This month, we celebrate the visual beauty of scientific images and drawings.

Our cover this month (and nearly every November issue since *Nature Methods* launched in 2004) features the photomicrographic artwork of this year's winners of Nikon's 'Small World' contest (which, this year, our own Rita Strack was invited to help judge). Teresa Zgoda and Teresa Kugler utilized fluorescence, stereomicroscopy and image stitching to capture this photomicrograph of a turtle embryo.

We love highlighting the Small World winners each year because it is a great reminder that scientific images are not only informational — they can also be beautiful. Today, the ever-growing toolbox of imaging methods are shedding light on the beauty — in the patterns, colors and symmetries — of micro- and nanoscopic objects that, until recently, could not be seen. Scientific advances are actually helping stretch the boundaries of the art world.

Of course, 'beauty is in the eye of the beholder', and what may be considered art to one person may be hideous to another. But appreciation of some form of art is a near-universal human trait. Creating striking images that do not just inform, but actually move a person to feel something, is a route that scientists should take more often to better communicate what they do with non-scientists.

Early scientists such as Leonardo da Vinci, Robert Hooke, John James Audobon and Santiago Ramón y Cajal were artists in their own rights, inspired to recreate scientifically accurate as well as beautiful representations of human, animal and plant specimens. The ability to draw was once a prized skill for a scientist, one that is all but lost in this digital age. But for those of us who are artistically challenged, software tools are helping to fill this gap. For example, the BioRender tool allows life scientists to readily create illustrations using pre-drawn templates. And recently, David Goodsell, Ludovic Autin and Arthur Olson, of The Scripps Research Institute, published their 'Illustrate' tool for generating illustrations of biological molecules (*Structure* http://doi.org/dcsr; 2019).

We invite you to sit back and take in some of our favorites from the top 20 Small World 2019 images and from other scientist-artists. ❐

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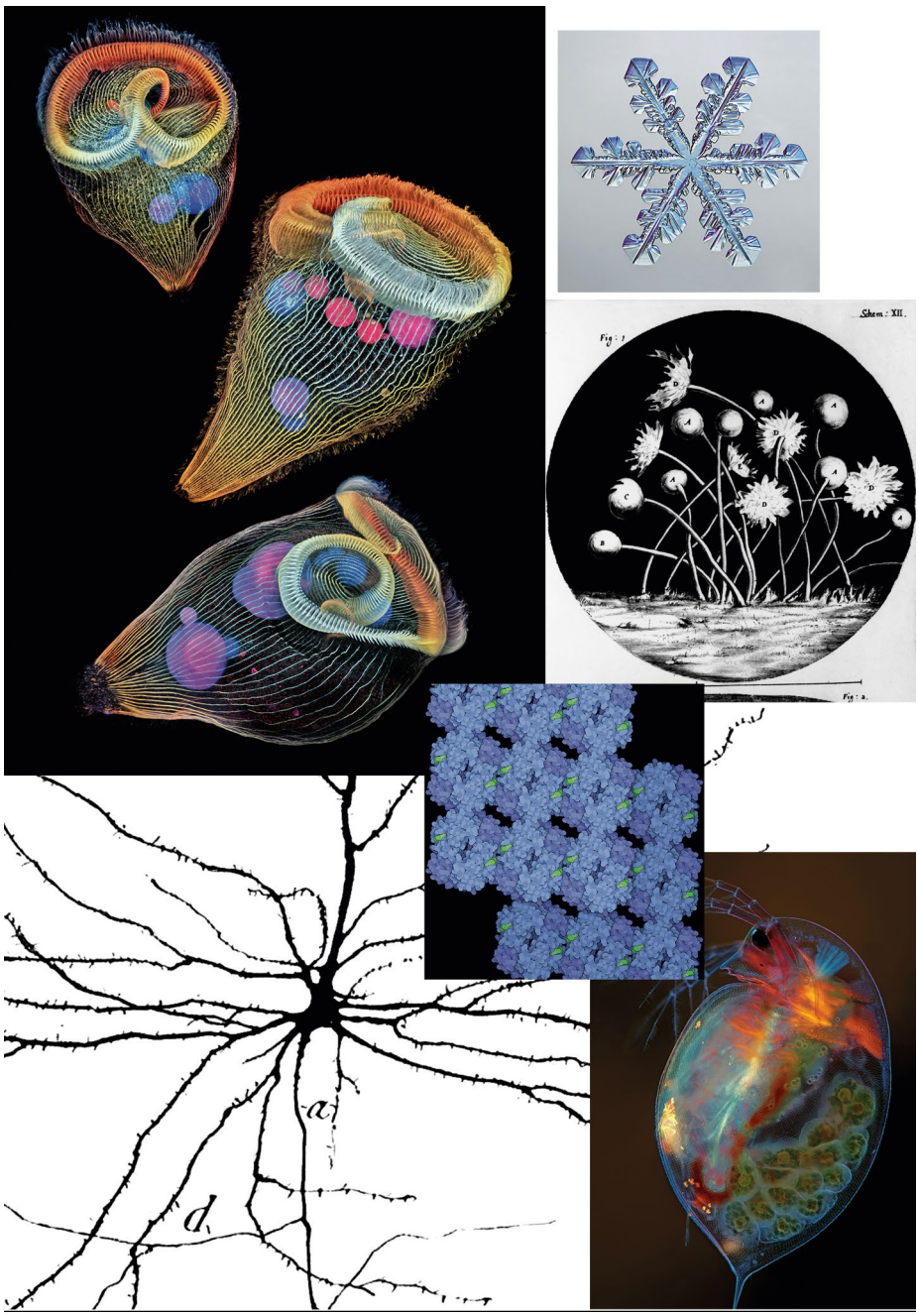

Clockwise, from top left: stentors, captured by Igor Siwanowicz, Small World 2nd place winner; a snowflake, captured by Caleb Foster, Small World 5th place winner; illustration of mold by Robert Hooke (Science History Images/Alamy Stock Photo); a rendering of hemoglobin packing by the *Illustrate* tool (reproduced from Goodsell, D. S. et al. *Structure* http://doi.org/dcsr, Elsevier); pregnant *Daphnia magna*, captured by Marek Miś, Small World 15th place winner; a neuron, drawn by Santiago Ramón y Cajal (Science History Images/Alamy Stock Photo).