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## Los Angeles-based alternative art group wins international competition

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When [Apexart](#), a nonprofit arts organization in New York, announced last year that it was accepting proposals for an international competition, it received 456 applications from arts groups in 65 countries. The winner would receive funding for a local art show that it would curate independently with assistance from Apexart. More than 250 jurors from around the world were invited to judge the proposals online.

Today, the winner was announced, and it's a Los Angeles-based group called [the League of Imaginary Scientists](#).

"We thought their proposal was a great fit for our mission, which is to combine work from inside the art world with subjects from outside as well," said Kerri Schootman, director of operations at Apexart. (Apexart's most recent exhibition in New York brought together the worlds of photography and plastic surgery.)

The League of Imaginary Scientists (some of whose members are pictured above) is a loose society for "creative scientists, mechanically-inclined artists, absurdist inventors and self-proclaimed quacks," according to the group's website.

"X, Y, Z and U" will open June 4 at the Outpost for Contemporary Art in L.A.'s Highland Park neighborhood. Featured artists include Kim Abeles, Kelly Jaclynn Andres, Jason Bobe, Mackenzie Cowell, Liz Kueneke, Andrea Polli and Chuck Varga.

The show is designed to address a series of philosophical questions: Where is science and how do we interact with it? Who maps information, and who has access? Can anyone participate in genomic research?

In New York, Apexart will provide video links and other interactive features to the L.A. exhibition.

Click through to read the League of Imaginary Scientists' winning proposal:

"The League of Imaginary Scientists is a group of interdisciplinary thinkers and tinkerers who present ambitious participatory art events with repurposed mechanics and scientific assertions. The League concocts micro-festivals for microorganisms, invites scientific luminaries onto local stages, and pours limited paper money into our bottomless pit of ideas. The resulting diversions from the everyday celebrate the everyday: past exhibitions showcased a communication device for talking to bacteria and a machine for reversing progress and returning viewers to childhood. League exhibitions simultaneously subvert and revamp the story of science. More than anything, the League of Imaginary Scientists is a consortium for ideas — a mental exhibition space where conversations and collaborations are hatched.

We seek affiliation and guidance by Apexart because A) we do not have the know-how or funds to leap from independent art collective to independent art space, and B) the League was formed on a street called Apex Avenue in Silverlake in 2006. For our dream exhibition in our city of Los Angeles, the League proposes an exhibition of artworks that function as scientific research for studies without intentionality — purely for experimentation. Examples of the types of projects we would like to exhibit include art and science in the vein of research practiced by artists such as Andrea Polli, whose work includes a study on locust eyes, and Kelly Andres, whose mobile laboratory allows city-goers to listen to ecology, as well as groups like Harvard's neuroscience laboratory, currently creating the first molecular film of an unraveled mouse brain. Aspirations for an evocative idea-oriented exhibition aside, the League gives great weight to the word, Apex. Our own origins anticipated an eventual peak. Perhaps this is it."

— David Ng

Photo: Members of the League of Imaginary Scientists. Credit: Apexart.