



*Sam and Streilka*, 2013, mixed media on 5 canvases, 36" x 66"

**Sandra Kaplan**

# *Galactic Stories*

June 26, 2014 – August 28, 2014

Opening Reception – July 10, 2014, 5–7 PM

Conversation with the artist and curator – 6 PM



Center for Bioethics and Humanities  
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO ANSCHUTZ MEDICAL CAMPUS



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My *Galactic Stories* began when my daughter, an electrical engineer, sent me several photographs taken by the Hubble telescope. Intrigued, I began combing through as many astronomy books as I could find, collecting historical astronomical images and scientific charts and maps.

As friends learned about my interest, they began sending me additional books and drawings. I started using their material in collages. Not only were images and ideas juxtaposed in those collages, so were the contributions of the different people who had provided me a trove of astronomical bric-a-brac.

These *Galactic Stories* are about the interaction of ideas and materials with no clear way to separate one from the other. I might begin with a “big” idea gleaned from whatever I understand about the amazing Hubble images, astronomic history or other “scientific” matters.

But once I begin combining paint and images, my process takes on a life of its own as I explore how the paint and images interact with one another. What began as idea-oriented work becomes a process-oriented exploration.

In *Galactic Stories*, history, science, philosophy and art collide. Tales of gods and goddesses merge with images of nebulae many light years away. Russian and United States explorations of space inspire my own “spatial” explorations. The images sometimes may seem incompatible, but they’re part of an encompassing continuum.

In *Sam and Streilka*, for example, a Russian dog who traveled in space is only brush strokes away from The Big Bang. It is my hope that the painting is thematically expansive — as well as visually unified.

These paintings and their use of mixed media are not an attempt to illustrate scientific ideas and theories, but to use those ideas and theories as a springboard from which to launch my paintings and collages.

Maps and charts figure into these works, as well.

Maps chart what we think we know, yet, to me, they always suggest that there’s more to discover. In the case of *Galactic Stories*, part of that discovery involves removing what is linear and time-specific in a chart (the information) and exposing its underlying skeleton (the structure), then building my painting on that foundation.



*Horsehead Galaxy*, 2014, oil and acrylic on canvas, 18” x 18”

The paintings and collages also may be a metaphor for the always tenuous state of what we know, the way knowledge begins, morphs and transforms into something else as we learn more.

Sometimes, a mistake can be fruitful and surprising. One day in my studio, I began a painting. I would depict an imaginary black hole. I later found an image in an astronomy book that looked as if I’d copied my experimental painting from it. I’d never seen the image in that book before nor was it an image of a black hole. It was of a phenomenon called a debris disk that surrounds many stars. That painting is now a part of *Sam and Streilka*.

I’m not entirely sure where the line between reality and imagination begins and ends. The best I can say is that the skies are full of astonishments that can expand the field of artistic play, and those are the fields in which I’m currently working.

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curated by Simon Zalkind

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### **The Art Gallery**

Fulginiti Pavilion for Bioethics and Humanities  
University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus  
13080 East 19th Avenue, Aurora, Colorado 80045  
303.724.3994

Map and directions at: [www.coloradobioethics.org](http://www.coloradobioethics.org)

### **Gallery Hours**

9:00am - 5:00pm, Monday - Friday, free and open to the public



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