The background of the poster is a dark, textured field of swirling orange and red organic shapes. Overlaid on this is a large, faint, pinkish-red DNA double helix. To the left, there is a vertical strip of a detailed, pinkish-red anatomical drawing, possibly of a human spine or a complex biological structure. The title 'UnNatural Science' is printed in a bold, yellow, serif font, centered horizontally and partially overlapping the DNA helix.

UnNatural Science

AN EXHIBITION

JANINE ANTONI

CATHERINE CHALMERS

PETER FISCHLI + DAVID WEISS

THOMAS GRÜNFELD

TIM HAWKINSON

NATALIE JEREMIJENKO

EVE ANDRÉE LARAMÉE

STACY LEVY

MICHAEL OATMAN

HUANG YONG PING

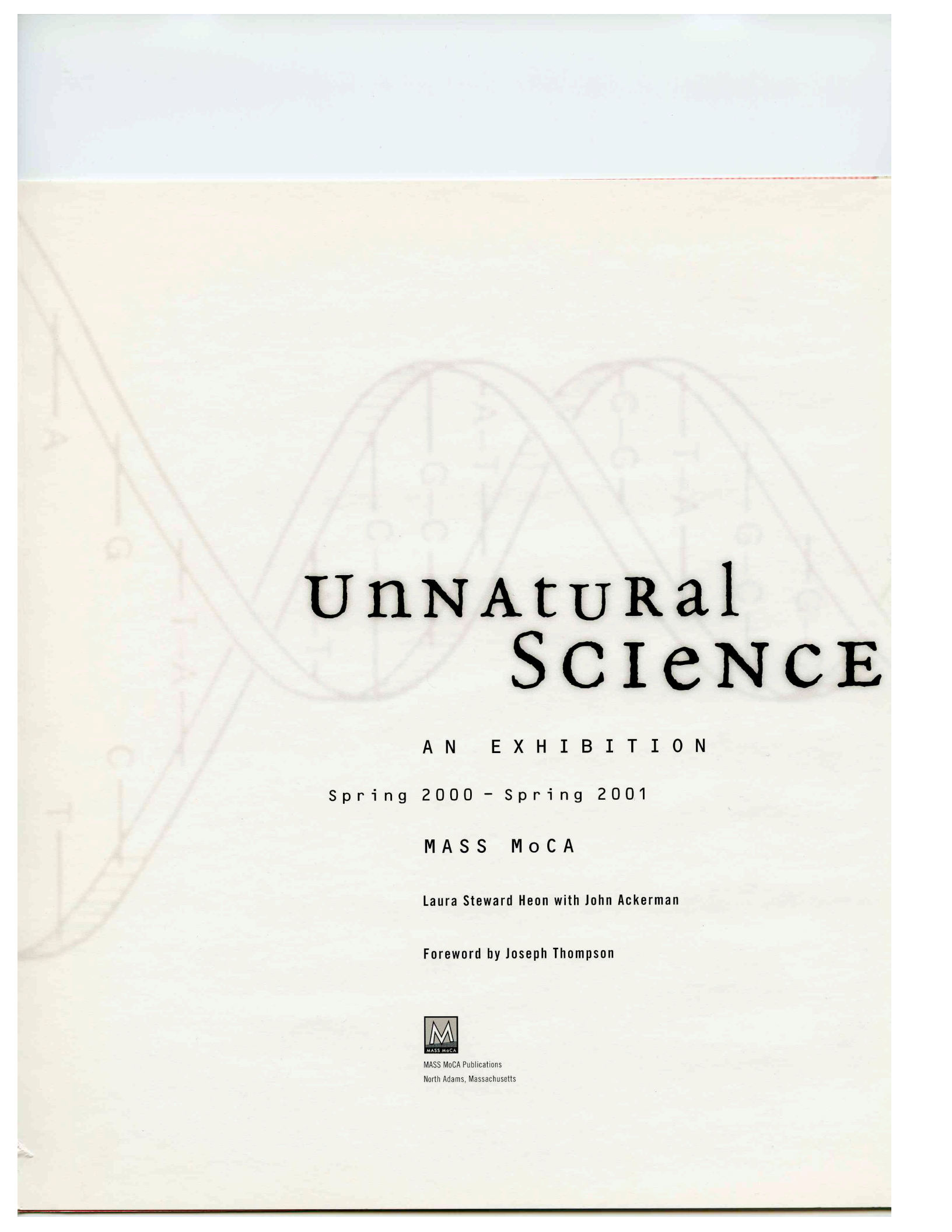
MATTHEW RITCHIE

GARY SCHNEIDER

KIKI SMITH

STEINA VASULKA

LIM YOUNG-SUN



UnNatural Science

A N E X H I B I T I O N

Spring 2000 - Spring 2001

MASS MoCA

Laura Steward Heon with John Ackerman

Foreword by Joseph Thompson



MASS MoCA Publications
North Adams, Massachusetts

GARY SCHNEIDER

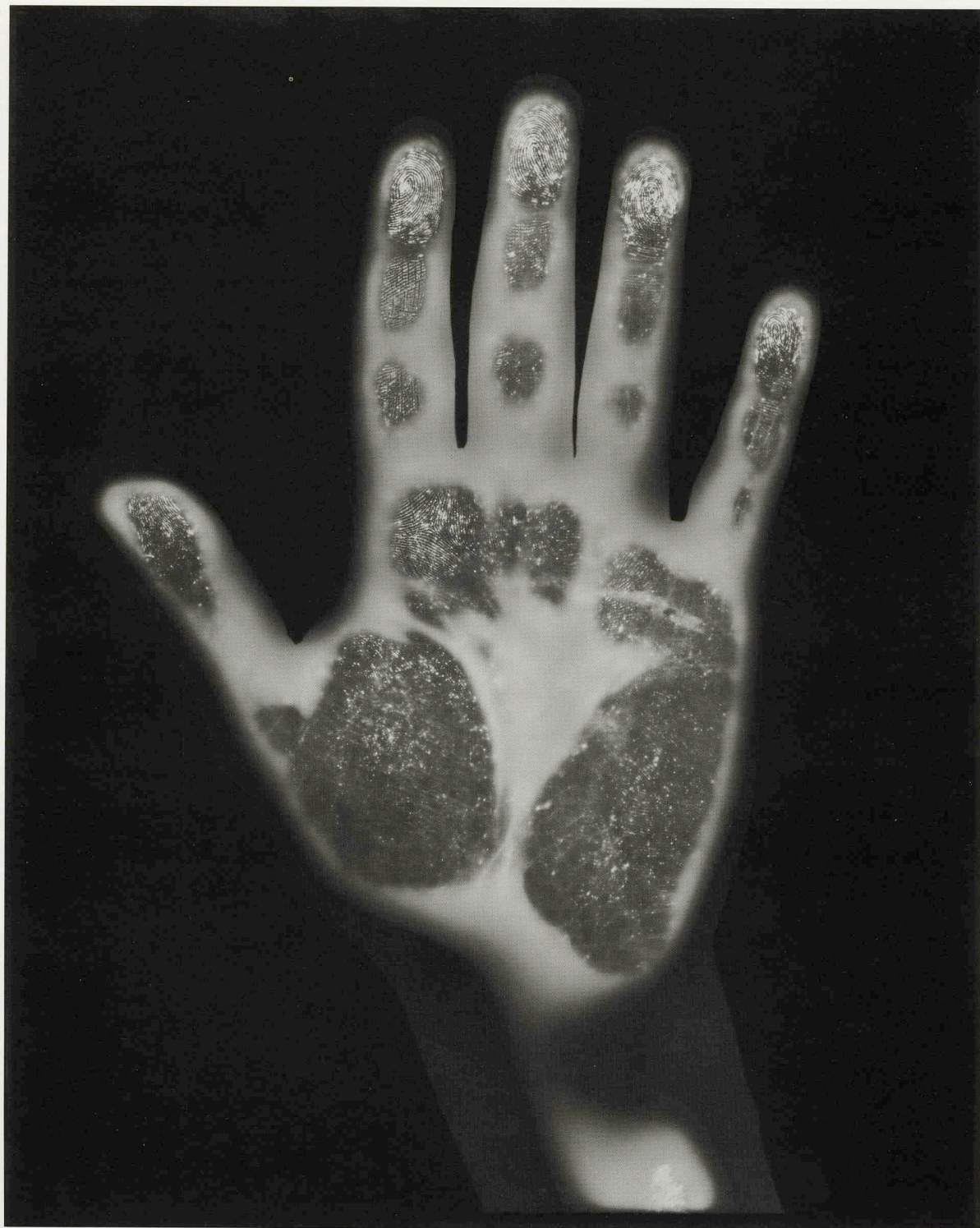
Genetic Self-Portrait, 1997–98

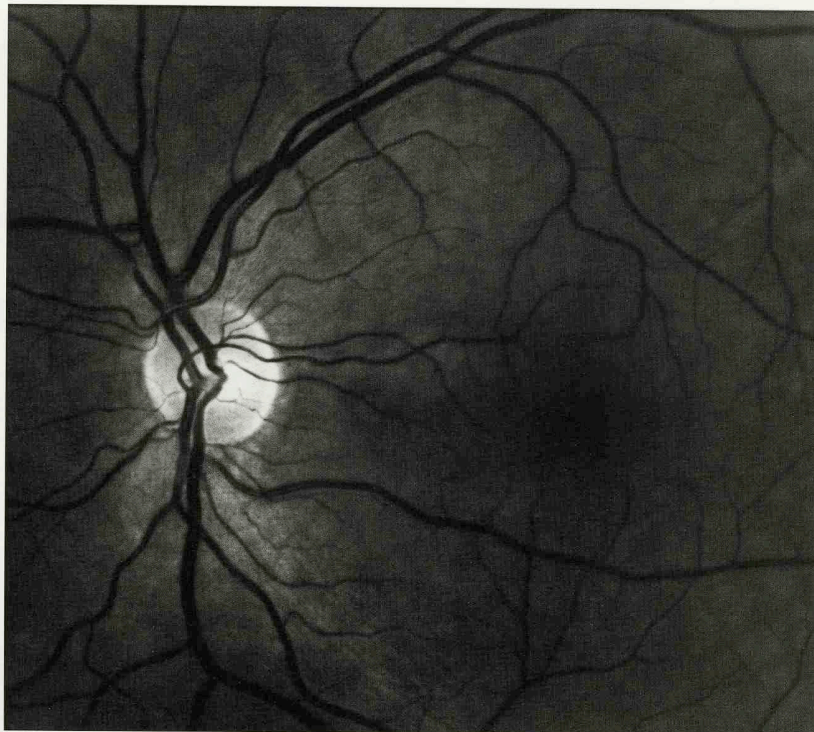
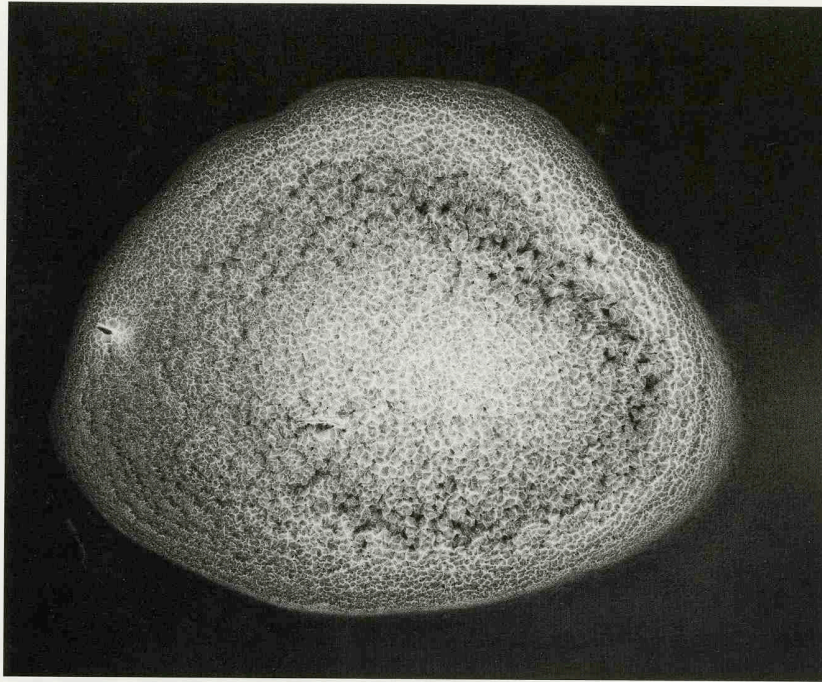
55 toned gelatin silver and platinum/palladium prints

Courtesy P.P.O.W. Gallery, New York

A photographer well known for his portraits, Gary Schneider was commissioned in 1996 to explore the human genome project. The rush to map every gene on each of the 23 pairs of human chromosomes began in 1953 after the discovery of DNA and took on new urgency in the late 1980s with medical and computer science developments that made the project feasible. Intrigued by the possibilities of the HGP, Schneider set out to make a self-portrait comprised of his chromosomes, DNA, sperm, retinas, and even his teeth, hands and ears – those things that physically constitute his uniqueness as a human being. Working with scientists such as Dr. Dorothy Warburton at Babies Hospital at New York Presbyterian, Schneider collected photographs made with various medical imaging processes. To photograph the tumor suppressor gene (MLL) on 3-micron-long chromosome 11, for example, Warburton and Schneider attached a 35mm camera to a fluorescent-light microscope. MLL, tagged to glow in fluorescent light, appears as bright white dots on two chromosomes among the other 22 pairs. The 23 pairs of chromosomes and glowing nucleus are printed across four panels, totaling 5 feet in length.

Schneider's self-presentation through these genetic markers departs from the traditional focus on the face as the locus of individuality. In the 19th century, physiognomy (the study of facial features to identify moral character) was widely practiced, and in the early part of the 20th century, eugenicists sought not only to determine character through appearance and genealogy, but to "improve" humanity by preventing undesirable people from reproducing. (Michael Oatman's work *Long Shadows: Henry Perkins and the Eugenics Survey of Vermont*, shown in the gallery adjacent to Schneider's, explores this dark topic.) But the *Genetic Self-Portrait* is neither a narcissistic presentation of Schneider's superior genes, nor an uninflected marshalling of evidence about him. Instead, Schneider made more personal selections. For example, he includes the SRY gene, which determines the characteristics of the testes, and the tumor suppressor gene mentioned above, which may have malfunctioned in Schneider's mother, who died of lung cancer shortly before he began this project.





Three photographs from
Genetic Self-Portrait by
Gary Schneider (hand,
blood sample and retina).

Gary Schneider, *Genetic Self-Portrait*, 1997–98. 55 toned gelatin silver and platinum/palladium prints. Courtesy P.P.O.W. Gallery, New York.

