

APR11-2011-020011

Abstract for an Invited Paper
for the APR11 Meeting of
the American Physical Society

Categorically Not!

K.C. COLE, USC Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism

The artist Bob Miller liked to say that the worst disease afflicting humankind is “hardening of the categories” - the tendency to cram subjects into boxes labeled “science,” “art,” “politics,” “economics,” “play” – labels that are as outdated and meaningless as divisions between the colors on a continuous spectrum. Over the past 10 years, KC Cole has been organizing free form events that tear down these artificial barriers, and with intriguing results: actors gain insights into character from a topologist; a choreographer solves engineering problems through her knowledge of motion; neuroscientists learn about intuition from filmmakers and string theorists. Categorically Not! - as the series is called - is not (merely) an attempt to “popularize” science by looking at it through unlikely lenses, but a real exploration into the deep connections that both illuminate and energize all fields of study. It is a “people’s” salon, free and open to the general public. Cole will talk about how she overcomes “hardening of the categories” not just through events, but also in her popular magazine and newspaper articles, books, radio commentaries, and teaching at USC’s Annenberg School of Communication and Journalism.