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MEET YOUR NEIGHBOR

Soren Meibom

MEET YOUR NEIGHBOR

SOREN MEIBOM'S *Inspirational Journey*

THROUGH SCIENCE,
ART & SPORT



The Meibom Family



Soren surrounded by his artwork



Soren during his soccer days

BY MICHAELA O'SHAUGHNESSY

AT FIRST GLANCE,

Soren Meibom's career path might seem like the setup to a quirky joke: an artist, athlete and astrophysicist walk into a bar ... But for Meibom, no punchline is needed to connect the passions that have shaped his life's journey.

Growing up in Denmark, soccer was everything to Meibom who played at an elite-level for club and youth national teams. However, during high school, his growing fascination with science gradually pulled him away from the soccer field and toward the stars. Even as he earned a master's degree in physics and astronomy from the University of Copenhagen, he continued playing semi-professional soccer. But at 25, he made the bold choice to retire from soccer to pursue a PhD in astrophysics—a choice he found as thrilling as being a professional athlete.

Driven by a desire to experience life to its fullest, Meibom moved to the U.S. in 1999 to attend graduate school. His PhD degree led to a 14-year career at the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics, where his expertise in stellar research earned him collaborations with NASA on groundbreaking

missions like Kepler and TESS, designed to discover planets beyond our solar system. Meibom's research with NASA contributed to answering age-old questions that have intrigued humanity for thousands of years, like how unique or common is our planet and solar system?

Yet, despite his growing successes as an astronomer, educator and public speaker, Meibom couldn't shake the feeling that he was neglecting a vital part of himself. Art, a passion nurtured in childhood through creative family projects led by his father, an artist, was calling to him. With a career and family keeping him busy, making time for art—his lifelong passion—had become more difficult. The decision to devote himself full time to his artwork felt like destiny to Meibom, despite taking years to reach the point where he felt comfortable leaving his scientific career.

"I always felt that while I had success as a soccer player and a scientist, my most natural talent where ideas, inspiration and positive energy come naturally to me, is in the realm of visual art. I gave soccer a real chance and I accomplished most of the things that I imagined doing as a scientist — working at a



Rowing art



At work

world-class institution and making new and important discoveries and contributions. However, I wouldn't be able to look myself in the mirror at retirement age if I did not give my artistic interests and curiosity the same opportunity and the same time and energy that I had given to soccer and science."

At first, Meibom had no plans to combine his love for art and science into what would become his signature SciArt. As a scientist, he had always looked at numbers, equations and graphs as scientific ways to tell stories, and now as an artist, he began to challenge himself to bring that scientific language to the visual arts. After creating a SciArt series about medical imaging for Boston Medical Center, that path unfolded unexpectedly. It was the powerful and positive reactions to that project that sparked his realization of the potential to fuse these two passions into something truly unique.

"My artwork wasn't actual X-rays or MRI scans that radiologists see daily; they were pieces of art with texture and color telling stories about the medical significance and science behind these imaging techniques. What the doctors saw was their specialty used to create art. I received such enthusiastic reactions from them, and that's when I realized that there is something here that does not, as far as I know, exist yet," explains Meibom. "It's about taking people's passions, identity, profession and skills, and incorporating them into visual art

through science, and doing so in a way that's colorful and uplifting and meaningful."

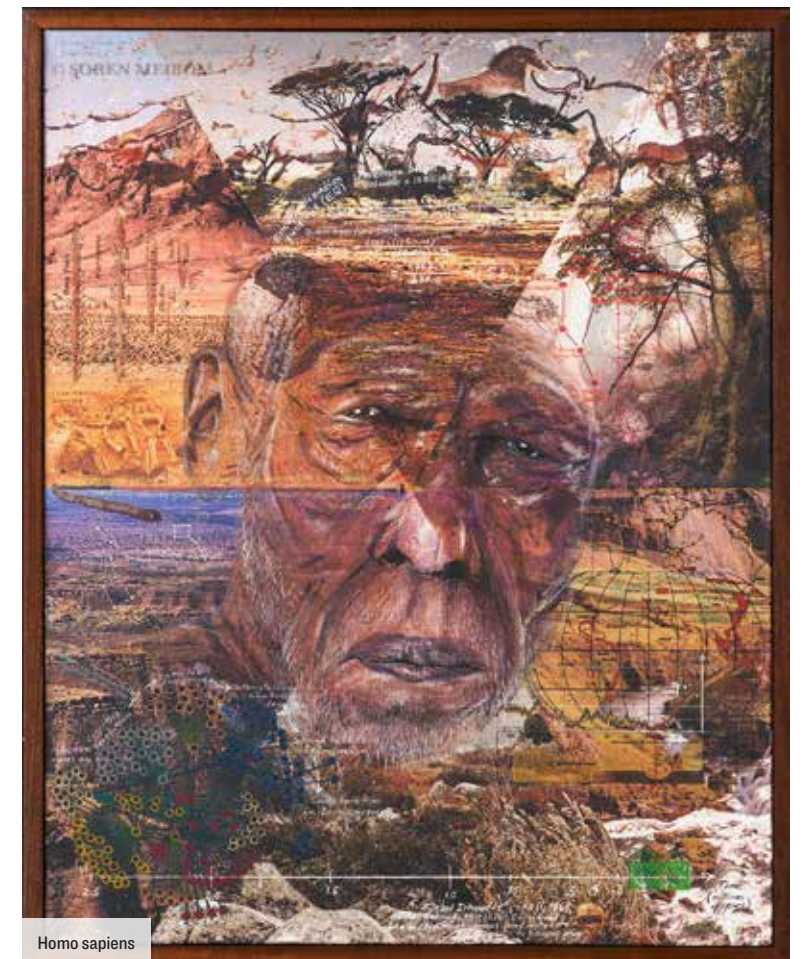
Meibom's SciArt projects have both been commissioned and followed his own interests. A few years ago he combined all three of his lifelong passions and created a SciArt exhibit about the complexity and beauty of the game of soccer. His soccer SciArt was exhibited at Denmark's National History Museum during the 2021 European Championships and now hangs in a place deeply familiar to him—the national soccer stadium in Copenhagen. His SciArt about the sport of rowing was commissioned for a fundraiser for the Head of the Charles Regatta and was purchased by a local collector. Next year, when his soccer SciArt is exhibited in another Danish museum, Meibom hopes to also display his rowing pieces, creating a comprehensive exhibit that explores sports through the lenses of art and science.

Having lived as a scientist and an artist, Meibom is passionate about dismantling stereotypes that divide creativity from analytical thinking. He believes there is significant overlap between the creative processes of artists and scientists and that we do children a disservice by telling them they can only excel in one area. For him, embracing multiple passions is not only possible but essential to reaching our full potential.

"Both artists and scientists are open-minded people who want to push boundaries. A lot of the same qualities it takes to be a good scientist are the same qualities it takes to be a good artist. It's important to form fully developed and productive human beings—you don't want to lead them in just one direction and tell them to dismiss their other interests and large parts of the beautiful world out here," insists Meibom. "Being a scientist is not about how good you are at multiplying in your head, it's about being curious about what is true and what you do not yet understand. And that is true for artists as well. There is so much curiosity and creativity involved in being both a scientist and an artist."

The one difference Meibom notes between being an artist and a scientist is the ease with which he shares his art with the world. In contrast, releasing a scientific paper used to feel much more daunting.

"I feel much more relaxed sending my art into the world than I did giving a scientific talk or putting a scientific paper out there. Science is a very exciting journey, but it has guardrails. It's like water rafting on a river where you can see the banks. The scientific method dictates that you stay with those banks as you sail down the



Homo sapiens

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river. That's totally understandable—discoveries and results have to be true and tested. When you're an artist, your boat is now on a vast ocean where there are no coastlines. You can sail as far as you want and in whichever direction you want."

Whether discussing soccer, art or stars, Meibom's passion and curiosity are infectious. He hopes his SciArt sparks the same sense of curiosity in viewers that it has injected in his own creative journey. "I'm hoping that my SciArt will make people more interested in exploring and learning and get them to start asking themselves questions about the world around them."

In weaving together his passion for science and art, Soren Meibom offers a unique lens through which we can discover a whole new appreciation of beauty. SciArt doesn't just tell stories; it invites viewers to explore their own sense of curiosity and wonder. By embracing the



multiple facets of his identity, Meibom exemplifies the beauty of living a life unrestricted by conventional boundaries, showing how the intersection of art and science unlocks

new ways of seeing and understanding the world.

Soren has lived in Winchester for 13 years with his wife Sara, a Professor of Radiology at Boston University and Nuclear Medicine Doctor at Boston Medical Center, and his daughter Mia and son Viktor, a Junior and Sophomore at Boston University.

Explore SciArt's captivating stories of rowing, radiology, human evolution, and more at www.SorenMeibom.com, where you can also purchase replica prints at www.SorenMeibom.shop. Soren's original SciArt is available for exhibitions worldwide—contact art@SorenMeibom.com if you're interested in showcasing his work. If you'd like to enrich your home or office with custom SciArt that reflects your personal journey or highlights your organization's mission and goals, reach out to Soren to commission an original piece.

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