From rough sketches to virtual reality: How scientists study, learn about developing embryos

Armed with a wand and funky spectacles, Beatrice Steinert steps into a world of lush green mounds and bright blue dots.

This is not some hallucinogenic trip. Rather, Steinert was exploring a microscopic snail embryo in 3-D at the YURT, a virtual reality theater at Brown University.

“I try to use my artistic practice as a way to further investigate the methods of creating images that have been so important to science for a very, very long time,” Steinert said.

It lead her to a scientist named Edwin Grant Conklin.

Conklin was part of a group of scientists at the Marine Biological Laboratory in Woods Hole, Mass., who pioneered a line of research called cell lineage in the late 19th century.

“It was incredibly time-consuming, incredibly meticulous, and difficult,” said Jane Maienschein, director of the Marine Biological Laboratory History Project. “It’s the kind of work that the people would not do today.”

Conklin’s work was published in 1897 in the Journal of Morphology with 105 hand-drawn images.

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion, and analysis. Read full, original post: Drawing life at its start, cell by cell