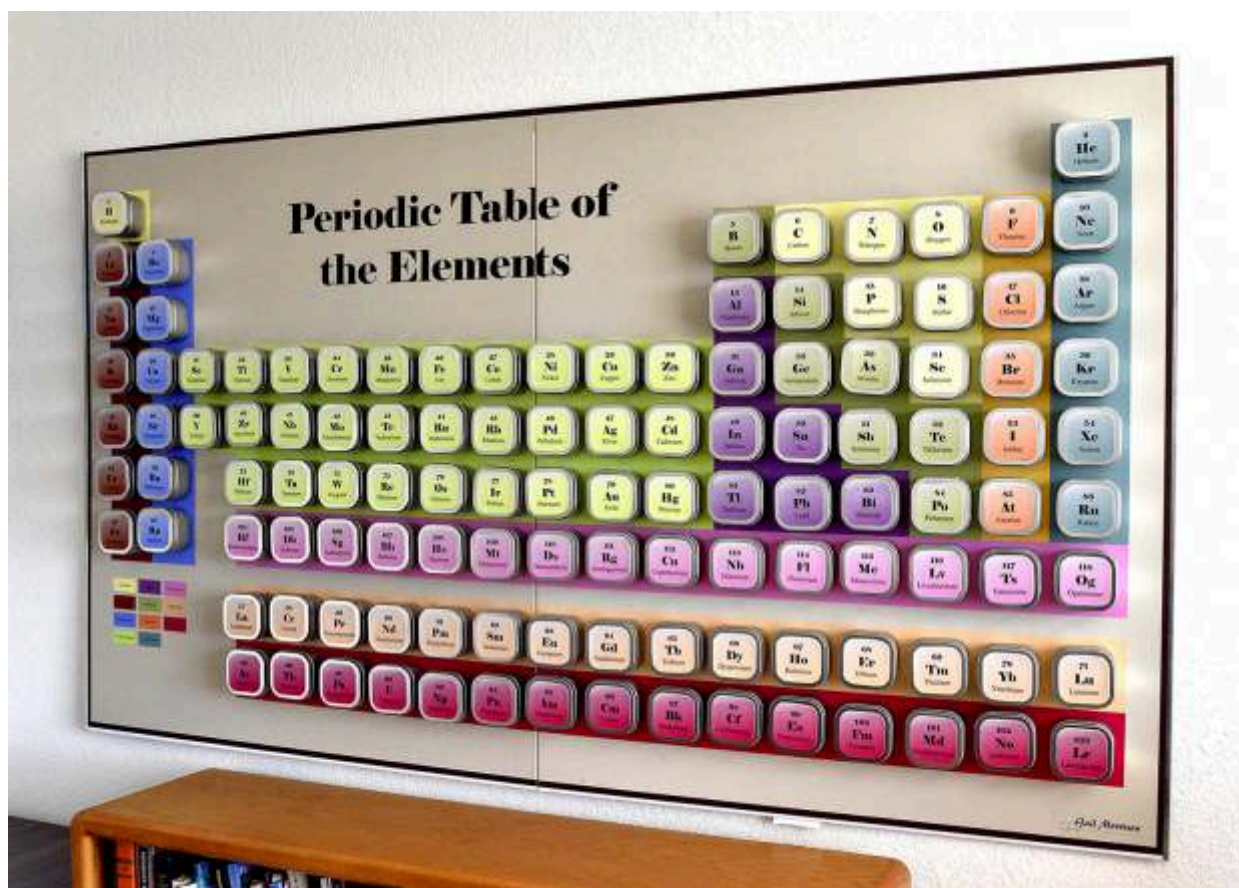


Periodic Table of the Elements

This is a collaborative, participatory, interactive Periodic Table of the Elements. It is designed to engage the public, inviting them to explore and interact with it. It serves to both educate and entertain and would be of interest to a wide audience.

Each element has a small box, attached with magnets in the familiar layout of the Periodic Table to a vertical galvanized steel backing. Overall size is 6'x3.5' (the two halves unbolt for easier transportation/storage); it hangs from a cleat/bracket and weighs approximately 45 pounds.

photo 1, overview



Each element also has a person to put something in the box - photos, poems, samples of the element itself, discovery or history information, the meaning of the name, its meaning in their life - whatever they feel offers the most interesting presentation of their element. Participants of any age can express how they feel about and understand a particular element. Contents of the boxes may range from literal samples, to scientific information and stories, to examples of elements in everyday objects, to myth, poetry and song.

Adjoining the Periodic Table could be a list of the names of contributors along with the elements they selected, and a photograph and text explaining what they did and why.

Viewers may participate in the Table as well. If a visitor is curious about tellurium, for instance, they can pull that box off, open the lid, and look inside to see how someone has chosen to present it.

Recently this Periodic Table of the Elements was the centerpiece and conceptual origin of the national art exhibition I produced, **ELEMENTS**, at the Marin Society of Artists in San Rafael, California. The exhibition was a major success, and helped kick off the International Year of the Periodic Table of the Elements as one of the first events listed on the website of the International Year of the Periodic Table of the Elements (iypt2019.org).

The Table was by far the public's favorite component of the exhibition. A unique aspect of the exhibition was the significant participation of chemists as both participants and visitors.

The Table was also featured at The Consilience of Art and Science 2018, a Pence Gallery and UC Davis Art/Science Fusion Juried Exhibition, in Davis, California. According to the gallery director the display was very popular; people really enjoyed the opportunity to interact with the Periodic Table

photo 2 - looking in a box



photo 3 - box group detail



So far, two-thirds of the boxes have been filled. Of those, 23% were done by artists, 13% by scientists, and 64% by "everyone else." Very few of these people have given a second thought to the Periodic Table of the Elements since high school, but all have found it an intriguing and enjoyable undertaking and have come to think about elements in new ways.

The Table is not completely filled, so it is still alive, still in play. Additionally, in an institutional setting there is no reason to limit participants to one element, or elements to one participant.

Some of my favorites:

Berkelium: Mike Freeman is a musician who lives in Berkeley. He gathered information on the properties of Berkelium and crafted it into a song which he recorded with his band. In the box: a QR code. Viewers "read" this with their phone and it takes them to a performance of the song on youtube.

Mercury: There are many directions a person could go with mercury - the silvery metal, the messenger of the gods, etc. But Janis Mara is a journalist. In the box: copies of the masthead of the San Jose *Mercury News*.

Silver: Joan Hart grew up in New Mexico which has a history of silver mining and a tradition of silver jewelry, which she loves. In the box: a hunk of silver ore, and a map to the Bulldog Mine in Colorado where it was found.

Einsteinium: Malcolm Lubliner illustrates Einstein's famous quote, "God doesn't play dice with the universe." In the box: a pair of hand-made dice whose sides spell out "E=mc²" and the Hebrew sign for life.

photos 4 & 5 - box details



More information:

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