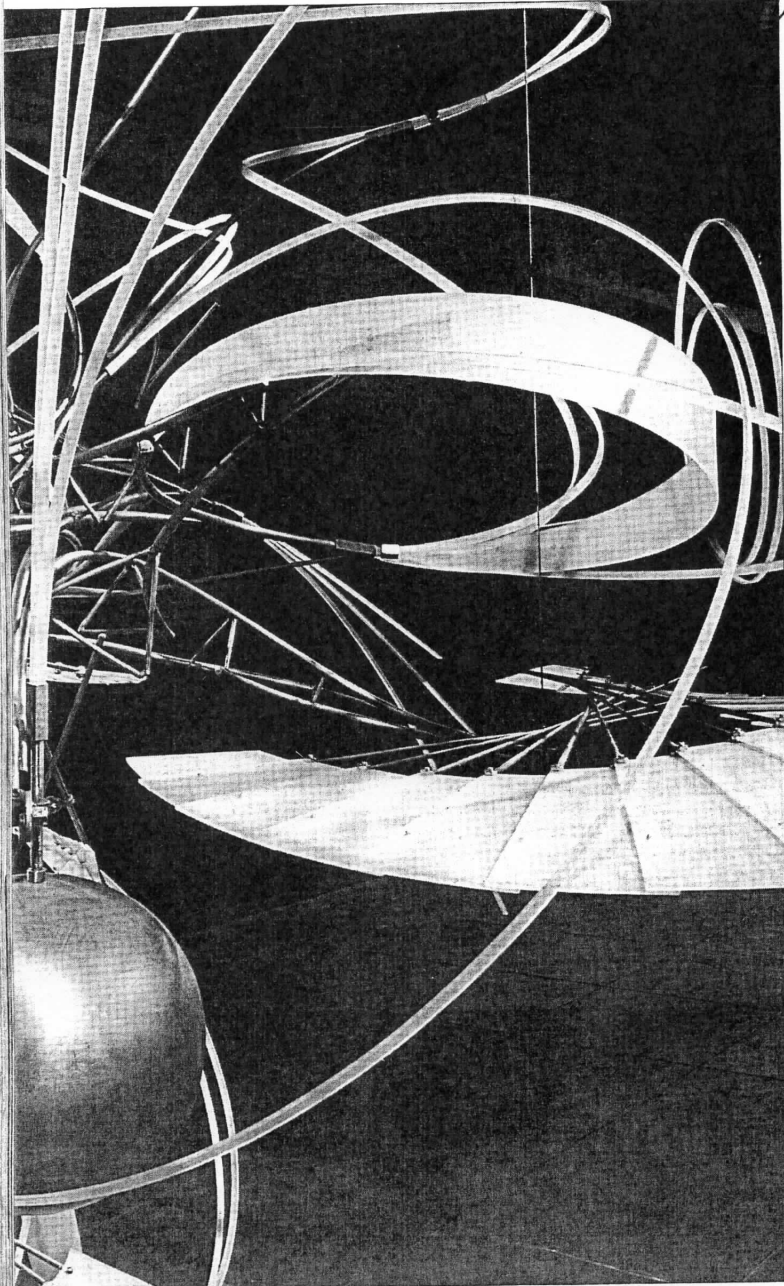


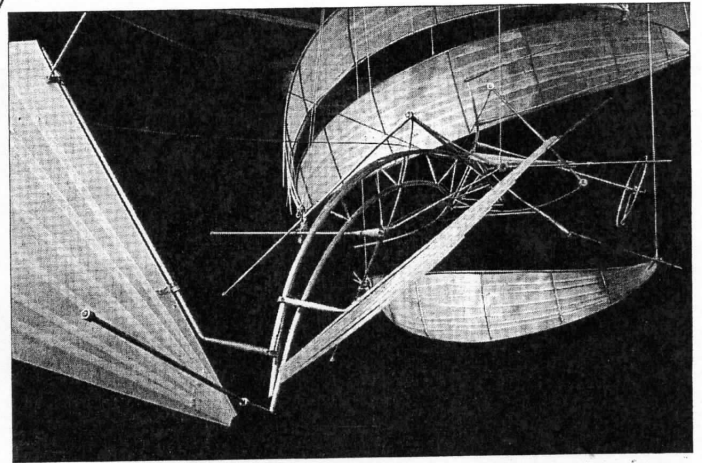
# Frontiers *of* fancy



Jamie Hamilton: *Vimāna*, 2007, steel, polycarbonate, 9 x 8 x 7 feet

Top right, *Vailix*, 2007, steel, polycarbonate, 9 x 6 x 5 feet

Images courtesy Museum of Fine Arts



**Before plopping down** a \$20,000 deposit to reserve a spot on one of Virgin Galactic's ships, would-be space travelers can go to the company's Web site and savor a detailed description of what they will see and feel. If they pay the remaining \$180,000, blast off, float about weightless, and see the grand views of space, they will have spent more time reading about their visit to space than experiencing it.

Whether we are anticipating spending six hours jammed into the middle seat during a transcontinental journey or making a minutes-long jaunt past the pull of Earth's gravity, today we all have a pretty good idea what it feels like to be up there, and for Museum of Fine Arts curator Laura Addison, that lack of mystery is a terrible loss.

"I've been thinking about the naiveté of inventors trying to accomplish something for the first time," Addison said during a recent interview. Speculating about what it must have been like to dream about flight while having no concrete experience to draw on, she began planning a show about the human urge to fly. Her ideas shifted as she encountered artists whose work pushed her thinking in new directions.

As she talked about the inspiration for *Flight of Fancy*, a show that opens at the Museum of Fine Arts on Friday, May 18, Addison repeatedly mentioned Leonardo da Vinci's plans for flying machines. He could only imagine what the world would look like from the sky. "What's logical to us might not have been logical to da Vinci," Addison said, adding that all of the exhibit's works are tinged with absurdity.

*Flight of Fancy* features works by Jamie Hamilton, William Lamson, Robert and Shana ParkeHarrison, and Sheilah Wilson. While Addison was planning the show, Wilson approached her with a proposal for an indoor piece that would use balloons to represent the human desire for transcendence. Addison told the artist she was considering a flight exhibit, and she would like to have a performance for the opening. Wilson had unsuccessfully tried to fly with the aid of helium-filled balloons about a year and a half ago, *Flight of Fancy* gave her the excuse to revisit the idea with a few twists.

About 10 days before the opening, Wilson was putting the finishing touches on a boat, made of lightweight plywood and pine, which she hopes to "sail" in the courtyard of the museum with the help of helium and weather balloons. Wilson's boat is named the *Erg*, after a ship that sank three times off the coast of her native Nova Scotia. The vessel is not



Robert and Shana ParkeHarrison: *Flying Lessons*, 2000, photogravure, 20 x 17.75 inches

strong enough to hold the artist; she'll stay on the ground, but Wilson said she might lip-sync "Farewell to Nova Scotia" as the *Erg* rises for the fourth time. "Farewell to Nova Scotia," about fishermen setting sail, is one of the first songs Wilson learned in school. The performance takes place during the opening reception. Addison said the launch would be filmed and posted on the museum's Web site.

Hamilton's steel-and-plastic constructions *Vailix* and *Vimana* were the first works to be installed in the museum's second-floor gallery. Suspended from the ceiling, both seem to be from another era and designed to illustrate some obscure scientific theory. It's easy to imagine a crusty old professor with a pointer using *Vimana's* spirals and fins to explain the orbit of space junk or perhaps the trajectories of stardust.

Hamilton calls himself a pragmatist and says he is in love with elegantly functional machines such as late-19th-century steam engines and firetrucks. "We've lost knowledge," Hamilton said. "Look at the Pantheon and old Roman bridges and aqueducts that are still standing and beautiful without maintenance. We've lost the skills to build things like that."

Robert and Shana ParkeHarrison's staged photogravures feature a character they call Everyman who's portrayed by Robert ParkeHarrison, wearing a dark suit that doesn't quite fit. He inhabits a world drastically altered by either weapons of mass destruction or human indifference to the environment. "He's doing everything with such earnestness," Addison said. Yet his actions seem senseless. In *The Guardian*, he balances on twisted stilts atop a tree stump; leafless branches jut from his back, suggesting skeletal wings. His arms are held away from his torso, giving some small sense that he might have some control over his useless wooden appendages. He appears ready to jump.

*The Guardian*, like most of the ParkeHarrisons' work, has the feel of a faded print found in an old book, yet it looks eerily modern. The nostalgic

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## The Family Learning Center By Lifespan Therapy Services

All courses developed by board certified Speech Therapist and Occupational Therapist

### Monday Morning Schedule:

#### Baby Sign Class 9:30 to 10:30 (Parent and Baby)

Teach your baby sign language. Learn the steps and signs required to use baby sign with your baby. Have fun and practice these techniques with songs and games! **Cost \$80.00 per session (one parent and baby) \$120.00 per session (two parents and baby)**

Sessions - June 2nd to July 2nd  
August 6th to September 3rd  
September 10th to October 8th

### Wednesday Morning Schedule:

#### 1. Toddler Skills Class 9:30 to 10:30 (2-3 years)

Watch your toddler interact with his or her peers while participating in gross motor, fine motor, language, and art activities! Each week you will take home a packet of fun and entertaining activities that will address your child's developmental milestones! **Cost \$65.00 per session**

Sessions - August 8th to September 5th  
September 10th to October 8th

#### 2. Baby Sign Class 10:30 to 11:30

**Cost \$80.00 per session (one parent and baby) \$120.00 (two parents and baby)**

Session - August 8th to September 5th  
September 12th to October 10th

#### 3. Yoga for the Special Child

Individual therapeutic yoga sessions offered for infants to young adults with special needs including Down Syndrome, Cerebral Palsy, Autism, ADD, Developmental Delay and Learning Disabilities.

#### 4. S.M.I.L.Y. Yoga Groups for Kids

Small group interactive Hatha yoga classes offered for kindergarten and elementary school aged kids using the "Sensory Motor Integration and Learning with Yoga" program to support attention, sensory integration, physical skills and literacy.

### HOT TOPIC SEMINARS

#### 1. Expecting Parents: Language Stimulation for Your Infant and Toddler!

Saturday August 11th 10:00 to 12:00 **Cost: \$50.00**

#### 2. Baby Sign for Daddy: Two hour overview for the working Dad!

June 20th 6:00 to 8:00 (appetizers provided) **Cost: \$65.00**

#### 3. Baby Language: - As Seen On Oprah

Overview and presentation of Dunstan Baby Language Program™

Saturday August 25th 10:00 to 12:00 **Cost: \$75.00**

#### 4. Baby Sign for the Expecting Grandparent!

Wednesday September 12th 1:00 to 3:00 **Cost: \$50.00**

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**Infant Nanny School: June 23rd 9:00 to 5:00 (class size is limited)**

**Nanny School for Nannies of School-Age Children: June 2nd 9:00-3:00 (class size is limited)**

#### Infant Nanny School Topics:

- CPR and First Aid Training
- Baby Sign Class (intensive class)
- Language and Child Development (gross and fine motor) Activities
- Review of car seat safety
- Cooking for Babies First Meals (healthy and organic)
- Baby Proofing Tips for The Home

Infant Nanny Course- **\$150.00** INCLUDES:

Box Lunch

Baby Bag (infant nanny course)

- baby sign book
- funny and healthy recipe cards
- CPR certification certificates

#### School Age Children Nanny School Topics:

- CPR and First Aid Training
- Lets Get Physical (indoor and outdoor gross motor activities)
- It is all in the details (indoor and outdoor fine motor activities)
- Express yourself (language stimulation activities)
- Safety in the community
- Music and Art for kids
- Healthy Options (at home and in the community)

School Age Nanny Course- **\$135.00** INCLUDES:

Box Lunch

Activities Bag (school age nanny course)

- activity kits
- healthy options recipe cards
- CPR certification certificates

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\* Individual Consultations available to address course topics with both nanny and parents in the privacy of your home.