

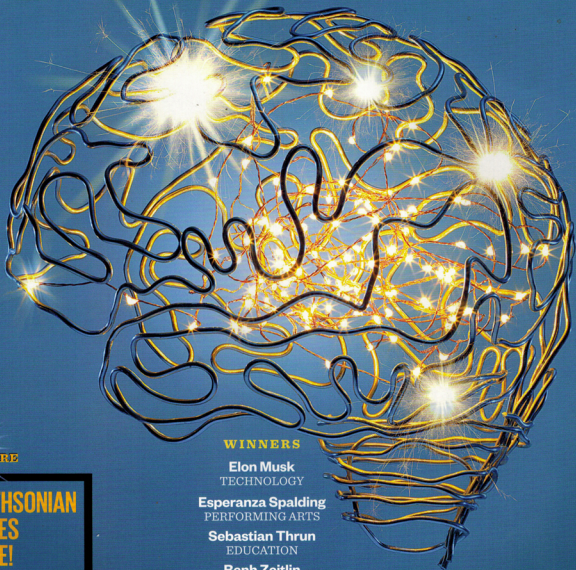
2012 AMERICAN INGENUITY AWARDS

December 2012 | smithsonian.com

# Smithsonian

FEATURING

The Innovators Who Are Rocking The World



BONUS  
FEATURE

**SMITHSONIAN  
COMES  
ALIVE!**

Download the free Actable app on your smartphone or tablet (see p. 45) and scan **THE BRAIN ON THIS COVER**. Scan pages **INSIDE** to watch our award winners in action.

**WINNERS**

**Elon Musk**  
TECHNOLOGY

**Esperanza Spalding**  
PERFORMING ARTS

**Sebastian Thrun**  
EDUCATION

**Benh Zeitlin**  
VISUAL ARTS

**Pardis Sabeti**  
NATURAL SCIENCES

**Jim Anderson**  
PHYSICAL SCIENCES

**Bryan Stevenson**  
SOCIAL PROGRESS

**Anne Kelly Knowles**  
HISTORICAL SCHOLARSHIP

**Jack Andraka**  
YOUTH ACHIEVEMENT

**PLUS**

Oliver Sacks' Mind-Altering Journey

Preston Tucker's Doomed Idea

Dr. NakaMats' Crazy Inventions

Wagner wrote for Loge—hot, his rise, and swirling, trilling strings represent the main blazes. Flutes and other winds twinkle, throwing up sparks. Later, "Magic Fire Music" yields to an aching lyrical melody, in keeping with fire's ambiguous nature.

Fire in pop music tends to be less philosophical and more sexual. It is the inspiration for Adele's despondent wail in "Set Fire to the Rain" and Jim Morrison's feral moans and screams in The Doors' "Light My Fire."

Calling her new album *Girl on Fire*, Alicia Keys takes away the sexual connotations, replacing them with a wholesome girl-power message aimed at teens like Gabby Douglas, the Olympic gymnast, who did backflips during Keys' performance of the song at the MTV Video Music Awards this past September. As with Springsteen, the "fire" here comes from the percussion, though Keys' aggressive drum-machine beats are light-years from the gentle patter of "I'm on Fire."

Fire can also be life-giving, even for an artist as moody as the Man in Black. Cash's late-career revival, which was capped by his stark version of "Hurt" by Nine Inch Nails, was helped along by another cover: his unexpectedly sunny take on an intense tune, with the organ providing a saintly sheen.

The song? "I'm on Fire."

—ZACHARY WOOLFEE



FIRE ART



## Sculpting With Fire

An artist who burns her creations

IN 1997, while attending the annual Burning Man festival in Nevada's Black Rock Desert, **Karen Cusolito** saw art in an entirely new light. "Fire is always very dramatic and it's unscripted," says the Oakland-based sculptor, who unveiled her first flaming creation five years later. Cusolito's most recent work, *Infinitarium*, is a pyrotechnic garden that includes a 14-foot-tall dandelion (above) with flames jutting from its 24-inch-long seeds. Cusolito has become adept at experimenting with fuel mixtures to convey different moods. While propane yields an aggressive orange flame, methanol burns with serene blue-green flames that can be made even greener by adding copper shavings. "I've got a lot of pieces where the fire is very delicate, inviting you to step closer," Cusolito says. "That to me is a really special thing to be able to achieve with fire." —LEAH BINKOVITZ

See more of Cusolito's pyrotechnic sculptures at [Smithsonian.com/cusolito](http://Smithsonian.com/cusolito)