



"Vital Gown 6", Encaustic toner transfer on silk and projection, 2015

Darian Goldin Stahl / *MRI IN USE*

Exhibition: June 10 - July 16, 2016
Artist Talk : June 10, 2016 , 7:00pm - 8:00pm
Opening Reception to follow



Alberta Printmakers Gallery
4025 4 Street SE, Calgary AB

Through *MRI In Use*, Darian Goldin Stahl offers a glimpse into the experience of navigating a medical diagnosis and living with chronic illness. The print-based installation emerged from the ongoing collaboration between the artist and her sister Devan Stahl, a writer and bio ethicist who was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in her early twenties. Devan's research, her personal accounts, and her magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scans are the specific source material for the exhibition. *MRI In Use* addresses broader, shared anxieties and uncertainties surrounding medical intervention, the fallibility of the human body, and mortality. It calls attention to the rift between the hopes attached to medical science—its potential for discovery and healing—and the bureaucratic and dehumanizing aspects of undergoing diagnosis and treatment.

The immersive installation includes a series of life-sized hospital gown prints suspended from the ceiling of the darkened gallery. These worn and wrinkled garments immediately call to mind a patient who is absent. They appear ghost-like, vulnerable, and delicate. Goldin Stahl created the works by applying multiple toner transfers to large pieces of waxed ultra-fine silk. The innovative and physically demanding technique accounts for the vibrant colours of the gowns, which radiate in the dim light of the gallery. The irregularly shaped, almost transparent prints are highly illusionistic. Viewed from the front, they appear almost sculptural. Once viewers move through and activate the space, the diaphanous textiles swing and sway to reveal their flatness. The hovering garments appear as slices of something larger when viewed from the side—a reference to the ways that medical scans reduce the three dimensional form.

While the MRI machine slowly and incrementally documents the body, patients might remain confined and immobile for hours. Goldin Stahl has constructed a psychological

snapshot of this uneasy and claustrophobic environment in the congested space of the gallery. In sporadic intervals, the sizeable prints are illuminated by projections of actual MRI scan metadata. The intermittent rhythm and repetition of the projector points to both the tedium of the diagnostic imaging procedure and to the stamina required to undergo such an experience.

The specialized technical language of medical imaging scans is incomprehensible for most people. Goldin Stahl interrupts this stream of abstract information by interspersing the projections of light and shadows cast by Venetian blinds. For the artist, the image of sunlight escaping through blinds is at once beautiful and dangerous. They evoke the bright spots that she has observed on her sister's medical scans, which represent lesions or scars left by multiple sclerosis. This analogy is a subtle reminder of the complex and unanticipated ways that diagnosis and knowledge of illness may be carried into domestic spaces and everyday life. MRI In Use provides a setting to think about and question the ways that medical science comes into contact with human beings, and how it is used to interpret the body. By combining and juxtaposing the clinical with the familiar, the installation endeavours to rehumanize the anonymous and alienating nature of medical imagery and diagnosis.

Writer's Biography

Heather Caverhill is a PhD student in the Department of Art History, Visual Art & Theory at the University of British Columbia.

Artist's Biography

Artist Biography

Darian Goldin Stahl has recently completed an eight-month scholarship residency at Malaspina Printmakers in Vancouver, BC. She will begin her PhD in Fine Art Humanities at Concordia University in Montreal, QC this fall.

Alberta Printmakers (A/P) is a non-profit, artist-run centre founded in 1989 in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. The organization's goals are to increase public awareness of print media, to engage a diverse audience, to provide resources for the artistic community and production facilities for printmaking.

A/P has an open membership, and is governed by a board of directors. Management and administration of A/P's activities are the responsibilities of its Directors, who reach out to volunteers in accomplishing A/P's goals. A/P also hosts residency and summer student programs.

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A/P thanks its funders:

