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SEEING OURSELVES

MuseCPMI Center of Photography and the Moving Image

Opening reception 7-10 PM
2 March - 14 April 2012

Curated by Koan Jeff Baysa, M.D. and Caitlin Hardy, M.D.



Laura Ferguson

Artist: Suzanne Anker, Deborah Aschheim, Stephen Auger, Christophe Berdaguer and Marie Pejus with Christophe Laudamiel and Christoph Hornetz, Stefani Bardin and Toby Heys, Jonathan Beer, Nancy Burson, Naomi Campbell, caraballo-farman, Joyce Cutler-Shaw, Scott Draves, Simon Drouin, Greg Dunn, Laura Ferguson, Angela Freiberger, Pablo Garcia, Peter Garfield, Sarah Elise Hall, Hugh Hayden, Pinkney Herbert, Joann Hoffmann, Nene Humphrey, Elizabeth Jameson, Sophie Kahn, Andrea Kantrowitz, Mark Kessell, Adrienne Klein, Bodo Korsig, Lilla LoCurto and Bill Outcault, Marcos Lutyens, Kate MacDowell, Michael Madore, Daniel Margulies and Chris Sharp, Patrick Martinez, Saul Melman, Igor Molochevski, Gayil Nalls, Natsu, Francesca Samsel, Anne Senstad, Jason Snyder, Max Steiner, Satre Stuelke, Visual MD, Claire Watkins, David Webster, Heron Werner MD with Professors Jorge Lopes dos Santos and Ricardo Fontes, Graham Wiggins, Virgil Wong with Jessica Lacson and Akshay Kapur.

Seeing Ourselves is a unique exhibit in which world class art will be combined with cutting edge science to leave viewers inspired by the beauty and capabilities of the human brain. While many scientific advances have inspired artists over the years, art and medicine have a special area of overlap in the desire to represent the human mind and body. As demonstrated in two groundbreaking articles in the March, 2010 issue of *Radiology*, new MRI technology allows us to see details in the living brain that were previously see only through the lens of a low-powered microscope. This important step has excited the scientific world, but has not yet been shared with the art world or with the general public. High-resolution MRIs will be displayed side-by-side with the artwork they have inspired, allowing viewers to marvel at both the structural beauty of the brain and the creative potential housed inside of it.

The concept of the neuroplastic brain opens new horizons of hope for healing brain injuries through physiological and biochemical changes, and to become more aware human beings by discovering new ways of experiencing and interacting with the world.

Seeing Ourselves is an art exhibition designed to make breakthroughs in biomedical imaging accessible to the public and to explore the commingled aesthetics of modern medical imaging and contemporary visual art. It will include displays of the state of the art MRI, PET, CAT images alongside art inspired by these medical imaging modalities. New York medical centers are home to the world's cutting edge medical imaging technology that has advanced our critical understanding of the human mind and body.

One of the show's intentions is to encourage the sharing of institutional knowledge as well as to examine the contexts of these medical images from the perspectives of the humanities, in addition to the sciences. By displaying the most advanced medical imaging examples in conversation with other visual images, and as artwork themselves, the curators blur ingrained distinctions between art and science and encourage audiences outside of the medical communities to appreciate and to be inspired by the remarkable scientific advances.

The human body is a slippery surface upon which discourses of race, class, gender, and sexuality are mediated, and thus becomes a contested scientific, political, ethical, cultural, economic, and social site. Since human subjectivity and identity are linked to the changing perceptions of vision and visualization, we make and remake our visual experiences of the world within these different contexts. In diagnostic imaging, the areas of visualization, medicine, and technology come together. It is astonishing to think of MRI and PET scans as the body's way of illuminating itself from within.

Historically, the partial or fragmented image suggested grief and nostalgia for the loss of a vanished totality and a utopian wholeness. In diagnostic imaging, the body is examined in detail, piecemeal and irreconciled, described in terms of "cuts" and "slices." The body in pieces, viewed as relics and synecdoches, constitute deconstructed images of humans and problematize issues of creation and re-creation, existence and mortality, integration and dissolution, especially when the images of the dematerialized body are translated from digital code, existing as pure information. There are dire consequences of equating digital reconstructions with the real. Medical images circulate similarly within this belief system and are often thought to be equivalent to the bodies represented within them. Realizing that MRI images are only re-presentations and partial truths empowers us to recognize the political, social, and economic factors that affect the interpretation of these images. The deployment of medical imaging pictures by contemporary visual artists reflects the innovative and alternative perspectives that art often offers to science, while acknowledging that both art and science are investigated by social beings within social contexts.