



**W**elcome to The Body Electric, ICRE's second annual digital art exhibit.

Professional artists, educators, students, researchers and health care practitioners from around the world have contributed beautiful and provocative creations. A jury of artists, academics and clinicians selected the works and they are presented as a curated digital exhibit.

As with the inaugural exhibit, this year's selections aesthetically and critically explore the body, and in particular, the intersection of the medical and the creative body. But in keeping with the ICRE theme, artists focused on several ideas as they relate to medicine: wonder, transformation, invention, and discovery. The show also contains a haunting digital narrative entitled *Cabinet of Medical Curiosities: Wondering about Objects of Wonder*. This narrative

discovers the dark historical moments of medicine's quest for discovery. Finally, we provide an opportunity for viewers to interact with the show by reflecting and posting their own experiences of wonder/ transformation/ invention and discovery in their health care practices.

While each piece can be interpreted through the show's various thematic lenses, certain concepts resonate more strongly with particular works. The contributions by Lia Pas, Nathaniel Westley Hoo, Lisa Boivin, Gina L. Duque, Raven Crow, Kirsten Schaefer, and Kaisu Koski bring to mind the following questions: What are the wonders of our bodies and environments, and how does medicine construct the body as an object of wonder? How do we come to know the "unknown" in medicine? How do practices and ways of knowing from beyond the biosciences reframe our

understandings of health care? This last statement recalls one of the primary objectives of *The Body Electric*: through art, the show calls attention to medicine's dominant epistemologies, and disrupts our customary ways of understanding the body, health and health care practices. As articulated so poignantly by Saneea Abboud, a newly graduated palliative care physician and an artist: "I approach art as a way to trigger emotion and wonder within...to remind us that we are Human Beings first and Doctors second". In their reimagining of biomedical objects of wonder, several artists allude to the theme's connotations of playfulness, awe and even spiritual reverence, providing a beautiful and textured counterpoint to the scientific object-as-specimen.

Some of the most wondrous moments for living beings are periods of transformation. Our bodies are transformed through

life stages, health and illness, and through our connections with natural, social and cultural environments. While some of these transformations are biological (like the quintessential metamorphosis of the caterpillar), our identities are mutable and performative. We enact various roles and can transform ourselves in different contexts.

Furthermore, in particular situations, our constructed identities may be beyond our control. Medicine, for example, transforms a person into a patient. The transformation into object is illustrated exquisitely by the disembodied glass eye in the drawing of Alison Philpott. Like a treasured artifact from a curio cabinet, it is examined and cradled in wondrous discovery. In this show, the eye becomes an overt metaphor for a transformative medical gaze, which explores, discovers and labels our anatomies, disease states

and even molecular identities. Many other works such as those by Amir Kavehei, Kayla Simms, Tracy Meyer, Amrit Singh, Elizabeth King and Julien Poitras intersect with *The Body Electric*'s themes of transformation and evolving identities.

The themes of wonder and transformation recall medicine and medical education's commitment to innovation, invention and discovery. Contributions by Eoin Kelleher, Dan Nuttall, Samantha Theriault and the high school students working with Johann Roduit all highlight current or historical technologies of discovery. Biomedical knowledge is discovered (produced or created) through many techniques—examples in our show include expository anatomical drawing, specimen collection, microscopic imaging or computer rendering. Jack's Butler's staircase draws us into an arduous physical and

metaphysical journey, while Iva Dulanovic's highly technical model of vertebrae recalls historical journeys of archaeological discovery. Allison Crawford's digital narrative excavates the unethical underside of medicine's history, and reminds us about how a discipline's singular, unscrupulous commitment to discovery led to horrific practices. Her haunting creation demonstrates how visual and written narratives give us tools to reflect on our own work as health care providers in both critical and generative ways. We encourage you to do the same as you experience the show, and to share your ideas with us.

Dr. Lisa Richardson, Co-Curator  
THE BODY ELECTRIC