

An Affair of the Heart: Hybrid Bodies @ PHI

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Hybrid Bodies, showing on the second floor gallery space of the PHI Centre until March 15th, is a *heartfelt* exhibition. The five artists presented, Ingrid Bachmann, Alexa Wright, Andrew Carnie, and Catherine Richards, take on the heart as an organ, as the subject matter of their work. The research team at PITH (Process of Incorporating a Transplanted Heart), which tasks itself with the investigation of the emotional and psychological effects of heart transplantation, invited the artists presented here to examine their data. Taking as their starting point testimonials from heart transplant patients at various stages of their experience, the artists created works that attempt to broaden the public understanding of this reality.

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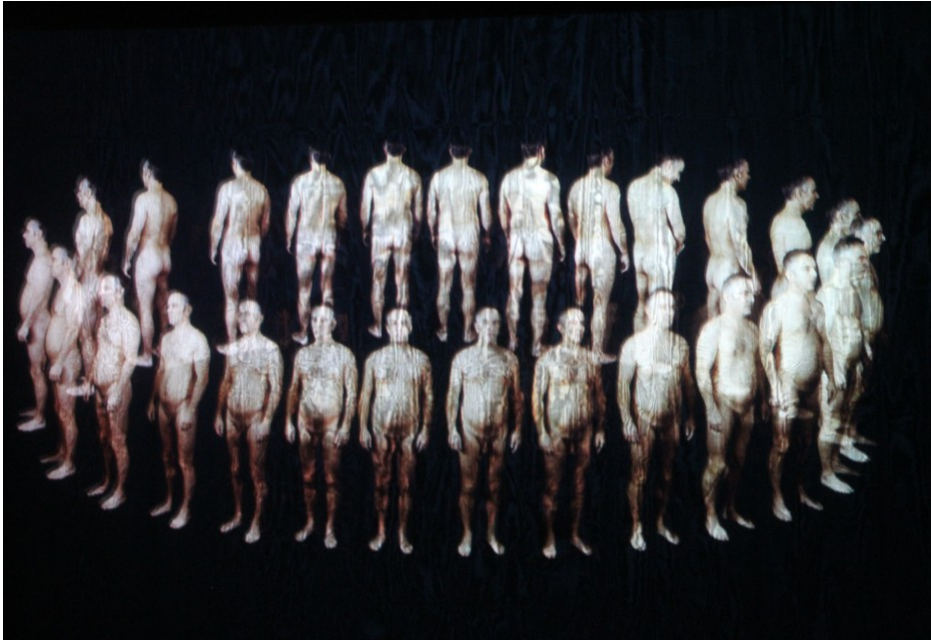
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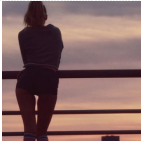
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Though it may seem like the exhibition could make you a little queasy, the displayed works in no way comprise a lesson in anatomy. There are even times at which it feels like the medium of the works is prioritized over the actual subject matter. Nevertheless, it is precisely the diverse mediums that allow the works to tackle the complex implications of heart transplantation and present them to us in a serious, poetic, and also playful manner. Catherine Richards' prints require the use of 3D glasses to fully comprehend the depth of the work. Ingrid Bachmann's work *A Part of Me* invites us to place "bone transducers" on our skin and listen to the stories they tell us. Andrew Carnie's *A Change of Heart* brings us into the darkness to witness a series of metamorphoses.



Alexa Wright's sound piece *Heart of the Matter*, which consists of eight felt jackets hung on a wall, is perhaps the most effective piece in the exhibition, as it embodies the unbridgeable gap between the viewer and the experience the works attempt to represent. Inside each jacket is a motion-activated speaker. As viewers move around the work, different voices emerge from each jacket, recounting deeply personal tales of heart transplantation experiences. The stories are poignant, extremely vivid, and true, yet at the same time poetic and disembodied. Hearing the stories of heart transplant patients is jarring: the tales are deeply moving and simultaneously, in their documentary nature, do not allow for an affective engagement.



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
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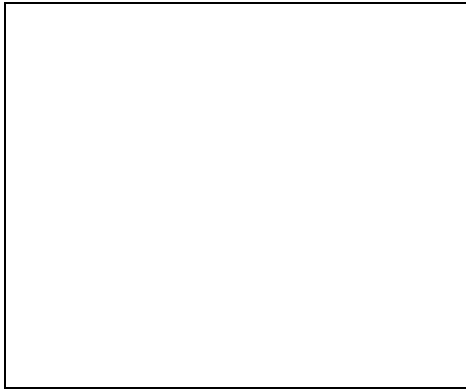


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On the other hand, though the subject matter of the exhibition is inherently heavy, looking at the works presented at Hybrid Bodies is also fun. Each work presents a new, and most importantly engaging, way of approaching the implications of heart transplantation. As Ingrid Bachmann states in the exhibition statement, the purpose of Hybrid Bodies is to “...make [the complexity of organ transplantation] accessible to the public...” The exhibition achieves that and more.

Before leaving, make sure to go bathrooms where you’ll get to hold a heart in your hands!

By Barbora Raceviciute

Images courtesy of DHC/ART

ALEXA WRIGHT ANDREW CARNIE CATHERINE RICHARDS HEART TRANSPLANT HYBRID BODIES INGRID BACHMANN PHI CENTRE

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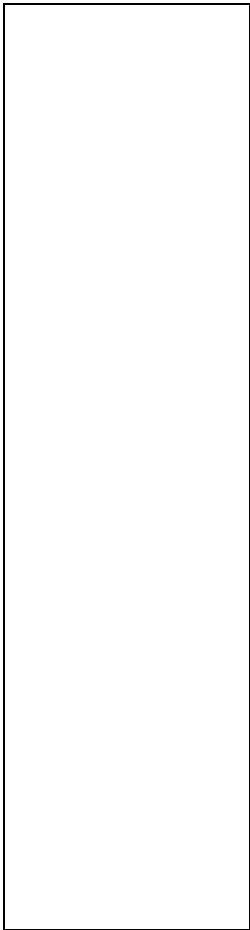
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