

Transpose MR

by

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ABSTRACT

The MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) apparatus is a popular method of obtaining images from the human body. These images are seen across mediums, from billboards to television screens. Their presence in media is tailored to connote a variety of messages. However, the image the MRI produces, the subject of many academic studies, is but one small, culturally visible, aspect of the MRI. In *Transpose MR*, a multimedia and animated artwork, I focus on the MRI apparatus itself rather than the already heavy leaden image. My goal in this work is to create a variable understanding of the MRI historically, philosophically, and narratively.

My investigation into the MRI, its situation in everyday life, stems from a personal history with the spaces and situations of the hospital. The MRI's situation is what I call the medical imaging situation, comprised of the medical imaging apparatus, patient, doctor, and technician. The medical imaging situation and its parts are ultimately viewed through the respective lenses of philosophers Jean Baudrillard, Vilem Flusser, Immanuel Kant, and Michele Foucault. These lines of thought address prime issues concerning the MRI: simulation, image and apparatus, curiosity, power and control. Each vector of inquiry both illuminates and complicates the MRI, providing a conceptualization of it as more than just an imaging device.

In Addition, the medical imaging situation is compared to both Ray Bradbury's short story *The Veldt* and to the Oracle of Apollo at Delphi from classical Greece. While seemingly unrelated, similarities are drawn that reveal the MRI as an entity both animal-like and oracular, a lion and a decipherer of bodies.

I have, through my art making practice, worked to make sense of the multiplicity of the MRI by reproducing, in small-scale model form, the environments that the MRI is home to. I have coupled these small-scale environments with a peep-box viewer and a semitransparent video display that places the MRI as a specimen to be watched. The situation of the MRI is reversed in *Transpose MR*, the apparatus that once imaged the human body is now the subject of scrutiny.