

Space Occupying Lesion

Meir Rakocz

Just as an accurate diagnosis is crucial to the first attempt to stage cancer, the opening photographs in the series Space Occupying Lesion are crucial to our understanding of this body of works, in which the artist joins his sick father on his journey with his illness. Hung one alongside another, the portraits S.O.L.1-7 resemble medical imaging pictures arranged along an "assessment wall." Each image features a stretch of black cloth unfurling in a landscape, where it was planted by the artist. These carefully planned and arranged compositions stand out in contrast to the spread of cancerous cells, which grow organically in an uncontrollable manner .

The "five stages of grief" used to describe the emotional experience of terminal illness or loss includes no references to humor or amusement. In the works Stage 10 and Stage 11, however, the artist proposes an experience of diversion within a "playground" composed of saline packs .

Two large, untitled digital prints portray the relationship between doctor and patient, while questioning its sacred associations and causing us to consider whether the caregiver is a savior, assaulter or victim .

An alternate way to think of experiences of loss is to view as temporary – a possibility suggested by the interplay between appearance and disappearance in the works YG1 and YG0. Indeed, throughout the exhibition, attempts to joke about fatality and toy with morbidity are presented as permissible, and are even recommended .

The patient may in fact be absent from the installation Second Opinion, which may be thought of as presenting the last stage, or aftermath, of the process. The photographs displayed on the monitor feature an infusion stand captured in different natural and urban environments, as if competing against time in its own stretcher race .

Following the publication of Susan Sontag's 1978 book *Illness as Metaphor*, illness ceased to be viewed as a dirty secret. The distilled images presented in this series of works by Meir Rakocz offer another unique, personal perspective on this subject and on the space it occupies .

Ariella Flint-Goor,

Exhibition Curator ; March 2012