

On Site

Exhibitions, installations, etc

John Wynne *The Organ Recital* Cable Depot, London, UK

In North Greenwich, cable cars sponsored by a Swedish software giant glide serenely above a newly built landscape of retail parks. On the river bank, by the Thames Barrier, sprawls Thames-Side Studios, a complex of over 500 artist spaces. Next door is the more modest Cable Depot, where John Wynne shows his latest installation piece. It's a medical themed show, as the title indicates: *The Organ Recital* references friends of a certain age's tendencies of increasingly dropping their health into conversation and Wynne's fascination with that.

He has tackled medical issues before, notably in *Transplant* (2008, reviewed in *The Wire* 297), a collaboration with the late photographer Tim Wainwright. Portraits of transplant patients, often scarred and still looking surprised, concealed speakers from which we heard the patients' voices amid a hallucinatory backdrop of hospital machine sounds.

This time around Wynne has created his most personal piece yet. It's an astonishing internal self portrait, almost a body horror version of Antony Gormley's body-centred sculptures. Inside a darkened room, a luridly coloured skeleton swims toward us in 3D, complete with arteries and internal organs, though lacking a head. Its choreography recalls an astronaut in zero gravity. On another wall, four more headless bodies covered in muscle and skin gracefully dive and spin. Everything is derived from Wynne's own whole-body CT scan – multiple X-rays taken by a vascular surgeon searching for an artery problem. Wynne's arteries got the all-clear, but the imagery hooked him. He requested the data, specifying he would use it to make art. Then, he wrangled medical imaging software to perform transformations on his data.

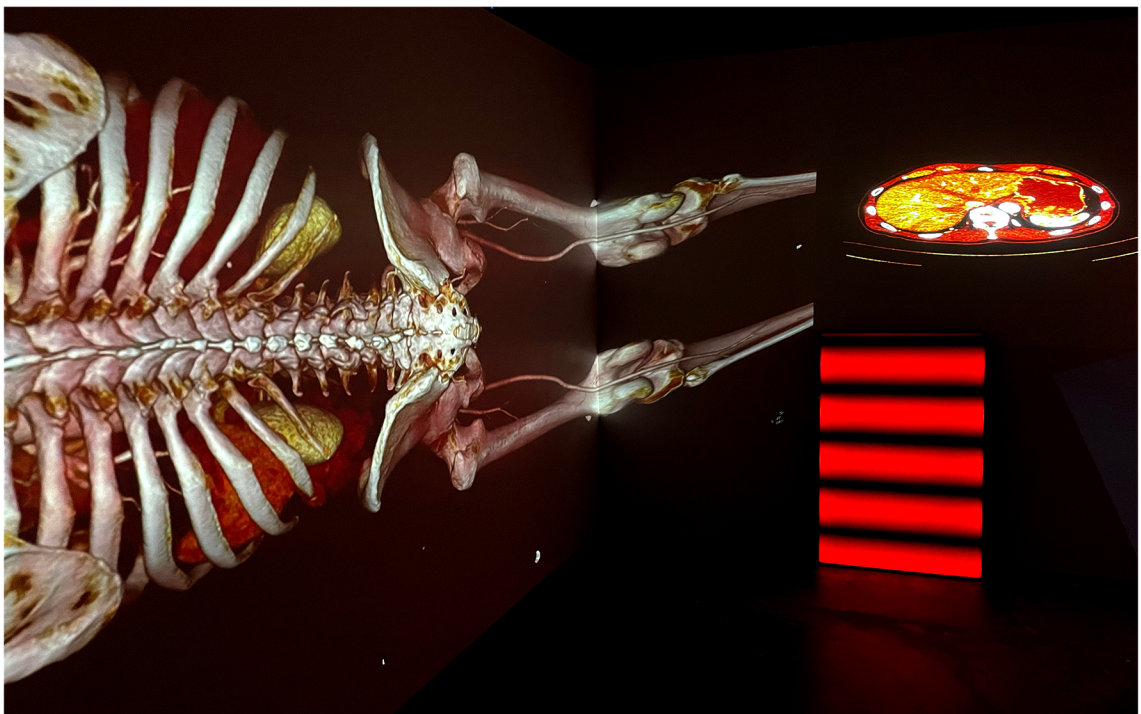
The soundtrack to this giddy trip through the human form continues Wynne's interest in very high and very low sound. Previously, he synthesized everything, but this time the high pitches are from a violin, slowly drawing a bow across strings. The violin humanises what could otherwise be a scary experience. Meanwhile, a sub-woofer, courtesy of Surrey based loudspeaker manufacturer Funktion-

One, occasionally pulverises the air with physical ripples of sub-bass. The bass also affects some of the imagery, juddering or speeding it up. Typically, Wynne has created the sound inside the room itself, painstakingly tuning the power of the sub-woofer to the dimensions of the space.

Even the violin is Wynne's own bowing – I assumed a pro fiddler, but Wynne has buckled down and taught himself over the last five years, enhanced by a couple of lessons from Angharad Davies. The final sound component is a steadily paced naming of bodily elements: "*Lungs, spleen, diaphragm, liver, heart. Mucus, saliva, grease, tears...*". It turns out this recitation is a Buddhist meditation on the body, known as Patikulamanasikara. The voice – naturally – is Wynne's own.

The Organ Recital could have been a morbid carousel of corpses, but these pulsating red images speak of life and the marvel of our body's design. As I move around the room my shadow becomes part of what I'm viewing. My own body feels more alive.

Clive Bell



John Wynne, installation detail, *The Organ Recital*, London, 2024