

# Susan Aldworth

0.2 Lecturer

University of Wales Trinity Saint David

Research Group: The Centre for Lens Arts and Science Interaction

**Evidence Portfolio: *The Portrait Anatomised***

**Output Number: 1 x 1**

Output Code: WIRAD-UWTSD-SA01

Output Type Code: M

Output Description: Exhibition

Author: Aldworth, Susan

Year of Publication / Production: 2013

Location / Venue(s): The National Portrait Gallery, London

Media: Lenticular prints, monoprints, publication.

Number of Works: 50+



Catalogue for National Portrait Gallery exhibition *The Portrait Anatomised*

## Research Context

In 2009 Aldworth was commissioned by Guy's and St Thomas's Charity to make a series of works exploring the experience of living with epilepsy. During the course of her research of the condition she worked with three people, each with a different type of epilepsy. Epilepsy is caused by disturbances in the electrical impulses in the brain and can be witnessed using electroencephalography, which is a technique for recording the patterns of electrical activity of the brain in the form of an EEG or electroencephalogram.

## Research Imperatives

We might see someone having a *Grand Mal* seizure. However we cannot witness 'absences' which are a common part of epileptic experience. All are physical manifestations of the epilepsy — one external and one internal. Aldworth's research question is 'What is the subjective experience like?' She addressed this question in both her series of lenticular prints which explored the surge of electricity in the brain experienced in epilepsy, and in her challenging multi-faceted monotype portraits of three individuals with an epilepsy diagnosis.

## Project Methods

Aldworth worked on location at St Thomas' Hospital in London as Artist in Residence in the neurophysiology department. During her time there, she wove together neuroscientific, clinical, and personal narratives to produce a series of lenticular prints for permanent installation at the hospital. She also used her research to make individual two-metre high portraits of three individuals with different types of epilepsy. These portraits were made by tiling together nine monotype prints to suggest the complexity of human personality. Each portrait explored both the medical and personal narrative of the sitter, and she employed the technique of *chine-collé* to introduce digital photographic elements in the work.

## **Funding**

The project was funded by a commission from Guy's and St. Thomas' Charity of £13,000, with additional funding of £35,000 from the National Portrait Gallery for the exhibition and a full catalogue (2013).

## **Outcomes and Dissemination**

The principle outcome of the project was a solo exhibition at the National Portrait Gallery, London from 7th March to 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013. Aldworth produced a suite of 5 lenticular prints and forty-five mono-prints and the exhibition was accompanied by the NPG publication *The Portrait Anatomised*. Dissemination included national and

international exhibitions and symposia, sound works, documentary film about the project, a BBC Radio 3 programme and public lectures:

- 6<sup>th</sup> April 2013 21.00 BBC Radio 3 Repeat of a 30 minute radio programme about the making of the portraits first broadcast on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> May 2011. 'Anatomising a Portrait: An Epileptic Journey'
- 15<sup>th</sup> April 2013 09.00 BBC Radio 4 Start the Week The artist Susan Aldworth is one of the guests
- Digital Space at NPG. Transcripts of four sound artworks about the exhibition
- [Documentary](#) about the making of the epilepsy portraits, directed by Chris Godwin
- 18<sup>th</sup> April 2013: 13.00 -14.00 NPG. Aldworth delivered the Lunchtime Lecture 'The Portrait Anatomised'
- 6<sup>th</sup> June 2013 19.00 - 20.00 NPG. '[In Conversation](#): The Portrait Anatomised'. Aldworth discussed identity, consciousness and representation with neuropsychologist Paul Broks, and writer Max Eilenberg

### **Associated Exhibitions and Talks**

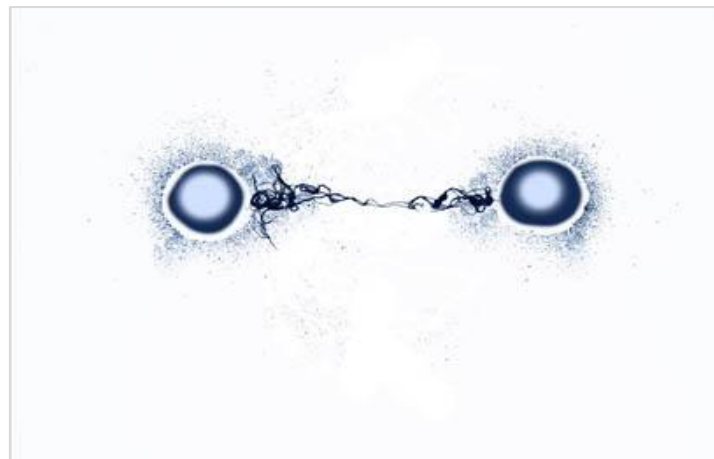
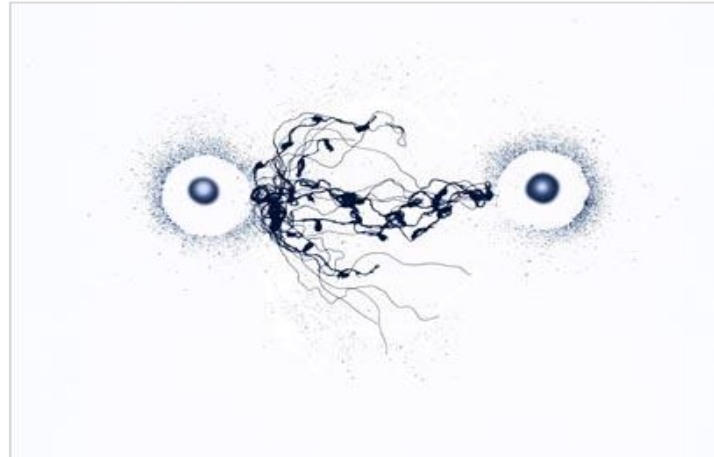
- The lenticulars were exhibited at the Key of Life Festival in the Scheltema Contemporary Gallery, Leiden, Netherlands in October 2010.
- Works produced during the course of the project were included in a group exhibition exploring the brain *Brainstorm* at GV Art, London, 12<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2011

- Kinetica ArtFair, GV Art, London, 3<sup>rd</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> February
- Public Lecture, The Portrait Anatomised, LSE, London, 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2011



*Max, 9 monotypes,*

*Elisabeth, monotype installation*



*Transition 1, Lenticular print, 2009*