

For Immediate Release

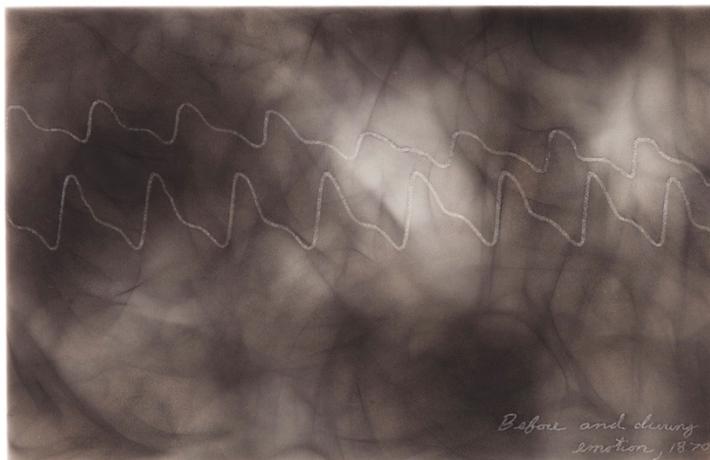
March 24, 2018

Inman Gallery is pleased to present

Dario Robleto
The First Time, The Heart

April 6 – May 26, 2018

Opening reception:
Friday, April 6, 6–8pm



Dario Robleto, *The First Time, the Heart (Before and during emotion, 1870)*, 2017

Inman Gallery is pleased to present a solo exhibition of new work by Dario Robleto entitled ***The First Time, The Heart***. Opening with a reception for the artist on Friday, April 6, 6-8pm, the exhibition will be on view through May 26, 2018.

The exhibition will debut a new suite of prints, *The First Time, the Heart (A Portrait of Life 1854-1913)*, published by Island Press at Washington University, St. Louis, Missouri. The gallery installation will be realized in collaboration with poet Adrian Matejka who has resequenced the 50 prints into a new poetic portrait.

In his extensive research about the heart and how humans have recorded and imaged it, Robleto brings together the first successful scientific attempts to make visible the life of the heart. Here Robleto has collected a series of 50 early pulse recordings that might describe a life, from birth to death. These recordings, gathered from libraries and archives across Europe and the U.S., have been notated by scientists since the late 19th century in a direct manner that is at once documentation and poetry: “pulse of man 6 feet tall,” “ear lightly touched with feather while sleeping,” “sadness from listening to a sung melody,” “threatening a little girl, 10, to go to the dentist,” “before and after a draught of hot milk,” “mail carrier with amputated arm,” “smelling lavender.” Each instance is likely the first time the heart was recorded during that specific, quotidian experience. “Occasionally, a breakthrough in science will so alter our mental landscape that, in a sense, everything is new again”, Robleto writes. “Mystery reclaims the banal; revelation is possible once more, embedded in the ordinary.”

In collaboration with Matejka, the 50 archival heart recordings become poems, in nine variations, such as *Up, Up from Daydreams / Lullaby*:

- 8 months pregnant, 1870
- Umbilical cord, first gasp, cutting of cord, 1886
- 3 month old, sleeping, 1874
- Snoring, 1876
- Name softly called while sleeping, 1877
- Arising from sleep, 1876

Pulse tracings were first made in 1853 when German physiologist, Karl von Vierordt (1818-1884), invented a sphygmograph, or “pulse writer.” Vierordt designed the machine to absorb the movement of a pulsing artery into a membrane or spring that would then make an attached stylus pulse in unison. Working with Island Press, Robleto developed an innovative printing technique in homage to the sphygmograph's rudimentary technology—essentially mark-making in soot from a candle flame. Robleto begins with a high-resolution scan of the original, historic pulse lines, which he then prints lithographically in transparent ink. He then hand-flames the paper, depositing an atmospheric layer of soot over the image area. After submerging the paper in a bath of shellac and alcohol to fix the soot to the paper, he brushes a solvent over the printed lines and text to gently lift the image from the soot ground and reveal the white lines. The result is a marriage of form and historical content, an exploration of the ways in which the heart is a site of human empathy and experience, and a deep look at a muscle that bridges imagination, metaphor, emotion, and biology. Robleto makes visible an existing natural language of life that has fascinated scientists and poets for millennia: in his prints, he develops a poetry from the hieroglyphics of humanity's most intimate organ.

The exhibition also debuts a sculpture that continues Robleto's ongoing collaboration with media historian Patrick Feaster to uncover and make audible the earliest recordings of the pulse and heartbeat.

Complementing the gallery exhibition will be three public programs:

Saturday, April 7, 1:00pm, Inman Gallery

The Making of The First Time, The Heart (A Portrait of Life, 1854–1913)

Dario Robleto will be joined by Island Press master printer Tom Reed in a conversation centered around the technical challenges the printers faced in realizing Robleto's vision for this ambitious portfolio.

Thursday, April 19, 7:00pm, MATCH Box 1

The Heart's Knowledge Will Never Decay: A conversation between Dr. Doris Taylor, Director of Regenerative Medicine Research at the Texas Heart Institute, and artist Dario Robleto

In this presentation, Robleto will join Dr. Taylor to explore the scientific, cultural and poetic implications of her laboratory's groundbreaking creation of a “ghost heart”— a heart scrubbed clean of all cells so that it can be regenerated anew.

Saturday, May 12, 1:00pm, Inman Gallery

The First Time, The Heart: A conversation between artist Dario Robleto and poet Adrian Matejka

How should we remember the past actions of forgotten hearts? Join Robleto and Matejka as they reflect on their collaboration exploring the early descriptive language and images from the 19th century scientists who created the prototype archives of the heart. In collaboration with Gulf Coast: A Journal of Literature and Fine Arts.

Image: Dario Robleto, *The First Time, the Heart (Before and during emotion, 1870)*, 2017

Transparent ink lithography on hand-flamed and sooted paper, dipped in bath of shellac and denatured alcohol with brushed lithotine lift on Rising Artist Bristol

For more information or images contact kerry@inmangallery.com, or call 713-526-7800.

Biographies for the artist and collaborators:

Dario Robleto is an internationally exhibited artist whose transdisciplinary explorations have led to collaborations with specialists in myriad fields, including artificial heart researchers, neuroscientists, glaciologists, and astronomers involved with the search for life in the Universe. Born in San Antonio, Texas, Robleto received his BFA from the University of Texas at San Antonio in 1997 and lives and works in Houston. The artist has had numerous solo exhibitions since 1997, most recently at the Menil Collection, Houston, TX (2014) and the Baltimore Museum of Art (2014). Recent notable group shows include *Prospect 4: The Lotus In Spite of the Swamp*, New Orleans, LA (2017), *Southern Accent: Seeking the American South in Contemporary Art*, Speed Art Museum, Louisville, KY (2017), *Explode Every Day: An Inquiry into the Phenomena of Wonder*, MASS MoCA, North Adams, MA (2016). A visiting artist and lecturer at many universities around the country, Robleto was recently appointed as Artist-at-large at Northwestern University's McCormick School of Engineering and the Mary and Leigh Block Museum of Art. In 2015 he joined a distinguished team of scientists as the artistic consultant to the "Breakthrough Initiatives"—the most comprehensive search ever attempted at finding scientific evidence of life in the Universe. He is currently serving as an Artist-in-Residence in Neuroaesthetics at the University of Houston's Cullen College of Engineering and at the SETI Institute in Mountain View, CA.

Island Press is a research-based printmaking workshop at Washington University in St. Louis that is committed to creating and publishing innovative prints and multiples, educating students and the broader community about print media, and advancing the printmaking field. In the context of intensive visiting artist residencies, Island Press explores the expansive theoretical and material terrain of the print. The Press is project-driven, tapping into the place where the artist's creative activity and research intersect with the unique capacities of the print. Experimentation with new modes, platforms, and technologies is a natural part of the printmaking pursuit at Island Press, and results in the creation of ambitious and pioneering editions in a wide range of media. **Lisa Bulawsky** is the Director of Island Press, and **Tom Reed** is the master printer.

Adrian Matejka is a poet who was born in Nuremberg, Germany and grew up in California and Indiana. He is a graduate of Indiana University and the MFA program at Southern Illinois University Carbondale. He is the author of *The Devil's Garden* (Alice James Books, 2003), which won the New York / New England Award, and *Mixology* (Penguin, 2009), a winner of the 2008 National Poetry Series. *Mixology* was also a finalist for an NAACP Image Award for Outstanding Literature. His third collection, *The Big Smoke* (Penguin, 2013), focuses on Jack Johnson, the first African American heavyweight champion of the world. *The Big Smoke* was awarded the 2014 Anisfield-Wolf Book Award and was also a finalist for the 2013 National Book Award, 2014 Hurston/Wright Legacy Award, and 2014 Pulitzer Prize in poetry. His most recent book, *Map to the Stars*, was published by Penguin in 2017. He teaches in the MFA program at Indiana University in Bloomington and is the Poet Laureate of Indiana.

Patrick Feaster is a specialist in the history, culture, and preservation of early sound media. A three-time Grammy nominee and co-founder of the First Sounds Initiative, he has been actively involved in locating, making audible, and contextualizing many of the world's oldest sound recordings. He received his doctorate in Folklore and Ethnomusicology in 2007 from Indiana University Bloomington, where he currently works as Media Preservation Specialist for the Media Digitization and Preservation Initiative. Feaster's *Pictures of Sound* won the 2013 ARSC Award for Excellence in the Best General Research in Recorded Sound / Best History category and was also nominated for a 2014 Grammy award for Best Historical Album. Since 2012, Feaster and Robleto have been collaborating to uncover and make audible the first pulse and heartbeat recordings and the first dreams and emotions registered as blood flow to the brain, each originally traced in soot from flames in the nineteenth century.

Dr. Doris A. Taylor, PhD, Hon DSc, FAHA, FACC, Director of Regenerative Medicine Research for the Texas Heart Institute (THI), is one of the world's leading cell therapy and cardiac regeneration scientists. She and her team are internationally renowned for their research on "whole organ decellularization," in which they've demonstrated that they can remove the existing cells from hearts of laboratory animals, and even humans, to leave a framework for building new organs. The hope is that Dr. Taylor's research is an early step toward being able to grow a fully functional human heart in the laboratory, which would revolutionize the field of organ transplantation if achieved. A native of Mississippi, Dr. Taylor holds a B.S. in biology from Mississippi University for Women, and a Doctorate in pharmacology from the University of Texas Southwestern Medical School in Dallas. She is the former director of the Center for Cardiovascular Repair and Medtronic Bakken Chair in Integrative Biology and Physiology at the University of Minnesota.