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The John Chervinsky Emerging Photographer Scholarship

January 5, 2018 (Winchester, MA)___ Photographer John Chervinsky, whose work explored the concept of time, passed away in December of 2015, following a typically resolute battle with pancreatic cancer. The modesty and unassuming character John conveyed in life belies the extent to which he will be missed, not only by his family and friends, but also by the entire photographic community of which he was so proud to be a part.

The John Chervinsky Emerging Photographer Scholarship was announced in June 2016 to recognize, encourage and reward photographers with the potential to create a body of work and sustain solo exhibitions. Awarded annually, the Scholarship provides recipients with a monetary award, a Master class with Mary Virginia Swanson, an exhibition of their work at the [Griffin Museum of Photography](#), and a volume from John's personal library of photography books. The Scholarship seeks to provide a watershed moment in the professional lives of emerging photographers, providing them with the support and encouragement necessary to develop, articulate and grow their own vision for photography.

The second year in 2017, 145 photographers submitted applications to be considered for the scholarship.

After much thought and consideration the judges (Shane Lavalette, Jay Gould, Ede Bresler and Karen Davis, chose [Rachel Fein Smolinski](#) as the second recipient of the [John Chervinsky Emerging Photographer Scholarship](#).

The judges, said, "We are pleased to award the 2017 John Chervinsky Scholarship to [Rachel Fein-Smolinski](#). Rachel's plunge into science-and-visual-expression, her experimentation with imagery and presentation in the service of her ideas, and a special energy all come through in her uniquely provocative work. While not a requirement of this award, and quite different in form, she and John share the spirit of scientific inquiry, making this all the sweeter."

Fein-Smolinsky submitted [The Infinite Internal](#) for consideration for the scholarship. Fein-Smolinsky says of the body of work:

"The Infinite Internal has three chapters: "The Sex Lives of Animals without Backbones", "A Science of Desirable/Detestable Bodies", and "The Prosthetic Practice for the Healing of Imaginary Wounds" that integrate disparate imagery, from highly stylized documents, photographs, videos of dissections, and sourced diagrams from scientific education materials used to create spaces that probe the relationship that intellectualism has with authority, gender, sexuality, and psychology. Intellectualism has historically been a saving grace for disenfranchised cultural groups, heavily associated with people of Jewish descent and those who identify as women. As someone who is both of those things, I have been carrying out my own experiments, spending time with DIY scientists and creating installation spaces that visualize science fiction stories of DIY biology and medical procedures that appropriate the authority of the bio-medical field. I print large format images created through microscopy and coat them in resin. Resin being a substance that is used in the preservation of organisms. I use clinical lighting like x-ray viewing machines to show transparencies that I produce in the darkroom on lith-film from archival scientific educational slides, carry out at home dissections of organs and organisms, grow crystals which I document via time-lapse, use alternative printing processes that reference the history of women in science like cyanotypes referencing Anna Atkins botany prints and black and white documentation of physical principles appropriated from an archive of scientific educational slides, referencing Berenice Abbot's work producing images for MIT's Physics department. A vital aspect of this work is the installations, which address the images as objects themselves, amongst a world of objects that hold visual pleasure on the same level as intellectual rigor, using institutional, experimental, educational, and commercial display methods."

Rachel Fein-Molinski's Statement of Purpose:

"My work is about pleasure, neurosis, objectivity and subjectivity. It is about the visceral and visual satisfaction associated with the history of the documentation and depiction of bio- medical phenomena. I use a mixture of the visual indulgence of high commerce, the sacred and compulsive laboratory space, and the expansive mode of science fiction and its ability to appropriate the authority of knowledge to create speculative installation spaces in the visual field. I look at what the relationship between neurosis, intelligence, subjectivity, objectivity and visual indulgence is within the history of the pursuit of knowledge.

The history of science has held fast to the aesthetic of objective authority, with observation as the primary source of knowledge in scientific inquiry. I scrutinize the bio-medical and techno-scientific

gaze, using its authority to create discreet objects, incorporating photography, video and sculpture to search for the neurotic impetus within the fields of intellectual pursuit.

I use an alter-ego, a caricature of a neurotic, intellectual hero, constructed from cultural signifiers, as a Jewish woman, raised with a cultural identity that idealizes intellect to the point of fetishization. This is a stylized performance of a masculine archetype (yes, I am exploring what it means to be a woman through the usage of masculinity and its historical relationship to authority) used in science fiction, tv doctor dramas, and retellings of the histories of technological advancement. Intellectual inquiry is a socially acceptable form of obsessive, and scopophilic (visually indulgent) behavior. It is a space where unhealthy impulses are sublimated into the field of intellectual pursuit. All is forgiven if the hero's brilliance outshines their character flaws.

Bio-medical exploration is a fantasy of constant visibility. To see is to know, and to know is to succeed. With techniques like dissections, bodies are eviscerated so that the spectator can incorporate the sight of the others' internal organs into their own body of knowledge. Or microscopy, where an imaging apparatus is used to augment the viewer's vision in order to look at, and infer new knowledge from, otherwise invisible mechanisms, ideally infinitely. However, as there is no such thing as a purely objective gaze—observation is always tied to a host of psychological associations. To see is to concurrently project and consume. Through this play-acting of biological experiments and procedures, I tease out the role of visual pleasure in intellectual inquiry, resulting in installation spaces that reproduce the clinical, experimental, and educational. In this way, I explore what Foucault described in his 1963 book *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception*, as "...that region of 'subjective symptoms' that—for the doctor—defines not the mode of knowledge, but the world of objects to be known." "

A call for new submissions will occur on August 1, 2018. The exhibition for Fein-Smolinski will take place in September 2018.

The Griffin Museum of Photography is open Tuesday through Sunday, noon to 4 p.m. The museum is closed on Monday. General admission is \$7 for adults; \$3 for seniors. Members and children under 12 are admitted free. Admission is free to all every Thursday, 2 to 4 p.m. For more information, call 781-729-1158, or visit www.griffinmuseum.org.

Photographs available upon request

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About the Griffin Museum

The Griffin Museum of Photography was founded in 1992 to provide a forum for the exhibition of both historic and contemporary photography. The Museum houses three galleries dedicated solely to the exploration of photographic arts: the Main Gallery, which features rotating exhibits from some of the world's leading photographers; the Atelier Gallery dedicated to showcasing the works of prominent, up-and-coming artists; and the Griffin Gallery, home to the extensive archives of Museum founder and world-renowned photojournalist Arthur Griffin. The Griffin Museum of Photography also maintains 3 additional satellite galleries: Lafayette City Center Passageway in Boston Downtown Crossing, The Griffin at SoWa, and The Greater Boston Stage Company in Stoneham, MA For more on the Griffin Museum of Photography, visit www.griffinmuseum.org.