

UCLH ARTS

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Scene Unseen II

An exhibition of drawings by Frances Newman.
Based on her observations of staff at
University College London Hospital

Press & Private View 8th May 6 - 8pm
Exhibition continues 9 May - 1 July

The Street Gallery, UCLH, 235 Euston Road, London NW1 2BU

"Many times a day I realise how much my own outer and inner life is built upon the labours of my fellow men..."

Albert Einstein

This May UCLH Arts is delighted to be exhibiting the work developed by the artist Frances Newman as part of her residency at the hospital.

Unusually Newman's gaze was not focussed on those we automatically think of in the hospital setting; the doctors, surgeons and nurses, but was instead turned behind the scenes and focussed on that part of the workforce that carry out their vital tasks largely unseen or un-noticed.

Newman has produced a series of powerful, sensitive and dignified drawings that introduce us to the hospital librarian, the linen distributor, the canteen cashier and the theatre care assistant, all seen here carrying out their allotted task, individuals but all seemingly united by a calm and considered application.

Maybe Newman's background as a former theatre nurse made her predisposed to knowing how vital the whole workforce is to the running of a hospital, allowing her to see and capture the quiet dedication, purpose and pride that the staff have in their work.

Here we see the male patient support assistant diligently and thoughtfully preparing to clean the corridor, the row of pharmacists, each concentrated on the never ending list of prescriptions needed to be made out or the theatre care assistant deeply absorbed in sorting the instruments for the next operation.

Newman has captured, without a hint of sentimentality, a glimpse into the world of the small army of people that is the work-force of a London teaching hospital. Here is an NHS with none of the sensationalism, tardiness or unprofessional behaviour of the news media, here we see what the vast majority of the hospital staff do day in and day out, more often than not unseen and unnoticed, yet taking a pride in the fact that their labour produces worthwhile, tangible results.

As Ron Heisler has pointed out; "with the finest artists in the genre we encounter rather more than an accurate depiction or impression of the facts of industrial life. They suggest the existence of community - of the making of a good life...". Newman's drawings on display here have precisely that quality.

The exhibition is accompanied by a 36 page illustrated catalogue with an introduction by the hospital's art curator Guy Noble and three short essays that discuss: The Artist in Britain and the Workplace, The Primacy of Drawing and a critical appreciation of Newman's own practice written by leading authorities.

We will of course send you an invitation to the Press & Private View and catalogue in due course and would be grateful if you would consider featuring this event in your publication as we feel it will be of great interest to your readers. High resolution images are available of the works to be exhibited and further background information can be supplied if required.

For further information please call Guy Noble on 0845 1555 000 Ext: 5451 or email guy.noble@uclh.nhs.uk

