

Induction

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“Induction,” by Meagan Wu, attempts to capture the intimacy and uneasiness of the moment when a child is rendered unconscious by an inhalational induction of anesthesia in preparation for hand surgery. The 30 × 24 inch oil painting shows a child lying on an operating room table with his eyes closed and his hand at his side. The anesthesia mask is secured over his mouth and nose while a gloved hand provides pressure to ensure that it makes a tight seal. The viewer only gets a glimpse of the torsos and hands of the anonymous staff standing over the unconscious patient. The playful green hospital gown adorned with puppies attempts to provide some levity to this intense moment. We are left with the evidence of what may have taken place during the induction process through the child’s outstretched left hand, about to undergo reconstruction. His hand is now limp, whereas seconds ago, it had strength and possibly sought comfort from the caregiver’s still animate hand. The viewer can only speculate as to how the child might have felt during the induction process and how the care team attempted to comfort him. The interlocked hands bridge the divide between consciousness and induced unconsciousness, while suggesting that even in a highly technological field like anesthesiology, a simple touch can be the most effective therapy (Figure).

Meagan Wu is a premedical student at Stanford University whose studies focus on both fine arts and medicine. “Induction” is part of a series that studies the aesthetics of medicine and the psychosocial aspects of health care through hand surgery. ■



Figure. “Induction,” oil on canvas 30” x 24”. Copyright © 2016 by Meagan Wu.

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DISCLOSURES

Name: Meagan Wu.

Contribution: This author helped create the artwork and assisted with manuscript revision.

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Contribution: This author helped as project mentor and in manuscript creation.

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Reprints will not be available from the authors.

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