

THIS IS A PHANTOM

STUART WHIPPS

6 SEPT-7 DEC 2025

Exhibition Information



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This is a Phantom is an exhibition of new photographic work by Birmingham-based artist Stuart Whipps, created in 2025 following a series of research visits to Aberdeen Royal Infirmary and University of Aberdeen Biomedical Physics Department. The exhibition unfolds across three interconnected strands.

During his initial research, Stuart became intrigued by the architecture and landscaping of the hospital and university campus - spaces that feel both generically institutional and uniquely shaped by the specific histories of Aberdeen's medical and academic development. A series of photographs explores this environment, capturing its layered character and physical presence.

These images are presented in frames made from readily available materials such as plywood and aluminium - an intentional nod to the materials used in early prototype MRI scanners developed at Aberdeen's MRI Research

Centre. Stuart was particularly struck by the improvised, often chaotic assemblages found in experimental technological settings - an aesthetic that speaks to the provisional nature of innovation.

The final series focuses on MRI phantoms: specially designed objects used to test, calibrate, and maintain the accuracy of MRI systems. Though not made of biological tissue, phantoms mimic the physical and magnetic properties of the human body, allowing for precise, repeatable imaging. Stuart's photographs of these objects highlight their strange, abstract forms, drawing attention to the unseen structures behind medical imaging.

While the three strands may appear distinct, they are united by Whipps's ongoing interest in the processes and apparatus of image-making. The campus photographs were made using a large-format analogue camera, a method chosen for its emphasis on focus planes and depth -

concepts echoed in MRI technology, which captures the body in ‘slices’. Across the exhibition, photography is positioned not just as a method of documentation, but as a tool for inquiry - an attempt to reveal, understand, and interpret complex systems of knowledge.

Artist Biography

Stuart Whipps is an artist who’s work is rooted in curiosity and exploration. He engages with subjects beyond his expertise, embracing learning through hands-on experience. Notable projects include;

- Restoring a 1979 Mini alongside ex-British Leyland workers,**
- Studying geological thin section techniques at the University of Birmingham,**
- Cultivating Begonias at West Dean in Sussex,**

- An extensive series of photographs at the Cadbury chocolate factory and across the Bournville Village in his hometown of Birmingham.

Stuart works predominantly with photography and video with occasional forays into sculpture. His most recent work 'The Leviathan of Parsonstown' was shown as part of the 2024 TULCA Festival of Visual Arts in Galway and was his first exhibition of printed photographs drawn from an ongoing body of work that was started back in 2013.



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