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Modernizing Sir Luke Fildes' *The Doctor*

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Abstract

Sir Luke Fildes' *The Doctor*, exhibited in 1891, is a classic work, celebrated for presenting a physician's posture, presence, and concentration before a patient. This reimagination of Fildes' work responds to modern demands on the patient-clinician relationship while suggesting the persistence of this relationship's sanctity.

Figure. Sir Luke Fildes, *the (Modern) Doctor*



Media

Gold leaf and soft carbon on medium paper; digital composite matte and diptych frame.

Caption

Sir Luke Fildes' *The Doctor* is owned by Tate Britain and was first exhibited in 1891.¹ A classic portrayal of a physicianship, it is celebrated for presenting a physician's attentive posture and presence before a patient.

Today, physicians navigate new challenges in patient-clinician relationships. In this diptych reimagination of Fildes' physician, the physician leans over an empty computer screen in the left panel, suggesting contemporary frustrations of burnout and bureaucracy in modern practice. The patient in the right panel is framed separately,

divided from the physician by a wide gap. Yet they remain facing each other. Indeed, despite burdens on practitioners of modern medicine, some qualities remain the same: patient and physician are backlit by gold leaf, a traditional symbol of sanctity among many artists and iconographers, suggesting the sacred nature of patient-physician relationships and of healing as an endeavor.

References

1. Tate. Sir Like Fildes: *The Doctor*, exhibited 1891. <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/fildes-the-doctor-n01522>. Accessed January 31, 2019.

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