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**ROCHESTER INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY**

**A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of  
The College of Imaging Arts and Sciences  
In Candidacy for the Degree of  
MASTER OF FINE ARTS**

**TEXT AND IMAGE**

**BY**

**David Jay Reed**

**1 October, 2002**

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# INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this thesis is to create images that juxtapose forms of the English language, with both related and non-related imagery, to create the illusion of realistic situations. My images will be expressed through computer-imaging processes, and non-toxic printmaking techniques, and will include the printing procedures and the problems associated with it.

I will discuss not only the similarities and differences of artists who have influenced my work, but also my source material. The latter having been derived from observing and recording various uses of the English language, both as humor or social comment, and in the form of quotes, graffiti, and signs. The exhibition falls into three sections.

The first section consists of the six household items, created by polyester plate lithography and computer generated labels. The containers and labels are meant to be a humorous facsimile. At first glance, the objects appear to resemble the real item, but on closer inspection the labels tell a different story. If the viewers read closely, not all is what it seems.

The second section comprises six four-color intaglio prints and three mannequin images. The text is in the form of signs, children's graffiti, and quotes, and is combined with images to create situations that are believable, but completely fabricated. This combination hopefully produces some amusement for the viewers.

The final section consists of the three inkjet printed images. These works are meant to be more serious, and are an attempt to incorporate text that not only relays a message, but also creates a pattern that becomes an integral part of the overall composition.

## Creating the first section

This series of six images was inspired by both the Wacky package trading cards (also known as Wacky packs) of the seventies, and the advertising images of pop artists from the sixties.

According to Rich's Wacky Kingdom, Wacky packs were actually stickers made by Topps Chewing Gum Co., which mocked name brand products (i.e.: *Crust* toothpaste in place of *Crest* toothpaste, *Weakies* cereal in the place of *Wheaties*, etc.). They were issued from 1973-1976, and came two in a pack with a puzzle piece and a stick of gum.<sup>1</sup>

The similarity and difference between what I attempted to portray, and the original Wacky packs, are as follows. The similarity is that I wanted, like the Wacky Packs, to mock the company and product. We both did this by putting a twist on the company logo, name, and product line. The difference is that my images are more 'realistic' than the Wacky packs, because they faithfully replicate the size and look of the original item. (see plates I and II)



**Plate I.** *Weak Germ for Feather Brains.*  
1974, die cut offset lithograph.  
Approx 2.5" high. ©Topps Chewing Gum Inc.



**Plate II.** David Jay Reed. *Dish De-solvent.* 2002.  
Polyester Plate lithograph & Ink jet print.  
10" x 5" image on 20" x 14" medium.



The more 'realistic' approach was influenced by pop artists like Jasper Johns (b. 1930) and Andy Warhol (1930-1987) who, according to Robert Hughes, replicated images that had become "banal and disassociated by being repeated again and again and again". <sup>2</sup> (see **plate III**)



**Plate III.** Andy Warhol.  
*Campbell's Soup I (Tomato)* 1968.  
Silkscreen. 24"x40". Various Collections.



**Plate IV.** David Jay Reed. *Orchard Reject*. 2002.  
Polyester Plate lithograph & Ink jet print.  
9" x 5" image on 20" x 14" medium.

Where the pop artists, especially Warhol, and I differ is in the appearance of the final image. He created many of the images using silkscreen, and didn't bother to "clean up the imperfections of the print: the slips of the screen, uneven inking of the roller, and general graininess" of the image.<sup>3</sup> I, on the other hand, wanted the images to appear perfect, so that they resembled the real item. By doing this, I was hoping to catch the attention of the public, make them question the purpose of the images, and then discover the subtle mocking of the brand name and label information. Below are examples of how I attempted to achieved this.

In *Orchard Reject* the company name *Del Monte* has been changed to *Del Mounte*. The name *Orchard Select* has become *Orchard Reject*, the name *Diced Cling Peaches* has become *Diced Cling Leeches*, and the peaches in the jar have been modified to resemble leeches. Even the image of the peaches and leaves has been changed to look like leeches on a human bottom. (see **plate IV**)

In *All Porpoise Cleaner* the company name *Wegmans* has been changed to *Wagmens*. The name *Anti-bacterial All Purpose Cleaner* has become *Semi-bacterial All Porpoise Cleaner*; *Disinfectant Cleaner and Deodorant* has become *disfunctional* (misspelled on purpose) *Deodorant and Cleaner*. Even in the small print, the main ingredient is *phocoenidae methonal gigantus* which translates into *giant porpoise gas*. (see plate V)



**Plate V.** David Jay Reed.  
*All Porpoise Cleaner*. 2002.  
Polyester Plate lithograph & Ink jet print.  
10" x 5" image on 20" x 14" medium.



**Plate VI.** David Jay Reed.  
*ConHer Pre Style 1600*. 2002.  
Polyester Plate lithograph & Ink jet print.  
13" x 8" image on 20" x 14" medium.

In *ConHer Pre Style 1600* the only change might appear to be in the logo, which has been changed from *ConAir Pro Style 1600* to *ConHer Pre Style 1600*. However, the majority of the changes have occurred in the upside down label. The heading has been titled 'How to electrocute a buddy' and the text then goes on to explain the various ways this act can be achieved. (see plate VI)



## **Printing the first section**

The images were created in two parts: the main containers and the labels. Both sections were created in Adobe Illustrator. The container section, however, was rasterized in Adobe Photoshop and printed in black, using a Laser Jet printer, onto a polyester lithographic plate known as a 'Pronto Plate'. The label, on the other hand, was printed in color, using an Ink Jet printer, directly onto etching paper.

The first images on the 'Pronto Plates' revealed that, even at 600 dpi, the Laser Jet printer did not replicate the blends I had created. The dot patterns were inconsistent and visually disruptive. The images were reprinted successfully at 1200dpi.

The 'Pronto plates' were dampened with a mixture of water and Fountain Solution, and rolled-up with Daniel Smith's 'Classic Lithographic Black #100'. The plates were then placed on an etching press bed and rolled through with dampened etching paper. Once the imaged paper was dried, the inkjet labels were cut out and glued into position to create the final collage.

Parts of the image lifted off the 'Pronto Plate' after the initial roll up with lithographic ink. I thought it must be due to a lack of heat, as heat is what fuses the toner onto the plate. I, therefore, heated the plate with the heat-gun for about 2 minutes. This gave a perfect result.

## **Creating the second section**

This section is divided into two parts, the six images of the graffiti series and the three images of the mannequin series.

### **The Graffiti series**

This series is a continuation of earlier work I created while living abroad. I had been traveling in Japan in the early nineties, and on one occasion, upon reaching a hotel, decided to use the men's

toilet. Just above the toilet handle was a sign that read, “When finished pee, turn cock right.” This humorous sign prompted me to combine Japanized English text (aptly termed “Japlish”) with images I had taken of Japan. The concept was to create pictures that were generally amusing or ironic, but also made social statements.

The composition of the artwork, however, was influenced by the early Japanese woodblock prints of artists like Ando Hiroshige (1797-1858) and Utagawa Kunisada (1786-1865). I was intrigued



**Plate VII.** Utagawa Kunisada  
*Kimono Zuki (Woman who likes clothes),*  
ca.1840. Oban. Printed by Tate-elseya Kanekichi.



**Plate VIII.** Ralph Goings (b. 1928) *Pie Case*, 1975.  
oil on canvas, 24" x 34".  
Collection, Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery and Sculpture Garden,  
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

by the methodology of juxtaposing text blocks with imagery. (see **plate VII**)

However, I did not want to reproduce the Japanese woodblock style. What I wanted was a more contemporary realistic interpretation. I decided, therefore, to create images derived from photographs. This idea was based on my knowledge of the hyper realist painters like Audrey Flack (b. 1931) and Richard Estes (b. 1936), but especially Ralph Goings (b. 1928) who, used “the impersonal, mechanical image of the photograph to paint a facsimile of reality.”<sup>4</sup> (see **plate VIII**)



I scanned photographs of my travels into a computer, manipulated them to create a semi-realistic look, and added the text. I then printed the result out on a high resolution Inkjet printer. By using this method, I was able to combine the old style of the Japanese woodcut artists and the newer style of the hyper realists, to create images that fulfilled my expectations. (see plate IX)



**Plate IX.** David Jay Reed  
*Dazaifu Nights*. 1996.  
Ink Jet Print, 10" x 14"  
collection of the artist

For this thesis, however, it was time to explore new territory. I still wanted to pursue the text and image concept, but I needed different material. This different material presented itself when I discovered “blooper” English in books and on the Internet. I compiled a list of “blooper” English and began to photograph imagery that would pertain to it. I again used the computer to combine the text and imagery. The three examples below will show the various concepts I employed and

the reasoning behind them.

In *True Love* I appropriated an example of graffiti, by two children, which I discovered in a source book.<sup>5</sup> I was delighted with Bunny's negative version of the usual "Bunny loves Timmy" and the necessity for Timmy's response. I want to believe that deep inside they really did like each other. In the computer I changed the names, reformatted it, and combined it with a scanned photograph I had taken of the back entrance to an old art gallery. The entire image was cropped



**Plate X.**  
David Jay Reed  
*True Love*. 2002.  
Intaglio-Type  
12" x 16"

and manipulated. Although the final output resembles a real situation, in reality, it has been totally fabricated. (see **plate X**)

A sign warning wheelchair patients of impending doom, at the throat of the alligators, should they accidentally speed down the makeshift steps, is another indication of my sense of humor. So, in *Beware, Alligators* I created a compilation of three separate images. The first is the trees and path. The second is the swamp, and the third is a sign that I created in Adobe Illustrator and imported. By combining all three elements in the computer and manipulating them, I was able to create a totally fictitious and humorous environment. (see **plate XI**)



**Plate XI.**  
David Jay Reed  
*Beware, Alligators*. 2002.  
Intaglio-Type  
12" x 16"



In *Yonder is the gate of Heaven* I have combined two separate images with the two pieces of added text, “Yonder is the gate of Heaven. Enter ye all by this door”, and “This door is kept locked because of draft. Please use the other door”. I believe this wonderfully describes the state of most religions today which, in my opinion, are steeped in old traditions and in dire need of reformation. The church doors were photographed in New York City, and the top emblem appropriated from the Internet. The two images were combined and manipulated, and the text added in place of the existing signs. (see plate XII)



**Plate XII.**  
David Jay Reed  
*Yonder is the Gate of Heaven.*  
2002. Intaglio-Type  
12" x 16"

### Printing the Graffiti series

Once the images were completed in Adobe Photoshop, the mode was set to CMYK. The Channels palette was selected, and then two procedures were used for the Cyan, Magenta, and yellow channels. The first was creating a ‘blur’, and the second was adding ‘noise’.

The ‘blur’ created a softer image, and the ‘noise’ further softened the image by adding a slight amount of graininess. This mixture of the two was preferable to just using more ‘blur’, because too much ‘blur’ would ruin the sharpness of the overall image.

The black channel was not given a ‘blur’ or ‘noise’ because it was the key. However, all channels were given a curve between 65 and 90. This procedure was used to break up the strong dot pattern, in the dark areas, to create finer dots that would translate into black when transferred to the ImageOnULTRA™ film.

Each channel was printed out separately in black ink onto four transparencies, using an Ink Jet printer, at 1440 dpi. The transparencies were then placed onto four separate copper plates, laminated with ImageOnULTRA™ film, and exposed in a platemaker. The exposed plates were then developed in a 10% Soda Ash solution.

After processing, each of the plates were inked up with the corresponding color mixture. The cyan plate was inked up with a combination of Process Blue and Ultramarine. The magenta plate was inked up with a combination of Process Red and Bright Red. The yellow plate was inked up with a combination of Process Yellow and Diarylide Yellow, and finally the black plate was inked up with a combination of Process Black and Blue Black. All color combinations included added extenders and transparent medium. The four inked plates were then run through an etching press, one at a time, in the sequence of yellow, magenta, cyan, and black onto dampened etching paper, to create a multi-colored image.

### **The Mannequin series.**

This series of three was printed with black ink on white paper with a hint of hand coloring. As in the four-color series, I wanted to create humorous situations, but in this case I wanted them to be more intimate with a hint of eroticism.

The inspiration for the images came from seeing the work of photographers like Alfred Stieglitz (1864-1946) and Henri Cartier-Bresson (b. 1908). Bresson wrote, "Photography is the simultaneous recognition, in a fraction of a second, of the significance of an event as well as of a precise organization of forms which give that event its proper expression"<sup>6</sup>.

I wanted to create what, at first glance, would seem to be an intimate, semi-erotic image of people, taken at a moment in time, and well balanced graphically, but at a second glance would reveal that the images were, in fact, mannequins.

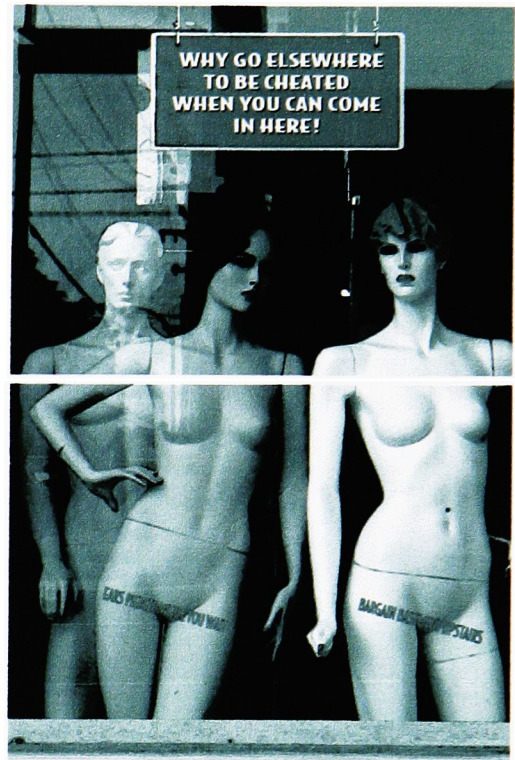
Part of the intimacy is achieved by use of chiaroscuro in the image, which allows light items to



stand out from their dark backgrounds and vice versa. For this effect, I turned to the portrait of “Le Baron, Chouzy” by Henri Cartier-Bresson. In this image, the bowl on the table and the subject’s face stand out from the darker surroundings, while the darker objects in the room stand out from the lighter surroundings. In my opinion, this composition helps the viewers concentrate on the subject and then guides them through the individual items which help define the subject’s character. (see plate XIII)



**Plate XIII.** Henri Cartier-Bresson.  
*Le Baron, Chouzy, France, 1941.*  
Silver Bromide, Magnum Photos.

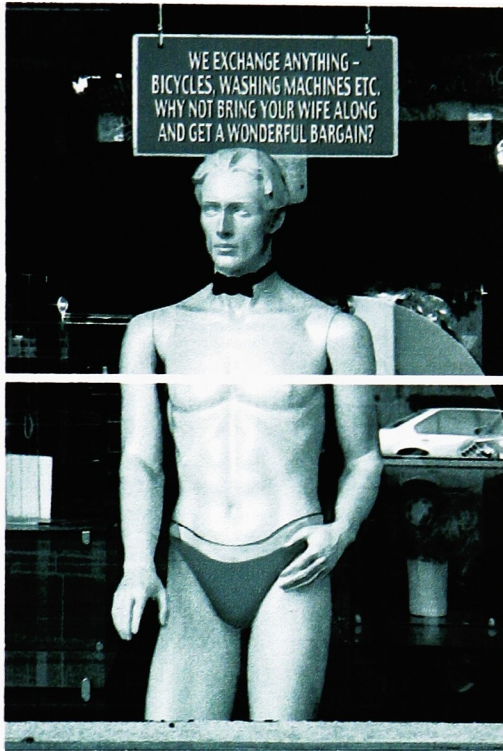


**Plate XIV.** David Jay Reed.  
*Why go elsewhere to be cheated? 2002.*  
Intaglio-Type. 16" x 24".

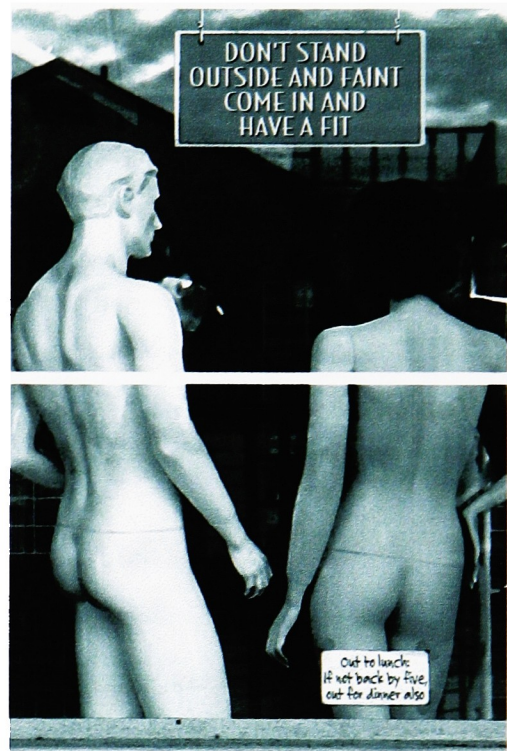
I attempted to create the semi-eroticism through the use of naked, or semi-naked bodies. The concept was to draw the viewers in for a closer look until they finally realized that the images were mannequins. From this proximity, it was hoped that they would then see the humor of the signs and text.

Examples of the signs and text are as follows. In *Why go elsewhere* the sign reads: ‘Why go elsewhere to be cheated when you can come in here.’ Text on the window, appropriately placed to hide the female mannequins private parts, reads from left to right: ‘Ears pierced while you wait’ and ‘Bargain basement upstairs’ (see plate XIV).

In *We Exchange Anything*, the sign reads 'We exchange anything-bicycles, washing machines etc. Why not bring your wife along and get a wonderful bargain?' (see **plate XV**). Finally, in *Don't Stand Outside and Faint* the sign reads 'Don't stand outside and faint. Come in and have a fit.' A note in the lower right corner of the window also reads 'Out to lunch, If not back by five, out to dinner also'. (see **plate XVI**)



**Plate XV.** David Jay Reed.  
*We exchange Anything*, 2002.  
Intaglio-Type. 16" x 24".



**Plate XVI.** David Jay Reed.  
*Don't stand outside and faint*, 2002.  
Intaglio-Type. 16" x 24".

### Printing the Mannequin series

As the final images were to be printed in black, the mode, in Adobe Photoshop, was set to Grayscale. Each image was printed using two plates, so each picture was dissected into two separate images.

Next, the black channel in each image was given a curve between 65 and 90. This procedure, as in the four-color procedure, was used to break up the strong dot pattern in the dark areas. Each image was then printed out separately in black ink on to a transparency, using an Ink Jet printer, at 1440 dpi. The two transparencies were then exposed and developed in a similar fashion to the four-color process.



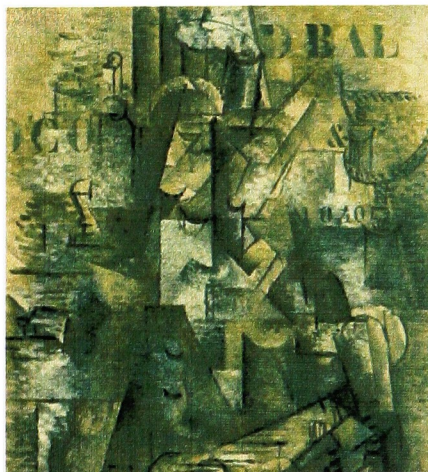
After development, each of the plates was inked up with black, re-aligned to create the full image, and run through an etching press onto dampened etching paper. After the image was dry, each print was hand-colored using diluted water-based inks.

### Creating the third section

These prints, like the others, continue the theme of **juxtapositioning** images and text. The difference, however, is three-fold. The first is the subject matter, the second is the composition, and the third is the final output.

The subject matter differs because it is meant to be more serious than the other images in the thesis. It represents a personal statement about my feelings toward close friends, and my reaction to world events. The composition differs because, unlike the other images, I have used text as a patterned backdrop to the main text. I have done this to reinforce the message. The final output differs because it is created solely as an Ink Jet printout with no added hand-coloring or collage. I have always regarded ink jet printouts as a legitimate form of printmaking, and wanted to include this process with the lithographic and intaglio methods I used previously.

The influence for this series is based on the early works of the French Cubist Georges Braque (1882-1963) who, during this period, created images using “neutralized color and complex patterns.” I was especially attracted to artworks like his *Le Portugais* (The Emigrant), where text was incorporated into the image.<sup>7</sup> (see **plate XVII**)



**Plate XVII (Detail)**  
Georges Braque.  
*Le Portugais (The Emigrant)*.  
1911-1912. Oil on Canvas,  
46" x 32".  
Collection, Kunstmuseum, Basel.

As with the previous influences, there are similarities and differences in the approaches. The similarity is that we both attempted to create multi-layered images incorporating text. The difference is that Braque accomplished this task by creating, in oil paint, an illusion of collage, another medium he was working with at the time, which juxtaposed the “materials of everyday life; newspapers, labels, [and] pieces of fabric.” I, on the other hand, accomplished it by combining multi-layer opacity adjustments in a computer software package. We both also wanted to set up a background pattern. The difference was he used “faceted forms” to create the pattern that tied the image together, whereas I used the text as a background pattern to tie the image together.<sup>8</sup>

Another similarity and difference was that we both were trying to create a flattened three-dimensional illusion. Braque achieved this visual illusion by reducing the structure into a geometric form and “rendered its shading so that its volume seemed to be contradicted, that is, it looked both flat and three-dimensional”.<sup>9</sup> I attempted the flat, three dimensional visual illusion through the merging and blending of realistically rendered images, so that each image appeared translucent and superimposed on top of the other. Below are the three examples.

*Jesus wept* is a comment about the current series of **pedophile** cases that are being attributed to Catholic priests. The caption **Into the world a child is born,**

**a child with no past,**

**but in his eyes a fear is seen,**

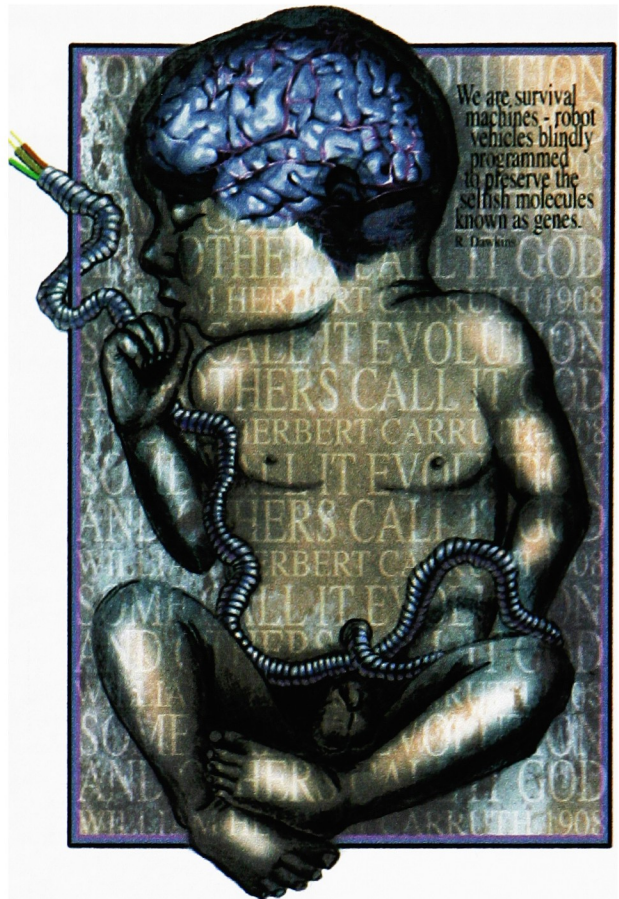
**a fear, I fear will last**

represents an epitaph of the evil that has befallen the molested children.<sup>10</sup> The gravestone with Jesus holding the dead baby represents the symbolic death of the children at the hands of the immoral priests. (see **plate XVIII**)





**Plate XVIII.** David Jay Reed.  
*Jesus Wept*, 2002. Ink Jet Print. 16" x 12".

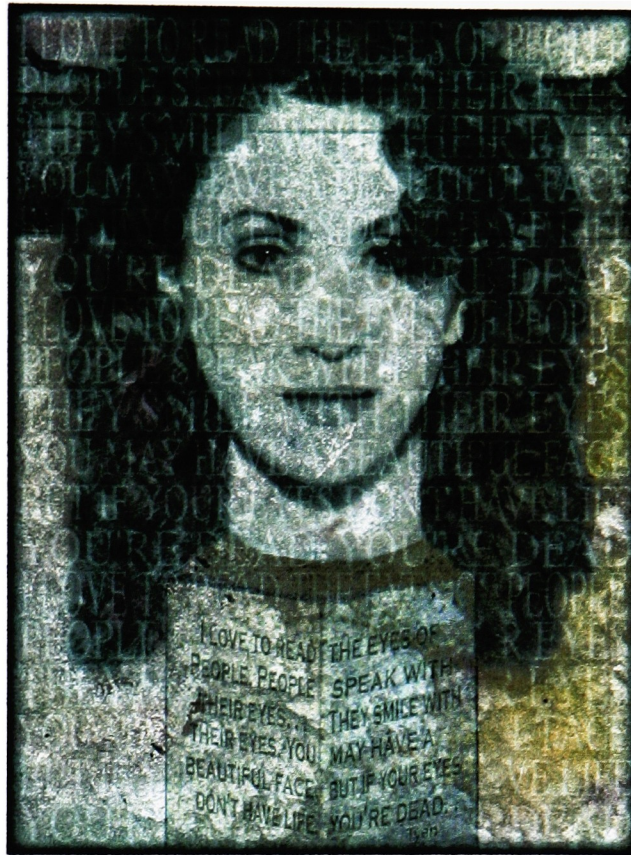


**Plate XIX.** David Jay Reed.  
*Some Call it Evolution*, 2002. Ink Jet Print. 16" x 12".

*Some Call it Evolution* represents the current debate about cloning. The fetus with the electrical umbilical cord is meant to make the viewers question the future of mankind. Will cloning be the predictable savior of the human race, or will we continue, as Richard Dawkins believes, as robot vehicles “blindly programmed to preserve the selfish molecules known as genes”? <sup>11</sup> (see **plate XIX**)

*It's in her eyes* is a combination of an image of a close girlfriend, named Tonina, and a quote by Tyen regarding the importance of the eyes. Part of her quote states; “you may have a beautiful face, but if your eyes don’t have life, you are dead”<sup>12</sup>. I first was attracted to Tonina because of

her eyes, so in effect, this image is not only homage to her, but also a vindication for all people who believe the eyes are the ‘window to the soul’. (see plate XX)



**Plate XX.** David Jay Reed.  
*It's in Her Eyes*, 2002. Ink Jet Print. 16" x 12".

In conclusion I would like to reiterate that the purpose of this thesis has been to create images that juxtapose forms of the English language, with both related and non-related imagery, to create the illusion of realistic situations. I believe I have achieved this goal, especially through the exploration of non-toxic printmaking techniques, which have allowed me to successfully express my ideas.



## End Notes.

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