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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

## **Connections**

By

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May 2006

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# Table of Contents

Thesis Proposal

Thesis Investigation Page 1

Hypothesis and Thesis Work Page 5

Observed Relationships & Professional References Page 9

Conclusion Page 17

Bibliography

Image List

### **Proposal**

My Masters thesis project will explore what I see as pervasive problems in our culture with the decline of general social responsibility and personal accountability,

In spite of the fact;

- The resulting problems are much discussed and recognized by the media
- That numerous organizations and programs exist to help people address issues such as spousal and child abuse, all types of addiction, compulsive behaviors, obesity and poor health as the result of personal neglect.
- That these issues have an immediate effect on one or two individuals, they ultimately have a significant impact on a much wider circle of society.

### **Purpose**

It is my intention to use my work (painting, printmaking, installation, sculpture and photography)

1. To call attention to these issues
2. To creatively explore these issues and
3. To provide positive linkages to the organizations and programs available in our community.
4. To encourage people to take positive action to improve their lives and thereby improve the fabric of our community.

### **Methodology**

My thesis project is multilayered.

First I will create a cohesive body of work that addresses the before mentioned issues. I intend to focus on the power and importance of the individual by using portraits rendered in several different mediums. These portraits will focus on individuals and the connection that they share with others. These pieces will speak of personal accountability, social responsibility and social passivity.

Second, when a person visits the project website, they will find:

- My artist statement,
- Information about my thesis mission and related events such as my masters' exhibit,
- An opportunity to provide feedback,
- Links to several key community resources that focus on providing help related to the issues I have mentioned

The website will add an aspect of interactivity and understanding to the work, allowing people an opportunity to react and speak-out: breaking social passivity.

Third, I will seek public attention for my message through engaging banners in public places or advertising in public papers which will direct the public to my website.

## **Outcomes**

As a human being and artist, I have a real passion for people and art. Having dealt with some of the before mentioned issues in my own life, I understand some of the frustration that people face in terms of people being held accountable for their condition. Through my artwork I am interested in exploring everything about this issue from the smallest detail to the broadest concepts. I want to use art to focus on these issues and problems that have my attention. Finally by attracting others to these issues through the banners and the website and, hopefully, to the exhibition at RIT, people may be further moved to examine these issues as they relate to their own lives and take positive action, thus improving the social and physical well being of our community.

## Thesis Investigation

**All things are connected and related, and everything is equally significant in the universe.** Beginning with this hypothesis, I investigate the effect that the decline of personal accountability and social responsibility, has on individuals particularly in the United States. Using images I create with a technically complex variety of mediums, I project, evoke and represent human conditions and emotions specifically related to these two concepts. Larger-than-life images of anonymous subjects, enhanced by colors and symbols provide subtle connections to each other and the viewer. Observations, research, reasoning skills and expertise form and define appropriate messages. My creativity and technical skill create a strong, cohesive body of thesis work in a variety of mediums, conveying those messages and demonstrating my mastery of a wide variety of artistic skills.

For the purpose of this written document, I am investigating connections between things that are visible and related. These connections can be mapped out a distance away from the source by identifying connections that cannot be identified by direct macro connections but rather can be mapped to a source via micro connections. ("Source" is NOT meant to be understood as a finite source or origin, but one that we accept as origin for the investigation of connections and relationships among people.)

The first aspect of my thesis identifies the phenomenon to be investigated: all things are connected and related, and everything is equally significant in the universe.



. Through observation and experience, my thesis investigates a sector of our culture having to do with relationships between people and connections to the importance of personal accountability and social responsibility. It is also important to record some of the observations that led me to this investigation. It is not my intention to make judgments of good or bad, right or wrong, true and false. I create images that speak to the viewer, who can draw his/her own conclusions and make his/her own connections. I accomplish this by using many mediums as my tools: language, motion, symbols, paint, print mass media, to investigate and make further observations and connections. For instance, I employ painting as a traditional process (Connection IV & V) in conjunction with new methods and technologies in printmaking (Connection I & II) along side mass media methods including newsprint (Language Art Installation) and the Internet (Website).

I have always been interested in “all things” from the depth and breadth of the universe to the structure and composition of an electron and the relationships these things share. I am also interested in the significance of time and life compared to the ideas of infinity and the unknown. I have investigated religion and the relationship it has to people’s beliefs and opinions concerning existence, nature, and worship of a deity or deities, as well as divine and human involvement in the universe. This led me to an interest in people and the function of faith, spirituality and the comfort that is created by having a structure supplying a moral and ethical code for societies to live by, for the purpose of creating an organized, relatively stable and cohesive functioning existence. I began creating a body of thesis work related to these ideas and concepts

For the past several years, I have informally and repeatedly explored ideas of connectedness and equality. I was not entirely sure why I was having these recurring



thoughts. However, it is through this repetition, knowledge and experience that I have gained a new perspective enabling me to conceptualize a model representing my thoughts and ideas about how all things are connected.

Connections are everywhere, infinite in every direction. This is what my thesis investigates and what my basic model symbolizes. This model encompasses and includes all things that exist. (*fig. 1-4*) Once I identified a model encompassing all things, I had the ability to investigate specific sectors which scientists such as George Chiatin (IBM World Research and Development) consider “interdependent” regions of the universe. This validation of thought allowed me to map out my “connections model.”

“Let us once again consider a scientist in a hypothetical situation. He wishes to understand a universe very different from his own which he has been observing. 'As he observes it, he comes eventually to distinguish certain objects. These are highly interdependent regions of the universe he is observing, so much so, that he comes to view them as wholes. Unlike a gas, which consists of independent particles that do not interact, these regions of the universe are unities, and for this reason he has distinguished them as single entities.’” (Chiatin 12)

Beginning with some of these ideas, I decided to research and seek out professionals working with similar concepts. I have often gained validation by discovering people working with or thinking about ideas similar to my own. I began searching and reading mathematical and physics papers when I discovered a mathematician named George Chiatin working with very similar ideas as my own. It was serendipitous that I read one of Chiatin’s papers, “The Mathematical Definition of Life” since I had just used an example used in the paper the week before when describing my own work. I discovered that my model is based on discovering the definition of “one.”

“A living being is indeed a unity. All the atoms in it cooperate and work together. If Mr. Smith is afraid of missing the train to his office, all his incredibly many molecules, all

his organs, all his cells, will be cooperating so that he finishes breakfast quickly and runs to the train station. If you cut the leg of an animal, all of it will cooperate to escape from you or to attack you and scare you away, in order to protect its leg. Later, the wound will heal. How different from what happens if you cut the leg of a table. The whole table will neither come to the defense of its leg, nor will it help it to heal. In the more intelligent living creatures, there is also a very great deal of interdependence between an animal's experience and its present behavior; that is to say, it learns and its behavior changes with time depending on its experiences. Such enormous interdependence must be a monstrously rare occurrence in a universe, unless it has evolved gradually.” (Chiatin 17)

It is important to hold a subjective point of view when investigating this system. It encompasses an infinite number of beliefs and belief systems, and depending on the platform from which the model is observed, resulting perspectives will differ. This is a model that repeatedly asks the question: why? This is the reason that there is importance in observing these connections and understanding that there is no ultimate answer, but rather a better understanding of how the system of our connectedness works. This is, in fact, what I am observing with my thesis show: hypothesis, connections and reactions.

I observe progress and change in technology, communication and science occurring at an alarming rate compared to past historical advances. I observe, through a combination of science and technology, the ability to view things on macro and micro levels, mostly attributed to the invention of the camera as it provides the mechanical extension of our sense of sight. With advances in communication, there exists the ability to transfer information to billions of people in real time. Flooding our communication system with excess information not only fertilizes minds but also cultivates new forms of thought and theory. This deluge

may also pollute and confuse, creating a sort of smoke screen, distorting the ability to discern reality from non-reality and what is understood as fact or fiction. In my model, you have the ability to move away from this confusing and unstable information and make connections through rationalization and an understanding of how all of this information is equally significant, working together as a functional support structure within this system. In our current culture, we are witnessing the disbursement of information that anesthetizes people, removing their ability to discern reality. It is increasingly difficult to know what media information is true, unadulterated and unbiased. This exemplifies another reason to seek a model in which these factors can be examined subjectively from multiple perspectives.

## **Hypothesis and Thesis Work**

For the purpose of this hypothesis and thesis work, I focus on my observation that within current American culture, there is a significant decline in the importance of personal accountability and social responsibility. With the rise of frivolous lawsuits, obesity, drug abuse and child abuse, people have refused to take responsibility for their actions and consequently the effect of their lack of personal accountability and social responsibility is directly related to the importance of our connections and to our shared humanity. My work without making any specific reference to the phenomenon that I am investigating, should allow viewers to make their own connections to these issues, to recognize themselves or others in the art work and to discover responses to my works that are both personal and universal.

I identified these two aspects of our culture on which to focus this thesis and to examine their cause and effect on micro (individual and immediate family) and macro (local,



national, global and universal) levels. I chose personal accountability and social responsibility because both have connections to physical, emotional, spiritual, and metaphysical beliefs and ideals that are directly connected to the quality and way that we live our lives. I propose that every individual may have experienced or may have the ability to observe these connections on a personal level, relating these ideals to their own life and have the ability to follow their implications and “connections” on macro and micro levels. My thesis work directly relates to the concepts by using individual portraits in conjunction with simplistic symbols and mathematical models, in order to make connections to larger more complicated theories

When it came to creating a cohesive body of artistic work dealing with this hypothesis, it was my intention to convey these concepts using many different perspectives, scales and mediums in a language arts installation with the purpose of broadening effectiveness and understanding while at the same time engaging a mass audience. I acted on my belief that by varying the modes of message delivery, the potential for understanding by a larger viewing audience is enhanced. I researched different avenues for interest and exposure. My first idea was to hang banners with pointed statements: You are fat. You are addicted. You are violent. You lie. This approach, however, proved to be infeasible due to legal issues, money limitations and time constraints. I ultimately decided to use *The Democrat and Chronicle*’s “Insider,” a free weekly tabloid-style magazine and Rochester’s city guide to weekly events. I designed a 6"x4" display ad with a reverse text reading: YOU ARE FAT (fig. 5) followed by my thesis website address, [www.look-closer.org](http://www.look-closer.org) The advertisement ran for one week and was located in the bottom right hand corner of the right hand page; one of the most frequently read locations of a tabloid advertising page. The purpose of the

advertisement was to capture the audience's attention enough to cause them to go to the website. I intentionally used an inflammatory statement, employing language as a tool to evoke emotions and interest by touching on a relevant contemporary issue currently identified as a major problem in society. I chose YOU ARE FAT because it is confrontational and potentially offensive. It is a statement that, when read silently or aloud, is targeted at the individual. The latest figures estimate that 61 % of America is overweight; hence there was a 61% chance that people viewing the ad were themselves overweight and would immediately have a reaction. Therefore, as a language art installation, I do believe that the advertisement was effective. If any interest, defensiveness or reflection resulted from the ad, it served its purpose. If it prompted anyone to visit the website, it further served its purpose. So there were multiple layers that this installation could have penetrated and affected.

It is also significant that there were no images on this website, just language and motion. The purpose of this design approach was to enable the viewer to make connections solely through words and movement, to problematic commonalities in our society. I chose Flash animation to engage the audience in a more direct way than the print-only *"Insider"* advertisement. When developing the text for both the website and the ad, I kept all of the wording related to specific relevant and widespread problematic, human commonalities directly related to personal accountability and social responsibility. These were chosen to reflect the basic cause and effect of individual decisions and how the implications of those decisions resonate from the "source" to an immeasurable and infinite number of interdependent locations in the universe, which are all connected. A website on the Internet offers the largest viewing potential for my thesis work, possibly reaching audiences on local,

state, national and international levels. It is important to have that potential because this information itself has the ability to affect viewers on that scale. The website was not only intended to act on its own as a functioning web art installation, but it was also intended to direct people to my thesis show at the RIT Bevier Gallery where they could engage with my art work at the most intimate level. After the viewer navigated through the web site, important information about the show was displayed, taking the viewer to a separate location to view images related to the other installations.

## **Observed Relationships & Professional References**

When putting together the body of work for the gallery show, I constantly referenced other professional artists both technically and conceptually. It is my belief that it is necessary to look at the work of others who have successfully captivated audiences. Such “collaboration” enhances one’s ability to more accurately convey your own messages

One of the artists whose work I have continually studied, and perhaps the most obvious work I have referenced is that of Chuck Close. I work in a very similar manner and have always incessantly looked at Chuck Close’s work. Close most often works on a monumental scale and uses many different mediums: from printmaking, photography, paper making, and through out his career has continually searched for new mediums to master. Close’s work has engaged my interest and helped me to broaden my artistic creativity to not only subjective imagery, but also more abstract and large-scale public works by taking Close’s ideas of variation of mediums to a different level.

Close creates portraits (paintings, prints and tapestries) of photographs not people. Photographs taken by the artist are the subject matter from which he created his images. The



photos Close uses are snapshots of official identification; close up, frontal views like those taken by police departments and passport agencies rendering all subjects similarly. Close's subjects, as well as mine, have passive faces and glazed eyes, looking neither happy nor sad. Even when smiling, they share a bland anonymity and appear disturbingly bored. They exist in a sort of limbo in front of the lens, frozen in a state of seemingly emotionless tranquility. These were the aspects of Close's work that I wanted to include in my own, to support my message. It is the simplicity and sense of purity of Close's approach to his subjects that I feel works so effectively, along with his complete mastery of technical skills. Close's work is rendered with scientific precision on a monumental scale. It was because of Close's paintings that I have viewed at the Albright Knox Gallery in Buffalo that I decided to employ portraits and multiple mediums in the rendering of this thesis work.

I commenced my thesis work with paintings, Intaglio prints and Digital prints with Close's scale and mastery in mind. I already had a lot of experience with Intaglio and Digital prints and very little with painting, I had to focus on painting for a while. I began painting using acrylics. While I learned a lot about color and application, in the end, I was not that satisfied with the results that acrylic paint offered. The acrylic dried too fast and did not allow the kind of manipulation that I was looking for. I chose to use oil stick because I was interested in applying the paint to the canvas directly, which allowed me to approach this painting in a very familiar drawing manner. I was more satisfied with the results from the oil stick than I was with the acrylics. The paintings allowed me to bring something to the work other mediums don't offer; the touch of human expression.

After completing two paintings, I was still not sure how I would display them for my thesis show. At the same time, Friedhard Kiekeben, a visiting artist at RIT, sat with me and



had a lengthy conversation about what I was trying to accomplish. We discussed the concepts that I was working with as well as the mediums I was using. We agreed that acrylic, oil, 4-color Intaglio-Type and digital prints were too many mediums to use in one exhibit and that the use of all of these mediums would weaken the show's effectiveness. He suggested that I limit my work to three different mediums. I had to decide which three I was going to use, and then I needed to have a vision of how I wanted to display my thesis work in order to best convey its messages.

I decided that because the oil stick painting was more successful than the acrylic, I would make another oil stick painting identical in size. I then made two 70"x70" 4-color Intaglio Types in order to balance how the pieces were displayed in the exhibition and created a large (52" x 32") backlit transparency in the middle of the exhibit.

Connection IV is one of the two large works (108"x108") using oil stick on canvas. (*fig. 12, 13*) I created a painting that was a large-scale (6' x 8'), full-body portrait, and then had the opportunity to acquire two 8'x3' canvases. I added these two panels to either side of the larger canvas in order to accommodate the hands of the figure, allowing me to break out of the more conventional square or rectangle formats. The painting took on the shape of a cross, an obvious and familiar symbol through which the audience could internalize the work, connecting their own personal narratives with that of the figure. The drawing/painting is a full body portrait of a male, with outstretched arms within a cross- shaped black frame standing in front of a red grid system. The individual has outstretched arms, open hands and an expressionless face, but conveys a sense of enlightenment through stark lighting and his confident stance. The red grid system connects the individual to my model. Perhaps this enlightened individual discovers his individual space and identifies his relationship to others

within the system.

Connection V, the second oil stick on canvas, is a full body portrait of a female within a black, cross-shaped frame, standing in front of a translucent grid system. (*fig. 14*) She has an expressionless face and unsure, less unconfident stance than her male counterpart, suggesting feelings of certain vagueness. Red and yellow arrows flow from the bottom portions of the cross wings where look-closer is drawn in red on red on the left and in yellow on the right. These two different colors indicate a difference in emphasis. The words “look-closer” are painted red on the left panel. The cross configuration is used in both works as a tool to engage viewers. It also links the paintings to each other. A universal symbol with religious connotations, it is a strong element, tempting the viewer to make inferences involving religion. The female takes this stance and conveys feelings of emptiness because she has not yet discovered her personal space or her space in the world. The grid system and model are there but she has just not discovered them yet. However, please note that the grid is clearly visible to viewers. This enables the audience to see something that the woman cannot.

My thesis work relies on its physical and intellectual irony. This body of work aggrandizes a system, not the events behind a face, inundating the viewer with explicit and implicit information. It is created using rigidly predetermined systems. The grid is used to not only render the image to scale with pinpoint accuracy, but also is left and sometimes emphasized to identify the delineated system in which all things in the universe are a part. Confrontation posed by these pieces is perceptual and physical. Scale overwhelms the viewer; the reality (or the look of it) appears and disappears. Although these images reveal every excruciating detail on each face, the portraits tell us nothing about the people

portrayed. Up close, these large-scale images dissolve into pure abstraction, while from a distance; a dot portrait appears in sharp focus. In these works, we are confronted by entirely new formations: “abstract data.” As I considered my process options, it occurred to me: why take months to do by hand what can be done instantly by a machine? For all of the technical proficiency, the effort does not show. The grid is the structure that permits the examination to proceed. I then used this concept as the basis for the Intaglio and Digital prints.

The first print, Connection I, is a 24-plate, four-color intaglio printed on six sheets of 24”x36” white Hannemule copperplate. (*fig. 7*) This image was originally a 4” x5” negative shot on Kodak portra 160 NC. The image was then scanned on an Imacon Flextight Scanner. After the image was made into a digital file, it was manipulated in Photoshop and printed as positives on 24 sheets of 24” x 36” Azon 787n. These positives were then exposed to 24 – 24” x 36” petg (acrylic) plates, which had been laminated with Imagon Ultra Film. The plates were then developed and printed using Rostow & Jung four-color process, water-based ink in RIT’s printmaking studios, resulting in a perfectly registered 70” x 70” image. It is a head-and-shoulders portrait of a male in a completely black environment. The male has a blank stare and shiny skin. The figure has a black censor bar across the mouth and a red circular vortex around his right eye with a red line connecting the black censor bar over the subject’s mouth. The image is framed in black shadow box.

At 70” x 70” portrait is intended to stop the viewer with its larger-than-life presence. Large scale was used because I wanted the viewer to feel confronted by the image, compelled to study it and all of its details. I want the subject to be alone with no distracting elements in the background. I placed the subject in a black environment to suggest a sense of emptiness or loneliness. The subject has shiny skin to suggest plasticity. This is important and intended



to symbolize the malleability of youth, which I believe is often lost as time passes. The blank, emotionless expression on the subject's face suggests a zombie-like, brainwashed state. The black censor bar on the subject's mouth signifies the inability to speak. The connecting line to the red vortex around the eye is meant to draw the viewer in to question what all of these elements are trying to say. I used red because, in our culture, it is perceived to be the color meaning stop or danger. Together, the red and vortex symbol around the eye says: STOP and LOOK.

However, we live in an era of distraction and impatience. It is increasingly difficult to expect people to ponder the complexity and meaning of a work of art when the limiting factor on the rate of intellectual absorption seems to be determined by the duration of a glance. I am reminded of this challenging aspect of art as I researched and considered the work of John Buck. (*fig. 8*) Best known as a sculptor, Buck worked for more than ten years with large-scale woodblock printing. Bold and complex, his woodblocks add to the long and diverse history of the medium. I was initially attracted to Buck's style and scale, and I began to examine how he handles the previously noted problems.

Out of the linear style in which Buck works, he is able to develop a highly charged language of silhouettes, abstract signs, symbols abstract schemata and graffiti-like swirls. Buck's drawings embody direct and indirect commentary on topics he has read in the newspaper or seen on the evening news. The distinctive gap between the visual field and dominant silhouette, the different kinds of information articulated, become the focus of the viewer's speculation. By developing a style juxtaposing different categories of visual information, I found a way to investigate the kinds of disconnections that occur between the individual and the world. This practice, developed from the observation of artists such as

Close and Buck, allows me to think that, as an artist and as individuals, we are socially responsible members of a community arguing with some aspects of ourselves and nature.

Buck's work, as well as my own, comes not only from the events of the day; the work comes out of deeper, ongoing concerns with far broader implications than mere topical subjects of the day. These deeper concerns elevate both Buck and me, making us socially responsible artists, who recognize that we live a finite existence, connected to the world we inhabit. Our work arises out of our need and ability to integrate idealistic notions with our recognition of the world as it is, including its disquieting aspects. I am certain my use of such imagery is inspired by Buck, who relied heavily on strong symbolic elements to convey meaning and emotion.

Connection II, my second 70" x 70" intaglio, (*fig. 9*) was printed using the same process as Connection I. The image is another head- and-shoulders portrait of a person, assumable male, (but it may also be female) staring blankly at the camera in an apparent catatonic state with a mouth that is slightly open. I wanted there to be some question of the gender, suggesting that gender is not important in these issues and that they affect everyone. The face is shiny again indicating and reinforcing through repetition that there is a certain literal and figurative elasticity to youth. I again used the same black environment, connecting it with the other pieces in the exhibition. The digitally manipulated image shows the subject with yellow arrows of uniform length coming out of his mouth, signifying a directional flow of uniform information. Yellow is used to convey a sense of importance and caution. The subject has red arrows of different sizes congregating around his left eye suggesting a difference in quantity and randomness of information input. These contrast with the yellow uniform out put arrows, showing a change in the information. I used red to echo the color

used in the other pieces as well as to indicate the importance and connection of the information. The subject of Connection II is wearing a garment with red and yellow stripes on the shoulders indicating that this input/output information is around us, on us, and even makes us who we are.

Barbara Kruger (*fig. 10*) is another artist who addresses the fragmented, contested character of contemporary culture directly merging strong messages with creative symbolism and innovative techniques. She is concerned with power and investigating the ways that hierarchical political, economic and gender relationships are expressed in the mass media. Kruger utilizes conventions of advertising and post revolutionary Russian and Weimar German photomontage. She typically juxtaposes powerful images and texts to undermine repressive representation, especially of women. I especially admire the way in which she combines several mediums to collectively convey complex messages through simplistic imagery. Similarly, this is a primary interest in my work. My goal is to use several different mediums in a simplistic manner in order to captivate the audience, understanding that intellectual absorption occurs “at the rate of a glance.”

I attempt to incorporate strong messages, with creative symbolism and innovative techniques in the central piece of the exhibition, Connection III. It is a 52” x 32” backlit transparency printed with Fuji Duraclear Film on a Durst Lambda Printer. (*fig. 11*) This is an image of five subjects holding hands against a completely black environment. This piece uses symbols in a different way, making connections to other people by using a common family format covering three generations: “grandparent, parent and child.” By suspending the little boy between a man and woman (his parents), I am showing shared relationships among the man, child, and woman. These connections are indicated by using line, color and geometric



symbols. By using red and yellow, I indicate important elements of the images and suggest multiple meanings. The geometric symbols are elements relating to my hypothesis in its simplest form. Circles indicate the infinite and cyclical motion of things; they also indicate an individual's "known personal relationship radius" which may extend from primary family to extended family, to friends and acquaintances. The grid system over the hands is significant. It serves as a rigid and simple mathematic tool used to represent both the grid as an entity and symbol of the individual and a universal symbol showing the separation between individuals in the world. We each have our own life-grid and perhaps in the grid of others. We each have a place in the world grid. The solid red color in the grid system indicates the individual's space in relation the individual next to them. The circle around the head is intended to make a connection to the part of the human body having the ability to see, hear, understand, file access and transmit information. The introduction of a new color and shape around the little boy indicates a significant shift in meaning. It calls attention to his age, simply saying: THIS MEANS SOMETHING IMPORTANT. "PAY SPECIAL ATTENTION TO THE YOUNG IN OUR SOCIETY." Starting from the viewer's left, a casually dressed man (father) stands, his right hand extended with a red circle around it with a deteriorating grid system. This indicates a broken, incomplete connection. This circle is connected to another around the subject's head. Black censor bars across his eyes and his mouth indicate an inability to see or to speak. The circle is connected to his left hand by a red line, which connects to another circle in which the man is holding the hand of the small boy standing next to him. The small boy holds a woman's hand on his left side, which is again enclosed by a red circle and connected to her head by a red line. There is a red line connected to another circle surrounding her left hand, which is extended, but not holding anyone's



hand. Instead, there is a man standing next to her (grandfather) with his hand extended and surrounded by a red circle with an intact grid system. One of the grid squares is completely red. His circle is connected by a red line surrounding his head, which is connected to a circle surrounding his hand and that of the woman (grandmother) next to him. Her circle is connected by a red line to a red circle surrounding her head.

The imposing backlit transparency has both a life-like and surreal feel. Because there are variations in the symbolism from figure to figure, the viewer is drawn into examining the images in order to discern meaning. Strong images of connection and disconnection in relationships and functionality and dysfunctionality in communication are among the concepts expressed by grids, lines and colors.

## **Conclusion**

My thesis and the direction of my current work utilize many mediums to maximize the effectiveness of the message to a broad audience. It is similar to saying the same words in different languages. Different mediums speak to different people. My belief in the value of such creative diversity has been validated by the experience of creating this work.

As an artist, I have little or no opportunity to measure the success or effectiveness of my work. I am generally not present to observe people's reaction to my work, and, even when a person shares their responses, it is self-limiting and may focus on either the technical or aesthetic aspects, not both. My goal, in my thesis work was, by necessity, highly personal: to create a body of work exploring the hypothesis I defined. To use my observations, research and reasoning skills and expertise to form and define appropriate messages. To use my creativity and technical skills to create a strong, cohesive body of thesis work in a variety

of mediums, conveying those messages and demonstrating my mastery of a wide variety of artistic skills.

I feel that I have successfully met the challenge of using multiple mediums to express the themes of the perceived decline of personal accountability and social responsibility in our society. I took inspiration and direction from artists Close, Buck and Kruger to infuse my work with color, symbolism, scale and abstraction as ways of enriching the overall depth of each piece and drawing them together. The results were visually stunning and personally rewarding, demonstrating my creativity and competence in the field of fine arts.

The work that I have done has enabled me to think in new ways about how I can effectively reach the masses and emphasize issues that affect everything and everyone: from the prices of gas, pollution, war to unforeseen issues that will arise in the future. It is what I believe I was meant to do in my life. I will continually strive to not only make the world a better place for my generation, but generations to come. This work will allow me to continually strive to reach the largest audience possible. This work has provided me with the foundation and the courage to pursue these ideas in a vigorous and determined manner that I am confident will continue to grow, to unpredictable heights.

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Sultan, Terrie. *Chuck Close Prints- Process and Collaboration*. Princeton University Press: The Art Museum of the University of Houston, 2003.

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Yau, John. *John Buck- Woodblock Prints*. Ann Kohs & Associates: Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, 1993.

## **Image List**

**Figure 6- Chuck Close**

*Keith*, 1972  
Mezzotint  
44.5 x 34 in

**Figure 7- Adam Werth**

*Connection I*, 2005  
4- Color Intaglio Type  
70 x 70 in

**Figure 8- John Buck**

*Father and Son*, 1985  
2- Color Woodcut  
82.5 x 36.5 in

**Figure 9- Adam Werth**

*Connection II*, 2005  
4- Color intaglio Type  
70 x 70 in

**Figure 10- Barbara Kruger**

*Untitled*, 1985 (each)  
Lenticular photograph  
20 x 20 in (each)

**Figure 11- Adam Werth**

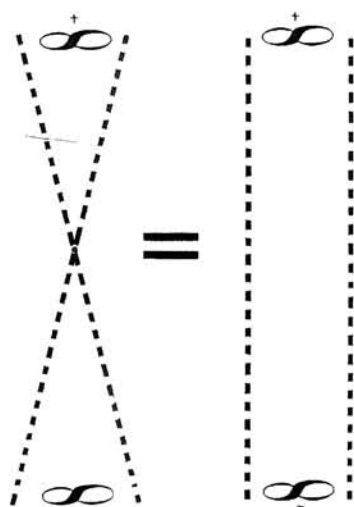
*Connection III*, 2005  
Durst Lambda Print  
52 x 32 in

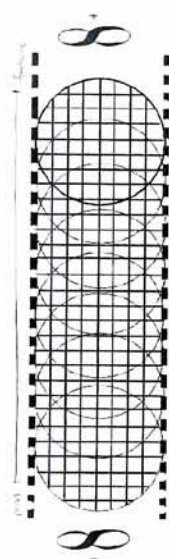
**Figure 12, 13- Adam Werth**

*Connection IV*, 2005  
Oil Stick on Canvas  
108 x 108 in

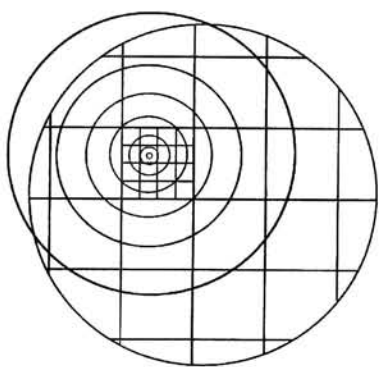
**Figure 14- Adam Werth**

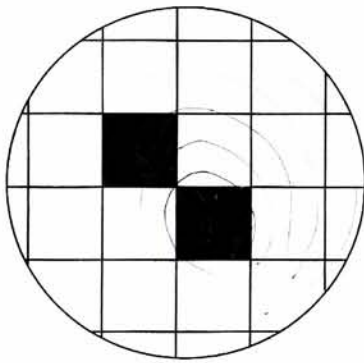
*Connection V*, 2005  
Oil Stick on Canvas  
108 x 108 in











Dewey Avenue., Greece. \$6 map fee; \$3 for members. Call for details. 377-5650.

**Earth Day Family Hike** led by Dick Adamus and Jean Squire-Geffell. 2 p.m. April 24. Thousand Acre Swamp Sanctuary, Jackson Road opposite Penfield Center Road, Penfield. Free. 385-3907.

**Naples Creek South Hike** 14 miles. Sponsored by Genesee Valley Hiking Club. 9 a.m. April 24. Call for details. 323-1911.

**Winona Boulevard Loop Hike** 3 miles. Sponsored by Genesee Valley Hiking Club. 1 p.m. April 24. Seneca Park Zoo, 2222 St. Paul St., Rochester. Call for details. 254-4047.

## Other

**Pug Spring Fling** sponsored by Western New York Pug Organization. Benefits Pug rescue. 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. April 24. Brockport Elks Lodge No. 210, 4400 Sweden-Walker Road, Sweden. \$5 donation requested. 244-7011. (315) 483-2058 or [www.wnydogs.org](http://www.wnydogs.org).

## PRO SPORTS

**Baseball: Rochester Red Wings vs. Ottawa Lynx** 1:35 p.m. April 24; 6:35 p.m. April 25. Frontier Field, 1 Morris Silver Way, Rochester. \$5.50-\$9.50. 423-9454 or [www.redwingsbaseball.com](http://www.redwingsbaseball.com).

## MISC.

### Films

**Forces of Nature** National Geographic production takes you deep into the Earth and high into the atmosphere to explore how volcanoes, tornadoes and earthquakes are triggered. 1, 2 and 4 p.m. April 24. Strasenburgh Planetarium, Rochester Museum & Science Center, 657 East Ave., Rochester. \$8; \$7 for seniors and students with ID; \$6 for ages 3-18; free for RMSC members. 271-1880 or [www.rmssc.org](http://www.rmssc.org).

### Readings

**Open Poetry Reading** 7 to 9 p.m. Sundays. Starry Nites Cafe, 696 University Ave., Rochester. Call for details. 271-2360.

### Shows

**CollectorFest** Monthly coins, sports cards, plaques, NASCAR toys, wrestling collectibles and comics. 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. April 24. The Party House, 677 Beahan Road, Gates. Free. 241-3198 or [www.collectorfestmonthly.com](http://www.collectorfestmonthly.com).  
**IACC's Sixth Annual International Art Show** paintings, sculptures, photographs and other media works by regional and international artists. 1 to 4 p.m. April 24. Italian-American Community Center, 150 Frank DiMino Blvd., off Manitou Road, Gates. Free admission and parking. 594-8882 or [www.iaccrochester.org](http://www.iaccrochester.org).

## CLUBS

### Celtic

**Dave North Trio** 7 p.m. April 24. Mile-

stones, 170 East Ave., Rochester. No cover. 325-6490 or [www.milestonesmusicroom.com](http://www.milestonesmusicroom.com).  
**Irish Singers Sessions** 3 p.m. April 24. Johnny's Irish Pub, 1382 Culver Road, Rochester. No cover. 224-0990 or [www.johnnysirishpub.com](http://www.johnnysirishpub.com).  
**Traditional Irish Music Jam Session** 5 p.m. April 24. Johnny's Irish Pub, 1382 Culver Road, Rochester. No cover. 224-0990 or [www.johnnysirishpub.com](http://www.johnnysirishpub.com).

## Classical

**Air de Cour** works by Bach. 3 p.m. April 24. St. Paul's Lutheran Church, 28 Lincoln Ave., Pittsford. No cover. 586-0580.

## DJs

**Slum Days** at the Bug Jar DJ Kevin Atoms, DJ Marcus McGowan, DJ Queen Knobitweekah and DJ Water. Eclectic styles from disco to techno. 9 p.m. Sundays. Bug Jar, 219 Monroe Ave., Rochester. No cover. 454-2966 or [www.bugjar.com](http://www.bugjar.com).

## Karaoke

**With DJ Smooth** 9 p.m. to 2 a.m. Sundays. S & T Lounge, 328 North St., Rochester. \$2. 454-5355.

## Open mike

**Back Porch Jam** 6 p.m. Sundays. Flip-side Bar & Grill, 2001 E. Main St., Rochester. Call for cover. 288-3930.

## CONCERTS

### Classical

**Fredonia Guitar Quartet** James Piorowski, director. 4:30 p.m. April 24. St. Anne's Church, 136 Church St., Palmyra. Donations accepted. (315) 597-4571.  
**Greece Symphony Orchestra** David Fetter, director; Tatiana Vassiliev; works by Mozart, Beethoven, Tchaikovsky and Telemann. 3 p.m. April 24. Bethany Presbyterian Church, 3000 Dewey Ave., Greece. Free; donations accepted. 234-5636 or [www.greeceperformingarts.org](http://www.greeceperformingarts.org).

### Other

**Community Music Program Faculty Recital** 3 p.m. April 24. Wilmet Recital Hall, Nazareth College Arts Center, 4245 East Ave., Pittsford. Free. 389-2700.

## Religious

**Anthony Burger** piano. 3 p.m. April 24. Trinity Reformed Church, 909 Landing Road N., Rochester. \$15. 381-5330.  
**Schola Cantorum: Compline** Stephen Kennedy, director. 9 p.m. April 24. Christ Church, 141 East Ave., Rochester. Free. 454-3878.

## DANCE

### Participatory

**West Coast Swing Open Dance** 4:30 to 7 p.m. Sundays; lessons 5 p.m. Dance Biz, 1742 Long Pond Road, Greece. \$6. 254-0300.

## STAGE

### Performances

**Blood Relations** presented by Seneca Community Players. 8 p.m. April 29 and 30; 2 p.m. April 24. New York Chiropractic College, 2360 Route 89, Seneca Falls. \$9 to \$12. (315) 568-9364 or [www.senecacommunityplayers.org](http://www.senecacommunityplayers.org).  
**Dan Liberto** with Wynn Riechert and Ray Salah. 8:30 p.m. April 24. Comix Cafe, 3450 Winton Place, Brighton. \$7-\$10. 424-5233 or [www.comixcafe.com](http://www.comixcafe.com).  
**Dave Mancini & Friends** songs from musical theater. 7:30 p.m. April 24. Downstairs Cabaret Theatre, 20 Windsor St., Rochester. \$12. 325-4370 or [www.downstairscabaret.com](http://www.downstairscabaret.com).  
**Elizabeth Rex** drama by Timothy Findley. 8 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays; 2 p.m. Sundays; through May 8. Shipping Dock Theatre, Visual Studies Workshop, 31 Prince St. at University Avenue, Rochester. \$22; \$20 in advance; \$18 for seniors (Sunday only); \$12 for students with ID. 232-2250 or [www.shippingdocktheatre.org](http://www.shippingdocktheatre.org).  
**Hamlet: Prince of Denmark** by William Shakespeare. 7 p.m. April 26, 27, 28, May 10 and 12; 8 p.m. April 29, May 8 and 13; 3 and 8:30 p.m. April 30, May 7 and 14; 2 and 7:30 p.m. April 24 and May 1; 2 and 7 p.m. May 11; 2 p.m. May 15. Geva Theatre Center, 75 Woodbury Blvd., Rochester. \$13.50-\$48.50. 232-4382 or [www.geva theatre.org](http://www.geva theatre.org).  
**I Love You, You're Perfect. Now Change** musical comedy about relationships. 8 p.m. April 29; 7 p.m. May 1; 3 p.m. April 24. Downstairs Cabaret Theatre, 20

Windsor St., Rochester. \$21-\$24. 325-4370 or [www.downstairscabaret.com](http://www.downstairscabaret.com).  
**Larry the Cable Guy** 5 and 8 p.m. April 24. Auditorium Theatre, 875 E. Main St., Rochester. \$41.25. 232-1900 or [www.ticketmaster.com](http://www.ticketmaster.com).  
**Murderer** mystery. 7:30 p.m. April 29 and 30; 2 p.m. April 24 and May 1. Tower Fine Arts Theatre, State University College at Brockport, 180 Holley St., Brockport. \$10; \$7 for students and seniors. 395-2787.

**Pippin** 2 p.m. April 24. Callahan Theatre, Nazareth College Arts Center, 4245 East Ave., Pittsford. \$12; \$10 for students; \$8 for seniors. 389-2170 or [www.naz.edu](http://www.naz.edu).  
**Squeeze Box** play by Ann Randolph. 7:30 p.m. April 28; 8 p.m. April 29 and 30; 4 p.m. April 24 and May 1. Downstairs Cabaret Theatre Two, 172 W. Main St., Rochester. \$21. 325-4370 or [www.downstairscabaret.com](http://www.downstairscabaret.com).  
**The Puzzle Locker** by W. David Hancock. 3 p.m. April 24; 8 p.m. April 27-30. Todd Theater of the University of Rochester, Wilson Boulevard, Rochester. \$10; \$8 for seniors and UR faculty and staff; \$6 for students. 275-4088 or [www.rochester.edu/theatre](http://www.rochester.edu/theatre).  
**Twelfth Night** by William Shakespeare. 2 p.m. April 24. Ingle Auditorium, Student Alumni Union, Rochester Institute of Technology, 1 Lomb Memorial Drive, Henrietta. \$7 (\$4 for RIT community). 475-2468 or [www.ritplayers.com](http://www.ritplayers.com).

## ELSEWHERE

### Buffalo area

**Planet Smashers** 2 p.m. April 24. Buffalo Icon, 391 Ellicott St., Buffalo. \$10; \$8 advance. (716) 842-0167 or [www.buffaloicon.com](http://www.buffaloicon.com); (888) 223-6000 or [www.tickets.com](http://www.tickets.com).

### Ithaca area

**Iron** psychological thriller by Rona Munro. 8 p.m. Thurs.-Sat.; 4 p.m. Sun.; through May 14. Historic State Theatre, 107 W. State St., Ithaca. \$20; \$17 seniors; \$12 students. (607) 273-4497 or [www.kitchen theatre.com](http://www.kitchen theatre.com).

### Syracuse area

**If Hope Dies** 4 p.m. April 24. Club Tundra, 5863 Thompson Road at Erie Boulevard, Syracuse. \$10. (315) 446-1934. ♦

you are fat

[look-closer.org](http://look-closer.org)

Comix Café

Comedy Club Restaurant and Lounge

April 13th - 17th  
Johnny Robinson



