



SNAPLINE

SPRING 2017 — GOD EDITION

FEATURED ARTIST: KAREN CASSIDY

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SNAP loves all the volunteers, members, supporters and funders that make our organization not just possible but also a thriving art community. A special thanks to our funders and supporters.

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Welcome to the Spring 2017 edition of *SNAPLine*; the GOD Edition. Our 2016 shift to thematic publications has allowed us to develop rich editorial content, when selecting our 2017 *SNAPLine* themes, producing a print culture publication on GOD seemed potentially risky and also too exciting and rewarding to not do. Exploring this theme through the long storied relationship between the printed word or image and religion has allowed our writers and artists to make some profound connections. *SNAPLine* featured artist Karen Cassidy, a long time member and SNAP printshop renter, explores the relationship between spiritual consciousness and creation in her limited edition series *Spiritus in the Ovarium*. A similar connection is made in the special project contributed by Blair Brennan *Expect A Miracle*.

We were thrilled to be able to provide another platform for Borys Tarasenko's *Sweet Jesus* colouring book project and we hope you might share your coloured interpretations with us online. Wendy McGrath will be a recurring contributor throughout 2017 producing the 'My Process' interviews that dig into individual artists' studio practice. This edition explores SNAP member Tim Grieco's work in printmaking and music. Carolyn Jervis and Robin Willey have collaborated on an essay that opens up and digs into a mysterious link between Grand Rapids' relationship to visual culture and how their unprecedented art competition has infiltrated and influenced evangelical circles there.

The *SNAPLine* publications committee is proud of the work we've accomplished and this beautiful publication wouldn't be possible without the support of our print sponsor McCallum printing group. As always I encourage our readers to participate fully in SNAP's programs and events — a listing of upcoming classes and exhibitions can be found on page 30. We hope to see you here soon, in the meantime happy colouring.



April Dean,
Executive Director

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MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

The history of printmaking is steeped in the history of religion. From early woodblock rubbings of the Buddha to the Gutenberg Bible — printmaking technology translated the mystical and unknown into tangible form. It provided thousands of laypeople access to religious iconography without visiting a church or palace. It was through religious leaflets and tracts that robust conversations about god — interpretation of who or what god is/was — would stir. In a way, religious printmaking became a vehicle meant to inspire and/or question. It was also a way for printmakers to depict god through their own interpretations of the subject matter they were hired to translate. As artists began experimenting with the figure of god, the relationship between god and the artist changed. Ever murkier than before, art and religion are interesting bedfellows. And why shouldn't a society of northern Alberta print artists also engage with this long-running dialogue?

But I am not here to proselytize the relationship of printmaking and religion from a pulpit — or am I? From SNAP's board of directors, I welcome you to the God edition of *SNAPLine*!

To those indoctrinated into the cult of SNAP, I say thank you. To those hesitating on taking a leap of faith (to Sponsor Membership) I say — do so and you shall be rewarded with four limited edition fine art prints.

Some might ask, "How else can one support SNAP?" As a charitable organization, we rely on the goodwill of those who give. Simply put, a tithing in the form of a charitable donation. This can be done in person or online.

By becoming a sponsor member or by making a charitable donation you are given the opportunity to support our belief that printmaking is a vital form of contemporary art that builds diverse, creative and engaged communities.

Although it may seem otherwise, reaching out to the board isn't as intimidating as going to the confessional. Have a question for the board? Send us an email at board@snapartists.com.



Ferdinand Langit
Director,
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SNAPLINE SPRING 2017

GOD EDITION



BLAIR BRENNAN combines his writing and art practice from his home in Edmonton. His drawings, sculpture and installations have been exhibited internationally in numerous group and solo exhibitions. Brennan has contributed articles to a number of national arts and cultural publications. His favourite Ramones song is "Strength to Endure".



CAROLYN JERVIS is an art writer and curator. She has a Master of Arts degree in Art History (Critical Curatorial Studies) from the University of British Columbia and has worked extensively in visual arts organizations in Edmonton. Carolyn's most recent published work can be found in the current issue of *C Magazine*. Currently, she is preparing the opening and inaugural year of MacEwan University's new art gallery, which will open Fall 2017.



WENDY MCGRATH is the author of two poetry collections and three novels. Her most recent book of poetry, *A Revision of Forward* (NeWest August 2015) is the culmination of a long-term collaboration of poetry and prints between herself and Edmonton printmaker Walter Jule. She is currently at work on the final novel in the Santa Rosa trilogy, a collection of essays, and a poetry-jazz collaboration with local musicians.



BORYS TARASENKO is a multidisciplinary artist based in Edmonton, Alberta. A BFA Art & Design grad from University of Alberta with a focus in Painting, his work examines spirituality, human consumption, and cultural identity. Borys has been involved in a number of public art projects, released a colouring book this past year, and shown work throughout Edmonton and parts of USA.



ROBIN WILLEY has recently completed his PhD in sociology and is currently an instructor at the University of Alberta and the University of Alberta — Augustana. His research has generally focused on Evangelical Christianity in Canada. While he has previously published articles on the difficulties of conducting research in church communities, social theories of religion, and the sexual practices of Evangelical young adults, his most recent research looks to investigate the changing theo-political orientations of Canadian Evangelicals.

Contributors
to this issue



SNAPLINE SPRING 2017
FEATURED ARTIST

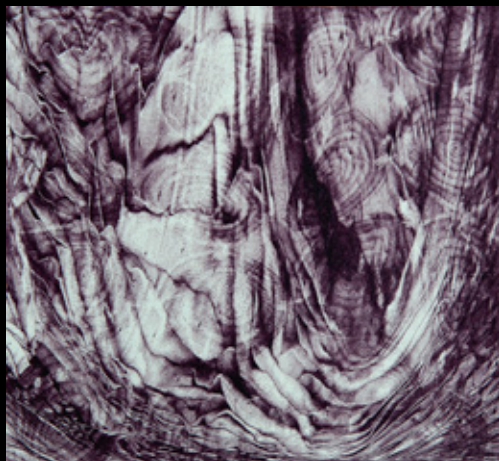
KAREN CASSIDY

"I am a graduate of Grant MacEwan School of Nursing 1977 and a graduate of MacEwan and University of Alberta Schools of Fine Art 2008, 2011, majoring in Printmaking and Painting.

Presently I work in the health care education field and maintain a studio practice at SNAP Gallery.

In the current works I strive to realize gender energies as spiritual consciousness. I see God in the matrix of dynamic elements.

Via collage and digital layering my prints are created through photo-litho-graphic techniques."



Spiritus in the 'Ovarium'

Our bodies are made up of the elements of this earth. What are our spirits made of?

My art is a visual expression of a dreamtime experience. It is a story about spiritual consciousness.

I dream that I am seated inside an orchid red chamber. There are many others present. Assembled in perfectly organized rows are countless female beings of varying ages, wrapped gently in folds of satiny warmth. It is a form of seedpod filled with spiritual gems. Ever calm, expectantly, silently, all wait for a very momentous event to transpire. Eventually each one will issue from the crimson sanctuary into the gravitational flow of a silky current and traverse a physiology designed towards the creation of a human being. To she who 'goes out' before me, I send a quiet hopeful wish for a fruitful union with the energy's downstream. She glides into a passage on the way to a potential human experience. My time to 'go out' is approaching. The outcome is uncertain. If fertilization fails to occur, I will resume a place at the end of the line within the velvety lush walls of the 'ovarium.' Here I will stay with the others until the next rotation to 'go out.' I realize that this repetitive process may takea forever, but there is no doubt that all is well.

The plush red garden atrium presents as a gathering place from which sentient female cells cycle through repeated opportunities to be human. Inside the chamber of the 'ovarium' one is the size of the head of a pin yet one experiences an immovable sense of purpose. It is understood that a life experience in a corporeal world is temporary and necessary for a sentient being to spiritually progress. It is a familiar and routine phenomenon. Equally essential is male energy to complete the master plan.

Inspired by a dream reverie my work is a visual exploration of female and male energies and the spiral of birth and rebirth. It is a theory of God and Spirit and mud.

P. Yogananda in his book explains that the soul cannot be burned, drowned, stabbed, or shattered. The devotee realizes...

*"I am not the body.
I am formless.
I am joy It Self.
I am just coming from the
inner perception of my Self.
I am not the body.
I am Invisible.
I am Joy.
I am Light.
I am Wisdom.
I am Love.
I dwell in the dream body through
which I am dreaming this earth life;
but I am ever Eternal Spirit."*

— Paramahansa Yogananda,
The Divine Romance.

TOP: *Spiritus in the Ovarium 1 v1*, ---, 2016

BOTTOM: *Spiritus in the Ovarium 2 v1*, ---, 2016

FRONT COVER: detail from *Spiritus in the Ovarium 2 v2*, ---, 2016

BACK COVER: detail from *Spiritus in the Ovarium 1 v2*, ---, 2016



WHAT KIND OF GOD IS THAT?

This essay was collaboratively written between **ROBIN WILLEY**, whose text is in the black font, and **CAROLYN JERVIS**, whose text is in the blue font.

Unknown photographer, Oprah with Pastor Rob Bell at Oprah's "The Life You Want" tour, 2014. Retrieved from Maricia D.C. Johns' blog thisisyourbestyear.com.

Outside of worship music that usually references the musical stylings of the late 90s, art is a rare sight in most Evangelical churches. That is, unless you're in the former "Furniture Capital of the World."

In 2014, my research into the roots of Canadian Evangelicalism led me from Edmonton, Alberta to Mars Hill Bible Church, just outside of Grand Rapids, Michigan. I (Robin) was surprised to find the church, which is located in a converted shopping mall, packed full of art. This included the sanctuary (members endearingly call it "the Shed"), which featured several paintings and installation pieces, including two that were actually commissioned by the church. When I approached a woman at the church's information desk and asked why there was so much art in the church, she looked at me, rolled her eyes, and responded, "Because it's Grand Rapids."

In April of 2009, Rick DeVos, a twenty-something member of a family whose billions make it one of Michigan's wealthiest, announced the creation of Art Prize, an art competition in Grand Rapids where any artist who can find a venue, indoor or outdoor, can participate. The art event is unprecedented due to the scale of artist participation (1,262 artist participated that first year; 1,453 in 2016), the enormity of its audience (over 200,000 in 2009; an estimated 400,000 in 2016), and the size of its cash prizes (\$500,000 is awarded by popular voting and juried voting each year).¹ Art Prize eclipses the number of visitors at major international biennales and art institutions by tens of thousands, all from a city whose population totals less than 200,000. Although there is no doubting that Art Prize fundamentally changed the city's relationship to art in 2009, Grand Rapids' relationship to visual culture and design is not without precedent. It was known as the "Furniture Capital of the World" for its booming furniture industry from the latter half of the 19th century to the 1930s.

This proliferation of art in the Grand Rapids area has influenced the religious culture of the area. The most notable example is likely Rob Bell — the founder of Mars Hill, former pastor and current Oprah Network star — who first ventured into speaking about the value of creativity and its connection to suffering in his 2009 book *Drops Like Stars*.² That said, the influence of art on Bell's theology is most evident in the first pages of *Love Wins*, his 2011 book that shook the Evangelical world and debatably forced Bell to step down as Mars Hill's pastor:

Several years ago we had an art show at our church. I had been giving a series on peacemaking, and we invited artists to display their paintings, poems, and sculptures that reflected their understanding of what it means to be a peacemaker. One woman included in her work a quote from Mahatma Gandhi, which a number of people found quite compelling.

But not everyone.

Someone attached a piece of paper to it. On the piece of paper was written: 'Reality check: He's in hell.'

Really?

Gandhi's in hell?

He is?

We have confirmation of this?

Somebody knows this?

Without a doubt?

And that somebody decided to take on the responsibility of letting the rest of us know.³

Bell's move towards a more universalist view of the afterlife sent a shockwave through the Evangelical world. Some critics went so far as to declare Bell as "dangerous" and a "heretic."⁴ Nonetheless, the work of art and note stuck to it legitimized alterations in Bell's theology that had

been taking place for over a decade; it provided him the catalyst to write *Love Wins* and more thoughtfully articulate the cosmopolitan God that has been evident in his work for some time and stands in stark contradiction to the more tribal and parochial God that dominates Evangelical theological discourse.

Art has long recorded changing relationships with God. This may seem an obvious statement because the history of religious patronage is more than clear in the seemingly endless supply of Virgin Mary and Jesus paintings in major art museums in the western world. There is, however, a more subtle link that is relevant to this discussion: leading up to the Enlightenment, art trends reveal a changing relationship with visuality that is inextricably linked to a changing understanding of God. Over the course of the 15th and 16th century in Western Europe the relationship between God and art fundamentally changed. Many artists and thinkers were coming to understand that they could learn about the world directly through observation, rather than channelled through divine knowledge. They began interpreting the observable world and experimenting with representations of the fleshly body of Jesus.

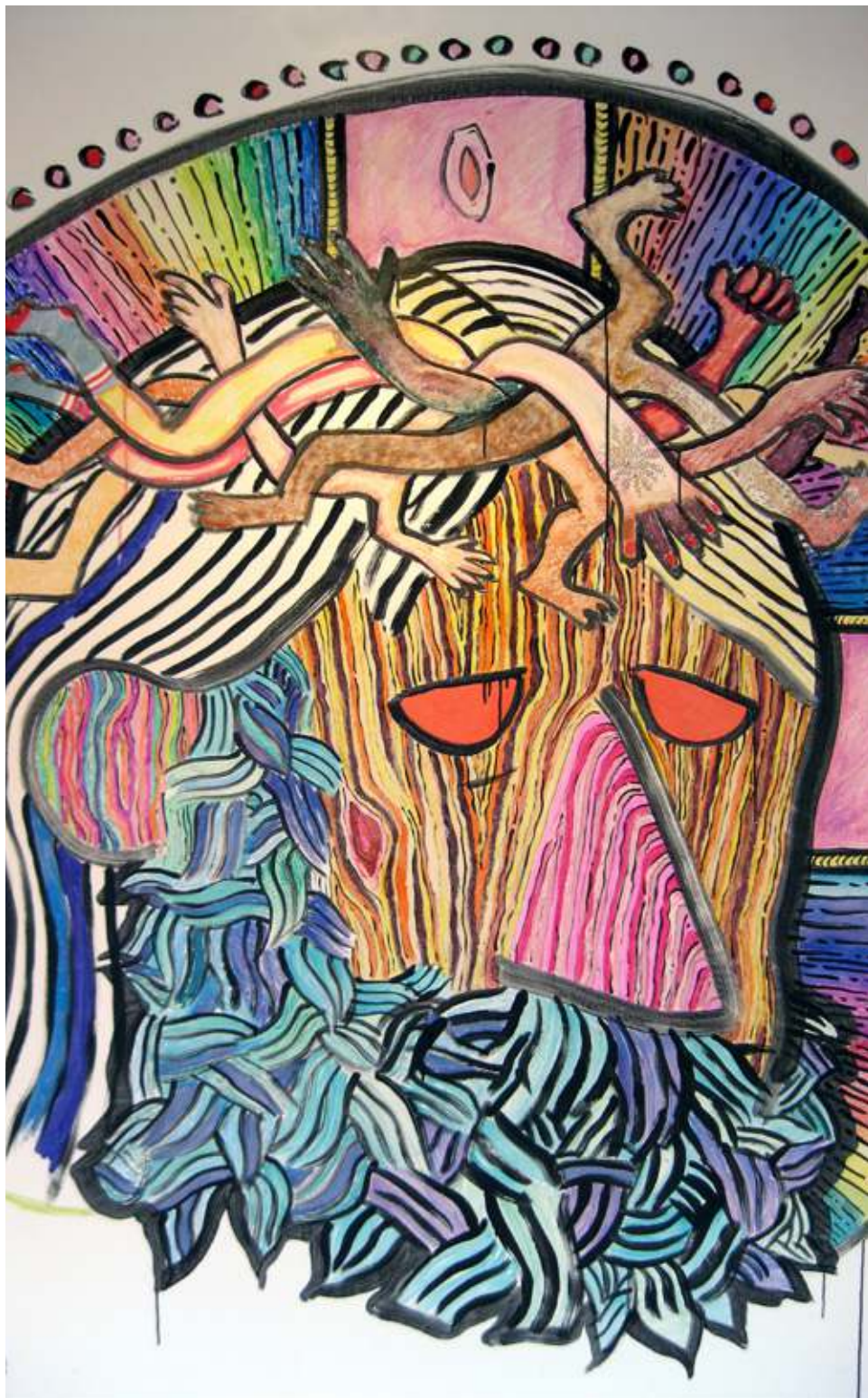
The early modern innovation that one's visual observation was worthy of consideration elevated individual interpretation, displacing the prevailing conception of the artist as purely a vessel for representing divine knowledge. This provides us with a historical precedent for the action of the person who placed that note on the artwork at Mars Hill and the intellectual pivot it catalyzed for Bell. We cannot take for granted this idea that a particular artist can have a perspective on a religious concept

that is not just a transparent reflection of a monolithic church. The changing relationship between realistic looking figures in religious paintings and this moment with an artwork in Bell's former church are both examples of how art plays important roles in making distinct religious discourses, and interpretations of religious ideas, visible.

As Robin and I were working through writing this piece, we realized the significance of a local example of varying interpretations of what a relationship with a Christian God looks like. On a Friday afternoon, we sat down with local artist Borys Tarasenko and reflected on his exhibition, *Sweet Jesus*, which took place at Bleeding Heart Art Space in Spring 2016. Tarasenko starts his artist statement for that show, coincidentally, with a quote from Mahatma Gandhi: "I like your Christ. I do not like your Christians."⁵ He told us a story about a visit to the exhibition, which featured a life-sized colouring book of Jesus and various Christian figures engaged in actions biblical and otherwise (such as Christ himself barbecuing hot dogs). Visitors from a local church just happened to visit Bleeding Heart while *Sweet Jesus* was on display, and in part interpreted the invitation to colour whatever they wanted on the walls as an opportunity to promote their own church community. This self-promotional text saw a further interpretive layer, as its letters and numbers were dissolved into decorative drawing by subsequent people, who deemed the parishioners' choice of engagement inappropriate. Both the assumptions made by the church members and by the following people engaged in the exhibition, much like the note-writer in Bell's story, reveal an otherwise hidden ideological position on engaging with ideas of God.

It was situations like the above story that led Tarasenko realize that *Sweet Jesus* had become a "metaphor for the Bible" — a text that many assume can only be interpreted in a certain way, but is in fact subject to an endless number of interpretations. *Sweet Jesus* became a place where various Christianities could interact in a way that is not normally made available. Mars Hill's peacemaker show worked much the same way. It enabled an artist to feel comfortable enough to submit a piece that included a quote by a non-Christian to an Evangelical show in an Evangelical church; it enabled a more conservative congregant to feel comfortable enough to leave a note critical of the piece; and finally, it provided a space for a progressive pastor to see both interpretations and use that moment to legitimize his own theological position. ■

- 1 "Welcome to Art Prize," *Art Prize*, accessed January 10, 2017, <https://artprize.org/about>.
- 2 Rob Bell, *Drops Like Stars: A Few Thoughts on Creativity + Suffering* (New York: HarperOne, 2009).
- 3 Rob Bell, *Love Wins: A Book About Heaven, Hell, and the Fate of Every Person Who Ever Lived* (New York: HarperOne, 2011), 3-4.
- 4 David Mappes, "Love Wins by Rob Bell: A Biblical and Theological Critique," *The Journal of Ministry & Theology* 16 (2012); James K. Wellman Jr., *Rob Bell and a New American Christianity* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 2012).
- 5 For the full description of Tarasenko's exhibition, see "Past Shows," *Bleeding Heart Art Space*, accessed Friday, January 13, 2017, <https://bleedingheartart.space/now-showing/>.



HBD Jesus



SWEET JESUS

A Colouring
Book

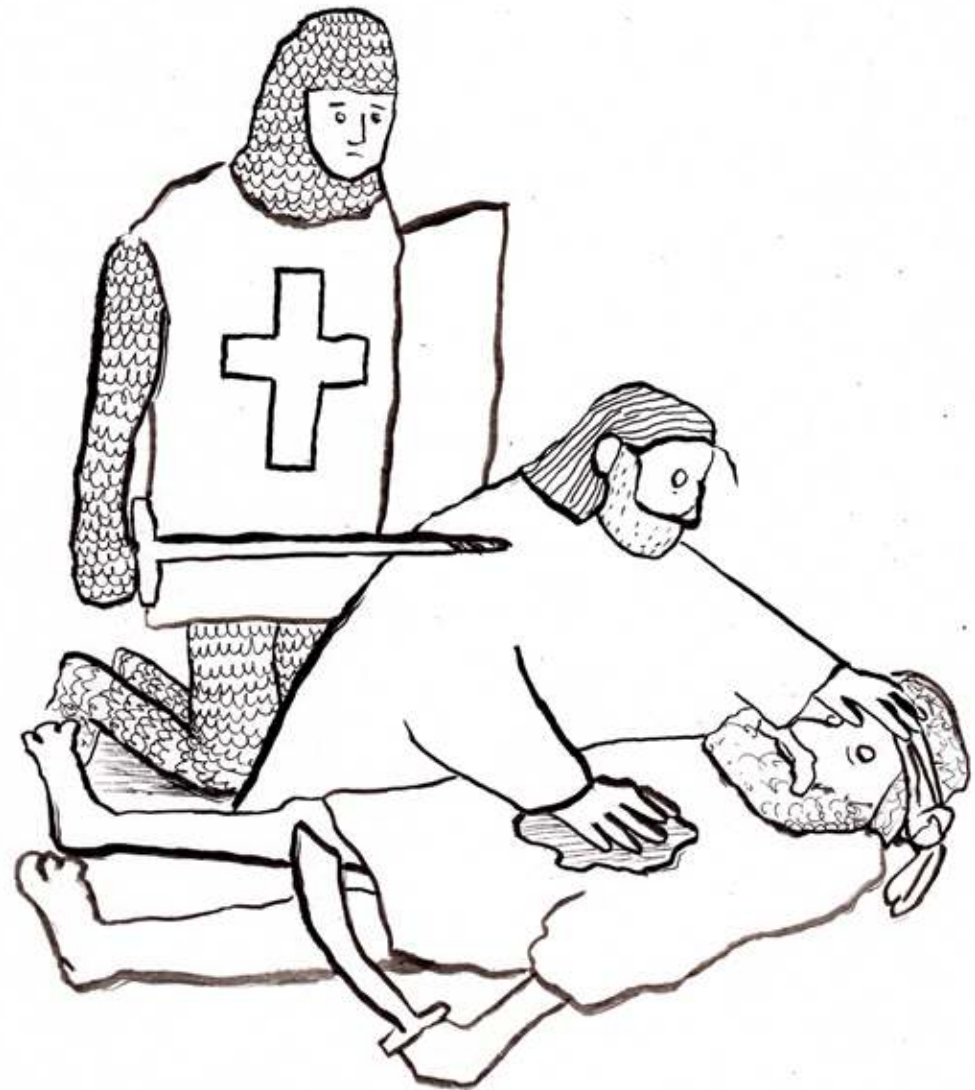
**BORYS
TARASENKO**

Prayer is not always oral. It can take other forms. Creating art, for example, can have a similar meditative quality. With *SWEET JESUS: A Colouring Book*, an eccentric supplement to the lore of Jesus Christ, Borys Tarasenko investigates a complicated and incongruous spiritual life. The audience must colour and complete the images with their own offering of visual prayer. Like the words inside a scripture, the lines inside a colouring book exist to colour any way a person likes. ■

Jesus at his day job



Jesus heals a Muslim stabbed by a crusader



Jesus helps a traveller



Jesus helps Richard Dawkins write The God Delusion



THIS PAGE: Gustave Doré, "Christ Feeding the Multitude," from *La Grande Bible de Tours*, wood engraving, 1866.

OPPOSITE PAGE LEFT: Unknown, Detail from the frontispiece of *The Diamond Sutra*, woodblock print, 868 (publication).

OPPOSITE PAGE RIGHT: Unknown, *Madonna with Four Virgin Saints in a Garden*, woodblock print, 1418 (dated).

The Feeding of the Multitudes

An Incomplete Timeline of Religion and Printing

In the Gospels, the Feeding of the Multitudes tells the story of a miracle in which Jesus used only five barley loaves and two fish to feed about 5,000 followers.

Baskets of food were passed among groups, bread and fish so bountiful that by the end there were still twelve baskets of leftovers. This act of multiplication not only satiated the crowd's hunger, but was also seen as a further sign that Jesus was the true Messiah.

A similar miracle of multiples occurred with the advent of printing. The technology that is now the basis of printmaking made texts and images available to multitudes. The early history of printmaking is intertwined with devotion and the expansion of religion.



As early as the 7th century, rubbings, stamps and woodblock printing were used to create numerous identical images from a single matrix. In the 13th century, demand for cheap playing cards and devotional images drove the early print market. By the 15th century, developments with movable type made it possible for books that had once been rare, one-of-a-kind manuscripts, to multiply like fish or bread. Printing presses were brought to the new world by missionaries seeking to reproduce and spread the word of God.

This ability to mass-produce images and words expanded the dissemination of knowledge, ideologies and language in an unprecedented way. By the late 17th century, this new found access to printed information fuelled the Age of Enlightenment, asserting the virtues of reason and individualism over tradition.



7th century: The importance of perpetuating texts is set out with special force in the larger *Sukhāvativyūha Sūtra* which not only urges the devout to hear, learn, remember and study the text but to obtain a good copy and to preserve it. This 'cult of the book' led to techniques for reproducing texts in great numbers, especially the short prayers or charms known as *dhāraṇī*-s. Stamps were carved for printing these prayers on clay tablets from at least the seventh century, the date of the oldest surviving examples found in India.

627 ~ 649: Woodblock printing in China is strongly associated with Buddhism, which encouraged the spread of charms and sutras.

704 ~ 751: The oldest existing print done with woodblocks is the

Mugujeonggwang great Dharani sūtra, found at Bulguksa, South Korea in 1966.

764-770: Earliest known woodblock printing in Japan, when Empress Shotoku commissioned one million small wooden pagodas containing short printed scrolls to be distributed to temples.

868: The oldest dated printed text known: *The Diamond Sūtra*, a Chinese translation of a key object of devotion and study in Zen Buddhism now preserved in the British Library. It is a scroll about 16-feet long found in 1907 by the archaeologist Sir Marc Aurel Stein in the Mogao Caves of Dunhuang.

1300s: Printing with a press was practiced in Christian Europe as a method for printing on cloth.

Images printed on cloth for religious purposes could be quite large and elaborate. When paper became easily available, around 1400, the medium transferred quickly to small religious images.

15th century: Originally Paupers' Bibles took the form of colourful hand-painted illuminated manuscripts on vellum, though in the fifteenth century printed examples with woodcuts took over. The *Biblia Pauperum* was among the commonest works put out in block-book form, mainly in the Netherlands and Germany. Both text and images were done entirely in a single woodcut for each page. Soon after, movable type became cheap enough to replace woodblock for the reproduction of text, woodcuts remained a major way to reproduce images.



1418: The earliest dated woodcut: *Madonna with Four Virgin Saints in a Garden*.

1423: The earliest dated surviving example of a holy card, small, devotional pictures mass-produced for the use of the faithful, found in Southern Germany. A hand-coloured woodblock print depicting St. Christopher with the infant Christ. Later engraving or etching were more commonly used.

1446: The earliest dated intaglio-printed engraving: *The Flagellation*, of a Passion series.

1454: The Gutenberg Bible was the first major book printed using mass-produced movable metal type in Europe.

1498: Publication of *Apocalypse with Pictures*, a famous series of 15 woodcuts by Albrecht Dürer of scenes from the Book of Revelation. The layout with the illustrations

on the recto and the text on the verso suggests the privileging of the illustrations over the text. The series brought Dürer fame and wealth as well as some freedom from the patronage system, which allowed him to choose his own subjects and to devote more time to engraving.

1539: Juan Pablos became the first printer in North America (in Mexico City) at the House of the First Print Shop in the Americas. Established by the archbishop Juan de Zumárraga, the first book printed was *Breve y Mas Compendiosa Doctrina Christiana*.

1568–1573: *Biblia Polyglotta* printed in five languages by Christopher Plantin in Antwerp.

1584: First printing press in Middle East, introduced by Maronite Christians in St. Antonius Monastery in Lebanon, psalter was printed the first time in 1585.

1590: The Jesuits in Nagasaki, Japan, established The Jesuit Mission Press in Japan and printed a number of books in romanised Japanese language.

1600s: Spain outlaws paper-making in the New World to control the spread of information and keep the colonies subservient.

1734: First printing press in Arabic at the Monastery of St. John, Khenchara, Lebanon.

1833: The first presses were imported to China by Western priests for their missionary work from Europe and America. The earliest known, an albion press, was set up in the Portuguese colony Macao and later moved to Canton and Ningbo.

1835: The first book in New Zealand was a Maori translation of part of the Bible commissioned by the Church Missionary Society:

Ko nga Pukapuka o Paora te Apotoro ki te Hunga o Epeha o Piripai (The Epistles of St Paul to the Philippians and the Ephesians).

1837: The invention of colour lithography made it possible to reproduce colour images cheaply, leading to a broader circulation of holy cards, including reproductions of old masters. Catholic printing houses produced large numbers of cards, and often a single design was printed by different companies in different countries.

1866: French artist Gustav Doré published a series of 241 wood engravings for a deluxe edition of *La Grande Bible de Tours*. The engravings depicted scenes from the Old and New Testaments and the Apocrypha.

1960–70: Sister Mary Corita Kent, from the Roman Catholic order of Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary in Los Angeles, gained

international fame for her vibrant serigraphs. Kent worked at the intersection of several powerful and at times contradictory cultural, political, and religious influences.

Mid-1980s: Risograph duplicator printer invented by the Japanese company Riso. Over the last 20 years, churches, schools, and political parties have been the biggest buyers. In the 21st century, Risograph printing has seen an increase in popularity amongst independent art book publishers.

1986: Andy Warhol's final series *The Last Supper* was commissioned by a Milan bank. Based on da Vinci's painting, the series is a collection of Warhol's techniques: the painting appears whole, double-silkscreened, washed in flat hues, executed in outline. There is a black-light *Last Supper*, a camouflage version, minimalist *Last Suppers*, and various ones incorporating commercial logos. ■

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT:

Unknown, *The Buxheim Saint Christopher*, hand-coloured woodblock print, 1423.

Albrecht Dürer, "St. John Eating the Book," from *Apocalypse with Pictures*, woodblock print, 1498.

Unknown, Holy Cards from Maison de la Bonne Presse, colour lithograph, 19th century.

Sister Corita Kent in front of her work, unknown photographer, 1964.

Sister Corita Kent, *Look*, serigraphy, 1965.

Andy Warhol, *The Last Supper*, silkscreen ink on synthetic polymer paint on canvas, 1986.

COMPILED BY
SERGIO SERRANO

interview by
**WENDY
McGRATH**

Tim Grieco, *Erect Reflection*,
copper plate etching,
11×19", 2012.

MY PROCESS

TIM GRIECO

PROFILE

BORN: Edmonton, Alberta

EDUCATION: Bachelor of Fine Art, 2010, University of Alberta. I completed senior level courses in Printmaking, Drawing, and Welded Steel Sculpture. Usually people just do one. I took summer classes and had more credits than I needed to graduate. I was really into spending a lot of time in the studio and paid for the extra classes just so I'd be obligated to work on art more.

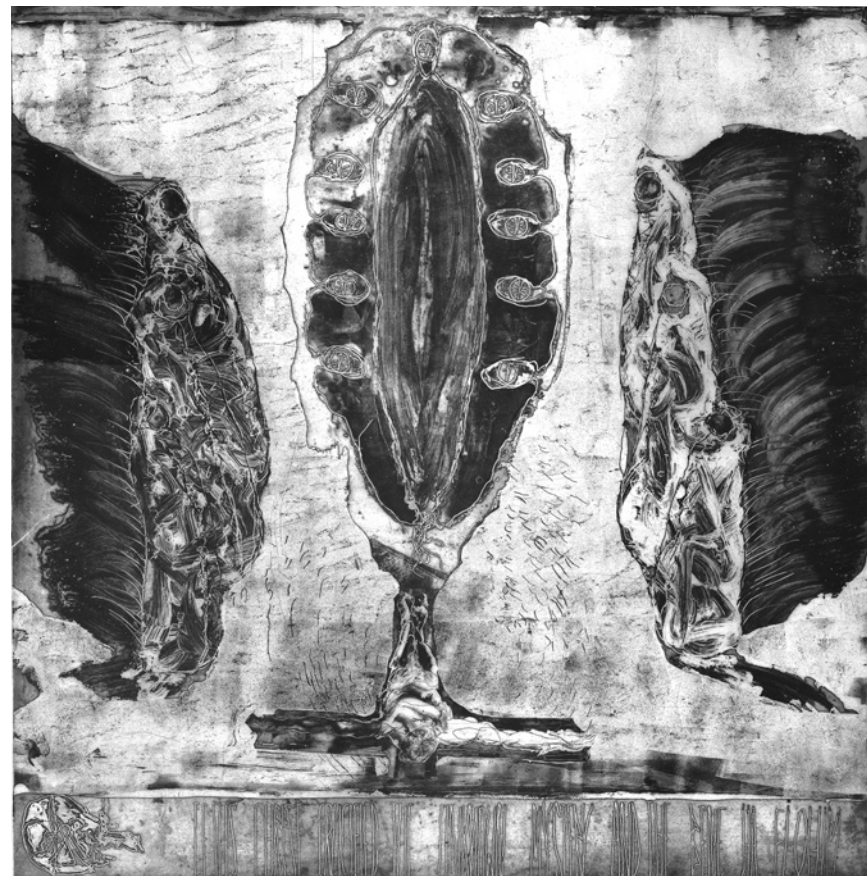
FAVOURITE ARTISTS: Hieronymous Bosch, HR Giger, Max Ernst, Richard Serra, and world religious art

FAVOURITE BOOK: *Siddhartha*
by Herman Hesse

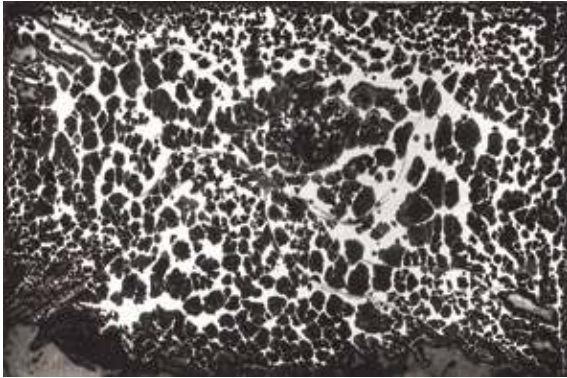
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MUSIC PLAYING WHILE PRINTMAKING: I put my iPod on shuffle and listen to a lot of folk, world music, experimental, rock, metal and other kinds of music as well as lectures on religious studies and philosophy.



I step into Tim Grieco's apartment/studio on a bright, cold January afternoon and his etching, *The Divine Council*, gazes down at me. Its energy is affecting and the maelstrom of mark making seems, at first glance, wonderfully discordant and disordered. However, a closer study of the print reveals its elegance and more defined images. Two swirling elements propel from the print's edges toward an iconographic vagina at its centre. The figure of a crucified Jesus Christ hovers above a line of narrow, rune-like text. I wonder whether Christ is emerging from, or returning to, the womb. Grieco welcomes this kind of ambiguity in response to his work. "I don't want people to know what it's about." The line of text at the bottom of the etching reads: "Jesus Christ Crucified the Bene Ha Elohim and the Unknown Mystery" — and the effect is evocative. Grieco, a musician in several bands, also incorporates text with image when working with lyrics and designing corresponding album covers.



Tim Grieco, *Erect Reflection*,
copper plate etching, 2012.
Detail on following spread.

inspires me — surrealism,
religious art, symbolist
work and expressionism:
Max Ernst, HR Giger,
Basquiat, Bosch.

The surface of Grieco's kitchen table is barely visible, scattered with sketchbooks, materials, and two recent untitled sketches. He says, "You get pretty strange when you cope with chaos. You can swim in those seas but you can't drown in them. You need to take control once in a while." The two sketches reflect some early ideas for a large-scale project referencing religious iconography using 3-D Op Art elements. Some recent pieces he has created also incorporate 3-D elements and are more sculptural. Grieco tells me the process for these pieces involves stapling camouflage netting to a stretcher. The piece displayed on his apartment wall looks writhing and chaotic. It appears to have heft, but when he touches it, it seems weightless. As the light changes, the effect is both visceral and fragile. The concepts of creation, destruction, death, birth and renewal are central to his creative process: "I'm starting to get ideas that seem more like visions of the future than ideas."

What do you consider to be the greatest influence on your work? Work that deals with themes of transgression, sexual tension, attraction vs. repulsion. My morbid curiosity often leads to exploration of the strangeness of the body and the internal mind as well, the parts of ourselves we sometimes push aside or distract ourselves from. So work that deals with such themes

Your 2011 exhibition at SNAP explored the origins of human consciousness with particular reference to stories in the Hebrew Bible. What interests you about these sacred writings?

I was raised in a Christian (Pentecostal) home. My Dad was a minister so I formed my own consciousness in the context of hearing these stories since I was a child. The thing that interests me the most are the parts that reflect the same themes.

There is an undercurrent, sort of a hidden sub plot, in the Hebrew Bible of interplanetary/interdimensional sexual transgression, believe it or not. This fascinates me, also, because many Christians are not even aware of it.

How would you define "God" and, based on your definition, is "God" present in your work? I think that understanding of God comes less from being explained from another's subjective insight than from being revealed through personal exploration. The absolute truth can only come directly from the source, as opposed to from another person explaining their own perception. The thing I personally define as God is knowledge and I think that God is attempting to know himself through our knowledge and experiences. I think the universe may only exist as a perception and that as we learn more it expands. God doesn't know any more about himself than the entire collective

of knowledge and consciousness that exists. As we learn more about reality, God continues to be created. I am aware that in some anti-gnostic religious interpretations, what I'm describing could also be called the Devil. Sometimes, I also think God is all the void that exists between every atom in existence, the vibrating force that activates these atoms and holds them all in place. Yes, God is present in my work by either definition.

God is the ball of consciousness that transcends our individual self-recognition. If all consciousness exists simultaneously then our misconception of individuality represents a tendril of that consciousness attempting to reckon itself in a new way, in the instance of each occurrence of what we perceive as an individual unique life. These tendrils occur as experiments breaking off and becoming separate from the main conscious mass in order to attempt to gain new self-recognition in an interesting, unique way. It can only happen if the place consciousness is born from is forgotten. The innocence in each case is what allows for new unique experience that is ultimately fed back into the whole consciousness that existed pre-birth.

God is an immoral algorithm. It's a program made with the intention to make us try everything and learn about itself.

You are also a musician. What bands are you in? What instruments do you play? Do you write lyrics? Antediluvian: all lyrics, lead vocals, guitars, effects. Revenge: session bass and session live bass. Malsanctum: guitar/bass/lead vocals, effects, lyrics. S.P.: guitar/backing vocals/effects. Ver Sacrum: guitar/effects/lead vocals/lyrics.

How does your music influence your art and how does your art influence your music? I used the lyrics for songs to make individual art pieces and album covers etc. for some time. Usually an image just

pops in my head and I execute it. The way I picture songs and how I want them to sound is very visual as well. For music or art I will come to the table with an image in mind and experiment to find the best way to execute it. The inspiration comes from the same place for both art forms.

What printmaking processes do you prefer and why? Etching, because I like how it combines the drawn effect with an almost photographic aesthetic. I often work in a loose, chaotic fashion at first. I encourage accidents and allow random occurrences, then edit and revise. This is akin to the gramage paintings of Max Ernst and other automatic surrealist methods of art making.

Where do your ideas for printmaking originate? Aside from constantly looking at interesting imagery, the main sources are dreams and imagination.

What project(s) are you currently working on and are there references/connections to God or spirituality in this work?

I'm writing a new Antediluvian album which deals with the theme of sexual transgression and explores the idea of the sexuality of God.

Can you describe your creative process? Usually an image just pops in my head and I execute it. The inspiration for the imagery comes from dreams and imagination, and is often referencing the body in a macrocosmic or microscopic sense.

When did you begin printmaking and what drew you to it? I started during my time studying Fine Art at U of A and was drawn to it by the graphic visual aesthetic.

What is the most inspiring part of the printmaking process for you? The way, in etching, the acid creates marks in the copper that print in a photographic and organic looking aesthetic. ■



“And there this poor Divinity, degraded and half annihilated by its fall, lies some thousands of centuries in this swoon, then awakens slowly, in vain endeavouring to grasp some vague memory of itself, and every move that it makes in this direction upon matter becomes a creation, a new formation, a new miracle.”

— Mikhail Bakunin,
God and the State

“You know what a miracle is.
Not what Bakunin said. But another
world’s intrusion into this one.
Most of the time we coexist
peacefully, but when we do touch
there’s cataclysm.”

— Thomas Pynchon,
The Crying of Lot 49

Expect a Miracle

BLAIR
BRENNAN

In Thomas Pynchon's *The Crying of Lot 49*, a character proposes that miracles are merely another world's intrusion in our own. For Pynchon, this simple idea is equal parts spirituality, literary metaphor and physics.

The advanced physics' Brane Theory of multiple dimensions may provide evidence of what that other world is or where it comes from when it intrudes upon our own. In an attempt to pull together the comic book multi-verse that he has created and inhabited for the last four decades, Scottish comic book writer Grant Morrison invokes Brane cosmology in his book *Supergods*:

Our universe is one of many, grown inside some unimaginable amniotic hypertime. It may even all be a hologram projected onto a flat mega-membrane, which is, in turn, embedded, along with many others like it within a higher dimensional space some scientists have dubbed "the bulk." In the brane model of the multiverse, all history is spread as thin as emulsion on a celestial tissue that floats in some immense, Brahmanic ocean of...meta-stuff.

Comic book writers are still providing me with answers about my physical world or, more precisely, presenting ideas in a manner that I can understand and further scrutinize. In Morrison's work and for my own metaphorical use this "hologram projected onto a flat mega-membrane" is printed, rather than projected. It is the ink on the page of a comic book, a print or a drawing. Brane Theory's thin emulsion "on a celestial tissue" may then be the *chine-collé* in this process. Simply by living our lives we are constantly transferring the "celestial tissue" of images and ideas on to a heavier support.

Making an image on a piece of a paper is a process that appears quite simple. It is however a miracle. It is a complex mix of spirituality, metaphor and physics; when it is successful, it is the intrusion of another world into our own. ■



Winter & Spring 2017 Education Programs at SNAP Printshop

Etching: Level 2

March 14 – April 11 / 5 Tuesdays / 6–9pm
\$230 for members / \$255 for non-members
Jonathan Green / www.jonathansgreen.ca

Silkscreen: Thursdays

March 16 – April 20 / 6 Thursdays / 6–9pm
\$260 for members / \$286 for non-members
Morgan Wedderspoon / meghanpohlod.com

Relief Print

March 15 – April 5 / 4 Wednesdays / 6–9pm
\$180 for members / \$198 for non-members
Meghan Pohlod / meghanpohlod.com

Mixed Media Printmaking:

Photo Transfers & Screen Printing

May 10 – May 24 / 3 Wednesdays / 6–9:30 pm
\$175 for members / \$192 for non-members
Caitlin Bodewitz / caitlinbodewitz.com

Weekend Workshops

Introduction to Letterpress

March 11 & 12
1 Weekend (Sat. & Sun.) / 10am–5pm
\$183 for members / \$202 for non-members
Dawn Woolsey / woolsey.ca

Letterpress Portraits

April 8 & 9
1 Weekend (Sat. & Sun.) / 10 am – 5 pm
\$183 for members / \$202 for non-members
Sara Norquay / slnorquay.wordpress.com

Visit snapartists.com/education
for more details on classes at SNAP.

REGISTER for classes in any of these 3 ways:

BY PHONE: 780.423.1492 / BY WEB: snapartists.com / IN PERSON: 10123 1221 Street
All classes take place at SNAP printshop located at 12056 Jasper Avenue. For further
information please contact SNAP Gallery. All materials are included in the course fee.

Upcoming Exhibitions at SNAP Gallery

FEBRUARY 2 – MARCH 4

Instigators

Guillermo Trejo

re: how many reasons do you need?

Marie Winters

MARCH 16 – APRIL 22

The Formalist's Library

Jason Urban

Great White North

Jordan Blackburn

MAY 4 – JUNE 10

Influence

Ericka Walker

Sahtuot'ine: Stories

from Deline Elders

Laura Grier

JUNE 22 – JULY 29

Monument: Coding a Woodcut

Beth Howe & Clive McCarthy

Fractures

Emmanuel Osahor

AUGUST 10 – SEPTEMBER 9

GIVE UP AND PARTY

Morgan Wedderspoon

Last Resort

Leanne Olson

SEPTEMBER 21 – NOVEMBER 4

The Story So Far:

An Exhibition of Artists' Books

Curated by Sara Norquay

NOVEMBER 18

SNAP's Annual Members

Show and Sale

SNAPLINE SPRING 2017 — GOD EDITION

FEATURED ARTIST: KAREN CASSIDY

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What Kind of God is That? Carolyn Jervis & Robin Willey
My Process: Tim Grieco interview by Wendy McGrath
Sweet Jesus: A Colouring Book Borys Tarasenko

SNAP MEMBERSHIP

When signing up to become a SNAPline Member
you'll take part in a limited edition mail art program!

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along with the quarterly edition of the *SNAPline* Publication. Through this
program SNAP commissions 4 exceptional, diverse and exciting artists a
year to create a limited edition of prints, one of which is sent to your home
each quarter. You'll also receive all other SNAP member benefits including
discounts on SNAP's classes; special event tickets and discounts at retail
supporters around the city.

For more information on how to become a SNAP Member visit:
www.snapartists.com/membership

OPEN STUDIO

Bring your plates, stencils,
paper and inks as well as
your ideas and creativity for
a day of printing at SNAP!

12–5pm
Every Second Saturday
\$20 plus \$5 supply fee

Please RSVP a day in advance
if you require a screen rental.
(\$10 for screen and chemistry)

March: 4 + 18
April: 1 + 29
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June: 10 + 24

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SNAP

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