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The Veil

Eric Richard Euler

Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College

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THE VEIL

A Thesis

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Louisiana State University and
Agriculture & Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Fine Arts

in

The Department of Art

by

Eric Richard Euler
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ABSTRACT

The Veil is a print media exhibition exploring the politics surrounding internet and internet related technologies and how they shape our identity. All of the works shift within a satirical and enigmatic visual language which accumulates to form a critique of our online habits and rituals. My work is driven by questions surrounding digital identity, privacy, data mining, narcissism, and commodity fetishism. How is the internet changing us as people and consumers? What are the repercussions of frivolously sharing private information online? And how are new government bills affecting our freedom online?

Gallery visitors will encounter the hand-pulled print in a variety of forms. The first room provides a dedicated space for my mural installation (figure 1), an immersive and accumulative work comprised of four hundred screen prints and relief prints. The backroom of the gallery provides a space for twenty three works on paper (figure 2). These prints are more reactionary and trace a more specific lineage in regards to my research.

PART ONE: PARAMETERS

Where does the traditionally hand pulled print stand within contemporary society and does it have a place? The expanding definition of the contemporary print media artist is as exciting as it is enigmatic. My practice involves always having one foot in the present and one foot in the past, in the crossroads of creative technologies. I'm driven by the ubiquitously circulating mosaic of digital and analogue ephemera that shapes our culture. The traditional print has somewhat become an anomaly, representing the mark of the human hand in the vast digital landscape of mass production. There is a sense of place, a sense of community, a sense of pride, and a certain democracy and affordability enjoyed by the creators and patrons of printmakers. Josh MacPhee, editor of *Paper Politics*, echoes my sentiments when he explains "I don't want to live as a singular artist; I want to participate in building a strong thriving community."¹ A side of printmaking I enjoy is the ability to make work that can be accessible to the public. "Prints" explains Deborah Caplow,"are often a form of public art, as they are circulated widely outside the private sphere."²

As a printmaker I participate in dialog with the multiple as a tool and as a vehicle for meaning. I am afforded the peace of mind of never having to worry about losing the original as I have multiples. I can display the same image in numerous places simultaneously while selling others at affordable prices or even trade and barter with other artists. I can print on t-shirts, make cards, or wheat paste prints in the public sphere. The multiple is a powerful and democratic force. As much as I believe that the materials and processes and their respective histories should be considered and echo the content of the work, I equally believe that the work itself should reveal a love of materials and a love of process. My exhibition celebrates the printed mark unapologetically as a diverse and dynamic vehicle for creation.

The Veil represents a satirical and enigmatic glimpse into both the habits and rituals of contemporary society's participation in social media, the corporate entities which propagate it, and how those systems of power sculpt and contribute to my own identity. I love the idea of the internet as a utopian database, networking people, ideas, and cultures from around the world, coalescing to move civilization forward on the road to peace and prosperity. The internet can be an empowering platform.

¹ Josh MacPhee, *Paper Politics: Socially Engaged Printmaking Today* (Oakland: PM Press, 2005) 9.

² Deborah Caplow, *Paper Politics: Socially Engaged Printmaking Today* (Oakland: PM Press, 2005) 12.

Unfortunately there will always be a political undercurrent, propelled by a system of exploitation, surveillance, and commodification. My creative research is guided by this dichotomy.

In this paper I will clarify the decisions which have guided the creative trajectory and process within my work. This paper is organized into two parts. Part One: Parameters is divided into three sections: The Spectacle, The Politics, and The Consumer. Each section discusses an aspect inspired by Guy Debord's seminal work *Society of the Spectacle*. Throughout the three sections I provide stories, insights into my process, and begin making aesthetic and theoretical connections to Debord's work.

Part two: Aesthetic Connections is separated into four titled sections which present a deeper discussion and analysis of the works in *The Veil*. I make further connections regarding my sources of inspiration, discuss the metaphorical and literal significances of my imagery, and help establish an art historical context. As a strategy to implant more of myself into the work I sporadically include symbols appropriated by the musical subculture I grew up being a part of. I'm interested in how these symbols and their histories can represent aspects of my identity while simultaneously functioning as metaphorical vehicles in my work. My conclusion offers a reflection on the exhibition and discusses ideas and possibilities regarding the direction of new work.

Guy Debord's *Society of the Spectacle* challenged the way I thought about consumer culture and how to negotiate life within a commoditized society. As a Caucasian male living in the privileged and somewhat civilized western world I feel like I live in a bubble, separated from the means of production of a vast majority of what I consume. "Separation" writes Debord "is itself part of the unity of the world." I found the pessimistic and poetic writings found within *Society of the Spectacle* to be engaging, empowering, and beneficial in helping me visualize the segregating implications of the industrial revolution, the separation of labor, and commodity fetishism within contemporary culture.³ I try to channel some of Debord's cynical energy into my own satirical prints. Even today, almost sixty years after *Society of the Spectacle* was first published, its ideas are still ripe, relevant, and paramount in reflecting the consumer illusion found within the commoditized world of the internet. "The spectacle" proclaims Debord "is not a collection of images, but a social relation among people, mediated by images."⁴

³ Guy Debord, *Society Of The Spectacle* (Detroit: Black & Red, 2010) 1.

⁴ Debord, *Society Of The Spectacle*, 1.

Essentially, my thesis involves creatively interpreting three elements relating to Debord's notion of spectacle: the spectacle itself, the politics and systems of power behind the spectacle, and the consumer. This section will discuss each element and provide stories and examples of my work to help contextualize the importance of intelligently navigating social media and how our online footprint crafts our own digital identity.

THE SPECTACLE

The spectacle is the synthetic illusion which veils humanity from the means of production of commodity. I like using the adjective "candy coated" to describe the spectacle because it charges the veil as something desirable, innocent, yet yields to the poisonous and toxic. The spectacle carries the power and characteristic of de-politicization. An example of this de-politicizing power is found in the chemical coloring and advertisements of soft drinks. Pop and soda are filled with loads of sugar and chemicals, although they aren't advertised as such. The corporate strategy portrays and injects these consumables with fun vibrant colors, making them more appealing and easier to sell regardless of their contents and means of production. A bright, vivid, and synthetic color palette unifies the vast majority of my limited editioned prints and provides the seduction echoing throughout my mural installation. In addition to unifying my work, the colors reflect the illusionary outer shell of the spectacle which plays on our narcissistic tendencies. The idea of de-politicization in the context of our relationship to the internet means normalizing our daily internet rituals and their implications. The spectacle cloaks the corporate mechanics which commoditizes our information.

A popular term for this idea is data mining, digging for information, excavating our digital identity.⁵ Easily accessible social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram are instrumental in data basing our information. It's important that my work reference these social media platforms and tools, symbols like the notification icon, twitter, Instagram, and Facebook icon, and friend request icon. These symbols dictate the databases that compose our digital and commodified identities. These icons appear in patterns which permeate in great abundance throughout my prints such as *Face Hole* (figure 3) and *Covert* (figure 4). When the layers of printed logos accumulate they create a beautiful, electric, and seductive space which hides their mission as data-mining devices. The colors of my installation

⁵ Debord, *Society Of The Spectacle*, 13.

#Ifyouthinkthisisscaryoushouldcheckouttheinternet exemplify this candy coated outer shell. The encapsulating scale of my installation reveals how surrounded and reliant we are on the internet and internet related technologies. The colored rectangular prints accumulate to form patterned mural inspired by the amount of handheld technologies we consume, discard, and record our lives with. The panopticon inspired arrangements of the hundreds of prints reference both the screens of a security room and the interfaces of our phones, both always watching us. Screen printing, still a primary industrial printing process used today, is the dominant medium for this work, embodying the ideals of the spectacle. The prints remind us of the serializations of Andy Warhol, placing consumerism on a pedestal as something to honor. My drawings of pills and drugs in the installation function to reveal our addictive consumer habits and reliance on these technologies.

THE POLITICS

The second characteristic I creatively interpret relating to the internet is the politics. By politics I mean more specifically the systems of power, means of production, and dialog surrounding corporate control of the internet. The spectacle is “no more than the economy developing for itself.”⁶ The political characteristics in my work manifest as symbolic and literal representations of power, authority, and frustration. Weapons, violence, recording devices, and security iconography are the obvious symbols used to express a society of surveillance and repression.

Since moving to Louisiana from Toronto I’ve become a sponge, witnessing and absorbing all the current politics erupt back home in Canada from afar. I began thinking more about the lineage and history of printmaking and how it pertains to my practice. I became inspired by the prolific lithographic output of Daumier’s political satire and the haunting etchings from Goya’s *Disasters of War* series. On the other hand, some of my biggest contemporary influences come from the Outlaw Printmakers, a group of printmakers scattered throughout North America. Tom Huck’s monstrous woodcuts echo the marks of Durer yet speak satirically of his regional identity. Ericka Walker’s large scale lithographs borrow a visual language rooted in the past in order to contemporize various discussions of current politics and to remind us of their history. The satire, sense of humor, and rebellious attitude of all these artists has certainly informed my own decision making.

⁶ Debord, *Society Of The Spectacle*, 5.

I'm interested in and inspired by both the fictitious and real life narratives that portray the archetypal decadent politicians and their appetite for power. This decadent and corrupt mayoral archetype is evident in Troma's great lowbrow classic *The Toxic Avenger*, however the antics of Toronto's ex-mayor Rob Ford may never be topped as a more ridiculous crack filled scandal. I enjoy reading about populist movements exposing the vulnerability of corporate politicians.

One of my favorite stories in Canadian politics stems from the debacle Former Conservative Safety Minister Vic Towe's unleashed in 2012. Mr. Towe's was in favor of Bill C-30, a bill which would give police backdoor privileges to search the Canadian public's internet history without a warrant. Like most bills in politics, it was masked with an illusionistic title, the "Protecting Children from Internet Predators Act." Mr. Towe's argued the police needed this power to protect children and caused international controversy when he proclaimed "opponents of Bill C-30 were friends of child pornographers."⁷ He even caught the attention of *Anonymous*, a group of hackers who champion privacy, liberty, and who threatened and eventually exposed some of Towe's personal mishaps and marriage failures on a twitter account. The bill was eventually scrapped and he resigned soon after. My work is witness of the tensions and frustrations of this turbulent system of power. Some of my woodcuts (figure 5) in my mural, inspired by the artist John Hancock, embody this frustration. They simultaneously represent the tension felt by politicians and the tension felt by protesters in the fight for power over the internet. They embody the aggressive marks of the German expressionists, yet yield to the satire and humor found in contemporary print culture.

THE CONSUMER

The last characteristic I interpret is the consumer who interacts, ingests, and negotiates life with the spectacle. As an active internet user and participant in social media I realize I'm not exempt from this category. I feel it's important to reveal my own experiences in regards to these internet related technologies, reflect on them, and show how they are shaping my identity. I aim to embrace a sense of humor while acknowledging my behavior, reliance, and devotion for internet technologies.

⁷ Jeff Davies, "Bill C-30: Threats Against Vic Towe's being investigated by RCMP", *National Post*, February 19th 2012. Accessed March 1st, 2015, <http://news.nationalpost.com/news/canada/vic-toews-threats-anonymous>.

In deciding on imagery for both the room installation (figure 6) and the traditional prints, I employed a few different strategies. I figured if I was going to interpret and characterize the internet consumer I should reveal what is ritualistically consumed on a daily basis on the internet. My initial idea was to become more aware of what I was reading and looking at while navigating the web and social media sites. I felt and still do to this day feel like checking social media newsfeed is a mindless act of procrastination, an act I have programmed my body to partake in. I feel like I run on auto-pilot. I wanted to look deeper so I started asking myself questions: What was why I looking at? Why was I looking at it? What attracted me to click on certain links in my news feed as opposed to others? What sort of links and stories was I interested in sharing on my feed? Or what made me annoyed and angry? It began feeling like every story or link on the internet was aggressively competing for my attention. Cats, narcissistic selfies, and sexually objectified men and women were all being used instrumentally to lure me in. The instant red flag that deterred me from engaging a link is what's called "click bait." Urban Dictionary defines one variation of "click bait" as follows: "(noun, pejorative) A seemingly innocent posting on social media that contains a link to more content, but whose true goal is to trick the viewer into clicking on the link so that the writer can collect view stats -- usually for monetary or for narcissistic purposes."⁸

Click bait is a device we use to attract friends (consumers) to websites, or to accumulate "likes" on Instagram and Facebook photos or statuses. Websites such as BuzzFeed.com use it in ways that are so blatantly unauthentic and lazy, but apparently effective, that it instantly deters me from investigating their stories. Usually the link will start with an engaging narrative or picture pertaining to anything from a weird and exciting art project to some new invention. In fact sometimes the stories sound really interesting, however the same recycled sayings such as "What they did next was something amazing" always plagues the end. These dumbed down slogans make me feel like they are trying to appeal to twelve year olds, which is a huge demographic, just not mine. I use similar slogans in my mural and overprint them on all sorts of imagery to express their recycled banality.

In conclusion to this section, the parameters of creatively interpreting the spectacle, the politics, and the consumer all relate, rely, and build on one-another, accumulating to form something like a corporate parasite. These three characteristics form the lens in which to investigate the themes of social

⁸ Urban Dictionary definition of "clickbait", last updated October 27th 2014, accessed November 30th 2014, <http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=click+bait>.

media, narcissism, digital identity, cyber-security, data-mining, surveillance, and privacy. Social media depends on narcissism, data-mining depends on social media, and consumerism relies on data-mining etc. "The Economy" writes Debord "transforms the world, but transforms it only into a world of commodity."⁹

⁹ Debord, *Society Of The Spectacle*, 14.

PART TWO: A DEEPER ANALYSIS

Part two of this paper discusses more complex metaphorical and literal meanings behind my imagery. This will include a brief contextualizing history of some of the symbols I incorporate, why they are important in regards to my identity, and how they function as vehicles to express the parameters inspired by Guy Debord. I will divide this part of the paper into three sections: *Toxic Rainbows*, *Satire and the Devil*, finishing with *Zombies and Sci-fi Movies*.

TOXIC RAINBOWS

My confrontational use of color is the primary formal element of design unifying my work. It's loud, obnoxious, bright, synthetic, and confusing, much like the realm of the internet. I look to Jeffrey Dell as a source of inspiration for my colors. His rainbow-colored cake prints reflect a similar toxic value. While my harmonious printed rainbow rolls appear pretty and aesthetic, they are politically charged in hiding the means of production. Disposable Machines (Figure 7) shows the silhouette of an exploited miner framed within the rainbow colored shape of a mobile device. The graphic and revolutionary aesthetic of the silhouette competes for attention against the mechanical outer shell of the phone. This print brings attention to the disposable nature of technologies and the disposable reality of the worker. On the topic of industry, *Here Comes the Airplane* (Figure 8) borrows from the aesthetic of advertising. An objectified woman sexually grips an assault rifle while candy colors strip the decoratively erect bullets of their malevolent and violent history. I feel like this print satirically celebrates how far marketers will go in impregnating their products with commodity fetishism. *Generation* (Figure 9) is another piece illustrating the decorative rainbow veil and a demonic manifestation emerging from it. In this case a mutant cyborg baby symbolizes the surveyor.

Works such as my self-portrait *Commoditized Identity* (Figure 10) utilize the tensions of simultaneous contrast and vibrating colors. These vibrant and jarring color contrasts echo the experience of surfing the web and maneuvering through oceans of competing websites, advertisements, and social media notifications. This idea of ritual is pushed even further in *Believe In Us* (Figure 11), an image depicting cylindrical patterned marks emanating from the eyes of a consumer. The word "believe" functions as a medicated smile, reminding us to stay aware or be consumed while navigating the web.

SATIRE AND THE DEVIL

Throughout high school and while living and working in Toronto I played in a variety of avant-garde rock bands. I was subsequently integrated into its subculture and eventually adopted its symbols as part of my visual language. As a musician and artist I believe we are only as strong as our community. I like supporting my friends so I started wearing a lot of band merchandise and began drawing influence from its graphic illustrative style, normally depicting zombies, satanic beings, ritualistic celebration, and political satire. These keepsakes became huge sources of inspiration for me. I enjoy the rebellious attitudes, sense of humor, and sense of play. Wearing band t-shirts gave me a rebellious voice. I bring these same characteristics into my work to help engage the viewer. This subculture often appropriates, satirizes, and involves images of Satanic and Christian imagery. I adopted this visual language as a way to voice my political concerns and to pay tribute to the lineage of my youth.

The multitude of characters, mythologies, and archetypes associated with Satan are as polarizing as the history to which they belong. By the 17th century the enlightenment had ushered in a new secularized era of thought. The rise of an educated society helped people challenge the church's idea of Satan and Evil, redirecting the power away from the Roman Catholic Church¹⁰. The question of evil moved away from the devil and to the more secularized evil of humanity¹¹. This evil of humanity, the repression, the violence, is reflected in what Debord explains as "separation perfected within the interior or man."¹²

Lucifer represents knowledge and defiance. He became an avatar which threatened the church's ability to control the masses¹³. In the 19th century romantic era we see a transforming symbolic Satan being explored heavily in literature, plays, and in art. This view of the devil correlated with the French revolution. The church saw the French revolution as the devil's work, while the revolutionaries criticized the church for upholding outdated tyrannical standards¹⁴. The king of France was viewed as an evil repressive leader so in turn, the king of kings, Jesus Christ, was dubbed the ultimate evil¹⁵. Satan

¹⁰ Jeffery Burton Russell. *The Prince of Darkness: Radical Evil and the Power of Good in History* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988) 206.

¹¹ Russell. *The Prince of Darkness*. 167.

¹² Debord, *Society Of The Spectacle*, 7.

¹³ Corvis Nocturnum. *I Lucifer*. (Atglen: Schiffer Publishing LTD. 2011)13.

¹⁴ Russell. *The Prince of Darkness*. 221.

¹⁵ Russell. *The Prince of Darkness*. 219.

became a symbol which represented resistance in the face of the old regime¹⁶. The crucifix in this case becomes emblematic of the elite and of the spectacle, as exhibited in my print *Veneration* (figure 12).

The romantics honored emotional thought over the intellectual and rational. This is evident in artists using Christian iconography outside of its biblical setting. I appropriate symbols in a similar fashion. The romantics weren't interested in celebrating the evil of the biblical Satan but were exploring a symbolism which could represent their political beliefs.¹⁷ My musical subculture appropriated these symbols which in turn inspired me to do the same.

The Hebrew word for Satan actually means "to obstruct".¹⁸ Obstructing in the context of political and ethical injustice is a powerful statement, especially in this day and age. In order to contemporize this discussion it's important to bring up whistle blowers like Edward Snowden, a former CIA contractor who in 2013 exposed to the media the extensive internet and phone surveillance perpetrated by American intelligence¹⁹. He is a martyr who is currently targeted for revealing and exposing the veil to the public. In my print *My Precious* (figure 13) I depict a red stereotypical satanic figure, inspired from the graphic work found within my musical subculture. He is sitting in a junkyard in the outskirts of a withered post-apocalyptic city, possibly plotting or coordinating some untold event. The title is appropriated from Golem's character in *Lord of the Rings*, a notion which compares the laptop computer to that of the ring, an irreplaceable and powerful item. The perspective is voyeuristic and raises questions regarding privacy and cyber security. His expression is surprised, as if being caught off guard by an unseen force. The print reveals the deep devotion we all have for our technologies but also embodies the anti-hero. The word activist and terrorist are becoming synonymous in contemporary society. The Canadian Government is currently trying to pass new anti-terror legislation entitled Bill C-51. "The Bill would give law enforcement the power to disrupt potential terrorist plots and detain suspects who "may" carry out rather than "will carry" out terrorist activity."²⁰ Grand Chief Terrance Nelson of Manitoba believes Bill C-51 will be used to target environmental activists. Under this new legislation any protest regarding treaty rights, land rights,

¹⁶ Russell. *The Prince of Darkness*. 220.

¹⁷ Russell. *The Prince of Darkness*. 221.

¹⁸ Russell. *The Prince of Darkness*. 28.

¹⁹ "Edward Snowden: Leaks that exposed US spy programme", *BBC*, January 17th, 2014, accessed April 5th, 2015. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-23123964>

²⁰ Jillian Taylor, "Bill C-51 dangerous legislation, says Manitoba First Nations leader", *CBC News*, Last updated February 23, 2015, first accessed March 1st 2015. <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/bill-c-51-dangerous-legislation-says-manitoba-first-nations-leader-1.2966795>.

and natural resources could be considered eco-terrorist activity."²¹ Anyone planning protests on social media could become a target.

Bill and Ted's Ethical Dilemma (figure 14) borrows satanic iconography in a different way, instead of using its symbols to represent my cult like devotion to hand held technologies. The double headed figure represents how torn I feel with using the politicized tools of social media. As an artist, most of my sales stem from Instagram and Facebook posts. The internet has helped break down lots of barriers between me and my patrons, although it's addicting and distracting to see who likes my posts while I work. There is also the irony of selling work about the politics of the internet through the internet. I much prefer selling my work by engaging and educating the public on site and in the flesh. Mobile print enthusiasts *Drive By Press* have successfully inspired a new generation of printmakers by bringing the press into the public. They travel with an etching press to festivals and schools and print and sell affordably on site, educating the masses in the process, a way I hope work in the future.

ZOMBIES AND SCI-FI MOVIES

While my visual language reaches as far back as the Renaissance, my creative process is inspired by the Dadaists, where the use of collage, appropriation, and ready-mades first originated.²² Max Ernst was a pioneer of collage, borrowing and appropriating widely printed engravings from magazines, using them to create ambiguous and curious compositions.²³ I embrace appropriation in a similar manor, borrowing imagery that is a product of these times. I pull from all sorts of pop cultural sources such as b-horror movies and 90s action movies. I gravitated towards using a visual language rooted in movies I grew up watching. My print *Submit* (figure 15) appropriates text from the movie *Terminator*, the ultimate man vs machine action movie featuring none other than Arnold Schwarzenegger. The strategy of appropriation makes the work more inclusive. Obviously I can't make work that everyone will understand or read in a similar fashion. What I can do is try to make different entrance points to the work so everyone can enjoy it. Pop culture is an entrance to the work that can serve people from my particular generation. They might get the joke or cultural reference and that becomes the entrance to the work.

²¹ Taylor, "Bill C-51 dangerous legislation, says Manitoba First Nations leader."

²² Cat Hope and John Ryan, *Digital Arts: An Introduction to New Media*, 25.

²³ David Britt. *Modern Art: Impressionsim to Post Modernism*. (London:Thames & Hudson. 2008)225.

When thinking about my identity as a consumer, the zombie resonates as an appropriate contemporary archetype. They are mindless consumers operating on a sort of autopilot, sort of how I feel about myself in regards to my technology use. George A. Romero's satirical zombie classics informed and guided my interest and research. The University of Bergen in Norway released a study in 2012 which illustrated how our addiction to the internet is similar to that of drugs and alcohol.²⁴ This study fueled my satirical zombie drawings which appear in both the mural installation and as individual prints. My zombie (figure 16) is displayed sandwiched in-between drug induced colorful waves, reminding us of our addictive and compelling technologies. The parallel between this generation's internet usage and the "vacant robotic quality" of the consuming zombie is clear.²⁵ The Global Information Center released the terrifying statistic that most Americans consume information for 11.5 hours a day.²⁶ The only way to consume information at a faster rate is to upgrade to newest technology, which coincidentally mirrors the same commodity panic culture we see on Black Friday. "The real consumer becomes the consumer of illusions." ²⁷

Even today people are buying products with built in surveillance devices. Samsung recently released a new smart television that listens to everything we say. Samsung even warned their customers not to talk about personal information in front of the television as it could possibly be recorded and sent to a 3rd party company²⁸. This news story inspired my print *Listening* (Figure 17) which exhibits a floating patterned rectangular shape surrounded by enigmatic typography symbolizing the words and whispers of the surveilling 3rd party company. It's hard for me not to be skeptical of these devices, especially with all these new repressive bills the Canadian government is trying to implement such as Bill C-51. These high end technologies spread as fast and as rampant as a zombie outbreak, homogenizing everyone in process.²⁹ Zombies themselves also currently reflect the epitome of pop and consumer culture. There are

²⁴ Alec Charles, *Interactivity: New Media, Politics, and Society* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2012) 12.

²⁵ Edward P. Comentale, Aaron Jaffe, *The Year's Work at the Zombie Research Center* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014) 2.

²⁶ Robert W. Mc Chesney, *Digital Disconnect* (New York: New York Press, 2013)1.

²⁷ Debord, *Society Of The Spectacle*, 18.

²⁸ Nick Grimm, "Samsung warns customers new smart TVs "listen in" on users' personal conversations," ABC News, last updated February 9, 2015. First accessed February 20, 2015, <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-02-10/samsung-warns-customers-new-smart-tvs-listen-in-on-users/6082144>.

²⁹ Comentale, Jaffe, *The Year's Work at the Zombie Research Center*, 8.

more television shows, lunch boxes, computer games, and festivals celebrating the zombie than ever before.³⁰ They are the epitome of commodity.

Another reason for using images of zombie in my prints is that they are populist, low maintenance, and aren't owned by Hollywood studios. Anyone can be a zombie with some cheap makeup and scraggly clothes.³¹ I believe this characteristic makes it easier for us to see our reflection in a zombie. Humor is the ultimate vehicle for truth which I believe should have a home in contemporary art. Humor can help us engage issues, political or not, in more compelling ways that might make the work more inclusive.

³⁰ Comentale, Jaffe, *The Year's Work at the Zombie Research Center*, 2.

³¹ Comentale, Jaffe, *The Year's Work at the Zombie Research Center*, 13.

CONCLUSION

With any body of work, it's exciting to see where it started and where it ended up. I began making prints in response to Guy Debord's *Society of the Spectacle* and ended up being partially guided by the political climate in Canada and how it will affect me upon my return. The later prints in this exhibition stem from a fear of repression, a fear of not being able to speak up, a fear of too many gate keepers in the government and in realm of the internet. I'm worried about living in an era where we will get thrown in jail for expressing ourselves online or while protesting in the public.

While I believe staying informed and doing research is immensely critical as a contemporary artist, I believe paying attention to what is happening around us is even more critical. The problems and solutions aren't always found within critical theory and art history, but around us in our communities. Outside of making editioned prints and print based installations, which I will still engage with after graduate school, I want to investigate practices that involve the engagement of the community. Instead of solely printing in the shop, I want to print in the public sphere, with under-privileged and marginalized youth, or collaborate with local businesses. I want to find ways that can connect people to the issues that are important in their community, whether it's raising awareness with satirical imagery or helping promote local enterprise. The democracy, affordability, and efficiency of the historically rich medium of prints are what make it special and engaging.

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APPENDIX: THE WORKS



Figure 1. Eric Euler, (installation shot) #Ifyouthinkthisisiscaryyoushouldcheckouttheinternet, Screen Print, Woodblock, and Spray Paint on 19x25 in. paper, 2015, photographed by the artist

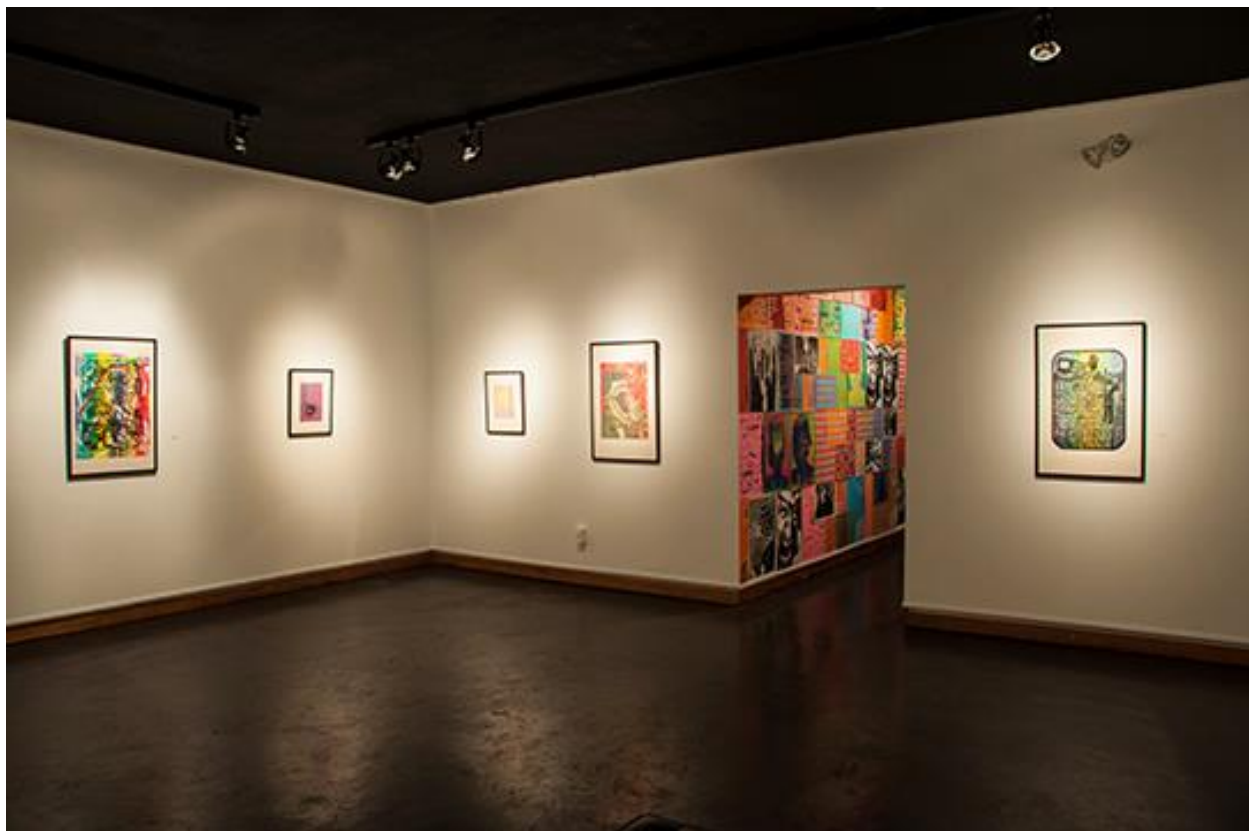


Figure 2. Eric Euler, Installation shot, 2015, photographed by the artist

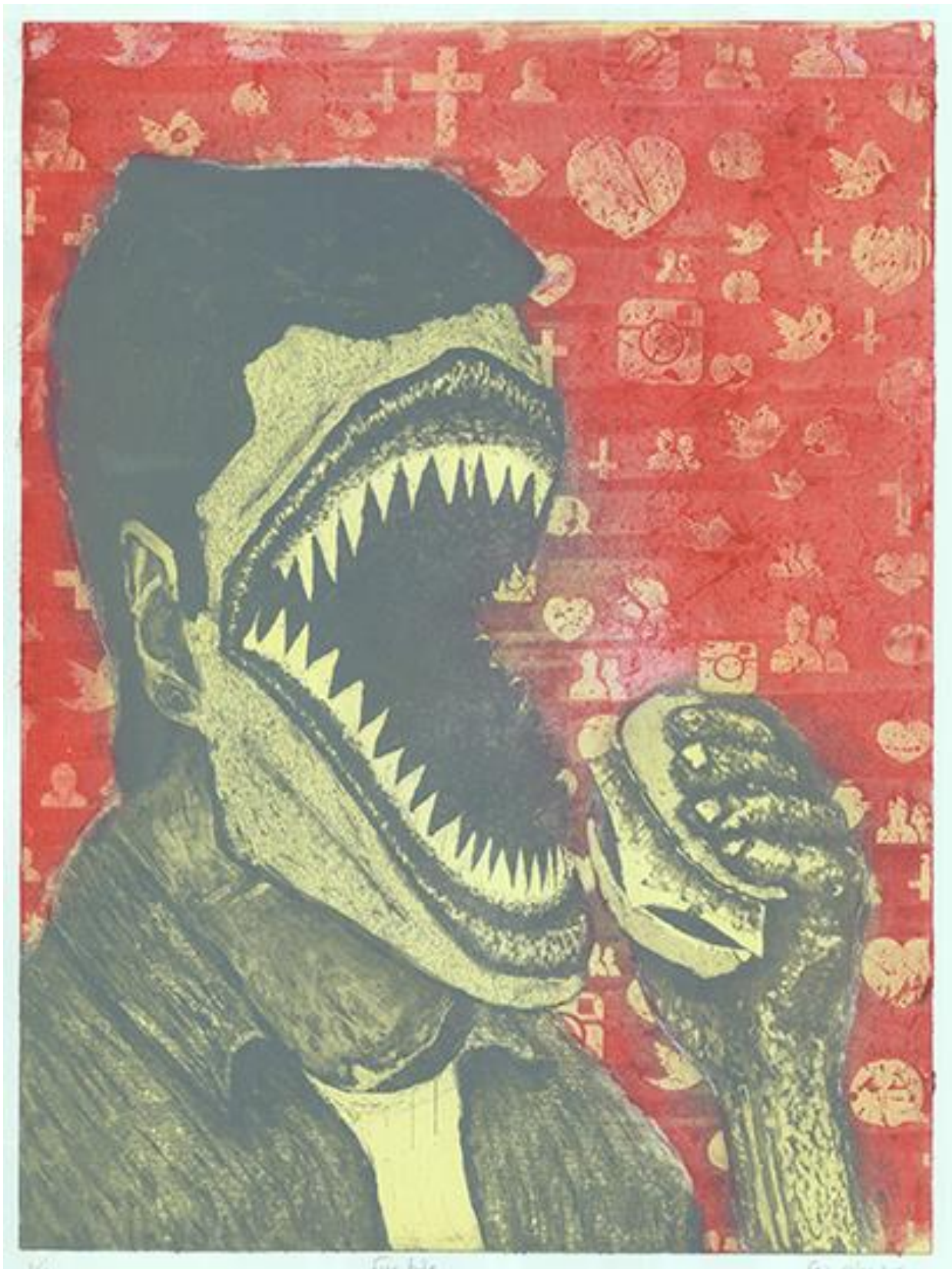


Figure 3. Eric Euler, Face hole, Etching, 22x30 in., 2015

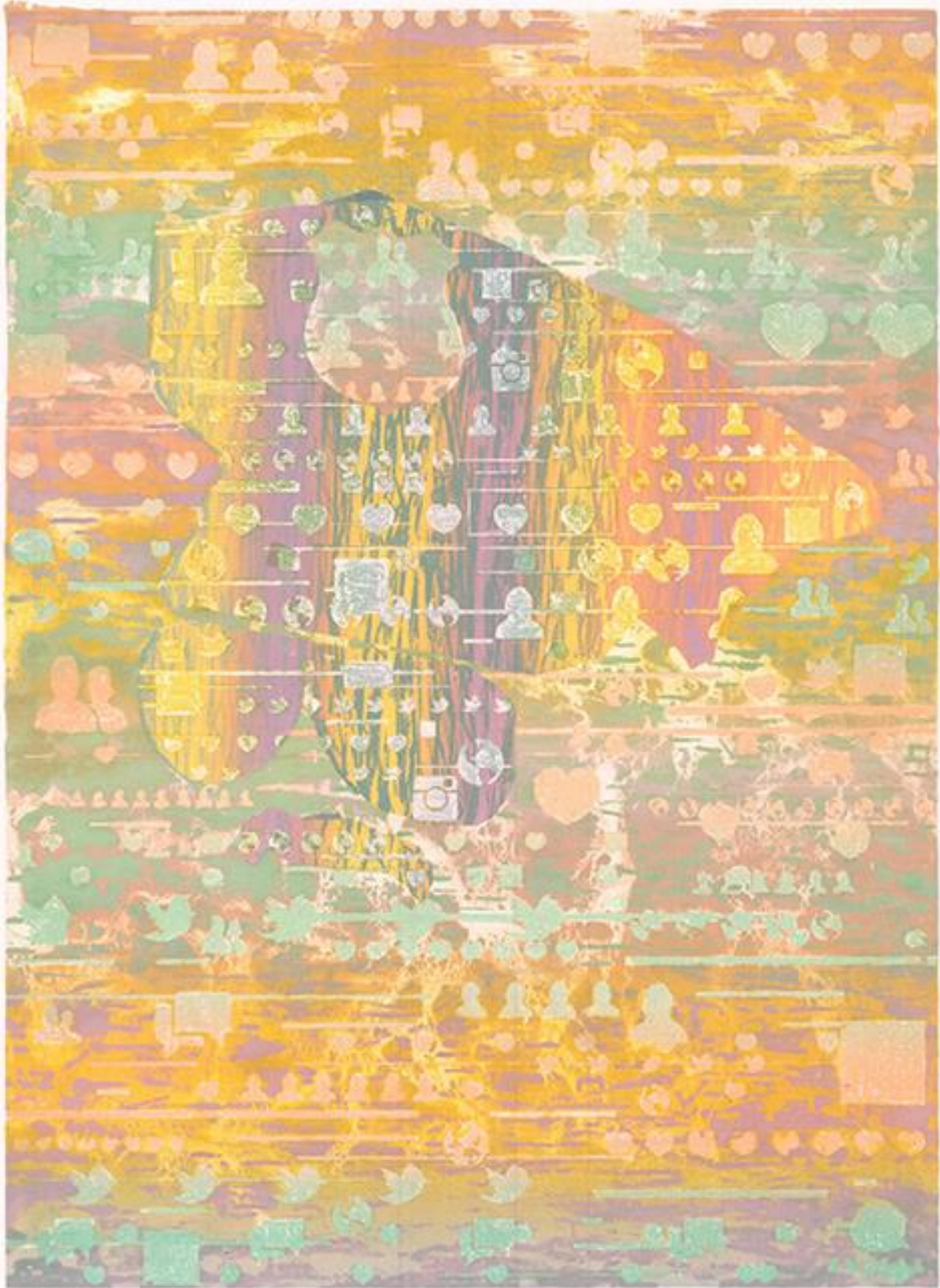


Figure 4. Eric Euler, Covert, Lithograph, 22x28 in., 2014

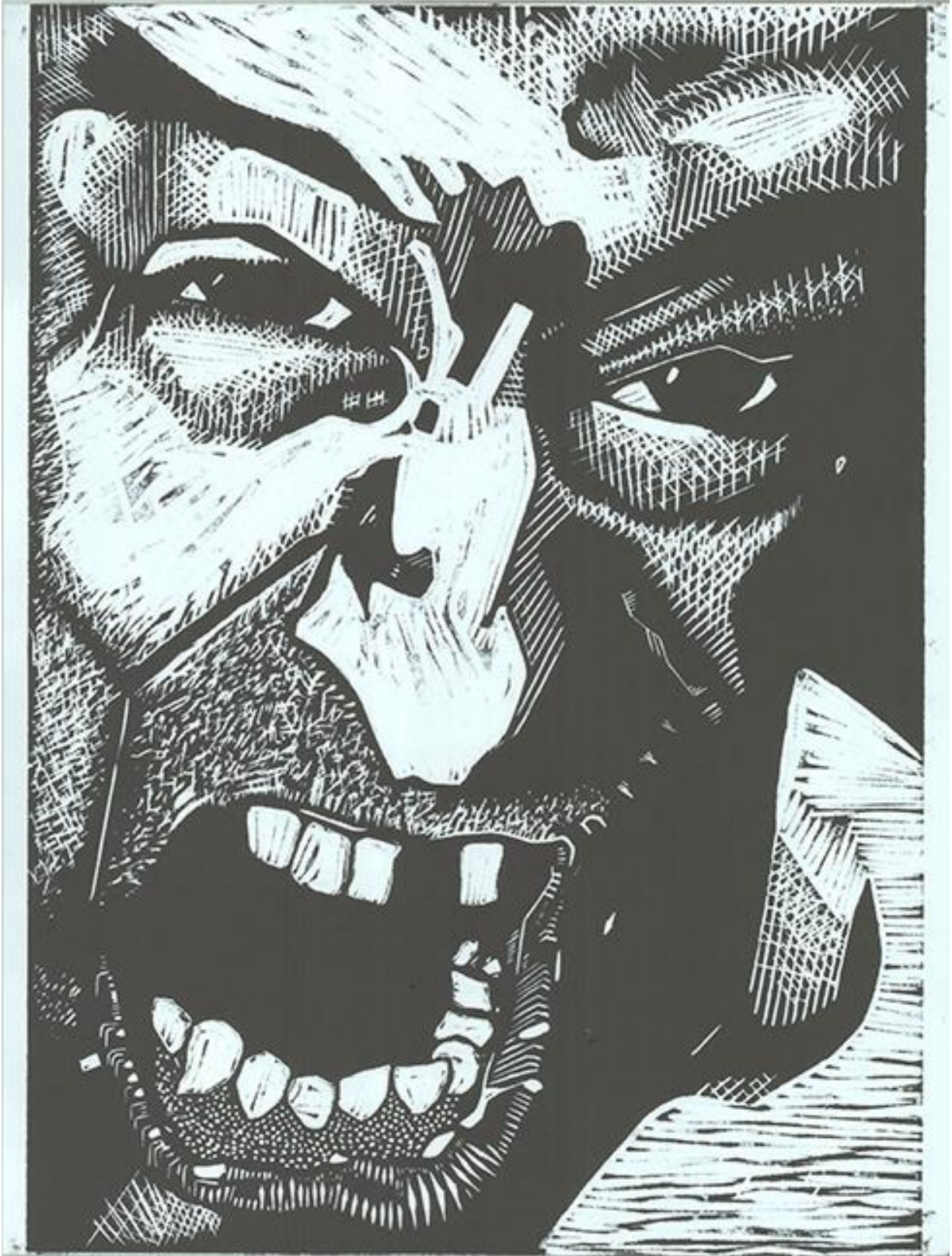


Figure 5. Eric Euler, #Ifyouthinkthisisscaryyoushouldcheckouttheinternet, Woodblock, 19x25 in., 2015



Figure 6. Eric Euler, (installation shot) #Ifyouthinkthisisscaryyoushouldcheckouttheinternet, Screen Print, Woodblock, and Spray Paint on 19x25 in. paper, 2015



Figure 7. Eric Euler, Disposable Machines, Lithograph, 11x15 in., 2014

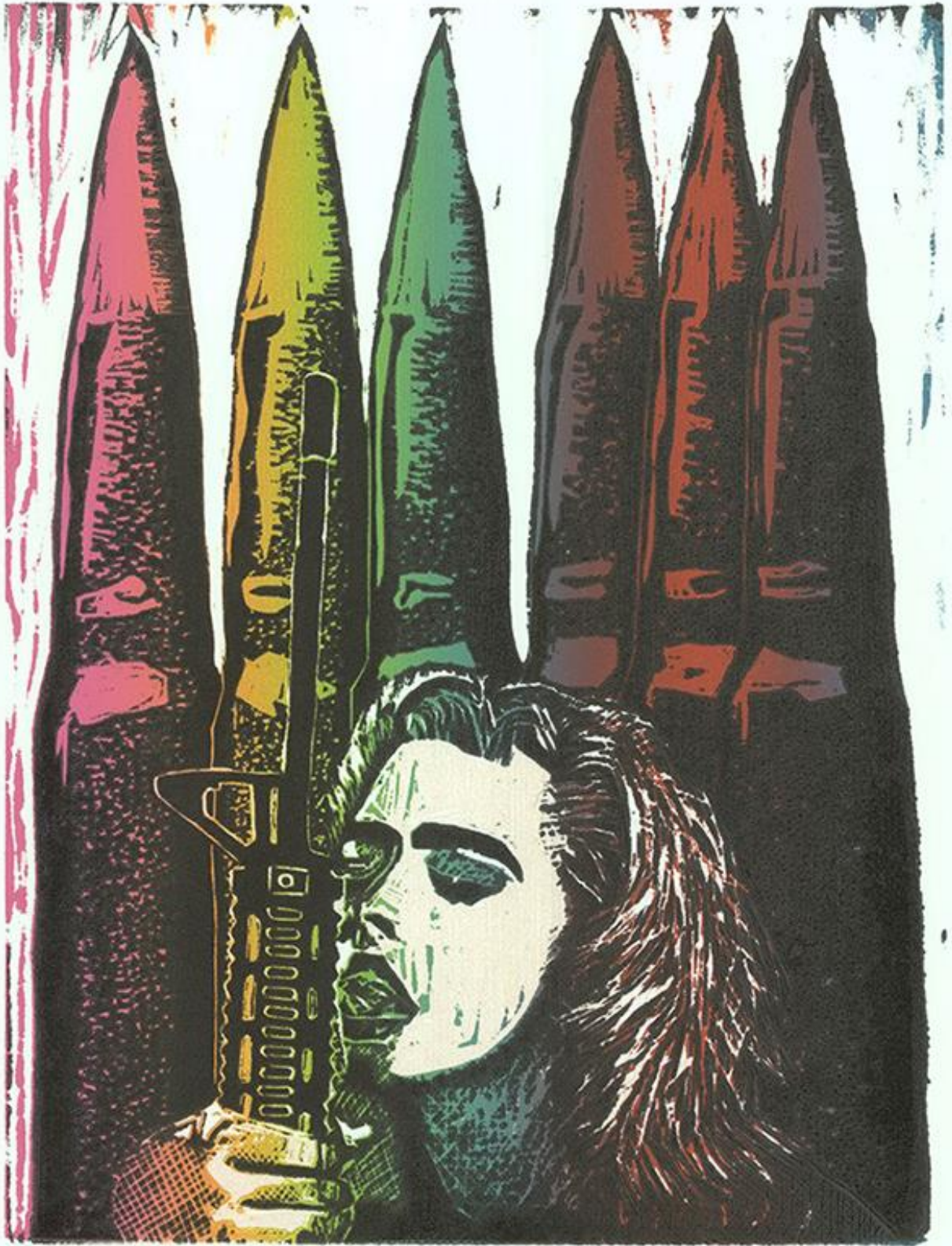


Figure 8. Eric Euler. Here Comes the Airplane, Woodblock, 22x15 in., 2014

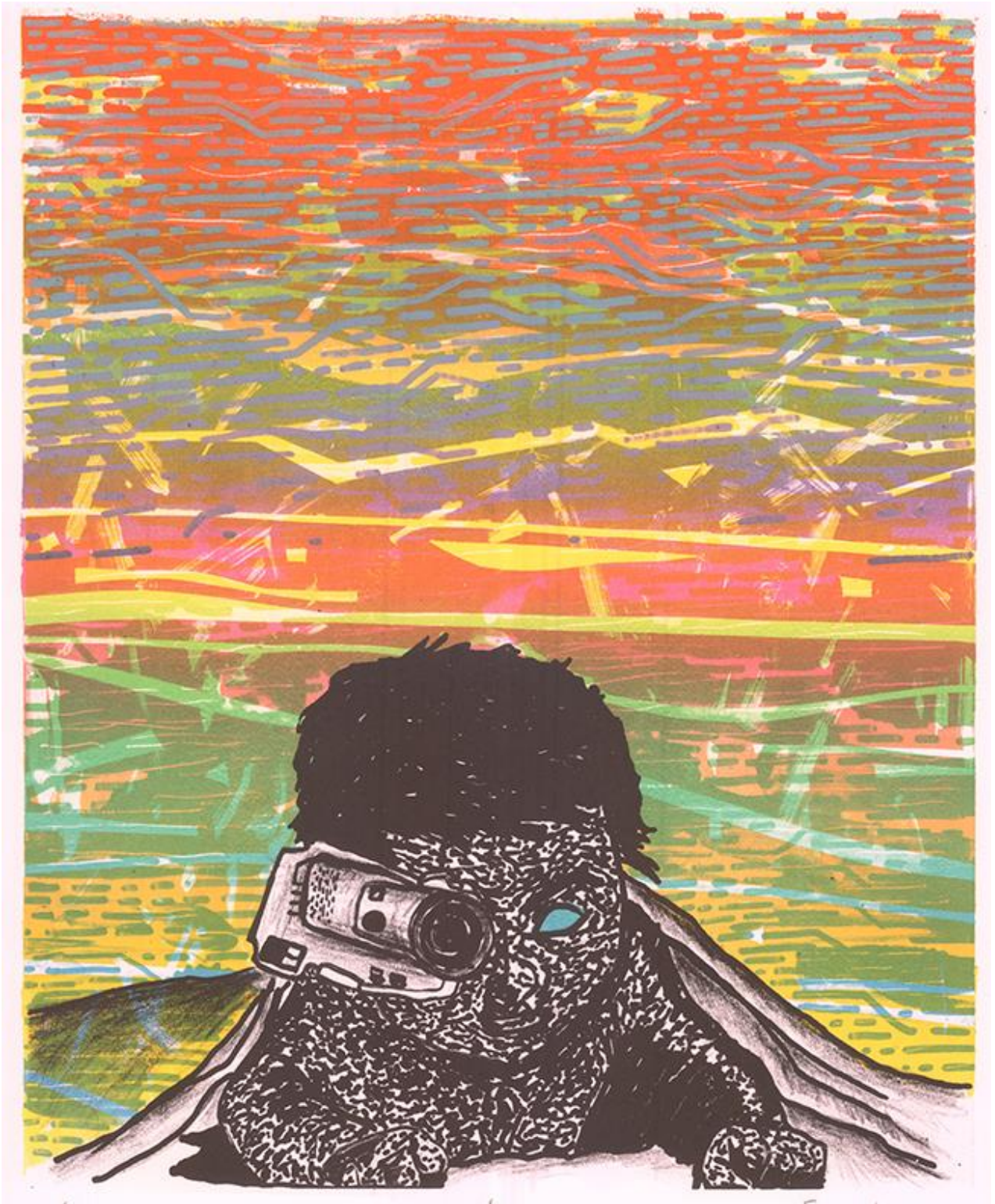


Figure 9. Eric Euler. Generation, Lithograph, 15x20 in., 2015



Figure 10. Commoditized Identity, Lithograph, 11x14 in., 2015

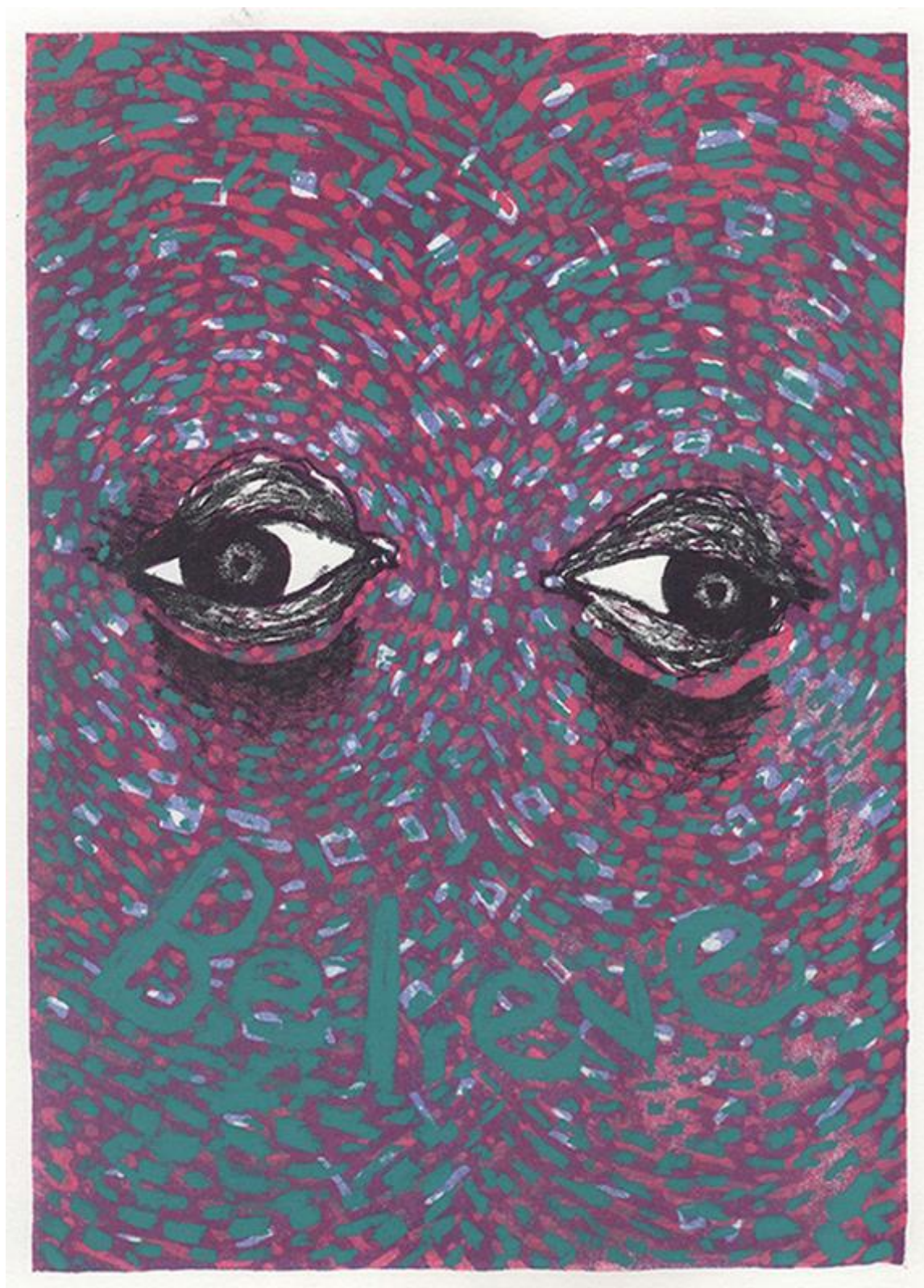


Figure 11. Eric Euler. Believe In Us, Lithograph, 11x15in., 2015



Figure 12. Eric Euler. Veneration, Lithograph, 11x14 in., 2014



Figure 13. Eric Euler. My Precious, Woodblock, 22x28 in., 2014

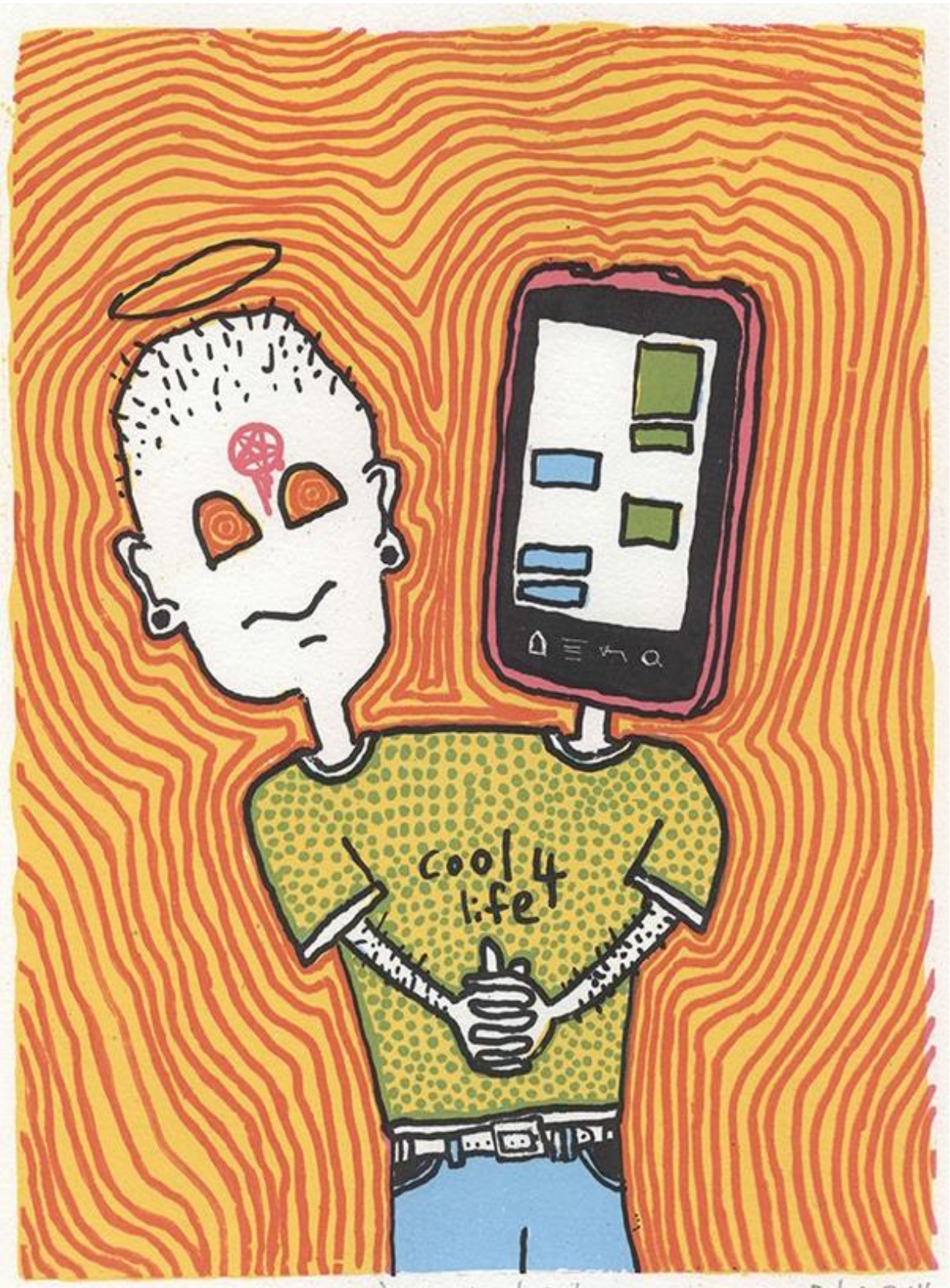


Figure 14. Eric Euler. Bill and Ted's Ethical Dilemma, Screen Print, 11x15 in., 2014

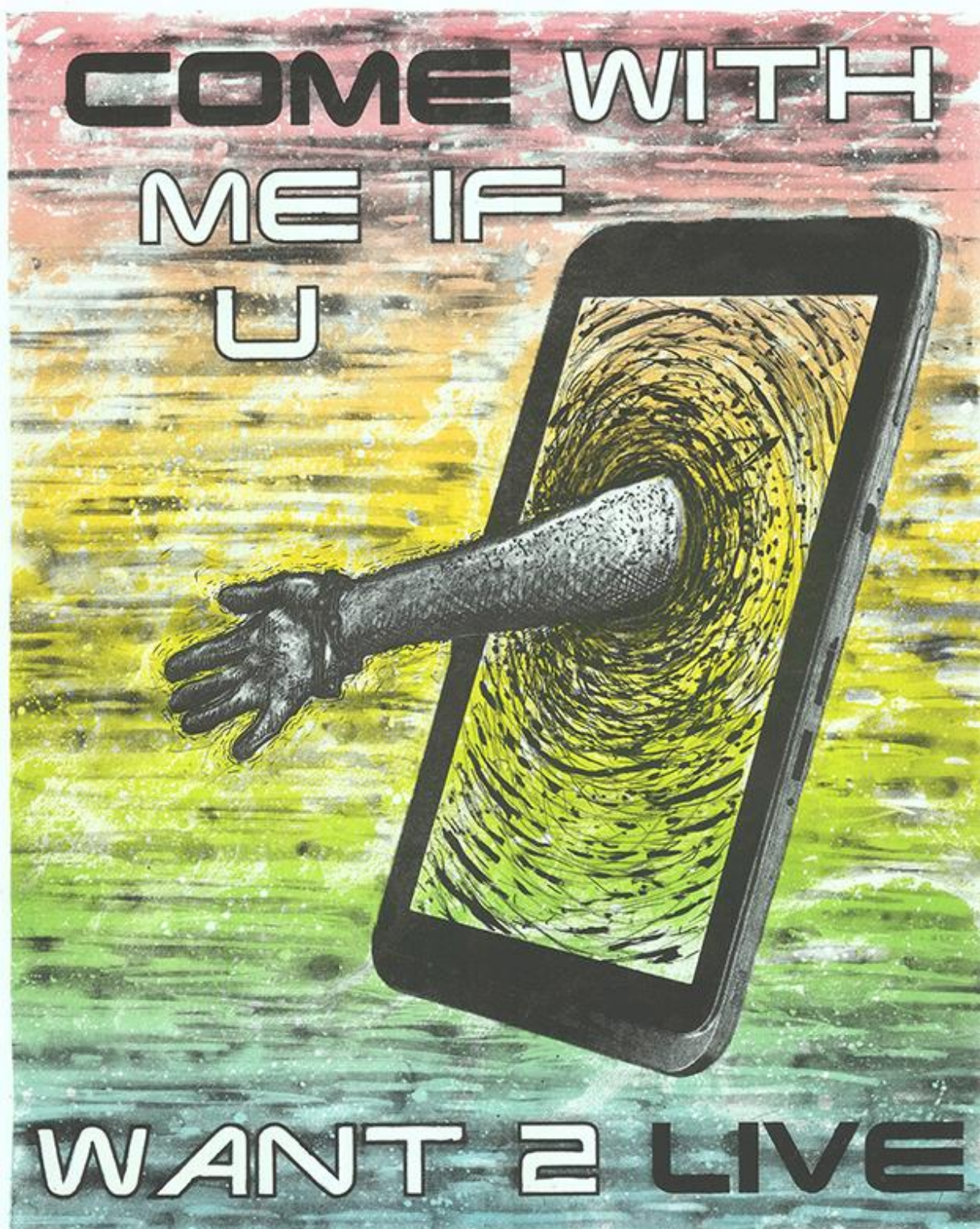


Figure 15. Eric Euler. Submit, Lithograph, 22x28 in., 2014



Figure 16. Eric Euler. Synthesis, Lithograph, 11x14 in., 2014

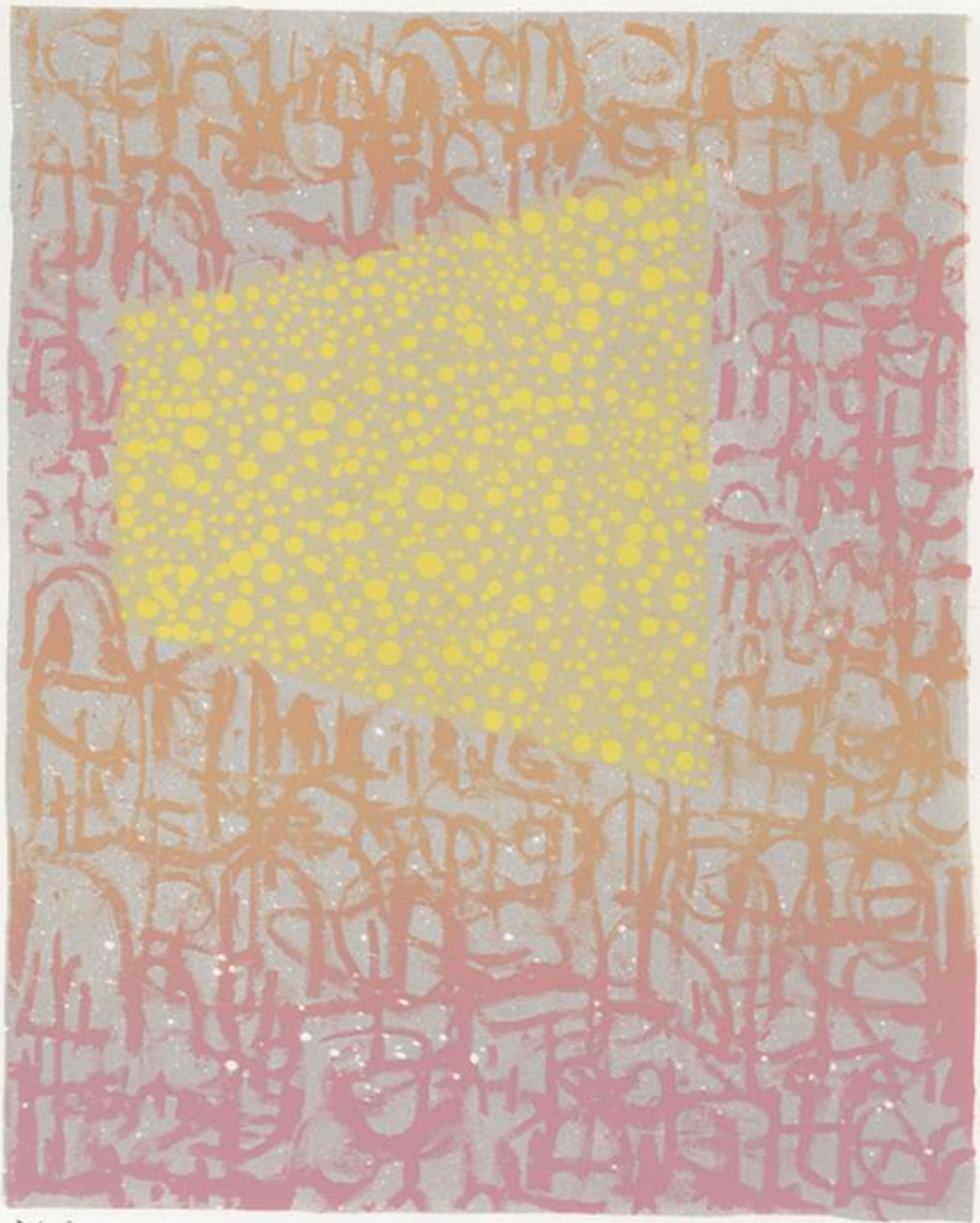


Figure 17. Eric Euler, Listening, Lithograph, 11x14 in.,

VITA

Eric Euler was born and raised in beautiful North Bay Ontario Canada. In 2004 He moved to Toronto Ontario to study at the Ontario College of Art and Design. A day after receiving his B.F.A in the spring of 2009 he went on his first tour with his band The Isosceles Project. In 2012 after working as a class assistant in the printmaking department at the Ontario College of Art and Design he accepted an offer to complete his M.F.A at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge. His work has been shown in numerous juried and invitational shows around North America and has prints in collections such as the University of Iowa, California State University: Fresno, and University of North Carolina at Pembroke. On top of participating in nearly twenty print exchanges, Eric has also curated two exchanges of his own: *Rock N Roll: A Celebration of Stone Lithography* and *Cyber Rituals*. Eric is currently getting ready to move to Albuquerque New Mexico to study at Tamarind institute. He hopes to move back to Ontario upon completion.