

In my work, I construct a view of the world we live in today, informed by research in human evolution, as well as memetics. Using elements and symbolic metaphors that serve as reoccurring themes throughout the series of three prints, I attempt to analyze the roles of memes and humans in relation to each other. My use of color choice and depiction of form are the vehicles I use to explore the deeper significance of what it means to be human. I attempt to engage the audience by choosing the most appropriate vantage point to parallel the dynamics of the two elements.

Since the beginning of this symbiotic relationship, humans are the only organism which memes can use as vehicles. Inherently, memes served to benefit directly the survival of the human species. As our species grew, memes evolved at an equally exponential rate, spreading throughout early humans, spawning culture, language and early art and decoration. Soon memes built off this foundation to create more complex memes, like economic systems and architectural styles. Some would say that in some sense memes have stolen the show and hijacked the dominant position in the relationship, driving humans to create more and more memes to build upon and serve larger memes rather than the survival of humanity.

I chose to depict images of the road because they seemed to lend themselves over as a very direct metaphor for memes and its influence on our species. In a literal sense, it is used as the driving force for the growth and development of civilizations. Where there are roads there is culture. It serves as a vessel to a predetermined destination or goal, and memes act the same way. Memetics was the tool that enabled us to learn and replicate fires for warmth in our ancient past, and today, it drives our nuclear arms race. Throughout this series, I try to deconstruct and discern which force is driving the other; it is apparent in society standards today, that the wealthier you are, the less offspring you are likely to produce during your lifetime. This peculiar dynamic is one of the most apparent displays illuminating our current disposition for one over the other. The more invested one becomes with their culture and society, the more biological succession recedes as the imperative while leaving behind a memetic legacy emerges as the main priority.

The road is a tangible analogy. I've drawn inspiration from its quiet autonomous aesthetic since I can remember; its a distinct physical realization of our perceptions and will to survive together as a species. What allowed for such rapid progress is intrinsically intertwined with our ability to create, communicate and store memes. The categorizing of memes as I have come to understand, is essentially the idea of knowledge itself; encompass tools, languages, art, cultures and even the double fold of toilet paper in public rest rooms. Memes served as the quintessential tool that we alone possessed when we first ventured out of the Savanna and needed warm clothes, more efficient tools to hunt with and shelter. They are still here,, co-evolving with us from our SUV's to our iPhones. The question I am left with after this series is are we a successful species because of our genes and biology? Or are we a symbiotic species relying on an autonomously self replicating force to dictate how we perceive and behave today?

Works Cited Page

- 1) Blackmore, Susan J., Lee Alan Dugatkin, Robert Boyd, and Peter I. Richerson. *The Power of Memes*. New York, 2000. Print.

Reading Blackmore's article I think was most informative to my project in the sense that it gave a very in depth comprehensive deconstruction on what exactly memetics were, as well as an interesting point of view on how far memes have taken us, and where they are leading us to now. Much of the atmosphere and scale relations between elements in my work has been drawn directly from reading this article as well as hearing her speak. Though I do not always agree with her opinion and inferences of our future being so ominous and threatening, no doubt she has reason to at least address the issue.

- 2) "FCJ-017 Material Cultural Evolution: An Interview with Niles Eldredge | The Fibreculture Journal : 03." The Fibreculture Journal. Web. 19 Apr. 2011. <http://journal.fibreculture.org/issue3/issue3_barnet.html>.

This article informed my work by clearly illustrating the distinct differences between memetic's cross lateral movement and development from person to person, to biological heredity which was bound to time and genetics. It used the study of fossils comparatively to Eldredges cornets to depict the freedoms and versatilities of memetic development in comparison to biological development which was more of a one way ladder rather than a cross lateral development. This article gave me a good idea of the scale and speed at which memes have the capability of developing, showing me the raw power of memetic progression and replication.

- 3) "Susan Blackmore on Memes and "temes" | Video on TED.com." TED: Ideas worth Spreading. Web. 19 Apr. 2011. <http://www.ted.com/index.php/talks/susan_blackmore_on_memes_and_temes.html>

Watching this TED talk, I got the chills a bit; Blackmore is a bit scary. Yet she is not so crazy or arbitrary, as her speech came off as an observational heeding for what is to come. Far more atmospheric and opinionated than her article I found a powerful resource to draw from hearing her speak. I attempted to capture that sense of underlying ominous force present in her speech in my prints. I felt a lot of my color choice was inspired by this video article. Her views on more complex memes, "temes" and the dangers we may potentially face in integrating them into our culture captured and paralleled a feeling in which I was trying to convey about the hierarchy of values in culture and society today.





