CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRIDGE

THE ART OF PRAYER
A CONCEPTUAL MULTIPLE PRINT DOCUMENTATION

An abstract submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in

Printmaking

by

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ABSTRACT

THE ART OF PRAYER
A CONCEPTUAL MULTIPLE PRINT DOCUMENTATION

BY
BILLY CHARLES ROGERS
MASTER OF ARTS IN PRINTMAKING

The object of this thesis is to examine briefly the following three statements as expressed in my prints. 1) Art combined with prayer has efficacy. 2) Art aesthetics and prayer aesthetics have a common basis. 3) Seven types of prayer expressed in the Bible relate to conceptual art.

The difficulty of understanding prayer's real efficacy arises chiefly from two sources: the belief that man lives under general laws, which in all cases must be fulfilled unalterably; and the opposing belief that he is master of his own destiny, and need not
pray for any external blessing. These two same issues lie at the heart of art history.

It is the balance or lack of balance in these two fundamental concepts which have produced the many art movements of the past and present. The enlightenment involved raising the epistemological question: how can we know the world and its governing principles? The problem for the artist was what to paint, what to see. How could he achieve any sort of artistic understanding of the world, of humanity, of what he wanted to paint? As art has expressed the philosophical changing winds, it has forgotten that to leave the infinite/personal God of the Bible out of the two fundamental issues - determinism on the one hand, and solipsism on the other, is to create despair, absurdity, and a sense of man's being boxed in.

Since Kant, Hegel, and Kierkegaard, the vision or world view of most art has been altered to exclude any action on the part of a divine creator who is both infinite and personal and can act into His creation. Because of this exclusion, the formula is that of striving for universal absolutes which give meaning, or for the total autonomy of man looking for complete freedom. It seems to have turned on one side or the other. However, prayer not only asserts subjective freedom for the individual, but also it is a means appointed by God for obtaining real objective efficacy as a blessing for man. It is the way of synthesis that so many artists have looked for in their
Prayer in art combines both sides with the actor, God. "A threefold cord is not quickly broken." 1

Determinism means what is right, and man is not any different from non-man. In contrast to determinism, being the master of my own destiny resolves itself ultimately in solipsism which is the reductio ad absurdum of subjectivism. The key to this mystery is prayer that lies in the fact of man's spiritual unity with God in Christ, and of the consequent gift of the Holy Spirit. It is through prayer that I can fight against the tendency of determinism to make man to become less than man, or non-man. And I can work with others to achieve something for the good of all because I can bring in the third part of the triangle, the infinite/personal God who can act into His creation with love. Thus art combined with prayer has efficacy.

The aesthetics on which I base my work is thus found in God's word. "Whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things." 2 This quote covers the art condition of the 20th Century where Duchamp's ready-mades indicated that "whatever" could become a work of art. "Conceptual art completed the break

1 The Bible, Ecclesiastes 4:12b
2 The Bible, Philippians 4:8
with traditional esthetics that the Dadaists, and notably Marcel Duchamp, initiated. Traditional esthetics could not quite recuperate from the assault of the ready-mades.”

In fact, conceptual art has rendered discussion of traditional aesthetics dead. There is simply no point in talking about aesthetics in the same vein as before conceptual art, because the object has been dematerialized. Hence, I profess that there is a need for a new foundation, one however which includes the past as well as the present. The quotation from God gives just that needed foundation. Notice however, it leaves out the absurd, the Nihilistic, the destructive, the despairing, and focuses instead upon that which builds in man from the threefold cord point of view. "Whatever!" Doesn't this include "ready-mades"? and wouldn't it be great if most "ready-mades" tried to fit that standard of truth, honor, justice, purity, loveliness, graciousness, excellence, and anything of praise? I think so.

What does it mean to have whatever I choose to be a work of art? And what does it mean to use truth, honor, justice, purity, loveliness, graciousness, excellence, and that which is worthy of praise as artistic aesthetics? The "whatever" means that I can be free to choose what is art and what is non-art. But in so choosing I must then impose some norms which are both objective as well as subjective about what I have decided to be art. Both "whatever" and the norms have been given from a source outside of myself. I can

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3Ursula Meyer, Conceptual Art, p. IX.
then communicate in prayer about my choices and criteria with the infinite/personal God. I can know what true truth is and apply it to my art. Truth in art means to express the human reality as experienced emotionally, rationally, and spiritually. Hamlet may never have lived, yet Shakespeare has created Hamlet to be true to human character and potential and true to his story and the fullness of his reality. Honesty can be called subjective truth. An artist must show his own insight, his own vision, his own understanding. Picasso gives a clear and consistent statement of his nihilistic view of reality. He is honest to this extent, but does he really show reality in truth?

Honor has to do with the place and function of the art. An honorable judge would not be painted or shown in such a way as to show non-honor of him and his office. If the office or figure were debased to be of no importance, this would not be showing honor.

Purity helps the viewer to see that which is lovely and not the lovelessness which does harm to others. It does not titillate but helps to show the good and beautiful. It protests against the debased and evil.

Loveliness in art is to make the environment around us something of a joy to be in and to design the things around us to be beautiful and fitting to use. It is something that belongs to all of life not just what we may call art, even though much art has no loveliness. Loveliness is expressed in line, form, color, shape, rhythm, sound, rhyme, relationship of words and composition, unity and diversity.
Justice has to do with that which is objective and conforming to reason rather than non-reason or absurdity. It brings into account that which is moral and right. Graciousness is good taste marked by tact and delicacy. Excellence and praise are not the bad, the valueless, the absurd, the disgusting, the revolting, or the sickening. Excellence and praise are a by-product of love, joy, and freedom. These qualities make the world a better place. We can not love universally, for that is only a dim non-love, but rather we love specifically and thus make the right, and fitting, and lovely thing of art for our fellow man.

Seven types of prayer expressed in the Bible relate to conceptual art as described in my prints. I have used the 5 basic printing techniques to express each type. There was overlap on two types. I used linocuts, etchings, lithographs, serigraphs, and photographs to document my concepts. Seven seems to be a trademark of God: seven days in the week, seven colors in a rainbow. Seven types of prayer are praise, confession, blessing, thanksgiving, supplication, intercession, and imprecation. There are many examples of each of these as individual prayers as well as many where two or more are combined to communicate the desired need to God. I have chosen the concept of prayer because it fits the ideas of conceptual art. I simply pray, that is think thoughts, and thus the action and object is dematerialized. Since conceptual art is based upon linguistic philosophy and particularly Ludwig Wittgenstein's Tractatus, which has a "curious kind of arid mysticism," documentation is part of the concept,
Wittgenstein maintained that there are things of which one cannot speak. This view is an essential part of all mysticism. The difference between my work and other conceptual art is that of command, rather than insinuation. The conceptual nature of my work as connected in life and art history is expressed in this quotation: "And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by men. Truly, I say to you, they have their reward. But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you." Notice the dematerialization of the object as well as of the action. In keeping with the approach of conceptual art, my prints are documentations. They could best be described like the renderings done before a building is built. "Done in my closet," the original watercolor and egg tempera paintings, or photographs, or drawings were only a sharpening of my prayer thoughts. I envisioned how I wanted a situation or person to be built up or changed, thus as the vision took shape in my head and on paper, the paper became a documentation that I had prayed that prayer for that specific thing. Like the architect whose rendering of a forthcoming building is a visualization or documentation of his idea, the rendering is not the work of art. The building to be built is the work of art. Of course, the rendering is more or less artistic in its line, form, color, etc., but the work of art is the

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4The Bible, Matthew 6:5-6.
completed building. That is the same with my prayer pictures. The effect of prayer in the lives of those I pray for is the work of art, not the pictures I paint. The prints are only documents that I have prayed. Conceptual artists have usually been successful in documenting actions as they occur. A recent example was Christo's "Running Fence." However, I have taken a very important step. I have documented events before the event.

Specifically, my series of supplication and intercession (Figures 13-18) have been especially rewarding in this area of documentation before the event. As I visualized various person's lives and situations changed, God acted and their lives were built up. The Suite of Praise (Figures 1-3) is designed to give God glory for acting in history. I chose the miracles of Jesus as situations to remember. I chose to make those bright and joyful to express the fullness of the rainbow of color. The line and form used give an impression of sketches, as indeed the original watercolor visualizations were.

In the confession series (Figures 4-6), interpersonal relationships were expressed with line and a rainbow of color over the entire suite. The space almost seems to be thrusting outward to the viewer rather than receding into the subject. The point seems to be reaching out. Confession of inner feelings and thoughts to another gives a spectrum of warmness and color to relationships. By adding one specific to many, we arrive at the universal. Picasso's method of trying by substracting or abstracting one from one to get the absolute universal doesn't work.
I don't have to find the universal structure behind the motif, as Cezanne tried to realize, in order to understand and find meaning to that which is all around me. Through prayer, I can change nature. I can alter nature with love and softness, knowing it to be God's creation. The warmth of spring and trees and leaves as well as the cool of winter are expressed in the shapes and shades of color in my Blessing Suite (Figures 7-9).

In the Thanksgiving Suite (Figures 10-12), I am not alone and completely subjective in my attempts to find meaning in life. The horizontal format indicates that relationships have meaning. I am thankful for many people in my life. My prayers grow from history and praise to thanksgiving for others. I find freedom in expressing thanksgiving.

In supplication (Figures 13-15), I cry to God for change. I am hazy sometimes because I'm not sure of what to ask for, but I sense there is a need. I am assured that in my weakness the Holy Spirit helps me by interceding for me in deep sighs too deep for words, according to the will of God. I do not have to feel hopeless and express black humor or participate in the absurd meaningless personal statements against others in order to change that which I want changed.

Some people want and need to have their lives changed but don't know how to pray. I intercede for them. I help them change their reality. I try to carry their burdens, thus changing their lives. I can build for them temples of beauty. I can visualize bright exciting colors for their lives as well as white purity and warm healing in the Intercession Suite (Figures 16-18).
Imprecation is the last resort (Figures 19-21). It is used only with love and care as a corrective measure. It is a protest against the blackness of the situation. It is waging the war! It is fighting the battle against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.
CONCLUSION

I have been overjoyed to find that most of my concepts have become actions of God in the lives of those I've prayed for. However, some are still in the will of God's plan for their lives. I find prayer a completely rewarding experience. The one example of the most exciting joy was in the process of changing one person's life from a life of crime, alcoholism, suicide, mental hospitals, heroin, drugs of all kinds, to a life of beauty, peace, love, joy, self-control, patience, goodness, faithfulness, and gentleness. Through combining several types of prayer (Figures 19, 16, 10) she was freed of her bondage to become the work of art she was meant to become. God doesn't make junk! As in my print of the nude ascending the stairs, (Figure 22) she was renewed, and healed, and clothed and is now beautiful. As walking on the water is an act of faith (Figure 23), so it is with prayer in the midst of the history of art. I choose to worship God in the service of others (Figure 24) through "The Art of Prayer" (Figure 25).
BIBLIOGRAPHY

A-ayla, Mario, Pop Art... And After, New York, The Viking Press, 1972.


Schaeffer, Francis A., He is There and He is Not Silent, Illinois, Tyndale House Publishers, 1972.


PRAISE SERIES:

Figure 1: "Praise IV"; Reductive Linocut; 22" x 15"*8 colors, Black, White, Ochre, Red, Dark Red, Purple, Blue, Flesh; Type Face is 12 pt. Garamond Bold, set solid spacing **; 20 in edition.

*All prints in all series measure 22" x 15".

**All type in all the series is set in 12 pt. Garamond Bold with solid spacing.
Praise IV

By Bob Ragan

I make your garments

in the dark of the night.

My Lord, and so the things

Though I have sought me

With the Fisher

and the upright.

Your soul and joying in me.

my kisses

mothers to my growth.

I am a man of ages

I thought I found you.

now can I not find you

marked her

poor's Capacity.
Figure 2: "In Jesus Fall in Love"; Reductive Linocut; 4 colors, Black, White, Green, Ochre, and Brown; 20 in edition.
In Jesse Hall in vase

By Bob Drigan

Would I remember him
If I met him today?
If he were
Not so fast in coming?
Could I recall his face?
How far away from here?
When he was at home or in camp,
Or at sea?
What is time to love?
You make a new friend
And afterwards part company
Yet keep the soul of a brother
And hating situation
And living place.

My brother I tell you name is love,
Chosen friend of mine.
Fall in love again with love when
Remembering where
When you were at home or in camp
Or a child want to go.
Bob Drigan
With your name on no brother's name.
Figure 3: "Praise VI"; Reductive Linocut; 4 colors, Yellow, Orange, Gray and Brown; 20 in edition.
Poem VI

By Burt Rogers

Through I've known the terror of shadow,
And I am the light,
Yet slowly we two
Through it have passed in the heart of a hill.

Always hand in hand
Brave a storm in a dance.

From a height
Through the branches,
All up the sky he held a cup,
Pouring its wine, a promise
Of promise's green apron.

And now all the din, your head,
She, I make your own hands
The world around, more of my fare.
And can nothing.
CONFESSION SERIES:

Figure 4: "A Sunrise Experience"; Intagilo Etching with viscosity, 2 colors, Brown and Orange; 25 in edition.
A home experience

By Jack Rogers

Over the mountains love clave this day.
New frontier
with wakening
Who are you?
Pink pulses in your cheeks wash you up,
Hopefully wasting
When are you?
Golden glow spread out here and there.
I find ways
to show you
The ways
Pastor, Woman, What windows we share.
Touch me
with wakening

I love you.

Complexity of life as food a robust growing
lack, I want
by the glow
of your love.

Explains of wonder in both of us knowing
both.

Don't be misleading
You love me.

Each morning of morning marks midnight's reverse.
There are
so many people.

The moment when experience is the light when you learn
the greater gift's here.
Love is God.

Your kisses are warm.
Our sister, my love. Ah! Yes!
Greeting. I love you!
Figure 5: "Of a Leaf"; Intagilo Etching with viscosity, 2 colors, Brown and Red; 25 in edition.
O Leaf

By Beth Bogart

I listened on a leaf,
And entered into my thought's uqorge.
All animals are from the tree.
My view could drink, it removed
Two large blocks of white light,
Insufficient to touch the leaf's
Governing page of white light.
When did I stop to read one of the leaf?
What light can reach one of the leaf?
How can I reach the leaf?
What blocks of white light can these?
These may be persons of life.
People in the leaf and then on the earth.
Write down the thoughts of any things.
What light can reach you from the leaf?
Build the leaf's thoughts to touch the
Agnostic words with all your positive might.
By placing your thoughts and nothing
You will see for yourself that good feelings
Look physical and spiritual into and return
to the leaf for more about God than you can hear.
Figure 6: "On Lake Kaweah"; Intagilo Etching with viscosity, 2 colors, Brown and Blue; 25 in edition.
On Love

by Beth Bogert

We wandered with a devil who came to衔 with our love, 
across the thin and eager wrapped around 
and pursued the power 
of currents that energy flow.
Whose had the dirt and stench to love meant losing, 
and the reach of hands with feet's wound.
Where was our soul?

We were hoped and sustained 
in trust and patience lay 
thieving, whispering, and heifers have feelings 
glimered in tale caused.

He killed apple 
the apple of her eye, 
they sorrows away 
the touch we'd made in understanding how love or mate or whole.
The nanomissed in fascination 
in love's cutting form to seek and come 
the apple of her eye but our souls to dance, 
such as she did, 

But not such we understood, 
the feelings, gape and voice in homogenization 
that founds for greater understanding of mankind, 
of good and evil.

During autumn days of Kwan's books 
now and then in every so though our books have gained revolutions numbers 
from a home with the devil that was overcome.
Our love, made one, while we screw life's kale 
in the track line for now, we know 

Our souls hunt as one, child of God, unafraid we cherish each other.
BLESSING SERIES:

Figure 7: "Love Binds Entropy"; Photo silk-screen; 4 colors, Light Gray Yellow, Light Brown, Light Olive, and Brown; 25 in edition.
Love Birds Energy

By Bob Rogers

Against the forest's houses
of illumination
a clearing place
and a mirror
shinning purely in sunlight.

This who also
without knowing it
and seeing us
right back in pair?

Why any good
than a cold fire
within the clouds
and snowing in with hope.

Nothing for the Lord
never waved.
Figure 8: "Whisper Over Roaring River"; Photo silk-screen; 4 colors, Light Green, Light Blue, Light Gray Red, and Olive Brown, 25 in edition.
Whispers Over Roaring River

By Beth Rogers

Roaring River
under the blankets
grape and spray
behind Edward
a colony of men
for whom the river burns
in ditches, in the wind
as I spread some resting hand
which surrounds the leaves
or summer for the soul
for a time when what happens is
Figure 9: "A Daughter is Only Borrowed"; Photo silk-screen; 4 colors, Light Blue, Light Gray Purple, Light Brown, and Gray Brown; 25 in edition.
A Daughter in Daily Harrison

by Ruth Rogers

| First cry |  
| First step |  
| First wipe |  
| First tooth |  
| First set of teeth |  
| First taste of sweet |  
| First sight of sea |  
| First red |  
| First day of school |  
| First teacher |  
| First friend |  
| First song |  
| First picture |  
| First letter |  
| First meal |  
| First bath |  
| First day of winter |  
| First snow |  
| First frost |  
| First kiss |  
| First day of school |  
| First teacher |  
| First friend |  
| First song |  
| First picture |  
| First letter |  
| First meal |  
| First bath |  
| First day of winter |  
| First snow |  
| First frost |  
| First kiss |
THANKSGIVING SERIES:

Figure 10: "My Sister's Temple"; Lithograph; 1 color, gray; 20 in edition.
My Sister’s Temple

by Beth Rogers

Our friendship is a sample of the Lord's
work and excellence.

We share in both and both the peace and
the joy that come from the heart.

We share in the hearing of God's
word, in the living of God's
truth, and in the sharing of God's
love.

We share in the joy of God's
darling, delight.

Our relationship is a
sample of the Lord's
work and excellence.

We share in both and both the peace and
the joy that come from the heart.

We share in the hearing of God's
word, in the living of God's
truth, and in the sharing of God's
love.

We share in the joy of God's
darling, delight.

To God be the glory, for Jesus Christ is
the Lord. Amen.

In Christ we join hands to
lift up God and a nation
in prayer and thanksgiving.
Figure 11: "All Praise Allowed"; Lithograph; 1 color, gray; 20 in edition.
Inside My Teenager

by Bob Rogers

Keep me separate from:
- your church
- my church
- my father's name
- your church
- church of St. John
- church of St. Paul
- church of St. Peter
- church of St. Paul's
- church of St. John's
- church of St. Mary
- church of St. Andrew

and you're there's why
I find your love here.
This time would be all alone
within the church.
That makes you, Decaf!
Figure 12: "Inside My Teenager"; Lithograph; 1 color, gray; 20 in edition.
All Prizes Allowed

by Beth Rogow

Communion

acted upon no one

without the chance upon

the many

we create

to change each other in

ways that are good and

true, and all

the little and the large

we must overcome to

grow in perspective of.

I lift one hand

and ring around

the cup, and one touch

I hold on to:

You are now my kind.

loving goodness present in
different expressions

of our kindness.

依旧 each of us the

to go on in perspective of God.
SUPPLICATION SERIES:

Figure 13: "Somebody's Daisy"; 4 Plate Photo Etchings, Surface Printed; 4 process colors (mixed to give variations of the 4 basic colors, Yellow, Red, Blue, Black); 20 in edition.
Figure 14: "When Little Joys are Big"; 4 Plate Photo Etchings, Surface Printed; 4 process colors (mixed to give variations of the 4 basic colors, Yellow, Red, Blue, Black); 20 in edition.
When Lolly Just Ain’t Big
by Ruth Rogers

When little you were big once,
reverencing the sky,
When they made you folks small,
When they made you folks small,
You began to shuffle in,
The nation is a case in point,
Childlike you are little things.
When we grow up, we’re small.
And we can do a lot of things.
Their appearance never lasts,
They are, after all,
Or children are in many things.
Figure 15: "Interlude"; 4 Plate Photo Etchings, Surface Printed; 4 process colors (mixed to give variations of the 4 basic colors, Yellow, Red, Blue, Black) 20 in edition.
Interlude
by Beth Rogers

Turn around
Mutter
or a scream
of me why
Love songs were written
or maybe listened
made every
as hard as one
or that one
or that one
my way of
unarmed to
my own soul
in my eyes

memory to hear

From those years

Real or other

For just a part of

It is not true

Suppose the nothing

For growing on.
INTERCESSION SERIES:

Figure 16: "Come Sister"; Photo silk-screen; 4 colors of warm gray; 25 in edition.
Figure 17: "Will We Make It?"; Photo silk-screen; 4 colors, Peach, Gray Red, Olive, Dark Olive; 25 in edition.
To A New Old Friend

by Bobbi Roger

Behold, the new year is here,
Old things are passed away.
I have known this year,
But I'm willing to accept
And find the new.

Once I was lost in the maze,
I also changed.
God is the same constant,
I must not lose.
I can't go back again.
The way we go.
This you give me,
And now,
Mary was a princess,
John and Jesus knew,
We live in darkness.
Figure 18: "To a New Old Friend"; Photo silk-screen; 4 colors, Yellow, Orange, Red, Gray; 25 in edition.
Will We Make It?
by Beth Rogers

Our
carrying
and
must
we
we'll
give
up.

I'll

when

leaving

the

we'll

be

love.
IMPRERATION SERIES:

Figure 19: "Delivered"; Photo black on silver print with embossing; 10 in edition.
Delivered

by Bok Rogers

Chimpanzees

my blood

is now

with snakes into drugs,
now gold

and the pain

will grow

brushed from

imprisoned in her own

two-way mirrors

Phenomena great screech

of radio

from the same

Tongue

Tongue

of frozen flutes

Do you want to know

what is happening

in that

howling

of air

her two

in dust packed

for her

If I or that dance in light

nothing will

who even be if we live.

In the event

Mona

Make an entry, live

The best is over and some day they

whenever misses the things.
Figure 20: "Fresh Breath"; Photo black on silver print with embossing; 10 in edition.
From Bead

By Bob Rogers

Some things to the face

push in bloomer

one thing, one thing

make factories call square

from the flower bed of the mind

all these products

making

two corners

one square

to corn and grain,

in the cloud, the cloud

Bringing up the spirits

of the Lord
Figure 21: "Choose Life or Death!"; Photo black on silver print with embossing; 10 in edition.
Famine nothing
two and two,
no conclusion
in meaning of time and chance.

A page turning
a page turning
nothing becomes
growing and growing.

Your I am God
for you to stay
and make life whole.

Once Life in Death

By Beth Rogers
PRINTS OF CONCLUSION:

Figure 22: "I Counsel You..."; Reductive Linocut; 28" x 22";
5 colors, Cream, Yellow, Red, Brown, and Black;
24 in edition.
Figure 23: "Foot Washing"; Reductive Linocut; 27 1/4" x 22"; 15 colors (colors printed around color wheel); 25 in edition.
Figure 24: "You Have Played..."; Reductive Linocut; 27 1/4" x 22"; 12 colors (first three colors printed split fountain), 22 in edition.
Figure 25: "Come Pray with Us"; 4 Photo plate intaglio etching; 4 basic process colors, Yellow, Red, Blue, and Black; (edition not pulled).