Sans entre nous

Nancy Flemm

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sans entre nous

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rochester institute of technology
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the college of imaging arts and sciences
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abstract

2000 ushered in an era of immediate visibility and messaging, that cultivated an idealized social identity while destroying ones personal identity, who we are isn’t as important as how we appear. society greatly encourages a detachment from the self in order to obtain public perfection. sans entre nous’ quadrigeminal collection visually dialogues identity struggles depicted through our unconscious sensory reactions. the innovative methodologies of intaglio-type printmaking magnify the subject in depth and texture. by virtue of imagery and medium, sans entre nous succeeds in exemplifying the need for self acceptance.
Acknowledgements

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exhibition images

**visual impressions series**

*tiffany*  
debossed intaglio-type print, 7 x 7", 2004.

*victoria*  
debossed intaglio-type print, 7 x 7", 2004.

*iman*  
debossed intaglio-type print, 7 x 7", 2004.

*farrah*  
debossed intaglio-type print, 7 x 7", 2004.

*donatella*  
debossed intaglio-type print, 7 x 7", 2004.

*vera*  
debossed intaglio-type print, 7 x 7", 2004.

**exposed tears series**

*feminal reflection:*  
*angelic prick*  
constructed intaglio-type print, 16½ x 21½", 2004.

*physical reflection:*  
*curseit*  
constructed intaglio-type print, 21 x 12", 2004.

*social reflection:*  
*artificial beauty*  
constructed intaglio-type print, 12 x 21", 2004.

*mystical reflection:*  
*bridle exchange*  
constructed intaglio-type print, 16½ x 21½", 2004.

*emotional reflection:*  
*lockit*  
constructed intaglio-type print, 21 x 12", 2004.

**classified packaging series**

*miracle food*  
intaglio-type print, 7 x 7", 2004.

*what women are made of*  
intaglio-type print, 10½ x 5¼", 2004.

*marital trap*  
intaglio-type print, 10½ x 5¼", 2004.

*nut cracker*  
intaglio-type print, 7 x 7", 2004.

*beauty seen, not heard*  
intaglio-type print, 7 x 7", 2004.

*decant her*  
intaglio-type print, 10½ x 5¼", 2004.

*shaping conformity*  
intaglio-type print, 10½ x 5¼", 2004.

*on the rocks*  
intaglio-type print, 7 x 7", 2004.

**feminine preserves series**

*goodie jar*  
giclée print, 4 x 5", 2004.

*milk jugs*  
giclée print, 3 x 3", 2004.

*nectar carafe*  
giclée print, 3 x 7", 2004.
conceptual conception

chapter 1
chapter 1 | conceptual conception (introduction)

1.1 | purpose

nancy flemm's *sans entre nous* confronts a distorted sense of self, created and perpetuated through the social construction of identity. the projected values of society influence identity not by who we are, but who we aren't; not by what we have, but by what we lack. an incessant search for wholeness produces an unrecognizable self and a sense of isolation from the society we covet.

1.2 | basis

when alone surrounded by deafening silence, do you hear voices? do they judge you? dissect you? torture you? most do. it's when we're defining our sense of self that we inflict the most damage. *sans entre nous* quadrigeminal collection is a visual interrogation of self-identity, comprised of three-parts observation and one-part conclusion.

series one, visible impressions questions the external image. series two, exposed tears pits the private self against public expectations. series three, classified packaging sells everyday ideals. series four, feminine preserves encourages preservation.

buddhists believe avidya is not only the denial of facts about oneself and the world, but also a projection onto the world of something not originally there. today's society has an ingrained, idealized system of measuring self-worth that distorts reality.

1.3 | imagery

*sans entre nous* wades through simplistic body forms and/or narrative cultural iconology to uncover the elements used to construct identity. layers of thought-provoking images are used to reach those hidden recesses of emotional frailty.

an interpretive installation plan guides the viewer into a 360° introspective exhibition. the viewer is surrounded in artwork emulating the internalizing voices we hear when processing thoughts, feelings and messages. full immersion in one's emotional process fosters a deep engagement with the dissection of one's self.

1. leifer m.d., ron. *the happiness project*, canada: snow lion, 1997. 188.

2. interpretive planner points out how placement of artwork can shape the message of an exhibition, and influence visitors interpretations.
visible impressions contrasts visual dissection and individual and societal perspectives through classic body images with debossed textures. debossed textures reflect the vaporous quality of identity.

exposed tears combats internalized feelings through fragmented body images and torn layers. recessed vignettes of dolls, decipher obvious and obscure struggles of idyllic obedience.

classified packaging projects the messaging of everyday society with household consumables. capricious, story book images narrate subconscious societal messaging.

feminine preserves provokes a valuation of body images to ascertain the scope of societal compliance. glass receptacles housing images encourage the viewer to look, appreciate, define and foster a reassuring sense of identity.

1.4 | medium

originally used as a basic form of communication, printmaking has shaped culture in all parts of the world and has had a profound impact on art. many artists have influenced printmaking, such as chuck close, salvador dalí, albrecht dürer [figure 1a], m.c. escher [figure 1b], francisco goya, james abbott, m’neill whistler, edward hopper, henri matisse, edvard munch, joan miró, pablo picasso, rembrandt harmensoon van rijn, henri de toulouse-lautrec [figure 1c], cy twombly and andy warhol. as history leads to innovation, the merits of printmaking are being increasingly challenged. today, contemporary printmaking’s technology-rich methods struggle to find validation in the world of fine art. sans entre nous both by virtue of its imagery and medium echoes printmaking’s desire for acceptance.

flemm’s attraction to contemporary printmaking entails its combination of tradition, innovation, experimentation and imagination. printmaking’s intrinsic capacity for change leads to unkown possibilities. in the the mid-1980s, non-toxic methodologies were developed and substantiated to ensure safer and healthier environmental choices. intaglio-type has consistently evolved with the diversity to create an anomalous artistic signature. sans entre nous pushed the boundaries of etching and uncovered a new technique, construction intaglio-type [chapter 3; page 16]. the growth and discovery of this process demonstrates that who we are is yet to be discovered.
sans entre nous’ three observational series [visible impressions, exposed tears and classified packaging] explore intaglio-types handcrafted medium for its ability to unify a collection with one singular process yet develop each series with a signature technique. the giclée³ process was chosen for the concluding series [feminine preserves], to give the feeling of early 20th-century propaganda posters. the sharp juxtaposition between reality and actuality is meant to highlights one’s self-sabotage.

fine art photography, was originally seen as an aid to painting or sculpture. joseph nicéphore niépce, louis-jacques-mandé daguerre, james clerk maxwell, and eadweard muybridge lay the foundation for art photography. as julia margaret cameron, edward steichen, ansel adams, minor white and bill brandt pushed photography into fine art. the prevalence of digital photography has called the integrity of the craft into question.

photographic storytelling captured with nudes and ordinary objects reveals secret regions hidden from society. following 20th-century photographic aesthetics, the close-up view of the body is abstracted by the subversion of scale and focus on form, surface and light. the nude is less about the individual and more an expression of form. flemm views the depiction of the nude as a metaphor for mankind’s redemptive effort to regain the state of innocence. dolls and household objects, as playthings and as feminine tools, are layered to idealize humankind’s cultural aspirations. through visual minimalism the movement, energy and uncertainty of identity is suggested.

1.5 | influences

flemm’s admiration for artists who aren’t afraid to get dark, greatly influenced sans entre nous. the oxymoron of hideous beauty drives the frightening and fascinating psychological undertones in this collection. for flemm, the concealment of imperfection is far more compelling than perfection.

edgar allen poe and j.d. salinger’s tortured lives and twisted pens reveal a frightening yet exhilarating world. their literary styles move the reader from the quotidian to a transcendent world of hidden meaning and authentic if gritty exploration.

edward westin’s compositions of everyday subjects are unexpected [figure 1d]. modernist landscapes, bold nudes, and abstracted studies of shells and vegetables offer the viewer a new understanding of form, light and space.

figure 1d. edward weston (b. 1886). shell, 1927.

3. pronounced zhee-clay. giclée is the process of making fine art prints from a digital source using ink-jet printing. giclée is derived from the french “gicleur,” which means “to spray.”
cy twombly’s mark making invades silent space [figure 1e] filling it with lyrical expression. his ability to define through absence insists upon an emotional quality in color, line and form.

flemm’s first tactile exposure to printmaking came from the brazen founder of chicago printmakers collaborative, deborah lader. her fearless use of non-toxic printmaking and unapologetic art resonates with taboo psychological undertones [figure 1f]. photography, printmaking, drawing, painting and construction collaborate the beauty of urban decay.

in 2001, three-quarters of the way through this very thesis, flemm fell in soul mate love with the artwork of joel-peter witkin. his complex tableaux transcends human form to find beauty in the grotesque often cast aside by society [figure 1g]. his masterful control of concept, environment and hand-crafted execution transforms our perspective on the human condition.
visible impressions

chapter 2
chapter 2 | visible impressions

2.1 basis

visible impressions, uncovers the illusion of identity. society instantly defines who we are in terms of what it sees, which engenders artificial aspirations and perpetual ambivalence. how we appear becomes more important than who we are. the external impression society constructs impacts one’s thoughts and bodily reactions. the media perpetuates our infatuation with superficial facades, placing value on packaging over content.

barbara crane and edward weston explore the fine line between content and packaging. crane demonstrates with oversaturated lighting that the human form can be reduced to a simple, nondescript line [figure 2a]. weston demonstrates how with soft delicate lighting, a pepper can appear to take on human form [figure 2b-2c]. identification is linked to how an individual interprets, recognizes and correlates. experiences contribute to the development of self and inform the interpretation of what one sees. in different packaging, content is altered.

2.2 medium

techniques used in this series highlight the fluidity between subjective and objective points of view. the visible impressions series use the obscure nature of abstract photography, intaglio-type and blind texture to explore the frailty of ones emotional state.

influenced by aristotle's metaphysical claim that “the whole is different from the sum of its parts”4. fragmented photography captures the immediacy of being in front of the camera, scrutinized, forced to reveal unadulterated truths. however these truths are as concealed in isolation. the body detached from the whole as square excerpts are unreadable masking nationality, values, beliefs, tastes, personality and social standing. imagination fills the unknown with personal projections.

judgments of identity are largely based on a visual dissection of what one sees. omitting wardrobes on film and adding tactile wardrobes in print, removes a layer of visibility. blind debossing leaves ambiguous undertones to be defined by the viewer and his or her experiences. in ronald king's artist book, turn over darling, wire is blind embossed creating matisse-like images [figure 2b]. king demonstrates the universal identity of female form in society.

Pierre Radisic’s photography demonstrates the transparency of subject and provides a representation of the ultrastructures as well as structures and textures that exist in living things [Figure 2e]. Ruffles, creases and bulges form an imaginative and organic new language. Through intaglio-type processes, uncomplicated images fuse the love and chaos we feel in our bodies, provocative images, although they are revealing, conceal the certainty of identity.

2.3 Analysis

The visible impression series depicts the inconsistency of positive self-evaluation and emotional security, brought on by a quest for societal approval. Perception is largely influenced by one’s own experiences or their peripheral view of society’s experiences. Debossed textures drape the human form in elements void of color, brand, substrate. Concealing changes how one views the physical which informs who one is. The epitome of American culture is a facade. By removing what we cover ourselves with, the surface layers by which society can judge us are reduced. The more important things become, the less important we become. Visible impressions demonstrate that we are more than we appear. We are not possessed by our possessions.

The prints use names of exclusive department stores, elite designers and top models to sensationalize the obvious. Tiffany [Figure 2f] appears to be adorned with a conservative strand of white pearls. Associations skew to classic, dependable and perhaps frigid. But in reality this is a portrait of a spontaneous woman who obtained Mardi Gras multi-colored beads in New Orleans. With a little creative editing and a strategically chosen title, the truth is concealed.

A wardrobe isn’t worn on the inside yet this series imprints indentations of clothing visible from beneath the skin, leaving the impression that clothing and accessories are as innate as one’s DNA. The body becomes a reliquary of invisible assets that define the intrinsic vapor of identity.

Visible impressions explore the myriad aspects of identity. Tiffany [Figure 2f] and Donatella [Figure 2g] portray frivolity and conservatism, featuring Mardi Gras beads and “mom” jeans. Vera [Figure 2h] and Farrah [Figure 2i] explore reality and fantasy, with a nurse’s scrub and a $10 holiday costume. Iman [Figure 2j] and Victoria [Figure 2k] explore practicality and sexiness as opposites using a girdle and lacy panties.
figure 2f, Tiffany.
debossed intaglio-type print, 7 x 7", 2004.

figure 2g, Donatella.
debossed intaglio-type print, 7 x 7", 2004.

figure 2h, Vera.
debossed intaglio-type print, 7 x 7", 2004.

figure 2i, Farrah.
debossed intaglio-type print, 7 x 7", 2004.

figure 2j, Iman.
debossed intaglio-type print, 7 x 7", 2004.

figure 2k, Victoria.
debossed intaglio-type print, 7 x 7", 2004.
exposed tears
chapter 3
chapter 3 | exposed tears

3.1 basis

exposed tears, represents the epic battle between the private and public self. the scrutiny of an image-oriented culture forges a struggle between who we are and who society wants us to be. fairy tale stories and flawless images fuel insecurities, as advertising swoops in with fanciful promises to make the ordinary, extraordinary. our infatuation with image generates self-doubt and prompts a public pseudo-persona.

salvador dalí [figure 3a], rené margritte [figure 3b] and hans bellmer’s [figure 3c] surrealist approach was an intellectual revolution brought on by the need to protest and rebel against conventional attitudes in cultural practices. in surrealism the body is typically depersonalized and fragmented. the presentation of the body as an empty shell that can be dismembered problematizes the unity of an identity based on the body.

3.2 medium

the techniques used in exposed tears reinforce the powerlessness one feels in the face of society’s insistence that we identify with others. the exposed tears series fuses the complexity of modern photography, the construction of intaglio-type and à la poupée\(^5\) inking to examine the culturally propagated insecurities that trouble the superficial surface of our public image. the combined techniques actualize an identity within an identity.

rarely are humans more vulnerable than when naked or more exposed than when their true feelings are discovered. modern photography, with its voyeuristic undertones, encases bodyscapes within a white border, putting the private self on public display for scrutiny, dissection and objectification. breaking through the skin, vignettes of contorted dolls expose our emotional recesses.

contemporary printmakers experiment with techniques that amplify the character of its subjects. nancy diessner drew and scratched the print plate in order to reinforce her narratives [figure 3d], in much the same way, flenn’s exposed tears series heightens surface drama and emulates wear by marring the print plate. construction intaglio-type techniques involved layered, ripped and torn imagon to create the dimension and textures of flesh wounds.

\(^5\) à la poupée entails inking a single plate with many colors. à la poupée is derived from the french “poupée,” which means doll.
body images and doll vignettes were delineated with an à la poupée technique to render a suffocating vignette within a warm body. Heavily applying blue ink to the doll vignette yielded a darker, richer toned effect. A scant application of brown ink on the body image yielded a softer, more demure effect.

3.3 analysis

By portraying the introspective conflict between private and public bodyscapes, exposed tears illustrates the uncertainty of self in the context of societal expectations. The cultural standards that lure, alter and shape ambition also contort, obscure and mask reality. As the outer self is defined, an inner vulnerability is exposed. Iconic dolls represent subjectification by means of societal conditioning. The motives behind the conditioning are portrayed through satirical imagery.

Homophones were chosen for print names to reinforce the need for context. The duality of who we are and who society wants us to be causes internal conflicts. Feminal reflection: Angelic Prick [figure 3e] addresses the opposition between a “good” image and “devilish” intentions. A doll with fly’s wings pinned to its shoulder shows how easily we can be deceived into believing “bad” is “good”.

Exposed tears reflects on society’s expectations in both public and private environments. Physical reflection: Curse It [figure 3f], deals with the conflict between the physical and the emotional. Social reflection: Artificial Beauty [figure 3g], is the battle between actual and fictional. Mystical reflection: Bridle Exchange [figure 3h] that between responsibility and nonchalance. Emotional reflection: Lock It [figure 3i] that between boldness and prudence. Traditional reflection: Expectant [figure 3j] that between selflessness and selfishness.

Figure 3d, Nancy Diessner (b. 1962). Finding the Sky (detail), photopolymer intaglio print, 2009.
figure 3e, physical reflection: cursed. construction intaglio-type print, 21 x 12", 2004.

figure 3f, physical reflection: cursed. construction intaglio-type print, 21 x 12", 2004.

figure 3g, social reflection: artificial beauty. construction intaglio-type print, 12 x 21", 2004.

figure 3h, mystical reflection: bridle exchange. construction intaglio-type print, 16 1/2 x 21 1/2", 2004.


figure 3j, traditional reflection: expectant. construction intaglio-type print, 16 1/2 x 21 1/2", 2004.
4.1 basis

classified packaging illustrates the satirical paradigm *what we see makes us who we are*. Societal iconology sells everyday ideals through everyday consumables. The products we choose become an intrinsic part of who we are. Belongings become more than property; they become symbols of our identity. Marketed to appeal to our weaknesses, consumer products, when collected, take on a seemingly moral weight.

André Kertész’s [figure 4a-4b] modernistic view of the commonplace captures the quiet traditions of the everyday by focusing our attention on images that are seemingly unimportant. The growth and development of our character is shaped by our environment and the products within it. Securities and insecurities are reaffirmed by what seem to be inconsequential product choices.

4.2 medium

Techniques used in classified packaging exposes the power and importance society assigns to products. Classified packaging uses advertising photography and intaglio-type to take a satirical look at ourselves through our things.

Influenced by the beauty and perfection of advertising photography, Flemm styled household products to suggest the “perfection” of advertising photography on societal ideals. A medicine cabinet served as the reliquary for this series, suggesting an intimate relationship between pain and a medicated society. Classified packaging elicits glamour and the desire for luxury consumer goods.

Konstantin Chmutin’s vacuous environment captures the subtlety in form [figure 4c]. The simplicity of composition and vast abyss of space intimidate the viewer with a quiet alluring beauty. Through the rich velvety nature of intaglio-type the classified packaging series is resonant of superiority and an authoritative aesthetic. Warm Van Dyke brown inks suggest nostalgia and wisdom in the messages.

4.3 analysis

classified packaging utilizes household products to portray unhealthy cultural standards that come to define what we see. Marketing messages are sophisticated, pervasive and aimed directly at our insecurity. Fear pushes us to find solace in products that we are told can improve the ordinary. This series attempts to put into conflict the conscious and unconscious messaging in everyday life.

classified packaging examines products in your home and the subminimal messages they impart. Sabotaged by the socially constructed value system, identity is overlaid with delusional ideals. The need for self-acceptance causes identity to be dependent on commercial products for its wholeness.

The descriptive print titles are meant to suggest stereotypical taunts. Miracle food [figure 4d] manufactures the insecurity then "medicates" it with chocolate. What women are made of [figure 4e] gives the formula for success with an expiration date. Marital trap [figure 4f] attempts to make us believe we can find ourselves in others. Nut cracker [figure 4g] offers us the chance to be assertive then crushingly rescinds the offer. Beauty seen, not heard [figure 4h] displays lust rather than love. Decant her [figure 4i] exemplifies courage under the influence. Shaping conformity [figure 4j] showcases natural form over fleeting function. On the rocks [figure 4k] celebrates revenge as a motive for success.
**figure 4d.** miracle food.  
intaglio-type print, 7 x 7", 2004.

**figure 4e.** what women are made of.  
intaglio-type print, 10½ x 5¼", 2004.

**figure 4f.** marital trap.  
intaglio-type print, 10½ x 5¼", 2004.

**figure 4g.** nut cracker.  
intaglio-type print, 7 x 7", 2004.

**figure 4h.** beauty seen, not heard.  
intaglio-type print, 7 x 7", 2004.

**figure 4i.** decant her.  
intaglio-type print, 10½ x 5¼", 2004.

**figure 4j.** shaping conformity.  
intaglio-type print, 10½ x 5¼", 2004.

**figure 4k.** on the rocks.  
intaglio-type print, 7 x 7", 2004.
feminine preserves

chapter 5
chapter 5 | feminine preserves

5.1 basis

feminine preserves encourages the preservation of identity. every individual experiences the dynamic of defining him or herself. we look to career, family, appearance, clothes, home, possessions, class, and education to provide our identity. what cannot be contextualized is vulnerable.

society shapes the way we view the outer world and our role within it. the saying “ignorance is bliss” asserts that what you don’t know can’t affect your view of the world. feminine preserves is supportive of the decision to break the destructive pattern of self-scrutiny and challenge the traditional components of “identity.”

rebecca mccannell’s unknown [figure 5a] masterfully illustrates the mold we permit society to create. feminine preserves confirms the idea that the formation of identity is malleable and impressionable. the glass jars serve as an interlude to societal influences.

5.2 medium

the techniques used in this series demonstrate the frailty of identity. feminine preserve uses a giclée process and glass jars to reinforce mass media’s projection of identity.

influenced by wwi propaganda posters, provocative postcards were digitally printed for immediate distribution. through the giclée process, generic cards were produced on expensive stock, appearing to be something they are not.

5.3 analysis

feminine preserves deals with the preservation of identity. glass recepicales shield the images from the external gaze of society. sunlight projects prisms onto the prints disguising pseudo prints. the viewer is asked to view the commercially produced print and resist the need to identify with a facade.

the print names refer to the body as an object. goodie jar [figure 5b], milk jugs [figure 5c] and nectar carafe [figure 5d] are reminiscent of the crude metonymies society uses to objectify the body, which are entirely at odds with the elegant prints. the juxtaposition of harsh titles and soft images represents the inconsistencies in self evaluation.

figure 5b, *goodie jar.*
giclée print, 4 x 5”, 2004.

figure 5c, *milk jugs.*
giclée print, 3 x 3”, 2004.

figure 5d, *nectar carafe.*
giclée print, 3 x 7”, 2004.
6.1 intaglio-type prints

Intaglio is the landscape structure beneath the surface of a metal plate. This is created by scratching, scoring or scraping a plate then immersing it into a corrosive material to bite into the depth of the plate. These recesses hold a significant amount of ink to generate an impression. Non-toxic intaglio-type printmaking is a safer intaglio printmaking technique, developed by Keith Howard in early 1990. Intaglio-type utilizes photopolymer film to create an intaglio plate and developer made of 10% soft-water solution which essentially replaces acids from traditional intaglio printmaking. Outset pioneers like Keith Howard [figure 6a], Friedhard Kiekeben [figure 6b] and Cedric Green [figure 6c] opened up new opportunities for the exploration and revitalization of printmaking.

6.1.1 Digital photography

A Sony Cyber-shot digital still camera, in manual aperture and shutter settings, captured the imagery for this series. A 5.0 megapixel file was generated for each image which translates to 14.1 megabytes at 26.667 x 26.667" or 35.556" x 26.667", at 72 dpi. Photoshop, on a Macintosh platform, was used to prep for photopolymer printmaking film. The images were then separated into two categories, body and vignettes, in order to maintain a distinct textural identity.

**Body photography filter**

The body images, having the largest visual presence, were modified to decrease contrast and brightness in order to soften the tonal range. The tonal range was then balanced for each image in the body series. A grain filter was used to mask the square pixels into a traditional circular grain. A 72 dpi file at final positive size was generated. This formula produced a soft, grainy image.

**Vignette photography filter**

The doll and product vignettes, having the most details, were modified to increase contrast and brightness to create a dark, rich, velvety surface. The tonal range was then balanced for each image in the symbol series. A 150 dpi file at final positive size was generated. This formula produced a strong, sharp image with lush tonal range.

---

8. Intaglio is derived from the Latin 'in-tagliare' which means 'to cut into'.
6.1.2 digital positive

A digital positive was produced by adjusting the halftone dot structure of each file. Lowering the density of the image file created a digital positive that allowed sufficient light to pass through the image onto the photopolymer printmaking film. The best tonal range resulted from reducing the density of black to 75% (using an Epson 3000). Due to the flux of tonal range, each positive must be adjusted independently. The image file was then printed on 1501 series colorlok clear film at 1400 dpi with a fine dithered dot structure.

6.1.3 plate construction

To ensure proper lamination of Imagion film, a .022-gauge copper plate was degreased by sanding with a 320-grit wet/dry sand paper just until surface was dull, then rinsed with cold water and spritzed with vinegar to remove fingerprints and dried thoroughly with a lint-free cloth.

Construction intaglio-type :: Top layer
Typically plate preparation removes impurities, such as scratches and fingerprints, in order to properly fuse the Imagion film to the copper surface. However, the body construction required a spontaneous destruction. The plate was smudged along the edges with hand lotion, brushed with a wire brush and gouged with an exacto blade.

An Imagion stencil was cut .25" larger than the plate for optimal adhesion and laminated to the plate by thoroughly spritzing the plate with water, removing the inner layer of mylar and placing it onto the copper plate. The plate was then spritzed with water and squeegeed in an "X" motion building from light to medium pressure. Excess Imagion was trimmed with an exacto knife by angling the blade onto the plate edge at 45° and pushing. The back of the plate was heat-set with a heat gun set to eight or higher, until it was hot to the touch.

Construction intaglio-type :: Bottom layer
The doll vignette is contained in the opening of the torn top layer. This was produced by illustrating, on tracing paper, a "tear". A stencil was cut from both paper and scrap Imagion. The positives were layered on top of one another, as the paper stencil was maneuvered under the positives to determine positioning. Once all elements were aligned the positives were removed and the paper stencil outlined in permanent marker onto the copper plate. Permanent marker
the imagon stencil was laminated to the plate by removing the inner layer of mylar (kept to build up a second layer) and positioned within the marker guidelines. the stencil was spritzed with water and squeegeed to the smooth surface. the back of the plate was heat-set with a heat gun set to eight or higher, until it was hot to the touch.

to prepare an imagon plate for transparency positive, a copper plate, imagon side-up, was placed on a teaneck light unit bed, covered with an aquatint and exposed for 20 light units. an aquatint is used prior to a drawing or continuous tone positive to add random dots to add tonal gradations through the etching process. the aquatint was removed and the transparency positive placed, emulsion side (right side) down and exposed for 12 light units for body images and 16 light units for vignettes on low light. as a rule of thumb the longer the exposure to light the lighter the exposure, the shorter the exposure to light the darker. a test strip determined the optimal results for this series.

construction intaglio-type :: bottom transparency positive
the plates in this series were constructed with two layers of imagon exposed independently to a positive and developed simultaneously. for construction intaglio-type, imagon was positioned onto the plate with care taken not to disrupt the stencil mylar. after second exposure to the film positive, the top mylar was removed. the tear area was scored with an exacto knife then ripped open and positioned to reveal the doll vignette. the stencil mylar was then removed. the plate was run through the etching press at 200lbs to adhere the tear. [figures 6i]

to develop the plate, the top mylar of the stencil was removed and the plate placed in soft water developer for nine minutes in a solution of 10 grams of soda ash to one liter of room temperature water. it was then removed from developer and rinsed with cold water and rubbed lightly with a clean sponge. the surface was spritzed with vinegar and the entire surface was hand rubbed, rinsed again with cold water, dried under a hand drier and cured 24 hours. [figures 6d, 6k]

debossed petg plate
to prepare a debossed plate, a .050 petg\textsuperscript{9} plate was cut to the exact size of the copper plate. the petg plate was set over the first-run artist proof and the textures positioned.

\textsuperscript{9} polyethylene terephtalate glycol is a plastic transparent printmaking plate.
once the texture was positioned, the excess textures were cut to the plate edge and glued with pva glue. this was allowed to dry for 24 hours before printing. [figure 6f]

### 6.1.4 intaglio-type printing

to prepare the press for an edition, surface was cleaned with glass cleaner, marked for registration and torque-pressed to 70 lbs.

**à la poupée first color**

for construction intaglio-type, blending two colors on one plate is challenging. the tear delineated the inking areas from one another. the smallest area, the tear, was inked first. gamblin’s ultramarine blue was carded neatly into the small area in multiple directions. tarlatan was wadded into a neat ball with no wrinkles, then swept across the plate in one quick motion, until white areas were clear of ink.

**single or second à la poupée color**

gamblin’s van dyke brown ink was worked onto the plate in multiple directions. for the second à la poupée color care was taken to avoid the vignette. tarlatan was wadded into a neat ball with no wrinkles, then swept across the plate in one quick motion, until white areas were clear of ink. plate edges were run across a phone book to clear it of residual ink.

the plate was placed ink side up and registered to press bed. hahnemühle copperplate 300gsm bright white paper was soaked in water for five minutes, then squeegeed and lightly blotted. dampened paper was carefully aligned then dropped slowly over inked plate and immediately run through the etching press. the paper was swiftly lifted and placed on drying rack to dry for 24 hours. [figures 6e, 6j, 6k]

where ink was too light or dark, the ink removal process was adjusted. the inking process was repeated to produce five artist proofs and an edition of 10. with oil-based inks, plates had to be cleaned immediately for future use.

to clean the plate vegetable oil was rubbed onto the plate and wiped with a clean towel. once all ink was removed, the plate was sprinkled with magnesium carbonate, rinsed with soap and water, and set upright to dry.

**debossed petg plate**

it was crucial that first-run prints were completely dry before being debossed, a process that took 24-48 hours. the press
was prepared with thick felt, cleaned with glass cleaner and torque-pressed to 170 lbs prior to printing debossing plate.

the first-run artist proof was placed in water for one minute to dampen, then lightly blotted. a petg plate was align to previous intaglio-type indentations and run through etching press. paper was carefully removed and placed on drying rack to dry for 24 hours. the debossing process was repeated until entire edition was completed. [figure 6g]

6.2 giclée prints

the giclée process was developed in 1989 as an immediate means of reproducing fine art printing. giclée prints are printed on hahnemühle bamboo high-quality, treated watercolor paper similar to what is used by painters. hahnemühle bamboo was treated for ink absorption to produce brilliant velvety colors. no uv protective coating was available. the life span of giclée prints can be in excess of 100 years.

6.2.1 giclée printing

an 8.5 x 11” indesign file was created to contain, align and format all three prints. the file was then printed to an epson X800 high-resolution inkjet printer. this printer uses a ccmmyk color model (e.g. light magenta and light cyan inks in addition to regular magenta and cyan) to increase the apparent resolution and color range and allow, smoother gradient transitions. an edition of 15 was printed within 30 minutes and trimmed to leave a .25” white border.
capturing the conceptual edge
chapter 7
chapter 7 | capturing the conceptual edge
{conclusion}

7.1 | purpose

adam and eve have taught us that curiosity corrupts the naivety of beauty. an acute awareness of our own skin and the context within which we find ourselves causes a rattle within. a beautiful collarbone appears foreign, disconnected. it taunts with ugly secrets, unrecognizable words and a muffled voice. solace is sought in societies remedies one attains to try and build the perfect self. hoping for peace we follow promises that ones public identity can fulfill the private identity.

sans entre nous successfully suggests the destructive influences of society on identity. from visible impressions’ uncertainty of image in mainstream america, exposed tears’ body dysmorphia brought on by the attempt to conform to societal expectations or classified packagings’ quiet manipulation through inanimate objects. identity is characterized by an incessant fear of who we are not. feminine preserves asks us to stop the self-sabotage and feel comfortable with who we are.

we see the danger of obeying society’s rules when it comes to beauty. society’s passive-aggressive marketing induces in us an almost insatiable need for acceptance. the media impacts the physical word in which we exist. our culture conditions us to be preoccupied with we don’t have instead of content with what we do. if history has taught us anything, it’s the only constant is change.

the progressive printmaking processes utilized electronic artist’s tools in the conception and capture of the visual template, allowing the ambiguity of intaglio-type to deliver the visual statement. the visual was meticulously controlled then freed in the plate construction process leading to an amorphous result. a manufacturing defect on the imagon film, a new imagon formula, and lost computer files all contributed to flemm’s ability to accept and work within the unknown. the incorporation of the man-made (digital) with natural (intaglio-type) parallels the duality in identity (societal and personal).

sans entre nous succeeded in providing a greater understanding about human difference and self-acceptance. identity is worn like a series of costumes made up of attitudes, attributes and experiences. as one ages, one assumes many iterations of his or her physical and psychological self. who we are today is not who we were and not who we will be.
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supplies resources

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xpdx.com

copper
.022 gauge
roofing cooper
danielsmith.com
dickblick.com
printmaking-materials.com

plexiglass plates
.050 clear petg acrylic
dickblick.com
lairdplastics.com

imagon
ultra photopolymer intaglio film from duPont
24" x 50' roll dimension
danielsmith.com

developer
soda ash
danielsmith.com

gamlin
oil-based etching ink
ultramarine blue
van dyke brown
gamblincolors.com
imcclains.com

rostaw & jung akua
water-based intaglio ink
lamp black
burnt umber
akua
danielsmith.com
waterbasedinks.com
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printmaking paper
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atlanticpapers.com
hahnemuehle.com

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hahnemühle bamboo
290gsm natural white
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