Corda na bretha: Cord of life

Elizabeth Kelly
Rochester Institute of Technology

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of
The College of Imaging Arts and Sciences
In Candidacy for the Degree of

MASTERS OF FINE ARTS

Corda Na Bretha: Cord of Life

by

Elizabeth Kelly

April 14, 2010
Chief Advisor  Don Arday

_______________________

Date:  _____________

Associate Advisor  Keith Howard

_______________________

Date:  _____________

Associate Advisor  Dr. Tom Lightfoot

_______________________

Date:  _____________

Associate Advisor  Don Arday

_______________________

Date:  _____________
Thesis Reproduction Permission Statement

I understand that I must submit a print copy of my thesis or dissertation to the RIT Archives, per current RIT guidelines for the completion of my degree. I hereby grant the Rochester Institute of Technology and its agents the non-exclusive license to archive and make accessible my thesis or dissertation in whole or in part in all forms of media in perpetuity. I retain all other ownership rights to the copyright of the thesis or dissertation. I also retain the right to use in future works (such as articles or books) all or part of this thesis or dissertation.

Print Reproduction Permission Granted:

I, _____________________________, hereby grant permission to the Rochester Institute of Technology to reproduce my print thesis or dissertation in whole or in part. Any reproduction will not be for commercial use or profit.

Signature of Author: _____________________________ Date: ___________
ABSTRACT

Through the creation of images of imaginary solar systems my thesis will explore the development of space through the processes of collograph and four-color intaglio-type inversion printmaking with painting. I am interested in the possibility of what we know and can touch, so I create my own visual universes for exploration.

Kasimir Malevich influenced my personal exploration. Malevich created his own movement of Suprematism, which enabled him to construct images that had no reference at all to reality. Suprematism refers to the pure feeling in art over art's objectivity. I began treating the surface of the imprinted paper by creating depth out of translucent and opaque levels of color.

The visual imagery that I supply the viewer with is an intricate knotting of fluid shapes, much like Irish calligraphy and scroll work, in order to create a texture that depicts a solar system. Depicting the stars use to be considered a scientific and artistic endeavor. My thesis is my artistic interpretation of an unknown galaxy in which the viewer can immerse themselves in movement, depth, imagination and the Sublime. By using simple shapes in order to construct a fictitious environment, I am inviting the everyday viewer to contemplate my space.
Deeply embossed collographs become landscape surfaces for painting. The choice of colors results in pulling some shapes forward and pushing others back to create atmospheric perspective. In doing so, I am able to create 3-dimenional images on a 2-dementional surface.

The technique of Four-Color Intaglio-Type inversion permits creating images from photographs of the collographic boards. Adobe Photoshop will enable manipulation of size, color and saturation levels of the images, which will draw attention to key areas from the original collographic plates. This replicates the way that a telescope with photographic capabilities would function in deep space.

This dynamic artistic idea translates the high relief texture of Vincent Van Gogh’s paintings to printmaking. This idea was also inspired by the simple geometric forms and organic lines found in the paintings of Kasimir Malevich.

My initial experiments suggest that the exploration of these techniques and media will be productive in the creation and expression of the solar systems I envision.
In April 2007, I exhibited a body of four Abstract Expressional pieces of work in Rochester Institute of Technology’s Group Thesis Exhibit for the Master of Fine Arts Degree.

Upon encountering this artwork from a distance, the viewer sees three 8 feet high x 4 feet wide straight display panels and a 8 feet high x 4 feet wide curved panel all connected in a narrowing spiral form. See Figure 1. From a distance, the interior space of the spiraling panels is spanned by a single long rectangle with an intertwining curvilinear pattern in yellow and orange. Three smaller, more boldly colored rectangles with the same linearity hang singularly on the outward facing surface of the straight panels beyond the viewer’s perspective.

The viewer is attracted first to the large, inward curving rectangle. The spiral serves to draw the viewer inward in two ways: the natural shape invites a reflexive, exploratory response; and the work as a whole is obscured, so in order to contemplate the whole piece, the audience must enter the spiral. The viewer is encompassed by the large rectangle after stepping into the interior space created by the panels. Through the construction of this installation created a physical space for viewing the piece, yet by
bringing the individual into the area I eliminate the space between the viewer and the object. The nameplate gives the title as *An Ri Chodladh (The Sleeping King)*, and the medium as print/painting. The work is 6 feet high x 16.67 feet wide. It consists of 20 embossed prints glued together and then hand-painted yellow, orange, red, and blue in accumulative layers of diluted acrylic paint.

Upon leaving the interior space, the viewer passes by the empty exterior of the curved panel and encounters the three colorful rectangles on the exterior walls of the straight display panels. The nameplates list the one on the left as *Cuan na Mara (Silver Haven)*, the middle as *Solas Siorai (Eternal Light)*, and the right as *Inion a Mara (Daughter of the Sea)*. Each brightly colored rectangle is two feet high by three feet wide and the medium for all three is listed as Four-Color Intaglio Type.

**CREATION**

In creating this artwork my goal was to create visual depth by layering opaque and transparent colors on the surface of White-on-White collographs. I also included three Four-Color Intaglio-Typs, which I created from photographs of the collograph boards. Through the application Photoshop I was able to manipulate the size, color and
saturation levels of the image, in order to draw attention to key areas from the original
collograph plate. By highlighting these key areas, extracting them, and presenting them
in a series, I felt that I could emphasize their iconographic qualities, giving the pieces an
emotional and spiritual depth that is reflected on the inward spiral.

In starting the collograph process, I was not singularly focused on the image but
rather on development of technique and texture. Over time I started to explore images of
symbolism and nature but I was not satisfied. I decided that the best way to achieve the
aesthetics I wanted was to simplify my imagery and use of color. The first piece I created
in this process was Kevin. In this piece I employed loose circling hand motions, which
rhythmically intersect over the plane of the piece. Simplifying the means of expressing
the imagery into elemental line and curvaceous shapes that form from patterns of positive
and negative space influenced further development of new compositions. After this
work, development of imagery and materials led to exploring larger print sizes and
alternative mediums.

When experimenting, the artist must investigate the strengths and weaknesses
each new medium has to offer. When printing images with color I experienced a lack of
control in the final outcome of the piece. In painting I have more control over color
placement, however I found I missed the randomness and mystery that printmaking can have.
The main piece of my thesis is the white-on-white embossed painting, *The Sleeping King*. *The Sleeping King* is a constructive title of this piece because it illustrates a solar system awaiting discovery. The piece was shown on a semi-circular wall curving in on itself. The curve, as stated earlier, does two things to reinforce this concept of discovery. First, the spiral is a logarithmic type, commonly found in nature and consistently found in the depths of the universe in the shapes of galaxies, including our own. Secondly, the spiral shape conceals its center: to view the piece as a whole the viewer must enter the spiral and move into it.

“Man seeks to form for himself, in whatever manner is suitable for him, a simplified and lucid image of the world, and so to overcome the world of experience by striving to replace it to some extent by this image. This is what the painter does, and the poet, the speculative philosopher, the natural scientist, each in his own way. Into this image and its formation, he places the center of gravity of his emotional life, in order to attain the peace and serenity that he cannot find within the narrow confines of swirling personal experience.”

I hope the viewer contemplates the construction of *The Sleeping King*, which seems simple at first glance. The image consists of twenty separate white on white prints, which were pulled from ten plates and pieced together to produce a six feet by sixteen-feet-and-ten-inches image. The process of the final formation was similar to piecing a puzzle together with the image face down. The layering of the pieces, along with the physicality of the mark making creates one consecutive composition depicting one representational environment.
After the pieces were assembled, I painted them with a dilute application of color until objects slowly created their own depth, which was then reinforced with a higher concentration of pigment and its deliberate placement. As I painted, the paint streamed down beyond the edge of the printed area itself into the border of the piece. This method of painting with drops of color falling chaotically beyond the image and out of frame returns the viewer to the present reality by breaking down the border between reality and created reality: the world of experience and the self-generated image of the world. The work escapes the boundaries of its own space, venturing into the horizon creating a new relationship with the viewer. The chaos of the drips also mimics the fragile scientific balance of materials floating in space.

The three Four-Color Intaglio Types I chose to display depict many different aspects that can be seen in galactic clusters. These images are small close-ups of the larger image, just like a deep space telescope would take close-up images of galaxies, stars, black holes, planets and nebula. Solas Siorai, (Eternal Light), is an image that depicts clouds of gas and matter in the birth of a new star. Inion Na Mara, (Daughter of the Sea), depicts a red giant; a dying star, becoming very unstable, soon to collapse and then explode creating a supernova. Cuan Na Mara, (Silver Haven), is an image of the endlessness of space. These images are displayed on the outside walls of the spiral enclosure. One of the properties of the logarithmic spiral, and one of the primary reasons I chose that shape, is that it is self-similar: the size may increase but its shape always remains the same. It is similar in this way to fractals, rough or geometric shapes that can be split into parts, each of which is approximately a reduced-size copy of the whole.
Culling portions of the larger image, although not fractal-type approximations, echoes this property of finding the large in the small.

When you leave the formation you turn to the reaches of darkness and the unknown in search of another creation. As descendents of the human race, we feel the need to head off into the unknown. The mission is one of discovery but most of all knowledge encourages us to expand our understanding of our relative connection to that existence. Understanding of the unseen, the unexplored is what drives us to discover what has not been fathomed except in the passing imagination we posses. We need to document our world and our existence in this macrocosm in order to be apart of its unending history.

"The most beautiful experience we can have is the mysterious. It is the fundamental emotion that stands at the cradle of true art and true science. Whoever does not know it and can no longer wonder, no longer marvel, is as good as dead, and his eyes are dimmed. It was the experience of mystery -- even if mixed with fear -- that engendered religion. A knowledge of the existence of something we cannot penetrate, our perceptions of the profoundest reason and the most radiant beauty, which only in their most primitive forms are accessible to our minds: it is this knowledge and this emotion that constitute true religiosity. In this sense, and only this sense, I am a deeply religious man... I am satisfied with the mystery of life's eternity and with a knowledge, a sense, of the marvelous structure of existence -- as well as the humble attempt to understand even a tiny portion of the Reason that manifests itself in nature."  

2

Through the ages humans have developed an understanding that the present world will pass away and give birth to new knowledge developed by the dreamers, theorists and idealists of the whole of humanity.
The purpose of my thesis is to explore the technique and materials involved with collographing on an alternative level. I have found my wants and needs of the medium could not be dealt with through the non-toxic process alone and I was creating with non-toxic printmaking techniques lacked the lightness and depth I wanted to depict in the creation of my work. With the interlocking physical representation of energy, weight in the painted objects gives a sense of motion and sequential action. At this point, I felt it was time to adapt acrylic paint as my color medium. The reason I choose this medium as a way of saturating the image with vibrancy and depth is because of how loosely and deliberately it could be applied to the surface of the piece. This layering effect helps in creating an atmospheric effect, which assists in translating the infinite formations of matter as they move in the abyss. In this virtual space I have created free motion as well as structure for a sensory experience, which is open to the viewers interpretation. The physicality of the Sleeping King has pulled the painting out of its fundamental two dimensional abstract illusion into a three dimensional reality.

Through experimentation with materials and imagery, I feel I have created my unique pictorial version of a solar system. “The moon, furthermore, and the spectacle of the night sky, the stars and the Milky Way, have constituted, certainly from the beginning, a source of wonder and profound impression.” The universe has compelled many artists, writers and intellectuals to develop moving experiences, ones of growth and understanding of the invisible mysteries of nature.
Sprinkled through individual civilizations calendars attributed to the studies of the sky can be found in the time of the Babylonian, Egyptian, Roman, Mayan and other predominant cultures. The motions of the constellations, planets, the sun, the moon and comets affected the planting of crops, navigation as well as religious ceremonies. In many cultures the same themes could be seen in the stars such as the Great Bear also know as Ursa Minor, which contains the Big Dipper or the Plough. Stone Age cultures in Siberia, Greek society, and even the Navajo Nation saw the form of the Bear in the sky as a myth that portrays a human who was helped by the gods. They are forever etched into the night sky for their deeds. These myths were created from a process of assigning meaning to the unexplainable, as a way of dealing with the vastness of space. “Though the development of agriculture and economy the earliest forms of civilization began to yield the basic tools that lead to human development. Writing, the wheel, mathematics, the calendar, kingship, priestcraft, the symbolism of the temple, taxation, and mythological themes are a few creations.”

Visual pictures have been left by many post Neanderthal societies referred to as Aurignacian, yet not much is known of these cultures for they existed before written word was created. These cultures left cave paintings in France, Ireland, Spain and other European regions. These depictions included impressionistic images of animals and humans engaged in everyday life. As recently reported by Micheal Rappengluech, formerly of the University of Munich, some of these images are records of the stars and the moons cycle contained in the scenes they depicted. In the Lascaux caves there is a wall painting known as The Shaft of the Dead Man, which depicts a bull, a bird-man
figure and a bird on a stick. Since we do not have documentation as to the meaning of these images we can only speculate what they mean based on our knowledge of Cro-Magnon man who lived in that region sixteen thousand years ago. Rappengluech has suggested that this particular image is a depiction of the three stars known today as, Vega, Deneb and Altair. The brown dapple horse, in another area of the same cave, can be interpreted as one of the oldest lunar calendars, with his dots representing the twenty-nine day cycle of the moon in the dark abyss. Rappengluech’s research has led to renewed contemplation as to the astrological significance behind many cave paintings.

Monolithic artifacts from Stonehenge in England to the South American city of Teotihuacán were initially constructed for ceremonial use based on the local cosmography. The mythical structure known as Stonehenge was built in the Preceltic Neolithic Age around 2950 BCE. Stonehenge is a Megalithic structure made of small and large stones, which stand in a circle on the Salisbury Plain in England. Stonehenge is thought by many to be a structure built by Druids for religious practices as well as tracking astrological events. It was used to mark the beginning of the Summer Solstice with the construction being aligned so the sun shows through the structure of the main complex to the center of the formation.

Other large, earthen structures such as burial mounds contained beautiful ornamentation reflective of the stars. One such site is the megalithic tomb found in Knowth in the county of Meath, Ireland. All over the structure there are simple symbols such as circles and spirals, etched into the surfaces of the stone construction. They also
contain images of the movement of the moon in its different phases. Early Celtic artisans created these decorative friezes carved into the rock by pitting the surface with another, stronger stone substance.

The name of my thesis is *Corda Na Bretha*, which means the *Cord Of Life* in Gaelic. I did this as an homage both to my own heritage, and as a reference to these tremendous early stone-wrought astrological artifacts. “The peculiarities which characterize true Celtic art, whether in stone, metal work, or manuscript illumination, consist in the excessive and minute elaborations of intricate ornamental details, such as the spirals, the interlaced ribands, and the entwined serpents and other animal forms.” I have subtly incorporated these cultural designs into the macrocosms that are presented in this thesis.

In Pre-Columbian, South American societies the heavens and its configuration influenced many beliefs in their civilization, even to the very structures of the cities. As explained by Brian Fagan author of *Ancient Lives*, the amazing acropolis of the Toltec’s capital, Teotihuacán, that existed from 200 BC. to 750 AD is where they lived and flourished as a trading society. The Toltec’s, a Mesoamerican culture that existed from 650 AD to 1200 AD created remarkable temples, pyramids, plazas, housing settlements and commercial buildings. These structures and their placement in the city were significant in the coexisting of religious rituals and political traditions. The integration of the individual into the common sociology has a fundamental influence on the development and growth of these societies’ universal themes of existence.
From the Pyramid of the Sun to the Pyramid of the Moon, which was built in direct correlation with the sacred mountains of the horizon and other astronomical observations, the Avenue of the Dead stretches. It symbolizes the line that connects humans to the worlds of the gods.

“The new inspiration of civilized life was based, first, on the discovery, through long and meticulous, carefully checked and rechecked observation, that there were, besides the sun and the moon, five other visible and barely visible heavenly spheres (to wit, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn) which moved in its established courses, according to established laws, along the ways followed by the sun and moon, among the fixed stars; and then, second, on the almost insane, playful, yet potentially terrible notion that the laws governing the movements of the seven heavenly sphere should in some mystical way be the same as those governing the life and thought of men on earth.”

This impetus to constantly recreate the cosmos in both architectural and artistic creations, and in our more ephemeral organizations of political and societal structures just demonstrates the enormity of the effect that the cosmos has on all creative endeavors. The cosmos has a profound effect on humans at every level.

ARTISTIC INFLUENCES
The constant correlation between nature and art brings forward the idea of the sublime and the effect it can have on the human body and soul.

“The Sublime is to be found in a formless object, so far as in it or by occasion of it boundlessness is represented and yet its totality is also present to thought. Thus the beautiful seems to be regarded as the presentation of an indefinite concept of understanding, the sublime as that of a concept of reason.”

In viewing a sublime event it slowly dawns on the individual what is being witnessed but most of the understanding of the event will not register until the event is over and contemplation can begin. In Immanuel Kant’s view, one's inability to grasp the enormity of a sublime event such as an earthquake, or an eclipse, demonstrates inadequacy of one's sensibility and imagination. Simultaneously, one's ability to merely identify such an event as singular and whole indicates the superiority of one's cognitive, supersensible powers. Ultimately, it is this "supersensible substrate," underlying both nature and thought, on which true sublimity is located.

The concept of the Sublime has been kicked around for a concise definition of what is considered sublime and beautiful. I believe that a large number of the pre-Modern artistic and architectural creations I have discussed are attempts to deal with precisely this kind of Sublime experience, and that by analyzing them; we can circle in towards the center of the creative impulse in humans. Through adaptation and the creation of new artistic movements the concept of the sublime has been modified for this day and age.
The New Sublime is an art movement that started in 1948 by Barnett Newman as a reaction to the 1910’s philosophical definition of the artistic Sublime. In relation to Newman, it has been put, “He seeks to create a space, espace, abyss, and a place in which a viewer may be absorbed, immersed, taken out of the ordinary and into the extraordinary experiences of wonder.” A specific piece of Newman’s, which reflects this Sublime notion is called *Vir Heroicus Sublime*, which translated from Latin, means *Man, Heroic and Sublime*. In this painting, the largest of its time, Newman asked the viewer to come closer to the piece to truly experience the work like a personal dialogue or a new encounter which reflects upon us metaphysically.

In *The Sleeping King* this concept was supported by the requirement that the viewer enter the work itself. In creating this piece, I attempt to create a spiritual plane is created by the rhythmic flow of circling lines as well as a temporal displacing of the known world. The slow development of the full experience of this piece mimics the creation of a universe. Even with its chaotic existence things last hundreds of thousands of years or take that long to develop into their complete form.

Other inspirations for the creation of my work are the artists Vincent Van Gogh and Kasimir Malevich. For years I have emulated Van Gogh’s expressive line and color in order to describe a landscape in addition to his treatment of portraits. Yet, only recently I have been focusing on the surface texture of his pieces. In reaction to that, I wanted to experiment with creating a series of collographs in which the main focus is
material and surface texture. I simplified my imagery and employed a relatively tame color palette in order to emphasize surface texture.

Kasimir Malevich was the artist who influenced the next steps of my personal exploration and continuing development of my imagery through Collographs. Malevich himself had initially been influenced by Cubism and Primitive art, which were both based on nature. As he matured, he created his own movement of Suprematism, which enabled him to construct images that had no reference at all to reality. His goal with the movement was to invoke feeling in art rather than reveal the world over art's objectivity.

“I felt only night within me and it was then that I conceived the new art, which I called Suprematism.” – Kasimir Malevich, “The Non-Objective World”. His paintings expressed the concept of a non-euclidian geometry, which imagined forms in movement, or through time. In his essay entitled “Suprematism”, Malevich claims that the movement contributed to the subconscious creation of new art. By ridding the subject matter of what Malevich describes as “practical considerations,” the viewers are able to feel the expression it creates. By using simple geometric forms and intersecting lines his abstract paintings embody the theme of being as well as the internal movements of the personality in order to express such things as the sensation of speed, flight, and rhythm. I felt a strong relation between these pieces and earlier, similarly simple representations of astrological motions.
His White-on-White series were key pieces in the development of Suprematism; on them he simplified the theme, color and imagery to create an asymmetrical square in infinite space. By eliminating many superficial elements I was able to create a series of White-on-Whites that focused on form and texture as the key elements of collographing. As I progressed with these White-on-Whites I began treating the surface of the imprinted paper as a landscape surface for painting. In the painting, through the process of building up of translucent and opaque layers of color, the creation of an atmosphere occurs.

The first art exhibition I went to was a collection of Monet’s work at the Chicago Art Institute. One of the first pieces I really observed was his painting of the waterlilies that surrounded an entire oval room. It was sublime; one could feel the passing of time and light in the swirling lines of paint. His interest was in creating an atmosphere, to see form and color visually, abstractly, rather than in the conventional sense. I felt a displacement, as if I was really there. It was a feeling I felt compelled to reproduce through my work.

Another artist who recently influenced me was Gary Simmons. His works on large canvases and simple shapes have influenced the way I view my work. Is it expressing what I want? Is it too much? Am I displacing the viewer? In Simmons’s 1996 piece Boom, which was conceived with chalk and paint on a painted wall. I found a release of form that I wanted to translate into my work. To create a piece of action without a ‘hook of social responsibility or moral call to action’ as put forth by Johanna
Drucker in *Sweet Dreams: Contempory Art and Complicity*, about Simmons’s piece. Under these concepts I have accomplished the creation of an otherworldly environment teeming with movement in its ongoing construction and expansion.

**SCIENTIFIC THEORY AND INFLUENCES**

The observation of celestial bodies soon led to theories as to how the universe was created. One concept, which emerged as most likely, is the Big Bang Theory. Albert Einstein in 1913 gave his general theory of relativity to the scientific community. As interpreted by Lynn Gamwell in *Exploring The Invisible*, Einstein’s general theory of relativity describes space as generally Euclidean but Non-Euclidean in regions where matter is present. His equations led others such as Alexander Friedman, to attempt to explain the ever-expanding universe. These disciples of Einstein developed a forward-looking theory of universal movement: With every expansion a depression will happen and the whole universe will return to a fixed point. The presence of a large object, in other words, changes the way that other matter around it acts. It influences matter in the same way that large celestial bodies have always influenced human creativity. The Big Bang theory describes an origin resulting from the compression of materials beyond the point of control. When compressed to an unthinkable degree, these prototypical materials
formed into elements, which combined to create a primitive universe. Four Billion years after the creation of the universe, life on earth began to contemplate the most important questions about its origins.

In the quest to discover the unknown, major observatories, such as the Hubble Space telescope and the Chandra X-Ray Observatory, have peered deep into space. Since Chandra’s launch in July 1999, astronomers have been able to “see” further into the universe’s many visible and invisible formations. In the National Geographic article “Super X-Ray Vision,” Michael Klesias discusses the observatory named Chandra and how its technology turns fragmented information into form. Chandra is a unique observatory in that it not only relays an optical image but also infrared and radio images. Scientists interpret these non-visual forms of energy into colored images in order to study and explain their behavior. In these nested images we are able to view pulsars, gas, dust and high to low energy particles that emit radiation. Through the combination of these visual and non-visual interpretations, modern scientists are able to give depth and dimension to a one and two-dimensional image. In the search for answers about the creation of the universe we have discovered a material, which we have named Dark Matter. This Dark Matter is responsible for the expansion of the universe.

The visual imagery that I supply the viewer with is an intricate knotting of fluid shapes in order to create a texture that depicts a solar system. I have always been fascinated with stars, nebulas and galaxies. Through developments in technology such as the creation of the telescope, photography and the deep space imaging, humans have
become adventurers again. With the first development of telescopes we were able to get a more tangible view of only our immediate galaxy. In much the same way that we can think of the first artists as actually scientists, in order to document contemporary visual finds, scientists must themselves become artists.

Depicting the stars was once considered a scientific and artistic endeavor set out by people such as Sir John Herschel and William Parsons, third Earl of Rosse, who both recorded their interpretations of the Orion nebula. My thesis is my artistic interpretation of an undiscovered galaxy in which the viewers can immerse themselves in movement, depth, imagination and the Sublime. In this day and age it is impossible for a human to travel into deep space, but that will never stop people from imagining a slew of whole new galaxies and galactic formations just waiting to be discovered. By applying watered down layers of acrylic I am attempting to fabricate an atmospheric perspective. There is push and pull in the weight of the shapes that I create in the embossing process. By using simple shapes in order to construct a fictitious environment, what I want to do is draw in the everyday viewer’s and allow them to contemplate a new space with familiar imagery.

A few of the failures I have noticed in the final presentation can be placed in two different categories. The first was the final setup in the gallery, in which I created a curved wall section for the main piece. The wall’s development was soundly conceived and built. Unfortunately, the final finishing of the wall was rushed and upon close inspection one could notice screw tips and construction joint tape. The second item was
the final outcome of the piece *The Sleeping King*. In viewing the final setup I still wanted to take the contrast level a little further to develop a more visual atmospheric depth.

There were also successes that I witnessed in the final arrangement of my thesis, and they were both related to the physical presentation. Foremost was the back wall set-up for the four-color Photo Intaglio type prints, for the walls being flush on the inner curve created pie-wedge shaped gaps on the outer wall. As a result, there were spaces between the three images so the viewer might contemplate each piece on its own. The second success was the illumination of *The Sleeping King*. After the lights were finalized and I began to photograph the display, I fell in love with the depth that was created by adding simple lighting.

In creating new work I plan to continue collographing and expanding my use of alternative mediums. New avenues of work I am pursuing are the stacking of collographs upon each other in which the images are treated so that all the layers can be visible. I also plan to continue Four-color intaglio types where a number of them would focus upon breaking down the image to showcase certain aspects of the piece.

With my thesis, I feel as though I have accomplished the creation of a fictitious space. I have brought a visual landscape into existence that has never been seen. By exploring the boundaries of technique and medium, I can showcase contemporary versions of the collograph process, which in turn allows the viewer to enter the fabricated solar system in my mind.
Through the development of social consciousness humans began searching for a reason; knowledge of what is, what has been and what will be. We search the heavens for answers as to why we are here, why we came into existence and even when to plant the harvest. When we were just a blink in the eye of existence, humans saw the stars as manifestations of the gods. Myths were developed to explain why our civilizations exist and these myths were anchored to the stars. Over time we were able to read the movements of the heavens in order to understand the realm of nature in our environment.

“A human being is part of a whole, called by us the Universe, a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feelings, as something separated from the rest—a kind of optical delusion of his consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest us. Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circles of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty.”

Humans still view the outer heavens as a mysterious place, which we are destined to explore and aspire to. We see our internal dramas play out in the stars’ movements and interpret the stars themselves in our art. By returning to our artistic roots, I feel as though I have been able to create a wholly new and yet exceedingly human kind of artistic expression.
1 Albert Einstein. *Principles of Research.* Address given by Albert Einstein in 1918 at the Physical Society, Berlin, for Max Planck's sixtieth birthday.


ADDITIONAL REFERENCES


ILLUSTRATIONS

1. Figure 1  2007
   Thesis Diagram

2. Experiment  2005
   Collograph, Akua color inks, 9in x 6in

3. Kevin  2005
   Collograph, Akua color inks, 30in x 20in

4. Untitled  2006
   White-on-White Collograph, Acrylic Paint, 40in x 29in

5. Blue Firmament  2006
   White-on-White Collograph, Acrylic Paint, 19.5in x 15.5in

6. Green Firmament  2006
   White-on-White Collograph, Acrylic Paint, 19.5in x 29in

7. Solas Siorai, (Eternal Light)  2006
   Four color intaglio types, Akua color inks, 24in x 32in

8. Inion Na Mara, (Daughter of the Sea)  2006
   Four color intaglio types, Akua color inks, 24in x 32in

9. Cuan Na Mara, (Silver Haven)  2006
   Four color intaglio types, Akua color inks, 24in x 32in

10. An Ri Chodladh (The Sleeping King) View One  2007
    White-on-White Collograph, Acrylic Paint, 6ft x 16ft
11  *An Ri Chodladh (The Sleeping King) View Two*  2007
    White-on-White Collograph, Acrylic Paint, 6ft x 16ft

12  *An Ri Chodladh (The Sleeping King) Aerial View*  2007
    White-on-White Collograph, Acrylic Paint 6ft x 16ft

13  *An Ri Chodladh (The Sleeping King) Work in progress*  2007
    White-on-White Collograph, Acrylic Paint, 6ft x 16ft
Elizabeth Kelly Thesis Construction Guide

1. Layout of four walls and image placement
2. Wall constructed for display 5x8 ft.
3. An Ri Chadadh (The Sleeping King)
4. Solas Siolai, (Eternal Light)
5. Inion Na Mara, (Daughter of the Sea)
6. Cuan Na Mara, (Silver Haven)