The Floral ploy "pieced, painted, printed"

Shannon Pfaff

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A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of
The College of Imaging Arts and Sciences
in Candidacy for the Degree of
MASTER OF FINE ARTS

The Floral Ploy
"Pieced, Painted, Printed"

by
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1/10/94
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ARTIST STATEMENT

The Floral Ploy
"Pieced, Painted, Printed"

The purpose of this thesis is to take a complex concept and redefine it visually. The theory of brain evolution has been, and will continue to be in debate both scientifically and spiritually. Since the brain, or the mind, is the center of thought, it seems fitting that a search for unity begin here. Art and science, art and religion, science and religion, are not at opposite ends. Reason and emotion, instinct and intellect, power and surrender, can come together and exist in harmony. It is the goal of this thesis to explore how, through examining the inner workings of the brain, there can be a path that touches on all life's cross-roads.

The human brain, when taken out of context, is a flower ready to bloom. The mechanics of the brain appear to be roots leading the thinker to the source. Some elements have not changed since the first being stepped out of the water, others have developed far beyond our warm-blooded ancestors. To move forward now, a look must be cast toward the remaining half of the world. The organizational, energy seeking plant kingdom, with its unique ability to adapt, has many lessons to teach. As opposed to searching the heavens for answers to life on earth, it seems more fitting that knowledge and understanding be gained from our true surroundings.
PREFACE

The idea of problem solving is the beginning of any undertaking. There must first exist the desire to understand and grapple with an unanswered riddle. A foothold in a concept is enough to provide inspiration which then manifests itself into a set goal. When it comes to the issue of creating visual art, the process is the same. The artist requires a viewpoint by which images can be produced and thus communicate to the audience the chosen topic.

The topic of this thesis, as briefly defined in the artist statement, is not only to visually establish a link between the physical properties of the human brain and the theories behind brain evolution, but also to come to terms with the principles of a scientific evaluation of the philosophical views on the brain as it relates to the spirit of mankind.

The original inspiration behind "The Floral Ploy" came from a passage in a fictional work by Tom Robbins entitled Jitterbug Perfume. However, it is the goal of this thesis to support the preliminary ideas in that passage with research by other theorists which provide a scientific foundation for the principles behind brain evolution and its relationship to spirituality.

It is necessary to examine how others equate the actual make-up of the brain with that of the logical and emotional functions of the brain. In other words, by briefly securing examples from other modern thinkers, it will be easier to show how there literally exists a common thread between science and religion, and hence will justify the network by which the artwork was created.
CHAPTER ONE
A SCIENTIFIC APPROACH

In order to begin to understand how Tom Robbins' passage inspired the creation of the artwork, it is crucial to provide excerpts of that passage. Therefore, a summary of Robbins' theory will be stated in the following paragraphs. Also it will be shown how a fictional writer came up with this theory by means of previous research done by the neurophysicist, Paul MacLean.

In Robbins' passage he describes the theory of brain evolution in three stages: the reptilian stage, represented by the diencephalon, or forebrain, encompasses a "consciousness [that] is cold, aggressive, self preserving, angry, greedy, and paranoid."\(^1\), the mammalian stage, represented by the mesencephalon or midbrain, characterizes "warmth, generosity, loyalty, love . . . joy, grief, humor, pride, competition, intellectual curiosity, and appreciation of art and music."\(^2\), the third, being the floral stage, is physically described as "the telencephalon, whose principle part is the neocortex."\(^3\)

If the reptile brain equates with cold and the mammal brain with warmth, then the neocortex equates with light . . . because the third brain is a floral brain and flowers extract energy from light.\(^4\)

As obscure as this might seem, Robbins uses Paul MacLean's research as a basis for this concept. "Paul MacLean was the first neurophysicist to point out that we still carry a reptilian brain--functional and intact--around in our skulls today."\(^5\) In other words, it is important to note
that: "The reptile brain is not an abstract concept, it is anatomically real."6

Paul D. MacLean is the head of the Laboratory for Brain Evolution and Behavior at the National Institutes for Mental Health near Washington, DC. Building on the earlier work of James W. Papez, MacLean has identified three distinct evolutionary stages in the development of the human brain.7

MacLean believes that: "there is an ancient, basically reptilian brain . . . located at and near the top of the brain stem,"8 which can be found in both prehistoric reptiles as well as the reptiles and amphibians of today. "Encircling [the reptilian brain] is the old mammalian brain consisting of the limbic system."9 The third brain, which Robbins associates with floral consciousness, is what MacLean defines as the "new mammalian brain or neocortex."10

When it comes to function or representation of the psychological interpretations of these brain stages, Robbins is not far off from the theories introduced by MacLean.

The older brains seem involved in the ancestral lore of the species, i.e. hierarchies of dominance-submission, sexual court-ship and display, follow-my-leader rituals, mass migration, ganging up on the weak and the new, defending territory, hunting, hoarding, bonding, nesting, greeting, flocking and playing. The neocortex, in contrast, seems more adept at learning new ways to cope and adapt.11

However, in regard to the principles behind the idea of floral consciousness, this is where MacLean stops and Robbins begins. It is the concept of adaptation, especially to the environment, that Tom Robbins' flower theory is most associated with. The analogy of the human brain to that of the flower is, as Robbins states the purpose of brain evolution. In a way, Robbins expands on MacLean's theory by pointing out how the physical properties of the brain resemble parts of the flower.
The whole brain is described in science as a bulb. The neurons of which it is composed have dendrites: roots and branches. The cerebellum consists of a large mass of closely packed folia, which are bundles of nerve cells described in the literature as leaflike. Not only do the individual neurons closely resemble plants or flowers, the brain itself looks like a botanical specimen. It has a stem and a crown that unfolds, in embryonic growth, much in the manner of a petaled rose.12

Further explanation shows how the neocortex behaves like a flower. For instance, neuromelain, produced by nerve fibers in the telencephalon "absorbs light and has the capacity to convert light into other forms of energy."13 Moreover, Robbins postulates that "as our neocortex comes into full use, we . . . will practice a kind of photosynthesis."14 Robbins believes that during deep sleep, not dream sleep, the unconscious acts as a data processor, but for now this is only part-time work.

In the future, when we become more efficient at gathering quality information and when floral consciousness becomes dominant, we will probably sleep longer hours and dream hardly at all.15

In essence, this phase "has definite spiritual overtones."16 Once the link between the true science and the floral postulate has been established it is time to consider how this evolutionary stage reflects on mankind and his relationship to the world around him. In other words, where does this leave mankind when it comes to spirituality? What is the point, so to speak? Is it possible to build a framework on which to move forward? What exactly is floral consciousness and how does it fit in with the big picture?

Tom Robbins believes that religion was a step toward this last evolutionary stage. Robbins states that: "Christ's mission was to prepare the way for floral consciousness."17 Jesus' words of love and forgiveness was in part a trend toward a higher level of thought. "In the East, Buddha
performs an identical function."\(^{18}\) The intent of both prophets was to pave a path that would eventually be able to guide mankind through the mammalian phase and into a the period of enlightenment.

Christ and Buddha came into our psyches not to deliver us from evil but to deliver us from mammalian consciousness. The good versus evil plot has always been bogus. The drama unfolding in the universe--in our psyches--is not good against evil but new against old, or, more precisely, destined against obsolete.\(^{19}\)

This is an interesting notion. The image of "Uroborus, the self devouring snake of paradox,"\(^{20}\) is brought to mind. Death and rebirth, the "conception of a circle, cycle, mandala, a meeting of Alpha and Omega"\(^{21}\) is, in truth, more accurate than God and the Devil. In fact, these ideas have been around before Christ. However, Christ and Buddha "were merely fulfilling their mytho-evolutionary roles."\(^{22}\) People need heroes. The psyche wants to have a role model. This is the way mankind evolves. So although many believe in the words of Christ, it might be time to also include science and nature into the general scheme. Quite possibly this type of philosophy can be labeled as a flower way of thinking. The introduction of science exemplifies religion by giving it new direction.

In this thesis, religion, not having to do with organized religion, is used loosely to describe meaning, or faith, or a set of beliefs that can not be described by technology and exists only within the individual. It is characterized by spirituality and typifies the way mankind feels toward the things in life not tangible. It is the unity of which holds together free flowing energy both in the body and in the mind. It is the goal to find a wholeness in that which is knowledge and that which is belief.

In order to truly tie in this so-called emotive/religious philosophy with that of the logical, scientific academia and thus fully denote the significance
in coming to a well-rounded conclusion, it is necessary to briefly look into the research and theories of other modern thinkers, namely Carl G. Jung.

Although Jung is not directly involved in the concept of a floral consciousness, he is one of the forefathers of neurophilosophy. Having a fundamental background of Jung's theories will be helpful in understanding this connection of science and religon. The purpose of this glimpse into Jung's beliefs is mainly to realize that the ideas and principles behind floral consciousness are not that abstract. Mankind has been trying to juggle technology and spirituality for many years. The aim of the modern thinker, like every human being is to come to terms with the soul.

Carl Gustav Jung "never subscribed to the supposition of his age, that science and religon were incompatible,"\textsuperscript{23} in fact quite the contrary. Jung believed that the new generation of western culture was "overly dominant in its thinking function. Technological man had gained the whole world and lost his soul."\textsuperscript{24} Jung's goal was to try to reclaim the religious aspect of man by utilizing the sciences of the day. He theorized that the psyche could be rounded out by uncovering the knowledge that lay buried in the unconscious.

Jung's concept of the unconscious . . . was a \textit{personal unconscious} of dimmed memories and repressed materials, a collective unconscious at a deeper level, evidenced by emotions and visions erupting from its depth and a fathomless part beyond. By \textit{collective unconscious} Jung meant 'the inherited possibility of physical functioning...namely...the brain structure'.\textsuperscript{25}

Jung postulated that the unconscious came into the conscious by way of symbol and metaphor. He believed that "we must have some archetypal inner model and be guided by the wisdom of the ages."\textsuperscript{26} It is a natural instinct guided by a spiritual instinct, "an equilibrium of nature and
spirit . . . synchronicity."27 This is evident in mankind's desire to exist within and beyond his own world. As the mind develops it craves "achievement of insight, wholeness and spiritual depth."28 Carl G. Jung stated that:

In the fullness of maturation there can rise the self which is both a nuclear element integrating the psyche and the totality of that psyche. It reconciles all the various faces of the mind and represents the self-realization that the kingdom of God is within you.29

Jung is not, of course, the only one who incorporates science and religion into the workings of the human brain. M. Scott Peck, M.D., author of The Road Less Traveled, works on Jung's theories and defines "the goal of spiritual growth to be the attainment of godhood by the conscious self."30 Likewise, other modern thinkers empathize with the need to unify science and religion in order to further the understanding of the human brain. Immanuel Kant, "the foremost thinker of Enlightenment and one of the great philosophers of all time,"31 believed that "a scientific theory of memory would go a long way toward explaining how we represent the world internally."32 Larry Dossey, M.D., author of Recovering the Soul, believes that there is "nonlocal" mind that does not exist in time or space. Dossey supposes that "science and religion have not had the final word on the nature of consciousness and its connection to the soul."33 Henry Margenau, a well-known physicist, came up with the term "Universal Mind" after discovering that "oneness does exist at the most basic levels of nature."34 Lastly, Patricia Smith Churchland certainly believes in a relatedness between science and religion. After first earning a degree in philosophy, she decided it was necessary to also earn a degree in neurology. Churchland has since written her version of the connectedness
in her book entitled, *Neurophilosophy*.

It seems impossible to completely draw a common thread between science and religion, simply due to the definition of the words. They seem not to be tied but woven into a labyrinth which embodies the concept in its entirety. The main thing to remember is not to evaluate the differences but to evaluate the similarities. In other words, in terms of this thesis, it is the point to examine how philosophy/religion gives meaning to the brain/science and vise versa.

The concept of simply making an analogy between the physical properties of the brain and the physical properties of a flower is dim without the idea that the floral part represents enlightenment. Thus, this gives value to the theory. Without value, the pictures are flat.

"The Floral Ploy", and it's intentions to make sense of science, religion, and art can not be expressed any further, because if one is lost the others will fold. Without the sciences, it is impossible to discuss the individual parts of the brain, especially as they relate to the visual images. Without the religion, it is impossible to discuss meaning, or unity, or function on a wholistic level. Without art there is no vehicle with which to discuss either.
CHAPTER TWO
A VISUAL APPROACH

If the human mind is to be conceived as a whole as well as parts, we need not just words to convey parts, but patterns, pictures and schemata to convey the whole.

Charles Hampden-Turner, Maps of the Mind

When it comes to approaching the visual aspect, the objectives seem somewhat clear. The artist must go directly to the source, the brain. However, in order to choose the right information, a fundamental knowledge of how the brain works must be attained. Almost anyone can imagine grey matter, but it requires more complex patterns and a more complex comprehension of the function of those pattern, that allows an artist to communicate with the viewer.

The first step in organizing the search for visual tools was in the separation of what could be foreground and what could be background. In this case, background was the initial goal. In design terms, it was the search for patterns and textures.

The patterns had to be graphically balanced as well as appealing to the function. Grey matter, for purposes stated earlier, was the most obvious and therefore became an anchor on the list. Grey matter, or more accurately put, the cerebral cortex, "is covered with deep grooves, which actually are folds."35 This was chosen not only for its interesting physical characteristics but also for its function which acts like a net and integrates signals conducted by various cells.
A second folded pattern in the brain is the cerebellum, or "little brain". As viewed from below, its folds are long and curvacious. It is a softer more fluid pattern. The cerebellum looks more like overlapping folds as opposed to the somewhat rigid folds of the grey matter. The smaller brain also is interesting because it plays an important role in exercising movement as it relates to the body.

As design goes, it was not enough to have just stability and fluidity; a texture with apparent energy and gesture was needed. For this, brain waves were selected. There were two reasons for the actual representation of delta waves. The first reason being that they are the most diverse in
format. The peaks and valleys are the most varied. The second reason being, and coincidently so, that they are the waves of deep sleep. Deep sleep is the point at which, according to Tom Robbins, the brain photosynthesizes information.

![Delta Waves](image)

**Figure 3. Delta Waves, The Human Brain**

Lastly, two staining methods were incorporated as pattern/texture into the dialogue of the background. These staining methods, the Golgi and the Nissal, were created to highlight neurons and cells. The Nissal method, consisting of a dot-like pattern "stains the cells of all neurons."36 Whereas the Golgi method "address[es] the question of the structural relations between neurons."37 The Golgi method is characterized by its resemblance to roots or branches.

![Nissal Stain](image)  ![Golgi Stain](image)

**Figure 4. Nissal Stain, Neurophilosophy**  **Figure 5. Golgi Stain, The Human Brain**
After the preliminary tools where established, thus creating workable design elements, a few basic decisions needed to be made. For example, what will be the foreground? What can be used to try and communicate evolution? What resources are available to create symbolism in the three stages? What, if anything, would it have to do with flowers?

Five has always seemed like a well-rounded number, probably for a lot of reasons, but for this project it was because five elements make a statement that is neither too brief nor too verbose. Three focuses too much on singularity and seven focuses too much on anonymity. Even numbers are always ruled out because they are too complete to ask questions. Basically speaking, five main elements were required to satisfy the work at hand.

Therefore, it was back to the brain. Another look had to be taken in order to find foreground. Both the idea of evolution and of floral properties had to integrated. Each element had to symbolize a stage in the evolution and yet still retain similar characteristics in order to convey wholeness and unity.

![Figure 6. Neuron, Neurophilosophy](image)

The first symbol was the very easiest to find. The neuron is the most
primary element. It virtually looks like a spark. It also resembles a flower in full bloom. The first symbol is the finest connection between the art and the theory of brain evolution according to Robbins.

![Image of brain vessels](image)

Figure 7. Blood Vessel, *Neurophilosophy*

The second symbol was a little more difficult to choose. Reptilian consciousness connotes symplicity, among other things, and requires a primordial elongation in design. However, the second symbol had to relate to the first. It has often been noted that blood vessels have a certain branch-like quality. One illustration of the blood vessels, within close proximity to the forebrain, shows the arch of the aorta. This arch appears pouch or seed-like, sprouting from it are two long arms. This pod-type element, once the artistic licence had been used to merge the arch into a closed form, was almost identical to the one found within the neuron. A match had been found, a common element; and thus this seed shape anticipated the three final symbols.

The third symbol had to represent the mammalian consciousness. The cerebellum, or small brain is not only a part of the mesencephalon or mammalian brain, but also when cut through the center resembles leaf-like shapes. This symbol required the most interpretation and manipulation.
Taking into consideration the connection between the two prior symbols, there was a need to incorporate the seed shape. Going under the assumption that there exists a joining with the brain stem allowed for the creation of a seed shape. The third symbol was designed as if the attachment to the brain stem was a cross section; and hence, the desired seed flowed into the leaf-like formation of the cerebellum.

Figure 8. Cerebellum, Neurophilosophy

The fourth symbol acts something like a bridge between the beginnings of the mammalian stage, which began so long ago, and the advanced technological state of mankind adapting to his environment. It represents how mankind, as opposed to simply mammal in general, has the ability to provide structures in and of his life. In other words, it typifies protection and comfort. By way of function as well as the symmetry of design, the ventricles in the brain provided a suitable fourth symbol. The function of the ventricles, "cavities filled with cerebrospinal fluid, . . . bathe the brain within the protective sheath of dura." The design of the ventricle system also happens to appear wing-like, which enhances the idea of protection. Moreover, the structure suited the specifications. Two lateral ventricles arch out and connect to a third ventricle which takes the form of
a seed by means of its opening.

Figure 9. Ventricles, Neurophilosophy

Now that the majority of the symbols had been chosen and were working within the set parameters, the last symbol had to be executed. The fifth in the series plays an important role because it is the conclusion of the statement, however, the statement is open ended. Floral consciousness is still a theory, a goal, or something to strive for.

The floral stage is associated with the neocortex. Unfortunately the neocortex has no distinct shape other than that of the grey matter acting like a cap over the lower brain systems. This meant that the fifth symbol had to be discovered elsewhere. The shape chosen actually came from the limbic system. The limbic system involves many parts but when seen together form a sideways tulip or a bud that has been laid down. The limbic system, although part of the primal brain, is "involve[d] in memory and emotion."39 This system is also linked to the olfactory bulb, which is a vital part of the idea of attaining a floral consciousness. According to Tom Robbins, "the 'smell brain'--the memory area of the brain activated by the olfactory nerve--and the 'light brain'--the neocortex--are keys to the mystic state."40 Another reason for using the limbic system was the nature of the
composition. The limbic system curves in on its self and attaches to the basal ganglion which has a "lentiform--'lens-shaped'--ball." This was a perfect applicant for the seed shape.

![Figure 10. Limbic System, The Human Brain](image)

Only slight liberties were taken when designing the symbols for the artwork. Each symbol maintains integrity. However, it was necessary, for aesthetic purposes, to execute some manipulation. For example, each symbol had to have balance. When taking elements out of context it is essential to re-configure, however meager it might be. Balance was established, in this case, by the variation of line weight and length.

It is a fact that the symbols alone, viewed after having been removed from the source, do not necessarily look or seem like brain parts. This is fine, and is somewhat the point. It is significant only to have had their design come directly from the brain. In other words, their authenticity survives because it is true. In addition to that, the symbols best retain their floral characteristics when not thought of as simple dissections, but are viewed as whole units that came together to create a bouquet of abstracted representation.

Before finalized design could be made, it was crucial to decide how
the art pieces were going to be put together. An understanding of how the medium of fiber was going to be used to carry the chosen elements was required.

Silk fabric has traits that lend themselves well to colorization and surface application. Consequently, silk was decided upon to be the main ingredient. Silk can be dyed to create any color and is a perfect receptacle for screen printed pattern.

When it comes to the technology of assemblage, it is better to discuss it here, so as not to hinder any conversation about the final images. Therefore, a description in the abstract of the techniques used shall be discussed here.

After the silk had been dyed to the correct color in the given palette, it was then screen printed using black procion dye mixed with algenate. Onto this treated silk, pre-cut pattern pieces made of fusible interfacing, were adhered by means of heat. The silk was then cut down and hemmed around the shapes. Each shape was a piece in the whole, and was predetermined through design.

Once the individual pieces were made, they were "painted" with an airbrush. The airbrushing was used to create both internal subtlety and an external hard edge. The pieces without pattern were treated with gradated color effects throughout the surface, and all the pieces were sharpened by utilizing a black airbrush line solely around the contours.

Lastly, these pieces had to be put together. This was done by using paper-backed fusible web. This fusible web acts much like sheets of dry glue that adhere the pieces not only to each other but also to the backing. Therefore, the pieces allowed themselves to be mounted at the same time they were being assembled. Again, by using heat the entire artwork was in
a sense laminated.

The very final touches consisted of cutting out the pieces from the carpet backing that was used as a foundation and cording the edges with hand-dyed black rope. The cording was also attached by means of hot glue. At this point, the artwork was almost complete. The last step was to decide on a way to hang them on the wall. The solution involved strips of velcro secured to the back of the artwork and strips of the velcro mate secured to wooden sticks which were then capable of being nailed to the wall.
CHAPTER THREE
A CREATIVE APPROACH

The basic designs for the artwork owe much to the modernistic phase of Art Deco. "Deco's modernistic phase was also greatly influenced by the radical art movements such as De Stijl, Futurism, the Bauhaus and Constructivism."\(^{42}\) This can be seen by noticing how shape is treated. In the Deco movement "shapes were either geometric abstracts, . . . or greatly stylized natural forms."\(^{43}\) The design of "The Floral Ploy" utilizes both of these characteristics. The majority of the background is composed of large geometric shapes and the symbols epitomize stylized natural forms.

Another correlation between the designs and Art Deco lies in the use of the patterns and the coloration. In "The Floral Ploy" there is a limited number of textures or patterns as well as a limited palette. Also, many of the basic shapes used in the composition appear over and over. Therefore there exists a lot of repetition.

Another important feature of Art Deco is a powerful sense of rhythm, with many patterns exploiting the effects, both accidental and deliberate, achieved by the juxtaposition and repetition of colors and shapes. Color contrasts [were] often bold and sometimes dynamic, . . . with considerable use of both primaries and complementaries. At the same time, interesting results were often produced by the careful use of graduated or balanced tones of the same or similar colours.\(^{44}\)

Although Deco played a part in the inspiration for the construction of the designs, function and meaning were crucial. Much of the use of repetition is due to the theory that the brain retains all its stages. Nothing is ever lost, it is just built upon. Each function is as important now as it ever
was. This is the primary reason for the use of repeating pattern and shape in "The Floral Ploy".

However, before going directly to the discussion on the individual pieces of art, it would be beneficial to mention two other features: size and titles.

Size is essential for dual reasons. Number one, the nature of the medium, being fabric, allows itself to be used in large amounts. Screen printing, as it relates to technique or medium, also factors in with the idea of abundance. In addition to that, the second reason has to do with the purpose of communication. Although the theory may be somewhat obscure, the statement requires the audience to view the artwork on a large scale. That is why the first, third, and fifth artworks are 65"x57". The second and fourth, because they act as bridges, are 75"x52".

Furthermore, the titles require some recognition. Since the statement, or theory, is essentially a story of evolution, it was important to bring this across by means of titling. In order to let it read, so to speak, each artwork was given two names. They read as follows: From the Earth, "the spark"; Reptilian Recognition, "of murk and menace"; Going Mammalian, "birth mother"; Man's Shelter Game, "the building"; Stage One, "floral consciousness". Both have equal significance but the second or surname, for reasons of brievity, will be the name referred to in the proceeding pages.

The first artwork, "the spark", is exactly that. Its function is to be the Big Bang. It is, in essence, the beginning because it incorporates the neuron as its symbol. Aside from that, the first art work establishes guidelines for the remaining four. More precisely, the first artwork sets up a model that helps to design the rest. The preliminary rule of thumb is that there are four main shapes, excluding the symbol, in each of the five
artworks. The first artwork, for instance, establishes what will be referred to as the "common shape"; which in the case of "the spark" is patterned with the grey matter. The "common shape" works not only as a unifying element, because it is found in all of the artworks, but also because it hints on the idea of opposing forces. It does this by having an angle and a free flowing side. It has both geometric and organic form. This is relevant because of the concept of yin and yang, which "have come to stand for two complimentary principles, alternating in space and time, throughout the myriad forms of nature,"45 structure and chaos.

Figure 11. Final Design, "the spark"

After the "common shape" was introduced, the remaining shapes were affected mainly by the aesthetics of design. The placement of these shapes relies both on design principles as well as function of the intended
visual dialogue. For example, "the spark", by way of composition, is stacked from the left corner and explodes down toward the lower right with a predominance of this spark idea created by the black neuron symbol placed directly on a square of light color. The composition is further enhanced by the fact that the artwork is not contained in the traditional rectangular format, and thus allowed to retain the outline of abstract shape. Notice how the bottom shape zigzags outward.

The message is even further strengthened by the use of color and pattern. The "common shape", as stated previously, is silver and textured with the grey matter, which also to a degree, resembles stone or rock. The second pattern, delta waves, is engaged in the zigzagging rust shape. The color and pattern are both reminiscent of a fiery explosion. The balance of all this activity rests on the "white-hot" square and the serenity of the deep blue, representing space.

The second artwork, "of murk and menace", represents the early reptilian stage. Shape is set up something like a turtle's shell. Hard shapes, compounded with the arms of the symbol, arch over the softer underbelly. The underbelly is composed of the solid brown, which holds the delicate seed part of the symbol, as well as being composed with the free flowing contour of the cerebellum patterned "common shape". In addition to the shell concept, the composition also promotes the idea of aggression through the use of the elongated sharp edges found in the contour of the artwork as a whole.

The patterns chosen for this piece also represent aspects of this evolutionary stage. The cerebellum pattern is soft and supple, like that of an underbelly. In fact, it ripples like a jellyfish. This is especially true because of the direction that the curvilinear line is moving. It undulates
lengthwise as opposed to seeming like a wave by moving horizontally. The second pattern, the Golgi staining is used to evoke the image of plant life; in this case, roots or perhaps seaweed. It also looks slightly confused and tangled, attributed to the contrast between the intricacy of black texture on the yellow shape where it was placed.

Figure 12. Final Design, "of murk and menace"

The coloring implores that which is living amongst the earth. There is a heavy use of brown and green, complimented by yellow and blue. Even the placement and use of green implies lower level foliage because of the horizontal shape allocated for the containment of that color. The yellow, although decorated and thus hazed, acts as the sun principle. Without light there would be no hope. The blue is for the cold blooded body of the reptilian and the brown is the bed in which it lies.

Quite the opposite from the reptilian phase, warmth and nurturing
prevail in the mammalian stage. The third artwork, "birthmother", is the epitome of sympathy and pro-creation. The "common shape" typifies this concept because of its solid tender flesh-like color as well as for its function as a backdrop to the two shapes placed on top of it. The two shapes act as walls of a womb and are impregnated with the symbol. The compositional arrangement of "birthmother" is also extremely centralized. The contour of the artwork as a whole is enhanced by the silver petal shape, showing itself three times around the main image. This gives the design a certain type of stability, which is acute to the concept that there must exist a wholeness before the desire to divide can take place.

Figure 13. Final Design, "birthmother"

The patterns for "birthmother" also depict the mammalian womb. The patterns are introduced in the protective walls, due to the fact that this
is where the exchange takes place. The delta waves represent the energy given off from mother to child. They are found in the bottom shape, illustrating the first connection, or the initial transfer of brainwaves. This being the primary sign of selfhood. The top shape implies sustenance. The Nissal stain gives the impression of being engulfed in nourishing cell bodies.

The color behind the patterns further embeds the principles of the walls. The delta waves move on a rust background and the Nissal stain floats over mulberry. The center of the womb is champagne. The silver acts as a soft sheath. The colorization of this artwork is especially notable in its utilitarian use of warm and cool. The success being that the transition of color supports a mild, less tense vision of supply and demand. The silver and champagne work as buffers for the strong links between the black symbol and the more concentrated uses of rust and mulberry.

The fourth artwork functions as a bridge that spans the world of mankind. There is a refined sense of order and structure in this composition. Technology found its way into "the building". The axial placement of the navy blue wedge acts like an anchor to the symbolic seed, while simultaneously working as a counterbalance for the farther reaching limbs of the symbol. Behind the blue lies mankind's nest. This shape represent home, concealed from the back by land and trees. The "common shape", or in this case the land, positions itself with its angle down and its free flowing line rolling on the horizon. Securing all of this is the job of the last shape. This shape depicts the highest level of plant form, the trees. This shape also moonlights as the determining contour edge of artwork in its entirety. The contour is a series of steps, either going up or going down. This design supports the many challenges that mankind has to face and conquer. Some of the most difficult ones being right outside his back door.
Once again the use of texture strengthens the intended statement. The grey matter, which in "the building" seems more like shells, pebbles, or marble, than like ordinary stone or rock as it did in the first artwork, is prompted to characterize refined elements of construction. This is mainly due to the fact that pink is used as a foundation color, but there also exists refined construction in the design of the pattern which has a notch and groove quality. Likewise, the second pattern promotes construction by means of natural growth. The Golgi stain is used on the dark green, which as stated earlier illustrates the trees. However, as opposed to the vertical direction of the Golgi stain as seen in "of murk and mence", in "the building" the branches move outward. This direction creates the idea of levels or hierarchies of plant forms.

Adding color to these shapes was basically taken from the most
direct translation. Land and trees are brown and green, respectively. The pinkish color is reminiscent of the nest, structured by the use of pattern. The blue, however, is essentially aesthetic in behavior. Due to the central placement of the shape that encompasses the color, it was necessary to chose something cool. The axis for mankind is not always as loud as it might sometimes be considered to be. The blue can also be interpreted as the shade or the night, which by definition is the lack of direct sun.

Figure 15. Final Design, "floral consciousness"

The last artwork created for "The Floral Ploy" is actually speaking about a beginning. It is the part of the evolution that casts a look forward. This artwork represents an awareness. Floral consciousness is the theory as well as the namesake of the work. It is the image most associated with flowers. Therefore, the composition enhances this thought. The overlapping
placement of the shapes has an open quality. The complementary shapes of rust and green create a "V" around the bulb of the symbol. The gap is then filled with the introduction of the "common shape". Since the majority of the "common shape" is exposed, it resembles a plane on which the pattern can then be strewn. The flower characteristics are best seen in the petal like contours of the last shape. This equally helps in the final outline of the artwork.

The patterns used in "floral consciousness" are likewise representational of the flower. The Nissal stain is spread over the "common shape" like grain on a field of sun. It dots the full surface of the plane. Furthermore, it is the pollination of pattern that maintains an equilibrium between the size and color of this particular shape. The cerebellum pattern, on the other hand, is situated on the slope of the green shape. This texture emphasizes foliage. The directional quality of the cerebellum pattern is used to depict the sensual folds of a leaf moving outward from its connection to the stem.

The colors used in the last artwork are, as much as anything, a culmination of the previous colors used. The artwork incorporates the most varied combination of complementary colors. The yellow works as a highlight; and the rust is both a petal color and a tie in to the blood of mankind. The green works as a cool foundation for the two warmer shapes, as well as doubling for the representation of foliage. The petal shape is mulberry and works to augment the idea of flower. The purplish tone of mulberry adds warmth and grace to "floral consciousness".

The five artworks, and hence the five statements they communicate are complete in their singularity. Each part of the creation is an individual thought. So although "The Floral Ploy" has an underlying meaning of unity,
it is not vital to view them together. They can be seen as chapters or passages. Sometimes it is not necessary to read the whole book. Sometimes it is possible to understand the characters without knowing their full role in the plot.

Likewise, with regards to the audience and the fundamental knowledge of neurology, it is not essential to have these two components put together. In other words, the artistic integrity of using the human brain as a visual source is not dependent on having the viewer informed on this topic. Visual truth rests on the assumption that the design characteristics will speak for themselves. The audience can interpret them as they like. The real judge of good artwork is not whether people can pick out representational objects, but is subject to whether or not the artist has fulfilled the predetermined goals. That is the way art, science, and even religion behave; the appreciation is intrinsic, the rest is opinion.
Figure 16. *From the Earth, “the spark”*
Figure 17. *From the Earth*, (detail)
Figure 18. Reptilian Recognition. "of muck and menace."
Figure 22. Man's Shelter Game, "the building"
CONCLUSION

By means of hindsight, it can be determined that a connection was made between the theory of floral consciousness and the visual images of that theory. The use of the physical brain as a source is the plateau of this concept. However, the original analogy can not be claimed, the credit for that goes to Tom Robbins. The artist, in this case, can only conclude that after much research and examination, the brain is not only a flower with the desire to bloom, but also something of a syncronism, moving logic and emotion, and linking science and religion. It is virtually impossible to have one without the other. To truly understand the brain, one must consider both its physical properties as well as its spiritual properties. One will always guide the other.

In addition to the correlation of brain to flower and science to religion, it is important to understand that the nature of this art is a means to interpret the theories and revelations of mankind. "The Floral Ploy" accomplishes this by involving personal style in subjective design making. It is the aim of "The Floral Ploy" to bring together the artist and the viewer by way of communication. It is a message, a piece in the puzzle, how well it fits is defined by how well it communicates. This is the nature and goal of all art.

All art, from the crassest mass media production to the most esoteric art-world practices, has a political existence, or, more accurately, an ideological existence. It either challenges or supports (tacitly perhaps) the dominant myths a culture calls Truth.46
ENDNOTES


2 Ibid., 364.

3 Ibid., 364.

4 Ibid., 364.

5 Ibid., 363.

6 Ibid., 363.


8 Ibid., 80.

9 Ibid., 80.

10 Ibid., 80.


12 Ibid., 365.

13 Ibid., 365.

14 Ibid., 366.

15 Ibid., 367.

16 Ibid., 366.

17 Ibid., 369.

18 Ibid., 369.

19 Ibid., 369.
21 Ibid., 83.
24 Ibid., 44.
25 Ibid., 44.
26 Ibid., 47.
27 Ibid., 47.
28 Ibid., 44.
29 Ibid., 47.


37 Ibid., 26.

38 Ibid., 106.


44 Ibid., 8.


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