

Creative Work: A Self-Fulfilling Prophecy

Artist: *Jack Twiddy*

Faculty Mentor: *Beth Grabowski*

Affiliation: *University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill*

Dimensions: *40" x 60"*

Medium: *Inkjet-Printed Digital Render*

Artist Statement: *My work deals with the notion that our understanding of death – as an inevitable consequence of life – is rationally unjustified, and further that our assumption of our own mortality serves as a self-fulfilling prophecy preventing us from overcoming this existential challenge. I see a twofold task for myself here: Firstly, to reach the viewer and get them to take such an idea seriously, and secondly, to provide a detailed and scientific rationale for the pursuit of an indefinite lifespan, as well as a plan for how to accomplish this feat. In my various pursuits, I address both components of this idea. My written work primarily deals with the latter goal, and my artwork is geared specifically towards the former. The work that I've produced for my thesis deals with the notion of the self-fulfilling prophecy, and how this relates to our society's treatment of death. It serves as an attempt to break through the defense mechanisms of the viewer, to get them to realistically consider the seriousness of their life in a world where mortality is as-of-yet guaranteed, and to hopefully open their mind – through desperation, if for no other reason – to the possibility of our societal pursuit of radical life extension. It is my hope that in doing so, I might be able to inspire the general public – one individual at a time – to seriously consider and accept the very real possibility of overcoming the current mortal status of our species, and thus lift the current barriers to the research and political and economic support necessary to unshackle ourselves from the chains binding us to our own mortal fate.*

The sculpture itself depicts an allegorical scene from a not-too-distant future, in which a progression of shackled individuals are led forward into a grave in the process of being dug. These individuals are escorted and forced forwards by their captors, but the power dynamic between the different characters is different than the dynamic found within other oppressive situations. If the viewer looks closely, they will observe that the aggressive figures themselves are attached to the same chain as those offering resistance. This is intended to serve as a metaphor for the behavior of our species regarding death. In our attempts to rationalize and defend our collective psyche against looming and ever-approaching obliteration, we have duped ourselves into an acceptance of this fate that nullifies any emerging attempts to challenge the inevitability of this outcome.



A Self-Fulfilling Prophecy (Front), Jack Twiddy, 2015



A Self-Fulfilling Prophecy (Back), Jack Twiddy, 2015