PORTRAIT/ICON/CODE: MARC QUINN'S DNA PORTRAITS AND THE IMAGING OF THE SELF

by

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(Under the Direction of Isabelle Loring Wallace)

ABSTRACT

In 2001, Marc Quinn was commissioned to create a portrait of Sir John Edward Sulston for the National Portrait Gallery of London. The resulting portrait, a framed plate of cloned DNA, looks unlike any other portrait in the gallery. This portrait and two subsequent DNA portraits appear at first to be critical of both portraiture and DNA science. However, a careful analysis of these works and the traditions of art which they reference – those of portraiture, self portraiture, and icons - show these to be studies in the history of the image and the ways in which the human relationship with the image can be seen to move in a cyclical, rather than linear fashion. While DNA may be a new medium, Quinn points out that the fears and fantasies inspired by DNA science are both timeless and timely, stemming from enduring anxieties about the image.

INDEX WORDS: Marc Quinn, Portraiture, Self-Portraiture, Icons, Subjectivity, Bio-Art, DNA, Genetics, Cloning

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"And now the announcement of Watson and Crick about DNA. This is for me the real proof of the existence of God."- Salvador Dali[1]

In 1953 Francis Crick and James Watson wrote an article for *Nature* magazine in which they confirmed the double-helix structure of human DNA that "suggests a possible copying mechanism for the genetic material."[2] In retrospect, this discovery is considered a momentous event, one in which our conception of life as human beings, and its meaning, began to shift. But in 1953 the existence of DNA quickly faded from the public mind, with very little attention given to Watson and Crick or the double helix for the next decade.[3] Art of the time reflects this indifference with only one artist giving deoxyribonucleic acid the attention that we now consider its due.[4] Salvador Dali's statement about DNA, along with his paintings such as *Butterfly Landscape, The Great Masturbator in Surreal Landscape with DNA* (1957/8) and *Galacidalacidesoxyribonucleicacid (Homage to Crick and Watson)* (1963) (Fig. 1), reflect ideas that still seem new to us fifty years later: ideas about the dual nature of DNA as both shared and unique, its implications about the past and future of the human body, and the possibility that DNA proves, rather than refutes, as many others argue, the existence of God.

What was distinctly *sur*real in the 1950s had redefined reality by the late twentieth century, providing answers to how the body functions and what makes each individual unique.

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[1] Gunther S. Stent, "Francis Crick," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, Vol. 150, No. 3, (September 2006) 473.
[2] James Watson and Francis Crick, "Molecular Structure of Nucleic Acids, A Structure for Deoxyribose Nucleic Acid," *Nature* No.4356 (April 25, 1953): 737.
[3] Philip R. Reilly, "Divining DNA," in *The Molecular Gaze: Art in the Genetic Age*, ed. Susan Anker and Dorothy Nelkin, (Cold Spring Harbor, N.Y.: Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory Press, 2004), xii.
[4] Ibid.

The work of scholars like Martin Kemp and Martina Wallace, whose 2000 book *Spectacular Bodies: The Art and Science of the Human Body from Leonardo da Vinci to Now* details the links between medicine and art from the Renaissance onward, serving as a testament to the enduring nature of the search for a biological answer to metaphysical questions.[5] The rise in popularity of discussions, writings and art that deals with DNA in particular from the late 1980s on reflects the most recent shift in cultural attitudes towards the potential of knowing the past and future of the human body. This increase can be attributed to the fact that DNA science and particularly genetics began yielding more concrete results towards the end of the twentieth century. What was once an abstract pattern, a double helix, became Dolly the sheep and the Human Genome Project. Thus, at the end of the twentieth century, the number of artists dealing with DNA, genetics, and the implications of genetic science grew dramatically. One example of this explosion of DNA-themed art was *Paradise Now: Picturing the Genetic Revolution*, an exhibition in the year 2000 at Exit Art in New York, which featured three dozen artists, all of whom dealt with the genetics, genomics, or biotechnology.[6] In his 2006 book *Signs of Life: Bio Art and Beyond*, Edouardo Kac presented numerous writers and artists who deal with concepts related to "bio art," a new category which he defines as art that "manipulates the processes of life; in its most radical form, it invents or transforms living organisms."[7] Those in this category include himself, George Gessert, and, most importantly for our purposes, Marc Quinn.

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[5] The book accompanied an exhibition of the same name at the Hayward Gallery. See Martin Kemp, Martin and Marina Wallace. *Spectacular Bodies: the Art and Science of the Human Body from Leonardo to Now*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000.

[6] Though genetics, genomics, DNA and cloning are not synonymous, for the purposes of this thesis it is necessary to realize/infer that to use DNA is to invite the viewer to extrapolate from the work interpretations related to the possibilities of cloning and genetic engineering and thus the work must be treated as encompassing such activities. The cloned DNA in Quinn's portraits represents each of these parts and processes, whether by indexical or symbolic means.

[7] Eduardo Kac, *Signs of life: bio art and beyond,* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2007), 2.

Quinn has not always been referred to as a "bio-artist" and may very well reject this title since his work reaches far beyond "the processes of life" into the connections between art, science and religion and what these connections say about the ways in which we see ourselves. He came to the fore as a member of the notorious *Sensation* exhibition, which featured up-and-coming artists from the collection of British advertising magnate Charles Saatchi. These artists, who became known as the Young British Artists or YBAs, lived up to the exhibition's title, eliciting much interest and sparking widely publicized controversies with their array of scandalous objects.[8] As a result of this exhibition, Marc Quinn gained international recognition for a work that continues to mesmerize viewers today, *Self* (1991) (Fig. 2), a self-portrait made of nine pints of his own blood frozen in a mold of his head.[9] Its use of atypical materials and conceptual depth made *Self* a fitting member of the *Sensation* exhibition, but more importantly, it was a fitting debut for Quinn whose work has continued to blur the boundaries between art and science. The appearance of *Self,* which sits in vitrine housed on top of a stainless steel refrigeration unit, warrants discussion as both scientific specimen and reliquary; it is at once sterile and sumptuous.[10] The confusion of binary oppositions clearly present in *Self* subsequently became a hallmark of Quinn's work; as we shall see, in his work form merges with content, scientific methods create religious forms, traditional genres are revisited in nontraditional

[8] For discussion on *Sensation*, see Brooks Adams. *Sensation: Young British Artists from the Saatchi Collection*. (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1998).
[9] Nine pints is the amount of blood contained in the average adult body. The blood for was drawn in several intervals throughout a five-month period. Gen Doy. *Picturing the Self: Changing Views of the Subject in Visual Culture*. (London: I.B. Tauris, 2005), 79.
[10] In order to prevent freeze drying, the vitrine is filled with silicone oil which is kept at subzero temperatures.

materials and interior worlds become external appearances.[11]

Quinn's conflation of religion and science began, as have many of his themes, with the aforementioned *Self*, which has frequently been compared to a reliquary.[12] *Self* contains all the 'stuff' of reliquaries – a biological remnant of a human (in this case, Quinn's human is still living), a container, and an image, or title, to identify the individual – thereby making the link with the tradition of reliquaries quite direct. Quinn has continued working with biological materials and historical or religious forms for his entire career, reaching the pinnacle for his use of bio art to date with a series of portraits made of DNA- *Sir John Edward Sulston* (2001) (Fig. 3), *Cloned DNA Self-Portrait (4th Perspective)* (2001) (Fig. 4), and *Kate Moss DNA Portrait* (2005) (Fig. 5).[13] While this series is rather small, both in scale and number, its significance within Quinn's oeuvre is unmistakable, most notably in relation to *Self*, with which these works

[11] In addition to his use of traditional materials, Quinn frequently references the history of art in his work, a testament to his years studying the discipline at Cambridge University Art. He began sculpting in 1984 and some of his earliest works, such as *Young Dancer Aged 14* (1988) and a *bust titled Marie Antoinette* (1989), both of which were sculpted of bread, baked, and then cast in bronze, reference his art historical training. His work does not often deal in subtle relationships, but rather in the questions raised by obvious connections. While his work incorporates many different artistic periods, he tends to choose those in which great shifts in thinking or practice can be seen (Medieval, Renaissance, The Enlightenment, Modernism). This allows the viewer to recognize patterns, tropes and the undercurrents of artistic thought. Often his work can be compared in detail with that of another artist, such as the comparisons I make in Chapter 3 with Dürer, but overall, it comments on the perceived conventions of a certain genre or movement rather than a specific history. He prides himself in his use of the literal seeing the power of his images in their ability to trigger connections in the viewer, that reflect the timelessness of his questions. See "Free Admission: Marc Quinn Talks to Sarah Whitfield," in *Marc Quinn: Tate Liverpool 1 February- 28 April 2002*. ed. Marc Quinn, Christoph Grunenberg and Victoria Ponery. London: Tate Gallery Publishing, 2002..

[12] Claudia Gartner makes a compelling comparison between *Self* and the eleventh-century bust reliquary of the Apostle Paul (Munster Cathedral Treasury) to demonstrate the alignment of *virtus* with the physical reality of a person, the alignment of mind and body in a contemporary theological context. See Gartner, Claudia. "Medieval Reliquary and Contemporary Art." Translated by Keith Kennetz. *Theologie und Glaube* 91, no. 2 (2001):245-261.

[13] Though I will focus on the three individual portraits, Quinn also made a group portrait, *Family Portrait* (2002), as well as *Self Conscious* in 2000, which consists of a vial containing a strand of DNA.

have multiple parallels, representing a clear development in Quinn's thinking from 1991 to 2005. Quinn's DNA portraits in many ways followed the pattern set by *Self* with the use of a tiny fraction of each person, this time the tiniest identifiable fraction, used to represent their wholeness.[14] However, because they take up the specific issues of the mapping of the human genome and genetic manipulation they also progress far beyond the reaches of *Self* to the larger implications of contemporary science and the cyclical nature of human progress, both artistic and evolutionary. These works present the art historian with an opportunity to examine the historic context of Quinn's oeuvre against the broader implications of a medium that has the potential to change the future of the human body and its image. For these reasons, the DNA portraits will be the main focus of this thesis.

The degree to which these portraits represent the "sitters" - Sir John Edward Sulston, Kate Moss and Quinn himself - and their individual subjectivity is questionable at best. In fact, by making three of these nearly-identical portraits, Quinn manifests not the unique identity of each person, but the visual and structural similarities in DNA; one portrait looks just like the next. Without a label, it is impossible to identify Sir John Edward Sulston from Kate Moss from Marc Quinn, and aside from being British, these three individuals have very little in common. Creating a DNA portrait of an esteemed geneticist or one's self could be expected, or at least apropos, but to create, four years later, a DNA portrait of a woman internationally known for her striking physical appearance which is completely absent from the portrait, raises questions about

[14] Quinn's use of reliquary forms in the DNA portraits has been commented on by a number of scholars, including the aforementioned Martin Kemp, and Quinn himself has acknowledged this connection. When pressed about the link with reliquaries in an interview, Quinn responded tersely, "So what are we talking about? The DNA works are relics, they are like traditional saints' relics." "Free Admission: Marc Quinn Talks to Sarah Whitfield," in *Marc Quinn: Tate Liverpool 1 February- 28 April 2002*. ed. Marc Quinn, Christoph Grunenberg and Victoria Ponery. (London: Tate Gallery Publishing, 2002): n.p.

the success of genetic portraiture, and the success of genetics and portraiture separately. The DNA in each portrait can be understood to contain that which is special to each sitter, the trait for which s/he is most known- Sulston's intelligence, Moss's beauty, Quinn's creativity- but what of that unique and special trait is truly represented? In a time that is so inundated with visual images, reducing the individual to a visually abstract chain of nucleotides exposes the threatening nature of a science that exists in a realm beyond those images.

As I will argue, a shift in the way in which we *image* ourselves also signifies for a shift in the way we *see* ourselves as subjective beings and raises questions about the origins of subjectivity, whether it resides in the cultural, biological, or spiritual realm.[15] While many of Quinn's works engage similar themes, it is the DNA portraits that most deftly discuss the relationship between images and people, and the sacred and profane methods of representing the self. While retaining his signature use of art historical themes, experimentation, and tension between natural and man-made forces, the DNA portraits more than any other series by Quinn reflect his intense interest in the histories of science, art and religion and the similar methods with which these disciplines visually represent their principles. Quinn makes it clear that human self-perception has developed through the influence of those institutions that re-present for us the essence of human existence. They find this essence in subjectivity, the image, and the soul, all of which appear to be suspiciously, and significantly, absent in the DNA portraits.

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[15] Subjectivity is a difficult word, especially in the context of art history, where it is frequently contrasted with "objective". As defined by Nick Mansfied, subjectivity refers to " an abstract or general principle that defies our separation in to distinct selves and that encourages us to imagine that, or simply helps us to understand why, our interior lives inevitably seem to involve other people, either as objects of need, desire and interest or as necessary sharers of common experience. In this way, the subject is always linked to something outside of it – an idea or principle or the society of other subjects..." Nick Mansfield, *Subjectivity. Theories of the self from Freud to Haraway.* (New York NYU Press, 2000), 3. In this paper, I will use the term *subjectivity* as a philosophical term describing this abstract aspect of the human condition, whereas I will use *identity* when speaking of those things that make an individual unique.

Conversations about selfhood and human nature are for Quinn as timeless as they are timely. His DNA portraits highlight the shifts that have occurred in human perception at a time when genetic science threatens to redefine what it is to be a human being, while at the same time show that these perceptions have, in many ways, always already existed through his use of religious and art historical sources. Quinn's portraits ultimately place this "shift" within Jean Baudrillard's concept of involution, the notion that we are progressing, both biologically and culturally in Quinn's context, not in a straight line, but in a hairpin turn.[16] Biologically, science threatens to return us to the single-celled state of our protozoan ancestors, where body and image no longer subsist. Culturally, it can be argued, we are reverting to a medieval sensibility where our subjectivity is linked with that of an abstract entity, be it God, as in medieval times, or our own invisible genetic material, rather than the result of our unique life experience. As I argue in the pages that follow, Quinn pits the methods for understanding humanity against each other not for the purpose of declaring a victor, but rather to emphasize their similarities, ultimately showing the cyclical nature of the pursuit and persecution of the image, whether artistic, genetic or spiritual. Quinn achieves this by combining up-to-date scientific processes with art forms that are both religious and historical, harkening back to medieval reliquaries and icons. The conflation of art, science and religion is characteristic of Quinn's work, and in his DNA portraits his discussion of all three congeals into a discussion of the state of subjectivity at the millennium and the future of the image.

[16] Baudrillard argues that mankind has reached a period of involution, which "aims, through cloning and many other techniques, to liberate us from sex and death," those very things that made us human in the first place. Jean Baudrillard, *The Vital Illusion*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 8.

Chapter 2: DNA and Portraiture

"There is...an impossibility about the task of portraiture, which these works try to demonstrate. The artist knows next to nothing about himself- how then can he know more about his subject?" – Marc Quinn[17]

In 2001, Marc Quinn was commissioned by the National Portrait Gallery of London, in conjunction with The Wellcome Trust, to create a portrait of Nobel laureate Sir John Edward Sulston, a leading figure in the Human Genome Project and former Director of The Wellcome Trust's Sanger Centre.[18] As a successful British artist with an inclination toward portraiture, a career-long engagement with science, and an investment in discovering new ways to portray the individual, Quinn was a perfect candidate for portraying Sulston. In order to execute this work, Quinn requested the assistance of the 'sitter' with his vast expertise in DNA science. Using standard methods of DNA cloning, Sulston and Quinn broke down Sulston's DNA, which was obtained from a sperm sample, and replicated it in bacteria.[19] The cloned DNA colonies were then spread on an agar jelly plate and left to grow until they became visible as the jewel-like beads that make up the portrait, at which time their growth was artificially halted (Fig. 6).[20] The agar plate was then sealed behind glass and mounted inside a wide stainless steel frame. In

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[17] David Thorp, "A Universe of Opposites." in *Incarnate*, Marc Quinn, London: Booth-Clibborn Editions, 1998, n.p.

[18] Begun in 1990, the Human Genome project was thirteen-year international project whose goals were to: identify all the genes in human DNA, determine the sequences of the base pairs that make up human DNA, improve tools for analyzing this data, and address the ethical, legal, and social issues that may arise from the project. See U.S. Department of Energy Office of Science, "Human Genome Project Information" U.S. Department of Energy Office of Science. http://www.ornl.gov/sci/techresources/Human_Genome/ home.shtml

[19] The choice to replicate the DNA in bacteria was not an aesthetic or conceptual choice, but rather a procedural necessity. Because bacteria do not contain its DNA within a nucleus, one bacterium can easily transfer its DNA to another. Thus transferring genes into one species of bacterium creates the opportunity for many more transfers. Gina Smith. *The Genomics Age: How DNA Technology is Transforming the Way We Live and Who We Are*. (New York: AMACOM, 2005), 33.

[20] Martin Kemp. "Reliquary and Replication: A Genomic Portrait: Sir John Sulston by Marc Quinn" *Nature* 413, (2001): 778.

comparison with much of Quinn's oeuvre, the portrait is visually tame: small and neutral toned, and quite unlike the macabre appeal of his most recognizable work, *Self*. The one visual link to his earlier work is the frame, giving the portrait a sterile, scientific tenor appropriate to both subject and artist.

Despite the portrait's lack of pictorial representation and glaring dissimilarity from other portraits in the Gallery, Quinn's image of Sulston was instantly hailed as "a true likeness"[21] and "an exact representation [which] precisely captures what is unique about him."[22] Even Quinn himself boldly called it "the most realist portrait in the Portrait Gallery."[23] Surely the average viewer would not, at a glance, consider this portrait a clear conveyance of Sir John Edward Sulston, the bearded and bespectacled man shown in the photographic print by Quinn that accompanied the DNA portrait in its initial exhibition. In fact, the mere presence of this photograph, as well as one of Quinn, emphasizes the fact that the DNA portrait does not bear a visible likeness to Sulston and is perhaps in need of supplementation (Fig. 7 & 8).[24] This begs the question, what makes a successful portrait? And further, what is Quinn saying about portraiture by creating a portrait that is undeniably both realistic and abstract? By highlighting certain characteristics of portraiture through their absence or presence in *Sir John Edward Sulston*, and the subsequent *Cloned DNA Self-Portrait (4th Perspective)* and *Kate Moss DNA*

[21] Jonathan Jones, "John Sulston, Marc Quinn (2001)," *Guardian Unlimited*, (2001), http://arts.guardian.co.uk/portrait/story/0,,740345,00.html.
[22] National Portrait Gallery of London, "Marc Quinn and John Sulston Unveil Genomic Portrait," National Portrait Gallery, http://www.npg.org.uk/live/prelgeno.asp
[23] Ibid.
[24] While the photographic prints were part of the original submission to the National Portrait Gallery, they are ancillary to the DNA portrait. The DNA portrait, the commissioned portrait, may be displayed without the prints, but the prints may not be displayed without the DNA portrait.

Portrait, Quinn is framing a much larger discussion of the ways in which portraiture does and does not succeed and the ways in which DNA is and is not a portrait.

In order to successfully glean what these portraits, and through them their author, say about portraiture, it is essential to determine in what ways they embody the conventions of modern portraiture and how they differ. As defined by Shearer West, "...all portraits represent something about the body and face, on the one hand, and the soul, character, or virtues of the sitter, on the other... "[25] This comparison highlights the ways in which Quinn's DNA portraits do not function as one would expect a portrait to function, namely because of its lack of a pictorial likeness or individualizing characteristics that would hint at the subject's identity. Erwin Panofsky provides a different, yet equally compelling description of the goals of a portrait:

> On the one hand it seeks *to bring out whatever it is in which the sitter differs from the rest of humanity* and would even differ from himself were he portrayed at a different moment or in a different situation; and this is what distinguishes a portrait from an 'ideal' figure or 'type'. On the other hand it seeks *to bring out whatever the sitter has in common with the rest of humanity* and what remains in him regardless of place and time; and this is what distinguishes a portrait from a figure forming part of a genre painting or narrative.[26]

This could easily be a description of DNA, that which is both unique to an individual, yet common to all humans.[27] If one follows Panofsky's definition, then, DNA can truly be a portrait of its progenitor. This is furthered by its potential to grant immortality through its infinite reproducibility, its unequivocal truth and accuracy, and its position as both original and copy. In

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[25] West, 21.
[26] My italics. Shearer West, *Portraiture*, (Oxford: Oxford History of Art, 2004), 24.; from Panofsky, *Early Netherlandish Painting*, New York and London, 1971, vol I, p.194.
[27] The only disagreement would be in Panofsky's mention of the sitter's ability to "differ from himself" in another portrait. This notion of self-difference is key to the discussion of subjectivity and DNA's relationship to a subjective being since DNA is, by definition, self-same. This discussion will be continued in depth in the conclusion.

this sense, DNA and its potential applications becomes a super-portrait, far surpassing the abilities of the painted image.

Likeness and Subjectivity

Portraiture, as a Western genre, is particularly sensitive to changes in the perceptions of the individual through time.[28] In medieval metaphysics there was great emphasis on the inner self because it was there that God's presence was most immediately felt.[29] The medieval portrait was likewise a symbol of the past and future presence of God in human life, while in the present, it shared with its viewer what little divine presence could be seen.[30] Similar to portraits today, medieval images represented those who were absent, as an emperor or deceased saint, or invisible, namely God.[31] The presence of portraits made the veneration of saints possible, and these images gained authenticity through their link to the past existence of the human represented and the promise of the future presence of God.[32]

By the Renaissance, successful, authentic, portraits had come to rely on the union between signifier (expression) and signified (inner essence, or subjectivity).[33] Portraits became an attempt at reconciling the inner world of the character with the exterior appearance of an individual and thus, marked the rise of "post-medieval modernity and humanistic individualism."[34] This increased interest in the human condition and the virtues of humankind

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[28] Richard Brilliant, *Portraiture*, (Cambridge: Harvard Univeristy Press, 1991), 8.
[29] Frank B Farrell, *Subjectivity, Realism, and Postmodernism- The Recovery of the World*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 1.
[30] Hans Belting, *Likeness and presence: a history of the image before the era of art*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 11.
[31] Ibid, 42.
[32] Ibid, 10.
[33] Van Alphen, 241-2. Van Alphen later locates the problematic nature of 20th century portraiture in modernity's recognition of the "irreconcilable split between signified and signifier."
[34] Brilliant, 127.

created an increased demand for paintings of people, and wrapped up in this, was the new idea of the internal self as an agent and a worthy subject.[35] In the early seventeenth century, Descartes' "I think therefore I am," became the mantra of the subjective world; though, for Descartes, the bodily world and the mind (or soul) were disjunct.[36] A century later, Kant then removed God from the equation of subjectivity and united the inner and outer worlds in the belief that "the self thus could not be known in isolation; it could be known only in relation to the world..."[37] Subjectivity thus retained the intrinsic natures, autonomy and constructive power that had been previously located in God, while gaining influence from an exterior world that was no longer dependent on the will of God either.[38] Representations of subjectivity thus shifted from that which cannot be represented, or can only be represented as one's piety or relation to God, to solely an external or inner force, to the union between the two. The merging of internal and external influences can be seen in the resurgence of interest in physiognomy, which claimed that the features of the face could be used as a gauge of one's mental state, and in the work of artists such as Jan Van Eyck (*Man in a Red Turban*, 1433, Fig. 12) and, later, Rigaud and Rembrandt (*Self-Portrait*, 1659, Fig. 13).[39]

The arrival of photography and subsequent rejection of mimesis in painting led to shifts in portraiture during the nineteenth and twentieth century.[40] Likeness became less of a concern, giving way to the artist's own stylistic desires, as can be seen in portraits by Giacometti or Matisse (*Green Stripe (Madame Matisse),* 1905, Fig. 14). By the late twentieth century, the

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[35] Joanna Woods-Marsden. *Renaissance Self-Portraiture: The Visual Construction of Identity and the Social Status of the Artist*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 13.
[36] Andrew Bowie, *Aesthetics and Subjectivity: from Kant to Nietzsche, 2nd edition*. Manchester: (Manchester University Press, 2003), 2.
[37] Hoffman, 37.
[38] Farrell, 3.
[39] West, 32.
[40] Ibid, 187.

search for a union between subjectivity and external appearance had all but ended. Frank Farrell describes this stage as the "complete disenchantment of subjectivity," wherein the mental and semantic aspects of subjectivity lose their intrinsic natures and become what he calls "nominalist," dependent on interpretations and their relations with the surrounding environs.[41] While Farrell himself presents possible remedies to this disenchantment, artists like Quinn have also undertaken the task of revisiting notions of subjectivity in the context of representation and the preservation of the portrait genre.[42]

One reason that artists like Quinn can continue investigating notions of the image and identity into the twenty-first century is the emergence of DNA science and the newfound interest in the dichotomy between internal and external influences on subjectivity. Where once there was the belief that subjectivity was purely the result of external forces, God or social influences, genetics has now stepped in, causing many to find the source of subjectivity in our biology. Because genetic information is distinctive, it is often believed to be vital to identity, misleadingly termed "genetic identity."[43] One of the greatest fears, or fantasies, about cloning can be found in genetic determinism- the belief that all personal traits are encoded in our genes, thus a clone would not only look like its original, but have the same character.[44] This concept has gained

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[41] Frank B. Farrell, *Subjectivity, Realism, and Postmodernism- The Recovery of the World.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 3. Farrell's book provides a very thorough study of the shifts in subjectivity from the medieval "divine" subjectivity, through its secularization in modern philosophy, to the contemporary disenchantment.

[42] Van Alphen, 254. This can be seen in the work of the YBAs, including Quinn, Tracy Emin and Jenny Saville, whom Gen Doy uses as an example of a type of rejection of Roland Barthes' "death of the author," citing these artists' preference for "autobiographical self-promotion." See Doy, 71.

[43] Onora O'Neill, "DNA and ethics," in *DNA: changing science and society*, ed. Torsten Krude, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 174-6. The term genetic identity can also be used to describe what a group of individuals share (ethnic, religious, etc).

[44] Nicholas Agar, *Perfect Copy: Unraveling the Cloning Debate,* (Cambridge: Icon Books, 2002), 218.

increasing popularity as more and more genetic information is decoded, despite the repeated use of identical twins to refute the claim that identical genes create identical people. Although the merger of interior and exterior influences on subjectivity has been understood and represented in portraiture from the Renaissance on,[45] the introduction of the concept of genetic identity has caused a resurgence in the belief that identity can be determined by internal factors only.

These threatened characteristics, image (likeness) and subjectivity, are seen as two key elements of the modern portrait. The likeness presented is typically that of the sitter only, while the subjectivity of both artist and sitter can be perceived.[46] By interpreting portraiture in a manner that seems to value scientific reason over individual passions, Quinn appears to call into question the success of portraiture as a means for representing subjectivity. Or perhaps it is the nature of subjectivity itself that comes into question through Quinn's use of DNA to represent his sitters, rather than physical appearance or identifying characteristics.[47] By working within a genre that traditionally connects subjectivity and the image, and eliminating the image, Quinn raises questions about the visual representation of subjectivity.

Realism

It is agreed upon that Quinn's DNA portraits are both realistic and abstract, two extremes that are not typically merged in a portrait. But what does it say about portraiture that these portraits can so truthfully represent an individual without *looking* like that individual? While many portraits idealize or generalize the sitter as a member of a certain class or type, it is

[45] West, 32.
[46] Ernst Van Alphen, "The portrait's dispersal: concepts of representation and subjectivity in contemporary portraiture," In *Portraiture: Facing the Subject*, edited by Joanna Woodall, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), 239.
[47] However, he can just as easily be seen to characterize science as objective and rational and perhaps incapable of capturing the "irreducible complexity of individuality." Either way, the truth and realism attributed to the portrait of Sulston appears to be problematic from the onset.

generally expected that a portrait will represent the sitter's face or body in an effort to display something about his or her unique character.[48] There is a disconnect in Quinn's portraits between the interior and exterior reality of the body, a concept familiar to his work, but expressed here with a new exactitude.[49]

Despite the fact that the DNA portraits undeniably represent, with infallible precision, those persons identified in their titles, the notion that these portraits are realistic depictions of an individual is a matter of some debate. When discussing *Sir John Edward Sulston*, Martin Kemp notes the inaccessibility of the "realism" inherent to the portrait, since it would take a scientific procedure to truly identify these images. He cites the presence of the two color photographs, one of Sulston and one of Quinn, at the inaugural exhibition for *Sir John Edward Sulston* as evidence of this illegibility.[50] Presumably, if the portraits were truly realistic, one would not need a laboratory to identify the sitter, the image contain sufficient visual clues as to be legible to the viewer's eye. However, considering Sir John Sulston's occupation, a genomic portrait can, on one level, serve as a recognizable visual representation of him since the scientific aesthetic of sterile, polished steel and an agar jelly plate will signify, to many, the life and work of a scientist. It is when the other two DNA portraits are introduced that this lack of visual signifiers becomes more problematic.

The lack of a pictorial likeness of the subject is particularly significant when considering *Kate Moss DNA Portrait.* The discussion of the image in regards to the DNA portraits is amplified by the presence of a fashion model in this series. Moss is internationally renowned for

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[48] West, 21.
[49] As compared to something like *No Visible Means of Escape IV* (1996, Fig. 11) which features flaccid exteriors with no interior or *Self* which merges the two.
[50] Kemp uses these observations as reason to call Sir John Edward Sulston a reliquary rather than a portrait, as will be discussed in Chapter 2. Kemp, 778.

her beauty; so much that in 2007, she was named as one of *Time* magazine's "100 Most Influential People in the World," for having "the face that has never gone out of style."[51] Likewise, her body has received much media attention, though less positive, as the subject of multiple controversies, from allegations of an eating disorder to the controversy over the negative impact of the "heroin chic" look of the nineteen-nineties. By creating a portrait out of Moss's DNA, Quinn is on one hand acknowledging that Moss's beauty, and her reed-thin frame, are the result of genetic predisposition, showing us the biological reason for her success. However, by highlighting the absence of Moss's famous fashion model image, and the fact that she cannot be recognized outside of that image, Quinn is also discussing the validity of that image, and through it, the authenticity of mimetic representation as a whole. Though this portrait is explicitly Kate Moss, she is not identifiable, because her famous face is not included. This causes the viewer to acknowledge that Kate Moss, as she is popularly known, exists only as image, and thus questions the identity of Kate Moss outside of her image.[52] Viewers rarely learn anything about Moss herself through her images because her career is built on being a blank canvas of sorts, able to take on whatever persona her job requires, separating her individual subjectivity from her exterior appearance. In the age of genetic manipulation and the promise of cloning, subjectivity has become a topic of similar debate -- will clones bear the subjectivity of the original? Or, as *Kate Moss DNA Portrait* points out by drawing attention to Moss's status as a "blank canvas," are subjectivity and the image separable entities? Both are currently seen as threatened by genetic science, with the end of one, the image, portending the end of the other,

[51] Belinda Luscombe, "Kate Moss," *Time Magazine*, May 1, 2007, http://www.time.com/time/specials/2007/time100/article/0,28804,1595326_1595332_1616692,00.html

[52] Although, one may argue that no one is identifiable in a DNA portrait, regardless of how well they are known, Quinn's frequent use of Kate Moss's image points to a fascination with her image-based fame.

subjectivity, yet the relationship between the two, as presented by Quinn, has always already been tenuous.

Abstraction

While Quinn's DNA portraits can be understood to be exact likenesses of those portrayed, if only in genetic form, it is important to regard them as visual abstractions. This complete lack of a mimetic representation seems to reflect the insufficiency of pictorial representation as compared with the superior identifying capacity of DNA. In the context of the history of portraiture, Quinn's portrait seems to look back to Modernism and the rejection of mimesis. While the Modernists were reacting in part to photography and its ability to accurately capture an individual's image, thus rendering mimentic representation on the part of painters, Quinn seems to be responding to the exactitude of DNA and its complete lack of the pictorial image. As abstractions, Quinn's erratic, organic spattering of DNA beads and his complete attention to medium rather than narrative or character, is not unlike to the work of the Action Painters, a category that includes American painters such as Jackson Pollock, Willem De Kooning, Lee Krasner and Franz Kline. Indeed, if one disregards the fact that these are colonies of cloned DNA, the translucent blobs on Quinn's agar jelly plates can quickly be read as drips or splatters, a haphazard scattering of material akin to the energetic skeins and puddles of paint made by Jackson Pollock (*Number 1, 1950 (Lavender Mist),* 1950, Fig. 15).

In his influential "The American Action Painters," which became a manifesto for this type of painting, Harold Rosenberg noted that with Action Painting, "the act itself is the 'object.'"[53] While Quinn himself may not have been physically active in the creation of these colonies, these objects are certainly the result of a very specific action, the cloning of DNA.

[53] Harold Rosenberg, "The American Action Painters," In *The Tradition of the New*, (New York: De Capo Press, 1994), 33. (23-39)

Action paintings, much like the genetic code, are the product of a controlled formula and a series of variables. And like the paintings of Jackson Pollock, the DNA portraits are the result of the methodical process of the artist/scientist combined with the independent "will" of the medium. Rosenberg also defined these paintings as "not a picture but an event," and characterized this event as "of the same metaphysical substance as the artist's experience."[54] They were, then, like portraits, capable of transporting the viewer to the moment of their creation, to the moment between artist and canvas, and this moment became synonymous with the artist. Quinn presents this moment in his DNA self-portrait by reproducing himself through the process of cloning, yet stopping the growth at a precise moment, essentially freezing his "life" just when a visible form emerged. When looking at a Jackson Pollock painting, the viewer is allegedly transported to the moment when the artist danced around his studio, flinging paint across vast swathes of canvas. The moment in Quinn's portrait is sterile and controlled, much different than the dirty fingers and cigarette ash of Pollock's moment, yet it remains entirely organic. His portrait is the result of his hand interfering with the growth of microscopic organisms, while also being the direct product of those organisms multiplying on a scale so small it is nearly invisible.

It is also true that with abstract expressionism, the self-portrait reached its farthest -- farthest from representation, yet closest to achieving what may have been considered the essence of the creator while at the same time retaining the self portrait's ability to speak to the viewer and engage subject and object, material and image, artist and beholder in one unified event. Of course, these works were not referred to as self-portraits and many critics balked at the idea of these paintings being considered as such. Yet Harold Rosenberg considered these artists to be undertaking an "adventure over depths in which he might find reflected the true image of his

[54] Ibid, 25.

identity."[55] While Rosenberg disassociates these paintings from "expression," he retains the connection with self-creation, and the painting becomes a direct, unmediated translation of artist onto canvas.

The goal of action paintings was not to create a pattern, but to represent the truth of a moment between the painting and its creator, much like the preserved moment communicated in a traditional portrait, which functions as a surviving document of the interaction between sitter and artist, a visual means of time travel, taking the viewer back to the moment of its inception.[56] These canvases become one with the mythical personas created around the artists, Pollock's in particular, yet they do not resemble the artist at all. They do however, become transmitters of an idea about the artist- virility, aggression and pure creative force. This comparison, then, serves to highlight the ways in which DNA is *not* unique and its inability to present the subjectivity of an individual. While Quinn's portraits do represent a universal truth, this truth is entirely physical, rather than metaphysical. Though Sulston was as active in creating his portrait as was Quinn with his, the portraits cannot be said to explain anything inherent to either man. Unlike Pollock's expressive marks, which invite the viewer to extrapolate from them the presence and mental state of their maker, the DNA beads provide no view of the man or woman depicted.[57]

Self and Other

Another traditional element of portraiture is the conversation between self and other. This functions on different levels since the portrait represents the relationship between the sitter

[55] Ibid, 31.
[56] Paul Barlow, "Facing the past and present: the National Portrait Gallery and the search for 'authentic' portraiture," In *Portraiture: Facing the Subject*, edited by Joanna Woodall, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), 221.
[57] The idea that an artist's expressive marks convey an essential, unique truth about the artist was later refuted through the work of writers like Roland Barthes, "Death of the Author," *Image-Music-Text*. (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), 146.

and the artist, one set of self and other, while the viewer of the portrait is looking at the image of the sitter and occupying the space of the artist, another set of self/other relationships.[58] For the viewer, there is an inescapable tendency to want to project one's self, location, and condition onto the receptive image, to double oneself into self and image.[59] The viewer of the DNA portraits engages in these same conversations since the DNA is visually indistinct and could easily represent one's own DNA instead of that of Quinn, Sulston or Moss. It is easy to map yourself onto the portrait since there are no visibly unique elements to identify this portrait as a specific individual, other than the title. This effect is enhanced when the DNA portraits are exhibited side by side like pendants, they are indistinct and thus can be seen as generic representations of any human.

This projection and reception often takes place in the meeting of the viewer's gaze with that of the sitter. Since DNA has no eyes with which to actively gaze, Quinn activates this conversation between the viewer's self and the DNA image by surrounding the agar plates with a wide reflective frame. Through the frame, the viewer literally projects him/herself onto the image. The image, then, becomes, quite literally, an image of whomever looks at it. The gaze, both cast and returned, is always the viewer's own.[60] Here, Quinn may also be commenting on the importance of the viewer to the reception of a portrait. After all, it is the viewer's gaze for

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[58] In the case of self-portraiture, these relationships tend to be collapsed since artist and sitter are the same individual, but Quinn's DNA self-portrait looks nearly identical to his portraits of Sir John Edward Sulston and Kate Moss and thus avoid any change in relationship with the viewer that would be seen in a self-portrait that featured the direct gaze of the artist/sitter meeting that of the viewer. See Anthony Bond. "Performing the Self?" in *Self Portrait*, ed. Bond and Woodall, (London: National Portrait Gallery, 2006), 33.

[59] T.J. Clark. "The Look of Self-Portraiture," in *Self Portrait*, ed. Bond and Woodall, (London: National Portrait Gallery, 2006), 59

[60] One could extrapolate, then, that by placing himself or herself in the view of the mirror, the viewer is creating a self-portrait. After all, the history of self-portraiture hinges on a relationship with the mirror. This will be discussed in further detail in Chapter 3.

which the portrait is ultimately created, since portraits are made to be seen. It is, then, the viewer's subjectivity that determines the success or failure of the portrait.

Quinn's use of the mirrored frame in his self-portrait clearly refers to the tradition of artists gazing in mirrors to paint self-portraits by placing the viewer in the position of the artist viewing his or her image in the mirror. The viewer, then, is involved in a conversation about self-hood with the artist, for it is the viewer who occupies the space of the mirror as well as that of the artist when he was creating the portrait.[61] The subjectivities of the artist and viewer collapse and tangle upon one another as both are traversing the boundaries between the self and the other.[62]

In *Cloned DNA Self-Portrait (4th Perspective),* the significance of this reflection, or doubling, increases exponentially since the power of DNA lies in its ability to infinitely reduplicate. It is not only the mirror that doubles, but also the DNA itself, with each bead serving as a twin to the one next to it. Because the viewer projects his/her self-hood onto the DNA portrait, through the mirror and the universality implied by the DNA (since it is visually nondescript and could, feasibly belong to anyone), each bead can also be seen as a double of the viewer. What is seen in the image, then, is the infinite reproducibility of the self, or at least its image. Rather than being a conversation between self and other, it is a conversation between the self and the self and the self, ad infinitum.[63] This highlights another of the anxieties associated with cloning and genetic manipulation, that the self and other will merge, or, more severely, that the other will be expunged altogether, and there will only be the self. This seems to fit well with

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[61] Ibid, 33.
[62] Ibid, 12.
[63] Baudrillard argues that there is nothing of the other or the image left with cloning, for the copy precedes any original. He also concludes that this infinite duplication abolishes the mirror stage. See Jean Baudrillard, *The Transparency of Evil: Essays on Extreme Phenomena*,, (London: Verso, 1993),115.

the contemporary rhetoric bemoaning DNA science, and cloning in particular, for presenting asexual reproduction, a reproduction of sameness, as a fitting substitute for sexual reproduction, which promotes difference, and with it a unique being. Many who oppose cloning warn that his will bring about what Jean Baudrillard has termed the "hell of the same," wherein loss of the other as mirror threatens the consciousness of the self, and "a subject purged of the other, [is] deprived of its divided character and doomed to self-metastasis, to pure repetition."[64]

Immortality

In its ability to represent an absent person, DNA functions much like a portrait, however, the image is endowed with a far greater power. In his *On Painting*, Leon Battista Alberti indicated that the "'truly divine power' of naturalistic painting was to recall the life of an absent or dead person." [65] Divinity aside, for this will be discussed later, the power to recall the life of a dead person, or to render a person immortal through their image, is one more function of the portrait. Here, the artist is endowed with the god-like power to grant immortality to his subject, and, in the self-portrait, he is granting that immortality to himself. This is an important aspect of self portraiture- the preservation of the artist's image for posterity. They were also granting themselves the privilege of controlling how they would be remembered for generations to come, since the self-portrait allowed room for some enhancement. This immortality is achieved not simply through physical likeness- but by achieving an emotional connection with the viewer who is capable of transcending time and space.[66] These qualities are manifested in a slightly different way with the DNA portraits. When looking at a DNA portrait, the viewer is not necessarily transported to the moment of the portrait's inception, but is perhaps reminded of the moment of

[64] Baudrillard, *The Transparency of Evil*, 122.
[65] Woodall, 17. The issue of the "divinity" of painting will be addressed in Chapter 2.
[66] Bond, 31.

the subject's conception. The DNA is, after all, the result of the combination of the genetic material from the mother and the father.[67] In this way, it also recalls the entire genetic history of a family, and beyond that, the species as a whole. Because genetic material survives through reproduction (the joining of the genetic material of father and mother) and is passed on from parent through child, it truly does transcend time and space.

In addition, DNA alone, through its duplication throughout one's body, and its potential for duplication when cloned, is also immortal, though this time through the perpetuation of itself, rather than the joining of two different codes. While the genetic history of a person would represent the result of many genetic codes mingling together to ensure perpetuation and diversity, duplication of DNA would only ensure more of the same. This brings us once again to the fears and fantasies associated with DNA science, the promise of immortality, but at the expense of difference. To go beyond DNA itself to its application, cloning represents the infinite reproducibility of a complete human. To use DNA to create a portrait, then, does not deny the immortality of a portrait, but rather, marks the portrait as obsolete, at least for this function. It can also be seen to deny the historical transcendence represented by portraiture or reproduction, since a clone would not have a history to reference beyond the initial version of itself. An eternal, transcendent image would be rendered unnecessary in a time when an entire being can be duplicated indefinitely; in this way, DNA has the potential to become both the portrait and the end of portraiture.

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[67] While DNA can make one consider the sexual beginnings of a particular human, it is also a marker of a potentially asexual future. According to Jean Baudrillard, with cloning "the father and mother are gone, but their disappearance...leaves the way clear for a matrix known as a code. No more mother, no more father: just a matrix. And it is this matrix, this genetic code, which is destined to 'give birth,' from now till eternity, in an operational mode from which all chance sexual elements have been expunged." He calls this "incest without the tragedy." Baudrillard, *The Transparency of Evil*, 115.

The feasibility of DNA becoming both the portrait and the end of portraiture hinges on its ability to simultaneously challenge the supposed power of the portrait and perfect the portrait. Quinn achieves this contradiction through his choice of sitters, his uncharacteristic avoidance of the human figure, the mirrored frame, and his use of once-growing DNA colonies. As framed portraits on a wall, these images immediately warrant comparison with other portraits, particularly in the case of *Sir John Edward Sulston*, which was hung in the National Portrait Gallery among other portraits. The ways in which these portraits do not follow the conventions of portraiture become obvious – the lack of the sitter's picture, the unusual medium, the lack of visual clues as to the identity of the portrayed. These portraits are, in many ways, non-traditional portraits. However, because Quinn works so frequently within the traditions of art history, it is more compelling to discuss how these portraits *are* like traditional portraits, or at least how they point out the nature of conventional portraits. These portraits are still concerned with the identity of the sitters, the immortality of the image, and the connection between internal and external influences on subjectivity, only they function through the use of science rather than the picture. By placing DNA within the longstanding tradition of portraiture, Quinn frames for us the ways in which we are still, as we have always been, seeking the same goals – to unify opposing influences (subjectivity and image, interior and exterior), to preserve our image eternally, and to make our identity known.

Chapter 3– DNA and Self-Portraiture

In *Cloned DNA Self-Portrait (4th Perspective),* Quinn builds upon a career-long relationship with self-portraiture.[68] *Self*, perhaps his most famous self-portrait, is an ongoing project wherein Quinn creates a new *Self* every five years from a new mold and fresh blood, thus recording the changes in his physical appearance both on the interior and exterior levels. It now has four different iterations which have been exhibited consistently since 1991. Other self-portraits in his oeuvre include *12.5% Proof* (1993) (Fig. 9), *Emotional Detox: The Seven Deadly Sins* (1994-5) (Fig. 10), and *No Visible Means of Escape IV* (1996) (Fig. 11). These works show the wide range of materials and techniques Quinn uses to explore his body. By the time of the *Sir John Edward Sulston* commission, Quinn's exploration of the self-portrait had spanned a decade and exceeded far beyond the conventional painted self-portrait. But his *Cloned DNA Self-Portrait (4th Perspective)* reaches even farther into the history and future of self-imaging through the use of biology combined with the abstractness of the image and the implications of cloning one's self. Similarly to *Self*, it relies on the use of bodily elements to represent him, but it differs greatly in its lack of Quinn's visage. Nearly all of his self-portraits have involved a conversation between external image and interior reality, both as subjectivity and biology. While this self-portrait makes many statements about the future of the self and the body at the hands of DNA scientists, it also revisits many of the tropes of self-portraiture and has much to say about the self as a representable, or knowable, entity.

Artists' self-portraiture has been found as early as the 5th century BCE when the Greek sculptor Phidias included a recreation of his own image on Athena's shield in a portrayal of the

[68] Self-portraiture will be further discussed in Chapter 3.

Battle of the Amazons.[69] However, it was not until the fifteenth century that self-portraiture was accepted as a viable subject for a work of art. There are several reasons for this, which I have already briefly discussed in this paper -- the dissemination of the glass mirror, which became increasingly popular in the fifteenth century,[70] the development of humanism, and the rise in the popularity of portraiture.[71] With these developments came a new definition of the artist as an intellectual element within humanist society.[72] The self-portrait was seen as the means by which man, the creator. became distinct from all other creatures through his use of tools and creativity, because in these, the icon and the index are one.[73] This conflation of icon (visible likeness) and index (indicative of its object) is one that will remain throughout the history of self portraiture and it is an important point in regard to Quinn's use of biological materials to create his own self-portraits where not only icon and index, but also subject and object, medium and image, external and internal are confused and redefined. Contemporary humanism, according to Baudrillard, seeks to preserve the individual as "a genetically defined entity," a shift that manifests itself in the DNA self-portrait, which, on the surface, defines its artist not through visible use of tools or the representation of creative force, but by his creativity-carrying DNA.[74]

The characterization and the communicative power of the self-portraitist relied on his position as a "seer," in both literal and figurative terms, since the artist's gaze in the self portrait characterizes him as one who has vision of both the external world, and an internal vision of

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[69] Athena's shield is no longer extant. Bernard Brunon. "Self-portrait, or Where do I Stand?" in *Autoportraits Contemporains: Here's Looking at Me*. (Lyon: ELAC, Art Contemporain Lyon, 1993), 8.
[70] Omar Calabrese, *Artists' Self-portraits*. (New York: Abbeville Press Publishers, 2006), 161.
[71] Ibid, 125.
[72] Koerner, "Self-Portraiture Direct and Oblique," 8.
[73] Ibid, 68.
[74] Baudrillard, *The Vital Illusion*, 21.

himself.[75] This works in tandem with the concept of the mirror, wherein the artist's gaze is at the time of painting, one can assume, directed at a mirror, but after the work is completed and hung in a gallery, the artist's gaze is directed at the viewer. This is an interesting point to stop and consider Marc Quinn's self portraits in their most traditional sense, as figurative representations of himself. There are almost no portraits of him with his eyes open. This would seem to be in part due to the nature of his media- it is not possible to keep one's eyes open when making a mold of your head- but even in the photo-quality lithograph *Template for my Future Plastic Surgery* (1992), his eyes remain closed. In fact, the only self-portrait done by Quinn which features open eyes is the head shot that accompanied the Sir John Edward Sulston DNA portrait, arguably, the least emotive or revealing of his self-portraits. In this way, Quinn is completely non-traditional in the fact that he is cutting off the viewer from that gaze, and hence denying that reciprocal relationship the viewer is so accustomed to the self-portrait. There is no mirroring; no conversation between the viewer's self and the artist's, highlighting DNA's objective nature; as is the object of the viewer's gaze, it presents no subjectivity of its own. In the DNA self-portraits there is, of course, a literal mirroring occurring, which allows the viewer to map him or herself onto the image and thus the DNA contained within. However, this mirroring does not so much put the viewer in direct contact with the artist's self, as represented through the artist's mirror image, as it creates in the DNA self-portrait a reciprocal self-portrait of the viewer. This is not to say that there is no transfer of ideas occurring, only that the viewer is denied the opportunity to see him or herself in the position of the artist, that the conversation between self and other becomes, rather, a conversation between internal and external aspects of the viewer's own self. In absence of eye contact, Quinn substitutes visceral feelings and a dialogue about the body that

[75] Bond, 11.

still speaks to the viewer on intimate terms, while retaining the standard role of creator, subject and viewer, through his own interactions with the image of himself.[76]

The Autonomous, Self-Created Image

Aside from their role in connecting artist and viewer, self-portraits also became an effective method by which artists could promote themselves, and thus elevate painting in society.[77] The existence of the self portrait then, identified the artist as the creator who can be judged as much by the skill of his hand as by the identity we suppose to be communicated through a portrait.[78] Albrecht Dürer is often considered the forefather of the skilled and characterizing self-portrait, and he serves as a compelling comparison for the self-portraits of Sulston and Quinn. In his work, we can identify the genius, the divine, the poet and the man of passions. Joseph Koerner insists that even in Dürer's earliest self-portrait he is shown to have great investment in the images he makes and that through this, all of his images become distributions of himself.[79] However, Dürer's more mature *Self Portrait, Age 28* of 1500 (Fig. 17) brings us closer to understanding the ability of the self-portrait to endow the artist with special qualities. According to Koerner, this painting inaugurated a new era of discourse in which

[76] Omar Calabrese notes that those self-portraits that deny eye contact transform the *I* into the *he* and thus become biographical portraits rather than autobiographical self-portraits. In consideration of the collaboration between Quinn and Sulston, this description proves quite fitting for these gazeless DNA portraits. If one considers Quinn and Sulston to both be integral, creative forces behind these portraits, then both *Sir John Edward Sulston* and *Cloned DNA Self-portrait (4th Perspective)* are self-portraits *and* portraits. Calabrese, 163.
[77] Koerner, "Self-Portraiture Direct and Oblique," 67.
[78] Bond, 39.
[79] For a detailed discussion of Dürer and the cloth of Saint Veronica, see: Joseph Leo Koerner. *The Moment of Self Portraiture in German Renaissance Art*, (Chicago : University of Chicago Press, 1993).

creative figures possessed an autonomy and free will akin to that of gods.[80] *Self Portrait, Age 28* has specifically been linked to images of Christ and therefore equates its painter with the divine, while it also represents Dürer as creator in the sense that it is his own work; he, like God, is creating his own person.

Notably, *Self Portrait, Age 28* has also been linked with the cloth of Saint Veronica on which the imprint of Christ's face appeared after he used it to wipe the sweat and blood from his brow during the Passion while he was on Mount of Olives.[81] This link is significant to our discussion not only because of the blood, which takes the discussion directly to Quinn's *Self* and then to his DNA self-portrait as a biological, indexical medium, but also because of the equation between Christ's divinity and sacrifice and the creation of art "not made by human hands."[82] The Holy Face, as Koerner calls it, would have been understood by a fifteenth-century audience to represent those same things that will come to be associated with Dürer's paintings, and those to come for centuries – the icon, portrait, self-portrait and signature, things that are also very much associated with Quinn today.[83] For Dürer to invoke this image in his own self-portrait is to attribute to himself that which was expressed in Christ's image -- "the dream of an autonomous, self-created image, a picture produced instantly in its perfect totality, outside the bodily conditions of human making that are embedded in the fallen dimension of time."[84] This also explains some of Dürer's formal decisions, such as the great lengths to which he goes to avoid brushmarks. He does not want this image to be associated with brush on canvas, but with divine

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[80] Koerner. *The Moment of Self Portraiture in German Renaissance Art*, 81. Quinn and Sulston, in actively cloning themselves are, too, exercising the autonomy and free will to create their own persons. More will be said on the conflation of artists and the divine in Chapter 3.
[81] Ibid. Dürer represents this cloth in other images as well, such as *Sudarium Held by Two Angels* (1513).
[82] Ibid, 80.
[83] Ibid.
[84] Ibid, 84.

conception, thus endowing his image and his persona with heavenly power akin to that of icons and relics. The notions of the image made "not by human hands" and the "autonomous, self-created image" apply to the DNA self-portraits particularly well. If Quinn is understood to be cloning himself, as I believe he can be, then he is truly creating an autonomous image of himself. At the same time, these images, as the result of the independent self-cloning of the bacteria, are created independently of the hand of the artists.

The Signature

Another aspect that ties together Quinn's *Cloned DNA Self-Portrait* with the conventions of the self-portrait, and also once again to Action Painting, is the presence of the signature. It is helpful here to again discuss Dürer and his impact on the self-portrait. According to Koerner, "Dürer's self-portraits make the most sense within histories of the trademark and of copyright."[85] It is not only his style and image that create a trademark for Dürer, but also his written signature. His minimal, graphic AD signature (Fig. 16) becomes what we would today consider a logo for Dürer and speaks to the era of the individual, the singular creative genius- his way of "branding" his art.[86] The signature is a form of self-portraiture in itself, a work that is supposed to signify the presence of the artist and his own unique identity, through its nature as a unique graphic symbol.[87]

As art proceeds through Modernism, the painting itself becomes as much of a signature as a written signature. This idea was taken to extreme lengths with the advent of the "signature style" which peaked with Abstract Expressionism and created in a work of art a giant signature,

[85] Joseph Leo Koerner. "Self-Portraiture Direct and Oblique," in *Self Portrait*, ed. Bond and Woodall, (London : National Portrait Gallery, 2006), 67.
[86] Here I mean "branding" both in the sense of marking an object as well as in the sense of marketing a product.
[87] Jacques Derrida, "Signature, Event, Context," In *The Margins of Philosophy*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982): 328.

trademark, or copyright. They became signatures by their acceptance as what Derrida called "the pure reproducibility of a pure event."[88] Just as the written signature represents the once-present author, so too, the signature style came to represent the painter who was no longer standing before the canvas. The author, the signature and the portrait became one in these works which spoke of a moment in time and the transcendental power of the author. The signature style was individualism and creative genius at its most triumphant and was said to be easily recognizable as a symbol of the artist's unique talent. Any of the abstract expressionists would do for this discussion, but the most appropriate connection can be made with the canvases of Jackson Pollock. These canvases become one with the mythical persona created around Pollock, yet they do not resemble the man himself at all. Much like portraits, they become transmitters of an *idea* about the artist- in this case, his masculinity, aggression and pure creative force. The power, and weakness, of this symbol lies in its repetition; hence a forger can steal someone's identity through learning to reproduce that which is supposedly unique to its author, his signature.[89]

DNA, too, is referred to as a "signature." Just as Dürer's AD lends authenticity to his paintings and prints, and Pollock's wild arrays of paint represent the artist through their unique stylings, so, too, DNA marks the prior presence of its "author." This is what makes DNA so useful in solving crimes- to leave DNA behind is, in essence, akin to signing one's work. And while it is not yet possible to "forge" a person's DNA, it is infinitely reproducible. This reproducibility, according to Jacques Derrida, undermines the power of the signature. There is a paradox in the signature, an event that relies on its singularity for authenticity, yet relies on iterability to function.[90] Thus, the signature style loses its unique value through its repetition.

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[88] Ibid, 328.
[89] Ibid.
[90] Ibid.

Derrida's analysis of the signature can be applied to cloning and is, in essence, one of the main fears associated with the human genome project and cloning – that by making supposedly unique, indivisible beings into imitable codes, or entire beings, scientists are undermining that very singularity that makes humans valuable. DNA then, like the signature, functions as a self-portrait in the sense that it marks the presence of the "author" at its time of creation and contains distinct characteristics from its creator. However, its status as an iterable code marks the inauthenticity of this portrait, which can be created over and over, ad infinitum.

The Creator and the Creative

The equation of painting and divinity did not begin with Dürer; rather, it was discussed some years earlier by Leon Battista Alberti who proposed that "painting contains a divine force...within itself this virtue, that any master painter who sees his works adored will feel himself considered another god."[91] The same was true for Michelangelo who thought that painting was evidence of an artist's quasi-divine ability to create ideal, expressive bodies.[92] The same statements, when attributed to science conjure images of flawed "mad scientists" and their monstrous creations, an outcome we have been warned about since the time of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein;* we are warned of the disastrous results of "playing God." As a scientist who was instrumental in the Human Genome Project, and an artist who created his own image, Sulston and Quinn surely fall into the category of those who have taken on a "quasi-divine" ability. His DNA portrait, on one hand, puts a more realistic, less threatening, and much more subdued "face" on a science that has been so demonized, while still reminding us of the (fictionally-inspired) repercussions of scientists who "play God" and seek to create the ideal being.

[91] Calabrese, 183, quoted from Alberti's *On Painting*.
[92] Woodall, 17.

In an apparent effort to combat accusations of usurping God's divine power and the demonizing images are conjured by the Human Genome Project and its successors, many have called the human genome "God's instructions." Francis Collins, another scientist involved with the Human Genome Project, upon announcing the first draft of the sequence stated, "We have caught our first glimpse of our own instruction book, previously known only to God,"[93] a statement that seems to redeem the genome and its potential uses by implying that God has left these instructions for us to follow, in essence making cloning and genetics part of God's will. Thus, scientists are not "playing God," but rather, following his directions.

Either way one reads cloning – as following instructions or usurping the power of the divine – it is still an act akin to painting a portrait or self-portrait, a blurring of the lines between man, the creative, and God, the Creator. As was seen in *Self*, Quinn had already made of himself artist and art work, creator and created, subject and object. Likewise, by creating his own autonomous image through a DNA portrait, Quinn is commenting on the creative power of the artist/scientist. He has also emphasized this role as Creator in *Lucas* and *Sky* (Figs. 18 & 19) two portraits that look like tiny replicas of *Self* and indeed, as portraits of Quinn's sons, are in every sense reproductions. However, there is an additional element to *Lucas* and *Sky* which makes them significantly different from their "father," *Self*. Rather than using blood, Quinn used the afterbirth, which was harvested on the day of each son's birth and then frozen in a mold of the infant's head that Quinn cast from a sculpture he made when the infant was only three days old.[94] Besides the infeasibility of acquiring blood, the use of the afterbirth provides interest beyond that of blood since the placenta and umbilical cord are that which connects the growing infant to its

[93] Dorothy Nelkin and Susan Lindee, *The DNA Mystique: The Gene as a Cultural Icon*, (New York: Freeman, 1995), xix.
[94] "Free Admission: Marc Quinn Talks to Sarah Whitfield," np.

mother. They provide a means of transferring all the necessary components for a developing human, from nutrition to immunities, from mother to child. These sculptures, then, are replicas of the infants, created from that which literally gave them life. They are a combination of the Creative powers of the mother as well as the father, which begins a conversation of the link between parent and child, and the similarities between parent and artist as Creators. To give life to a child, whether as father or mother, is much like Alberti's statement on painting, a feeling akin to being a God. In this sense then, Quinn, as the artistic and biological creator of these works, is linking three different types of creation, that of biological reproduction, artistic reproduction and divine Creation. However, in removing the mother from the equation, Quinn has returned to the primordial state of asexual duplication rather than sexual reproduction. This eternal repetition of the same returns us to Derrida's critique of the signature as infinitely iterable and thus, void of any unique traits. This achievement, then, rather than raising Quinn to the level of the singular Divine, has reduced him to the self-same, akin to the bacteria which facilitated the cloning process.

By cloning himself, Quinn has linked all three types of reproduction – biological, creative, and divine. He is the Creator of himself in every sense of the word. He has become a truly "autonomous, self-created image." In this sense, he has achieved the goal of Dürer and many other self-portraitists, though on a microscopic scale. That is also to say, that by creating a self-portrait that is a literally a clone of himself, Quinn is pointing to the fact that self-portraitists have always been seeking this divine ability to recreate themselves, to become the Creator through the recreation of their own image. While his self-portrait looks very different those of Dürer or Rembrandt, or even the abstractions of the Action Painters, they succeed in

highlighting the ways in which all self-portraits seek to achieve the same goal, to create a copy of the self through the artist's Creativity.

Chapter 4- DNA as Icon

Because the word icon is used in more than one context, namely the cultural, religious and semiotic uses of the word, the DNA portraits intersect with this idea in different ways. The Christian use of the word icon most often refers to flat panel paintings of holy figures, typically saints or martyrs. However, there is also the additional semiotic use of the word icon, in which it is something that bears a visible likeness to its object. DNA serves as an icon in this sense since it not only has properties in common with an individual, but also holds within it the genes for *all* of the physical properties of that individual, it holds within itself the potential to create an identical being. The word icon also has a cultural context wherein an icon is a thing or person that is easily recognizable as a symbol of their time or place. An example of this use is found in the work of Andy Warhol, who painted these types of icons, as well as being one himself. Warhol, who was exposed to icons in the Byzantine tradition during his childhood, made use of both the cultural and religious by portraying celebrities in poses from popular media in flat, frontal compositions.[95] Quinn can be seen as working in much the same way in his DNA portrait of Kate Moss, a contemporary cultural icon akin to Marilyn Monroe.[96]

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[95] Raymond M. Herbenick. *Andy Warhol's Religious and Ethnic Roots: The Carpatho-Rusyn Influence on His Art*.(Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1997), 98. Throughout this book, Herbenick discusses Warhol's Carpatho-Rusyn ethnic roots and his exposure to Byzantine-style icons at his family church in Pittsburgh and his mother's church in New York and the probable influence these had on Warhol's art.

[96] Quinn has created numerous other works involving Kate Moss which serve to comment on her iconic image, such as the sculptures *Sphinx* (2005) and *The Road to Enlightenment* (2006). On the difference between Sphinx and Kate Moss DNA Portrait, Quinn notes that "the sculpture of her image...has become detached from her person. While...the so-called abstract image, is actually the most realistic." See Rod Mengham, "Nel Ponte. Interview with Marc Quinn," In *Marc Quinn,* a cura di Achille Bonito Oliva, Danilo Eccher, (Milan: Electa, 2006): 172.

DNA, too, functions as a cultural icon, representing what W.J.T. Mitchell terms "the Age of Biocybernetic Reproduction."[97] In their book *DNA Mystique: The Gene as Cultural Icon*, Dorothy Nelkin and Susan Lindee describe DNA as "a symbolic icon that bears only a limited resemblance to the biological entity to which it refers, [which] in American popular culture changes with the times."[98] It has inspired numerous films, from sci-fi action (*Gattaca*, *Jurassic Park*) to comedy (*Twins*, *The Nutty Professor*), as well as a continual stream of ethical and political debates and, much like Moss, has graced the cover of numerous magazines. All of these uses for the word icon aptly apply to DNA, but it is in the religious, iconoclastic context that the DNA portraits fit most appropriately within Quinn's oeuvre.

DNA and Iconoclasm

Perhaps one of the greatest similarities between Christian icons and DNA is their public reception, both have been alternately revered and reviled, sometimes for a similar power that both hold, that of creating an image, or a double. Icons were the center of a centuries-long debate over the image and its place within Christian society.[99] Those who opposed icons, the iconoclasts, cited the 2nd Commandment as evidence of God's prohibition of the graven image- "You shall not make for yourself a graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow

[97] See W.J.T. Mitchell, "Art in the Age of Biocybernetic Reproduction." *Art Link*, Vol. 22, no. 1, http://www.artlink.com.au/articles.cfm?id=2522

[98] Nelkin and Lindee, xii.

[99] Evidence of iconoclasm can be seen in such contemporary events as the toppling of statues of Saddam Hussein in Iraq after he was taken out of power, but the ideas of iconoclasm can be traced back to antiquity. Some of the most striking episodes were during Byzantine iconoclasm, (726 – 787, and again in 815 – 843) though iconoclasm occurred many years later (during 1566 in the Netherlands) and in diverse locations, including Egypt, Greece, and China. See Chapter 14, Idolatry and Iconoclasm, in David Freedberg, *The Power of Images: Studies in the History and Theory of Response*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989.

down to them or serve them."[100] Image worship was the mark of pagans and went against God's word, thus, even as icons gained in popularity they were undesirable in the Church's eyes since they reached beyond the capacity of the Church in their ability to act on behalf of God and answer prayers.[101] The argument in support of icons was more nuanced than the argument against them and reflects many of the same arguments surrounding DNA. Perhaps the most famous of the iconodules was Saint John of Damascus, who praised icons for their ability to communicate Christianity to those who were illiterate and to allow Christians to see or image God.[102] Since Christ was the son, and therefore the image, of God, iconodules often used this as evidence for the righteousness of icons. Because Christ was made incarnate, he could be represented in human form.[103] He was the absent made present through the image.

Similar to icons in the first centuries, cloning has become a matter of moral, religious and political debate, dividing societies even as it promises to save them. Anxiety has been building around DNA since its discovery, but fears spread quickly with the announcement of the Human Genome project which was viewed by critics in the late 1980s as "absurd," "dangerous," and "impossible."[104] Critics like Jean Baudrillard, whose writing has been called "radically iconoclastic" by W.J.T. Mitchell, have taken a bold stance against DNA science.[105] Baudrillard

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[100] Exodus 20:4 & Deuteronomy5:8-9
[101] Belting, 1. For a more detailed discussion of the intricacies of iconoclasm, see Belting, 144-183.
[102] Saint John of Damascus also decried those who opposed icons and "fundamentalists" who did not take into account the "unwritten rules" of Christianity, and explained the Second Commandment as a time-specific rule that applied to Jews only. Cormack, 22. In 787 the Second Council of Nicaea reinstated the use of icons and in 843 the desecration of icons was deemed to be heresy. Robin Cormack, *Icons*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), 9.
[103] Cormack, 17.
[104] Leslie Roberts, "Controversial From the Start," *Science* 291, no. 5507 (2001), http://www.sciencemag.org/cgi/content/full/291/5507/1182a
[105] Andrew McNamara, "Words and Pictures in the Age of the Image: An Interview with W.J.T. Mitchell," *Eyeline*, no. 30, (1996): 18.

describes clones as a "cancerous metastasis," implying that the doubling of the clones will bring down the social body as a malignant tumor would the human body.[106]

There are, however, some who champion DNA science as the way to secure our future. While cloning itself remains a moral dilemma to many, some forms of genetic manipulation and DNA research have gradually gained approval. In his address at the announcement of the success of the Human Genome Project, President Bill Clinton extolled the genome and all its potential:

> "Today's announcement represents more than just an epic-making triumph of science and reason...Today we are learning the language in which God created life. We are gaining ever more awe for the complexity, the beauty, the wonder of God's most divine and sacred gift. With this profound new knowledge, humankind is on the verge of gaining immense, new power to heal. Genome science will have a real impact on all our lives—and even more on the lives of our children. It will revolutionize the diagnosis, prevention and treatment of most, if not all, human diseases."[107]

Here, the President connected the genome to God, but called it a "gift," which, like using the word "instructions," implies intention on the part of the divine, once again subduing the "playing God" argument and iconoclastic fears. His statement also brings up another link between DNA and icons, the believed ability to heal and bring good fortune, thus rewarding the faithful and proving the power and truthfulness of science/Christianity. Those who defend DNA science cite the ability to cure diseases, produce superior children and answer questions about the origins of human life. In this "brave new world" of genetics, diseases can be cured, children can be genetically selected and enhanced, and agriculture will be revolutionized to abolish famine.[108]

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[106] Baudrillard, *The Transparency of Evil*, 119 & 121.
[107] Human Genome Project Information, "President Clinton Announces the Completion of the First Survey of the Entire Human Genome," Human Genome Project Information http://genome.gsc.riken.go.jp/hgmis/project/clinton1.html
[108] O'Neill, 166-7.

James Watson, who was once the head of the Human Genome Project, promotes genetics as a method for curing nearly everything, from disease to hunger and sadness.[109] The prayers that were once reserved for the sacred icons are now being sent to science. Like medieval icons before it, DNA threatens to expropriate the power of the church with its powers of salvation.

DNA Portraits and Icons

Certainly, the format that Quinn chose for the DNA portraits speaks to their relationship to icons. And icons have many of the same functions as portraits -- granting immortality, making the absent present – with the addition of generating miracles and serving as intercessors, and receiving veneration.[110] The two-dimensionality of these portraits is striking in comparison to the three-dimensional format used in the frozen heads and much of Quinn's other work, which is often figurative sculpture. He has made a conscious effort to make these portraits small, rectangular and very flat with wide frames and a centered image, all characteristics that fit with the familiar format of painted icons (*Virgin of Vladimir*, Fig. 20). His selection of stainless steel for the frame rather than the traditional flat wood panel that would make up the image and "frame" of a icon stands out as one way Quinn breaks with tradition. As this was a very conscious break with tradition, it merits some discussion. First of all, the metal frame easily correlates to the use of metal overlays to protect as well as decorate icons produced from the twelfth-century onward.[111] Its cold, sterile appearance also creates the scientific aesthetic that compliments Sir John Edward Sulston's career as well as fitting within Quinn's frequent use of the look of science. Both explanations suit Quinn's purposes, but neither is especially compelling on its own.

[109] Nelkin and Lindee, xiii.
[110] Belting, 60.
[111] Cormack, 11.

A more apt implication of the mirrored frame can be gleaned from a comparison with a specific kind of icon, the vita icon. Vita icons feature narratives or scenes surrounding the central image. One such icon is *The Virgin of Vladimir with Twelve Scenes from the Legend of the Miracles of the Icon of the Virgin of Vladimir* (1750-60, Fig. 21). While most vita icons feature scenes from the life of the saint or martyr represented, in this icon, the central image is framed by twelve scenes which narrate not the life of the Virgin, but the history of the Virgin of Vladimir icon itself. This is interesting in comparison to Quinn's DNA portraits since the mirror in Quinn's work, then, stands in place of the twelve scenes. In press photos for the National Gallery, Dr. Sulston is shown looking at the portrait, his face reflected in the frame surrounding the DNA. Indeed he would be the history (and future) of this particular DNA. And the DNA is likewise the history and future of Sulston. Similarly, any viewer would be reflected in this frame, and thus, the universality of DNA's history would be acknowledged, the narrative being that of the Darwinian evolution of humans. However, it is equally true that when there is not a viewer in front of the work, the DNA reflects its surroundings. In this case, the DNA would be, like the *Virgin of Vladimir with 12 Scenes*, chronicling its own travels, reflecting a new image in each location.[112]

DNA as Sacred/Soul

By framing DNA as an icon, Quinn explicitly places DNA in the position of image. The word image, much like the word icon, has secular and non-secular interpretations, particularly in the case of man being created in "God's image." Of particular importance to our discussion is the

[112] A different take on Quinn's relationship with the mirror comes from Sarah Whitfield in her discussion with Marc Quinn about *Mirror Self Portrait*, 2001-2, which consists of a mirror that hung in Quinn's studio, and into which he looked, every day for a year. Whitfield connects this mirror to Quinn's DNA portraits through its indifference, citing Richard Dawkins's statement that "DNA neither cares nor knows. DNA just is." "Free Admission, Marc Quinn Talks to Sarah Whitfield," np.

debate that has been taken on by many scholars, over the meaning of Genesis 1:26 when God says "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." W.J.T. Mitchell points out that "likeness" has been added to prevent the confusion between the spiritual image, what most deem the correct interpretation, and picture, which has been deemed as incorrect by those who favor iconoclastic readings.[113] Using the word image in this way, to mean spiritual likeness rather than picture, would imply that DNA, as image and icon, would be spiritually, not merely physically, identical to the person from which it came.[114] This position, a form of genetic determinism, is not widely favored in the scientific community. Nicholas Agar has referred to this view as "what people find so scary and yet tantalizing about clones," the potential that a clone would be exactly resemble the person from which it came in *every* way.[115] Quinn voiced his own opinion on genetic determinism with *Family Portrait (Cloned DNA)* (2002) (Fig. 22). Since this "family portrait" features DNA from Quinn, his wife (who was at the time his girlfriend), their son, and her daughter, Quinn states that it is about "how love can be stronger than biology."[116] This portrait contains two separate sets of biological families, but they function as one family because their social and cultural bonds surpass the disjunctions in their genetic material. Or, in terms of this discussion, their subjectivity is a result of factors that do not reside in the biological.

Ultimately, Quinn brings us to the question of the origins of the soul and its status in a time when human beings have been whittled down to a repeatable code. Quinn has undertaken

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[113] W. J. T. Mitchell, 1986. *Iconology: image, text, ideology*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), 31.

[114] The coincidence of pictures and reality that resulted from the invention of perspective served to merge visual similitude with all other kinds of similitude, thus altering the meaning of "God's image" once again to mean both spiritual and pictorial likeness. See Isabelle Loring Wallace, "From the Garden of Eden and Back Again: Pictures, People and the Problem of the Perfect Copy," *Angelaki: Journal of the Theoretical Humanities* 9, no.3 (2004): 137-155.

[115] Agar, 117. Agar goes on to state that genetic determinism is "as wrong as, but no more wrong than, the doctrine of environmental determinism..."

[116] "Free Admission: Marc Quinn Talks to Sarah Whitfield," np.

debates about the soul on several levels, first with his *Rubber Soul* (1994) (Fig. 23), a sculpture that looks similar to *Self*, but rather than using blood, he constructs the self-portrait head of glass and places within it a frog. Quinn also placed this frog inside the head at the location of the pineal gland, which is also the site where Descartes had located the soul, thus equating the human soul with that of the frog.[117] The frog, *Rana sylvatica*, is a species that achieves what is essentially suspended animation at low temperatures. In *Rubber Soul*, the frog is kept at temperatures that trigger its hibernation for the entire length of its exhibition and is later revived with warmer temperatures. Its hibernation is so deep that it appears to be dead, all of its bodily systems ceasing to function. The frog's ability to oscillate between life and near death is equated with the presence and absence of its soul within its body.

By placing DNA in a spiritual framework, that of the icon, Quinn is also encourages discussion of the linkage between DNA and the soul. Despite the scientific view that DNA contains only nucleotides, and the assertions of renowned scientists such as Richard Dawkins, who stated "DNA neither cares nor knows. DNA just is,"[118] plenty of interpretations exist that equate DNA with the soul, a hybrid of genetic determinism and religious values. As discussed by sociologist Dorothy Nelkin, DNA and the soul hold many similar properties:

> Like the Christian soul, DNA is an invisible but material entity, an 'extract of the body' that has 'permanence leading to immortality.' And like the Christian soul, DNA seems relevant to concerns about morality, personhood, and social place. It is not a coincidence then that the cultural depiction of DNA shares many characteristics with the immortal soul of Christian thought...Scientists and popularizers borrow the compelling concepts of one belief system to meet the needs of another in an effort to help their readers see the centrality and power of the gene.[119]

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[117] Doy, 80.
[118] "Free Admission: Marc Quinn Talks to Sarah Whitfield," np.
[119] Nelkin and Lindee, 40; quotes from A.E. Crawley, *The Idea of the Soul*, 1909.

In borrowing these concepts to make the gene more accessible, popular culture has essentially replaced the idea of the soul as source of the true self with DNA, and because of this spiritual status, DNA has become, to many, forbidden ground, that which should not be tampered with because it is sacred.[120] Critics are wary of genetic engineering because they feel that manipulating the genome will desacralize the body and turn the human body into nothing more than a machine.[121] However, though the sequencing of the human genome and "discovery" of our instructions seats man at the top of the intellectual chain, it can also be said that these findings threaten to place humans back alongside animals and plants, as one species of many who are nearly identical on a chemical level.[122] While the idea of knowing where we come from sparks great interest in intellectual communities, in the end, it holds the potential to prove that humans, like other creatures, are at the whim of a chemical chain whose sole purpose is perpetuation.

This is a discussion Quinn engages with *DNA Garden* (2001) (Fig. 24), a large trifold unit made of reflective stainless steel that houses seventy-seven agar plates holding the cloned DNA of seventy-five plants and two humans.[123] This Garden serves as a contemporary, and rather dystopian, take on the Garden of Eden. As is true with his portraits, these plates are genetically unique yet unable to be identified by visual analysis alone. Alhough there are variations in the patterns of the DNA colonies -- some are glassy beads, otherst have leaf-like

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[120] Ibid, 54.
[121] Ibid, 57.
[122] Judith Roof, *The Poetics of DNA*, (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 2007), 32.
[123] While it will not be discussed in the context of this paper, a compelling comparison can be made between DNA Garden and a late 13th to early 14th century Byzantine Mosaic icon in the Metropolitan Museum of Art collection. (see Byzantium Faith and Power 1261-1557, "Mosaic Icon with the Akra Tapeinosis (Utmost Humiliation), or Man of Sorrows," Metropolitan Museum of Art, http://www.metmuseum.org/special/Byzantium/g4_pop_1.R.asp) A comparison with this icon, which contains numerous relics, links the popular discussion of Quinn's work and relics by scholars such as Martin Kemp with my discussion of icons in this paper.

patterns -- no two stand out as unique. Quinn is accomplishing two things with this work. First, he is highlighting the fear that when humans can be reduced to genetic material, there is very little difference between plants and us; any humanistic distinction is completely dissolved. Secondly, he is illustrating Darwinian evolution by tracing human origins to the cloning of single celled organisms, since the DNA colonies are, after all, bacteria that has been inoculated with human DNA. At the completion of the Human Genome Project, Sir John Sulston stated, "We are confirming Darwin- that is the most useful take home message from this. It is the unity of life, or Nature being conservative, or the idea of the Blind Watchmaker- the notion of evolution as a constant reworking or random recombining of parts."[124] Thus, for some, the Human Genome Project proved that it was an act of genetic randomness that created humans as distinct from plants. However, by placing this Darwinian "proof" into the context of the Garden of Eden, Quinn is once thus blurring the lines between Creationism and evolution, and retaining the sacred interpretation of DNA as "God's instructions."[125]

Placing DNA in the Garden of Eden also serves to illustrate Baudrillard's concept of involution by taking humans back to a unicellular state, giving the appearance of thousands of identical protozoans. This Eden represented by Quinn is not the blossoming garden promised in the Judeo-Christian Bible, but a cold, sterile environment. This new vision looks like science, not nature- Paradise in petri dish.[126] Indeed, the involution feared by Baudrillard echoes the Judeo-

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[124] Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute. "Ten facts from the Human Genome Project," Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute. http://www.sanger.ac.uk/HGP/publication2001 /facts.shtml

[125] DNA Garden essentially illustrates more clearly the concept of involution that is implied by the portraits. In this way, DNA Garden works as a companion piece to the portraits, serving to amplify the meaning already inherent to those works.

[126] This anxiety about the loss of the body is not universal, as proven by those who eagerly await the moment when they can "plug in" to a virtual reality. This perspective is discussed at length in Margaret Wertheim, *The Pearly Gates of Cyberspace: A History of Space from Dante to the Internet*. New York: W. W. Norton & Co, 1999.

Christian concept of our origins in and eventual return to Paradise, the natural state of innocence of the pre- and post- lapsarian times. According to Christian dogma, the Fall occurred when, Adam and Eve, having eaten from the tree of knowledge recognized themselves as images before God and become ashamed of their nakedness. By this recognition, man became separate from animal. In a return to Paradise, then, all self-consciousness would be expunged and humans would return to the divine state of unawareness. So, in that sense, man will become self-same, and thus, without having the capacity to differentiate between self and image, will become purely image. This is exactly the portrayal put forth by Quinn. Despite the sterility and steel of Quinn's Garden, it bears much in common with the biblical Garden of Eden, before the Fall, when it was populated with unknowing, immortal beings, as well as a Darwinian Garden, that "primordial soup" containing asexual, single-celled beings. His version of Paradise is not a pictorial representation, but a microscopic documentation of what plants and people will look like when reduced, by this circular "progress", to codes that all look the same. Whether clones manifest themselves as lifesize twins or microscopic DNA colonies, the problem remains the same -- that is, the problem of the "perfect copy."[127] In achieving this perfect copy, we will thus do away with both death and representation, which were linked to begin with, by creating an immortal, self-duplicating image.[128] As represented by Quinn, the "autonomous, self-created image" of Dürer and the Holy Face, merges with Baudrillard's "Hell of the same" in the form of a self-perpetuating code that embodies the portrait and icon, subjectivity and soul, but at the expense of each.

[127] It is worth noting that since these DNA colonies have been frozen in their growth, they have not fully achieved the status of "perfect copy" as far as they have not become a new version of Quinn, Sulston or Moss. The colonies are, however, perfect copies of each other.
[128] For more on the perfect copy, see Wallace, 151.

Conclusion

In describing the philosophy of Richard Dawkins, who proposed that the body exists only as a means for the gene to copy itself, Donna Haraway muses that the gene "is the alpha and omega of the secular salvation drama of life itself."[129] This reasoning applies equally well to Quinn, though in his case, the gene has both secular and non-secular properties. DNA is the copy and the original, portrait and the end of portraiture, the image and the dissolution of imaging, affirmation of both God and Darwin. It is progress and a return to the beginning. The narrative is convoluted, to be sure, and Quinn does nothing to deny this confusion. His work does not prove or disprove God, nor does it support or refute the potential of cloning. What he does accomplish in his conflation of so many frameworks and by placing a new way of seeing ourselves in the context of thousands of years of imaging, is to show the vast similarities in all of these methodologies. The fears and fantasies associated with cloning are the same as those that existed in the first millennium during iconoclasm, and the promise of DNA to create the perfect copy has been the quest of artists since portraiture began. The reality of a perfect copy, of a living icon, has brought about a return to a medieval sensibility, where the threat and promise of the image lies in the same analogies that were used to defend or refute Byzantine icons. For all the newness associated with it, the DNA in Marc Quinn's portraits represents not a new way of seeing ourselves, but a reminder that our relationship with images has always been about the attempted to reconcile opposing forces – interior and exterior, Creator and creative, copy and original – but ultimately, that merger would be at the expense of both difference and the image.

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[129] Haraway, Donna J. *Modest_Witness@Second_Millennium .FemaleMan©_Meets_Onco Mouse™: Feminism and Technoscience*. (New York: Routledge, 1997), 133.

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Figures

Figure 1
Salvador Dali, *Galacidalacidesoxyribonucleicacid*, 1963
Oil on canvas

Figure 2

Marc Quinn, *Self*, 1991
Artist's Blood, stainless steel, Perspex and refrigeration equipment
208 x 63 x 63 cm.

Figure 3

Marc Quinn, *Sir John Edward Sulston*, 2001
Sample of sitter's DNA in agar jelly mounted in stainless steel
5 in. x 3 3/8 in.

Figure 4

Marc Quinn, *Cloned DNA Self-Portrait (4th Perspective),* 2001
Sample of sitter's DNA in agar jelly mounted in stainless steel
5 in. x 3 3/8 in.

Figure 5

Marc Quinn, Kate Moss DNA Portrait, 2005
Sample of sitter's DNA in agar jelly mounted in stainless steel
5 in. x 3 3/8 in.

Figure 6

Marc Quinn, *Sir John Edward Sulston (detail),* 2001
Sample of sitter's DNA in agar jelly mounted in stainless steel
5 in. x 3 3/8 in.

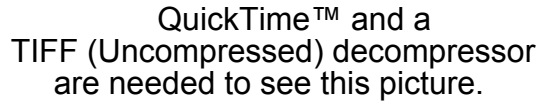

Figure 7

Marc Quinn, *Marc Quinn*, 2001
ultrastable pigment transfer print on polyester base laid on aluminium
12 1/8 in. x 8 5/8 in.

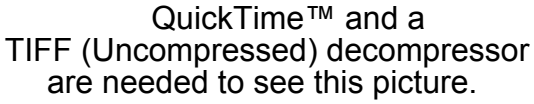

Figure 8

Marc Quinn, *Sir John Edward Sulston*, 2001
ultrastable pigment transfer print on polyester base laid on aluminium
12 1/8 in. x 8 5/8 in.

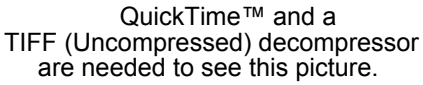

Figure 9

Marc Quinn, *12.5% Proof*, 1993
Stainless Steel, Privalite glass, fiberglass, pump, computer and red wine
305 x 107 x 107 cm

Figure 10

Marc Quinn, *Emotional Detox, The Seven Deadly Sins* (gallery view), 1994-5
Cast lead and Wax

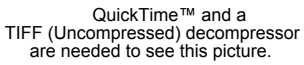

Figure 11

Marc Quinn, *No Visible Means of Escape IV*, 1996
RTV 75-60 polyurethane and rope
Approx. height 660 cm.

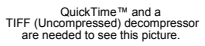

Figure 12

Jan Van Eyck, *Man In a Red Turban*, 1433
Oil on wood
26 x 19 cm

Figure 13

Rembrandt Van Rijn, *Self-Portrait*, 1659
Oil on canvas
84.5 x 66 cm

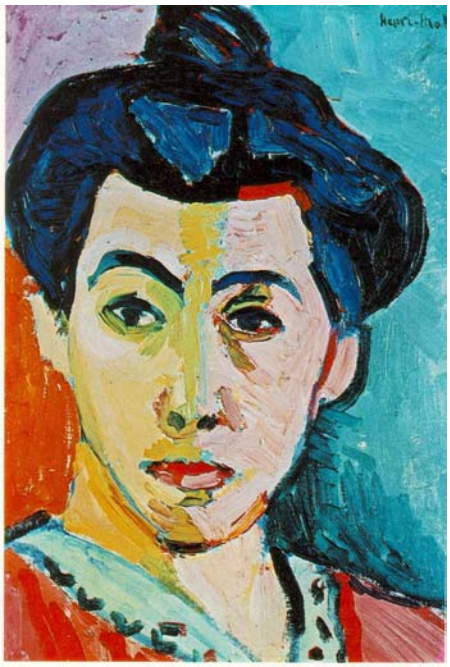

Figure 14

Henri Matisse, *Green Stripe (Madame Matisse),* 1905
Oil and tempera on canvas
15.94 in × 12.80 in

Figure 15

Jackson Pollock, *Number 1, 1950 (Lavender Mist),* 1950
Oil, enamel and aluminum on canvas
87 x 118 in.

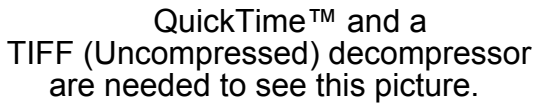

Figure 16

Albrecht Durer, title page of *Vier Bücher von menschlicher Proportion,* 1528

Figure 17

Albrecht Durer, *Self-Portrait, Age 28*, 1500
Oil on panel
67 x 49 cm

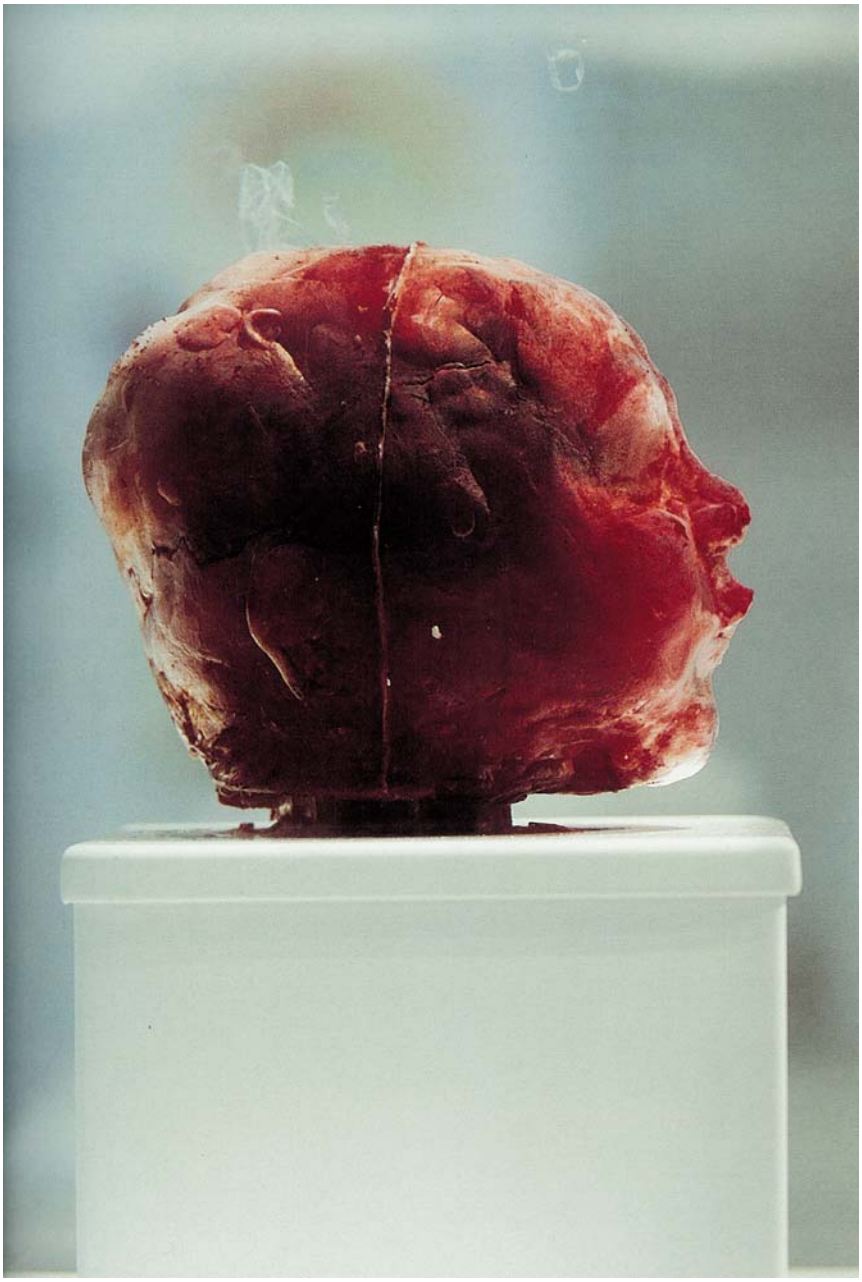

Figure 18

Marc Quinn, *Lucas*, 2001
Human placenta and umbilical cord, stainless steel, perspex, refrigeration equipment
80 1/2 x 25 3/16 x 25 3/16 in

Figure 19

Marc Quinn, *Sky*, 2006
Human placenta and umbilical cord, stainless steel, perspex, refrigeration equipment
205 x 65 x 65 cm

Figure 20

Virgin of Vladimir, Early 12th century
Tempera on wood
104 x 69, without frame 78 x 55

Figure 21

Unidentified Artist, □*The Virgin of Vladimir with Twelve Scenes from the Legend of the Miracles of the Icon of the Virgin of Vladimir*, 1750-1760□ □
Tempera on panel with silver □
28 1/4 x 21 3/4 x 1 1/2 in.

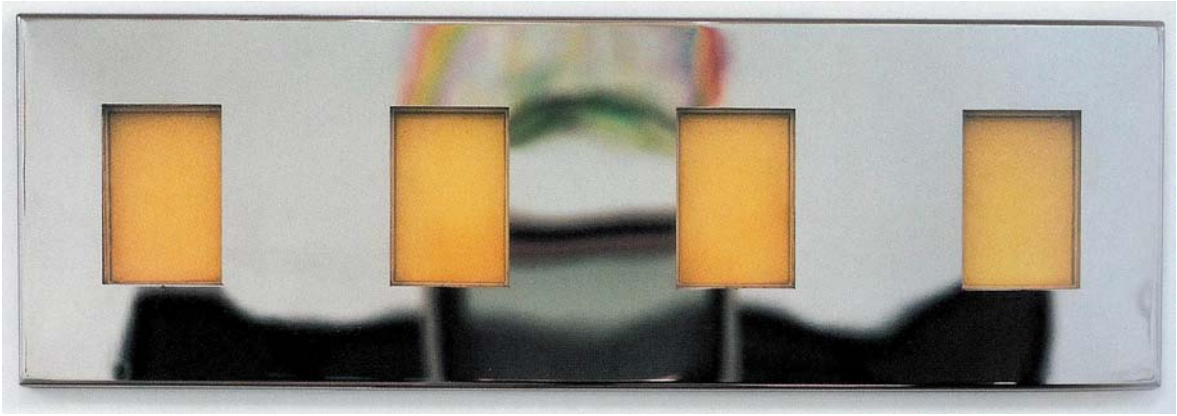

Figure 22

Marc Quinn, *Family Portrait (Cloned DNA),* 2002
Sample of sitters' DNA in agar jelly mounted in stainless steel
262 x 205 x 27 cm

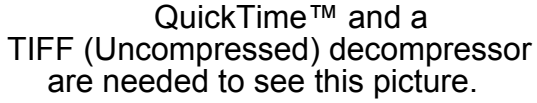

Figure 23

Marc Quinn, *Rubber Soul,* 1994
Stainless steel, steel, glass perspex, refigeration equipment and frog (Rana sylvatica)
208 x 63 x 63 cm

Figure 24

Marc Quinn, *DNA Garden*, 2001
Stainless steel frame, polycarbonate agar jelly, bacteria colonies, 77 plates of cloned DNA - 75 plants, 2 humans
73 13/16 x 126 x 4 7/16 in.