

Cyborgs in the Dark

By:

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Preamble

I am fascinated by the infinite vastness of space and time. One of my favorite things to do is to look up at the night sky staring at the stars and moon until I feel my body awoken. With a chill that travels down my spine, I am reminded both of how insignificant I am and how magnificent it is to have an acknowledgement of my existence. In these moments I travel through my imagination to light years beyond earth. I have visited solar systems, galaxies, and black holes. I have seen dark matter and I have seen entirely different universes. I have met different versions of myself and my friends and family. I can see times where I'm someone or something else or nothing at all. In reality only a few minutes pass but in my fantasy, the speed of light has taken me to places my physical body cannot go; time stops, it is reversed, expanded, condensed, unwound or restructured. Sometimes, very rarely, I get a faint glimpse of god, but it is elusive. These are the moments in which I feel most alive, and they are my most powerful source of inspiration.



Surfing, etching, 21 x 32 inches, edition of 10, 2021

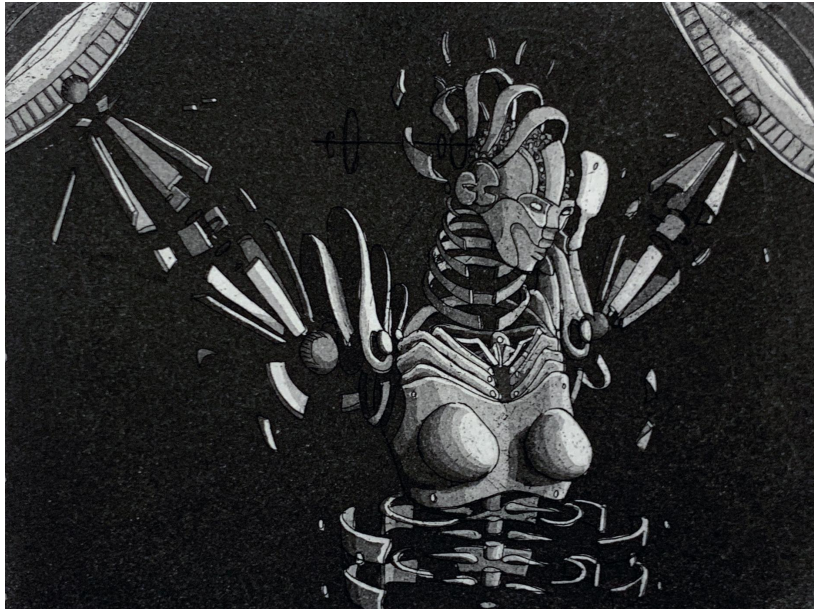
The Story

After the catastrophe that brought Earth to the brink of extinction, we had a chance to rebuild. Humans used machines to build a balanced world, where man and nature lived in harmony. Energy sources were potent and clean. Cities rose above the clouds, near the stars. Human life-spans extended far beyond our ancestors, and they were able to enjoy their new world. After Earth was healed we looked to the stars and wondered what else there was to know. Some of us left Earth to see for ourselves what exists in the darkness of space. Many left to orbit another star, others left to chart the galaxy, and some left to find our creator.

The Work

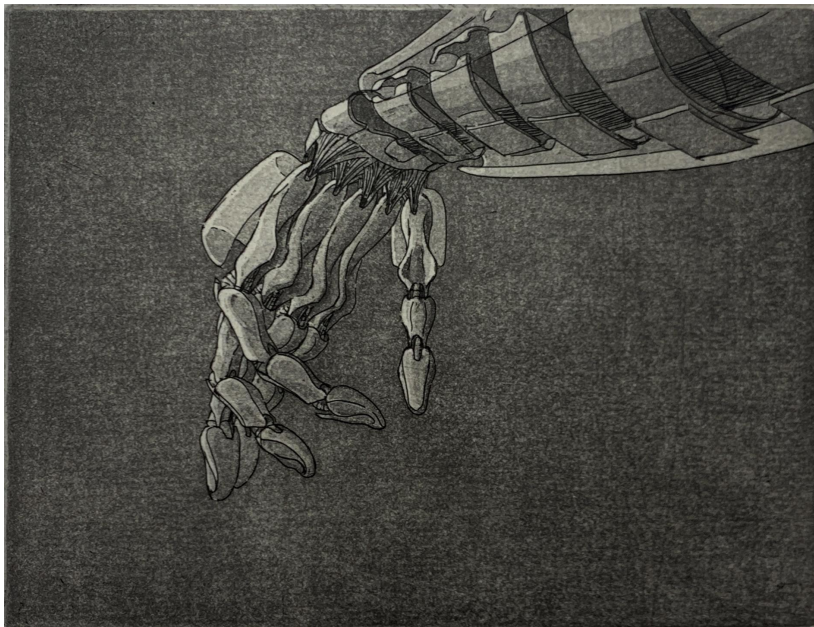
The lithographs, screen prints, woodcuts and etchings of my current body of work belong to a single storyline that is evolving in bits and pieces. One sees in them, recurring objects, figures and places. In the print *Temple in the Sky*, one of my characters (I have never named them) has discovered a temple above the clouds on another world. This is a recurring scene where I imagine that I have found god's old home but he is nowhere to be found. Searching for god is an age old quest but the one I am personally searching for does not exactly stem from religion. Because I know Christianity best, my ideas have their closest ties to its theology. However, my figures have yet to meet their creator. The darkness of the atmosphere in my prints such as, *Cyborg in the Dark 1*, symbolizes my own questioning of god's existence and my wondering about the future of humanity.

On one hand, my work illustrates my fantasy of traveling through space to the unknown. On the other hand, it is figure and character studies. My quest for the unknown is also a quest to make a better descriptive line. My imagery belongs equally to the world of science fiction and the discipline of anatomical rendering. I reference the canon of science fiction for inspiration to tell my own story, evolving and refining my characters over and over again. In one of my early cyborg prints, *Cyborg #1*, an etching that was the start to this body of work, one can see the figure is disassembled, but they can *imagine* it reassembled as well. I am literally breaking my cyborgs down to reveal their interiors and to visualize how they come together.

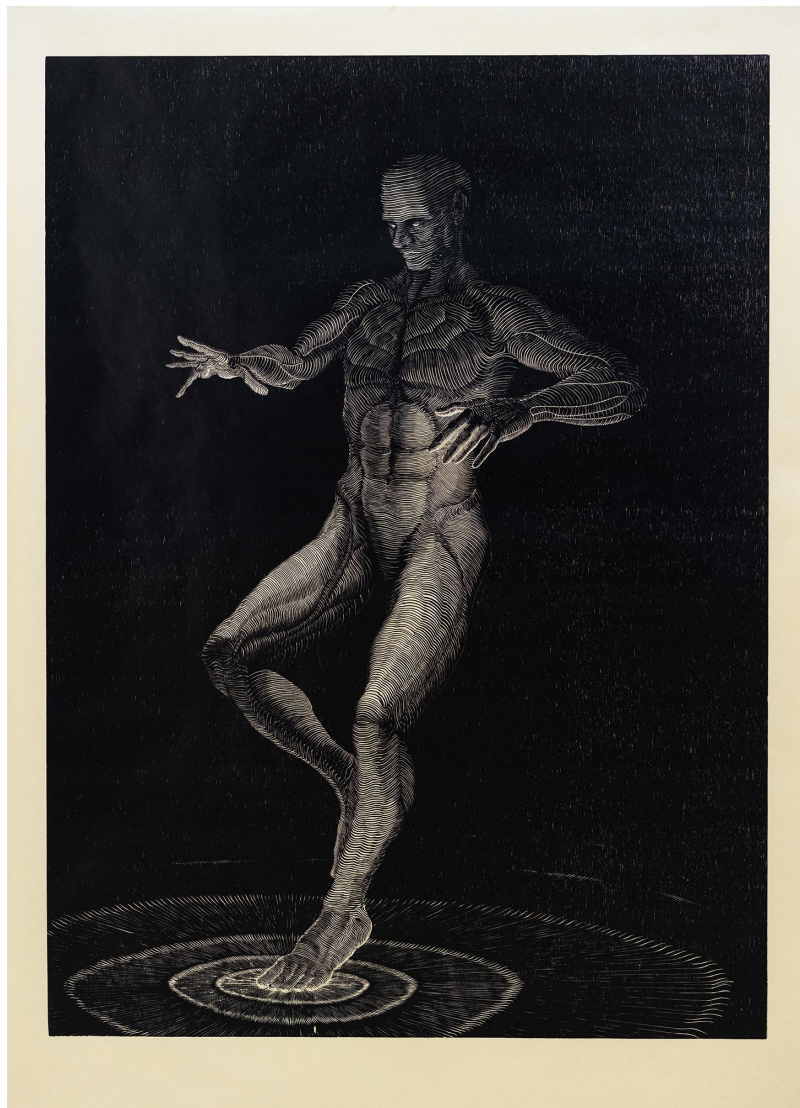


Cyborg #2 detail, etching, 7.5 x 11 inches, edition of 5, 2019

Cyborg #3 detail etching with chin colle, 7.5 x 11 inches, edition of 3, 2019



The majority of my work is monochromatic. This is a choice to emphasize the dramatic contrast of black and white, light and dark. Light signifies knowledge, creation, and energy, while darkness signifies ignorance, mystery, and weight. My figures manipulate light in various ways. The figure in my woodblock print, *Landing*, has light emanating from their hands such as the light that would be necessary and adjusted mid-flight for landing. The light is meant to act similar to a propulsion system for accelerating and stabilizing. The figure can be compared to the Marvel character Silver Surfer, or Iron Man, but instead of being made of metal, or what Silver Surfer is made of, they look like they are made of flesh and bone.



Landing, woodcut, 32 x 43 inches, edition of 9, 2020

Anatomy & Design

The anatomy and design of my cyborgs has changed over time. This is evident when comparing the pieces, *Sleeping Cyborg*, *Cyborg in the Dark I & II*, and *Details in the Fabric*, and *Landing*. These prints are listed in order that shows my progression designing the forms of the characters. In *Sleeping Cyborg*, the cyborg is made of metal, this is made clear by the ultra thin hard ground lines partitioning every part of her body and changes in tone, which can be interpreted as a reflective surface. The idea of a metal surface is assisted by the print being an etching. The copper surface is smoothly polished and metal; the quality of the medium elevates the articulation of the figure. The aquatint technique leaves hard shifts in tone, which is a quality that is seen in reflective pieces of metal. This style of rendering was referenced from sci-fi imagery from past decades where robots looked like shiny toasters.



Sleeping Cyborg, Etching, 22 x 30 inches, edition of 4 + 1 AP



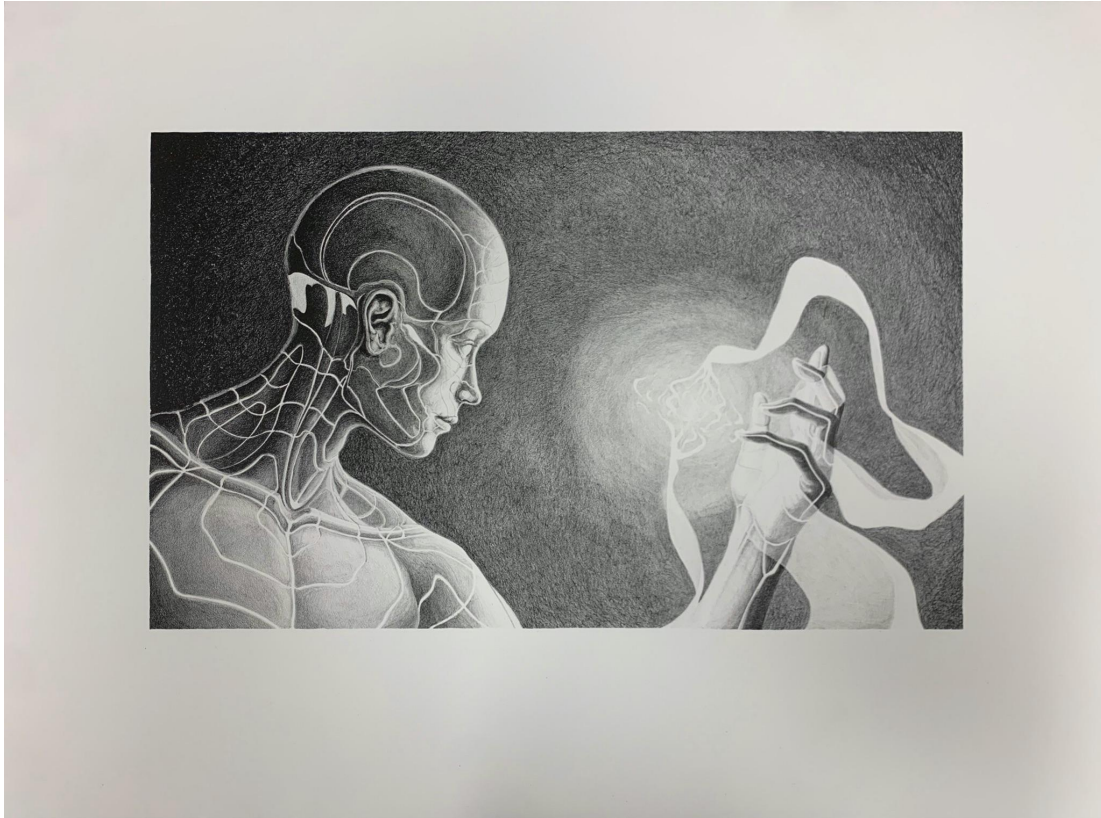
Cyborg in the Dark, screenprint, 22 x 30 inches, edition of 5, 2020

In *Cyborg in the Dark* and *Cyborg in the Dark II*, I moved on from referencing older style of sci-fi imagery to references and inspiration drawn from current technologies. The figure is wearing a suit needed for space travel. The idea behind the suit was to protect the figure without weighing him down. The suit also has technological capabilities, like being able to emit light complex enough to make holograms. The suit is made of panels that allow for fine movements. In the sister print, *Cyborg in the Dark II*, I rethought and focused on the design of the hand. I show my viewer the intricacies of the components of the hand, where parts meet, bolt together or fold underneath each other to allow for full range of motion. There are openings

for light throughout the hand which are designed for different uses related to giving the cyborg interaction with their environment beyond touch. Sometimes, as in this print, they are stylized, intersecting each other in the palm of the hand like the lines on my own palm.



Cyborg in the Dark II, screenprint, 22 x 30 inches, edition of 12, 2020



Details in the Fabric, lithograph, 22 x 30 inches, edition of 14

Whereas, in the lithograph, *Details in the Fabric*, the main figure's body is partitioned by white spaces. Also the surface of the figure is different because the characteristics of the process employed asserts itself on the work. This print is rendered entirely with lithographic crayons and has the quality of a pencil drawing. This allows for smooth transitions in tone from white to black. The body parts are partitioned similar to previous prints but the white iline instead of black signifies a technologically advanced being and therefore has more knowledge and capability. The figure is seen manipulating "matter" without any physical interaction with the light representing the cyborg's body working to control the matter, and the matter is glowing in response to being controlled. Using the processes of lithography afforded a close rendering of the anatomical structure of bones, and muscles leading to a fusion of futuristic and naturalistic design. I discovered by making this print, that there is no need to make a figure more robotic to be perceived as more advanced. In my search to create a cyborg that could travel through the universe forever, I found myself coming back to the naturalism of the human form, which is in

itself, a beautiful complex machine. By giving the figure the ability to control light, I reached into ideas that lie between sci-fi, spirituality, and magic.



Genesis, woodcut, 17 x 39 inches, edition of 12 + 3 AP's, 2021

In the woodcut prints, *Landing* and *Genesis*, I carried on with the naturalistic body form, however the figure was transformed through the medium. Creating the same figure in the graphicness of the woodcut was a challenge because I had to transfer values into line. I used an engraving style to carve the lines of the figure, beginning with sequential ultra thin lines, and swelling them out systematically and gradually to create the illusion of light and shadow. I chose woodcut for these prints because the blocks start as whole black flats. If I rolled up and printed the block without carving anything, it would be a dark void. Carving slowly brings the figure to life. I incrementally discover more as I progress through the block; the resistance of the block to control light force against lightness and knowledge. The wood matrix also speaks to the idea of timelessness. The flowing lines of the figure meet at the center of the chest akin to the rings on a tree trunk that reveal its age.

Additional Works



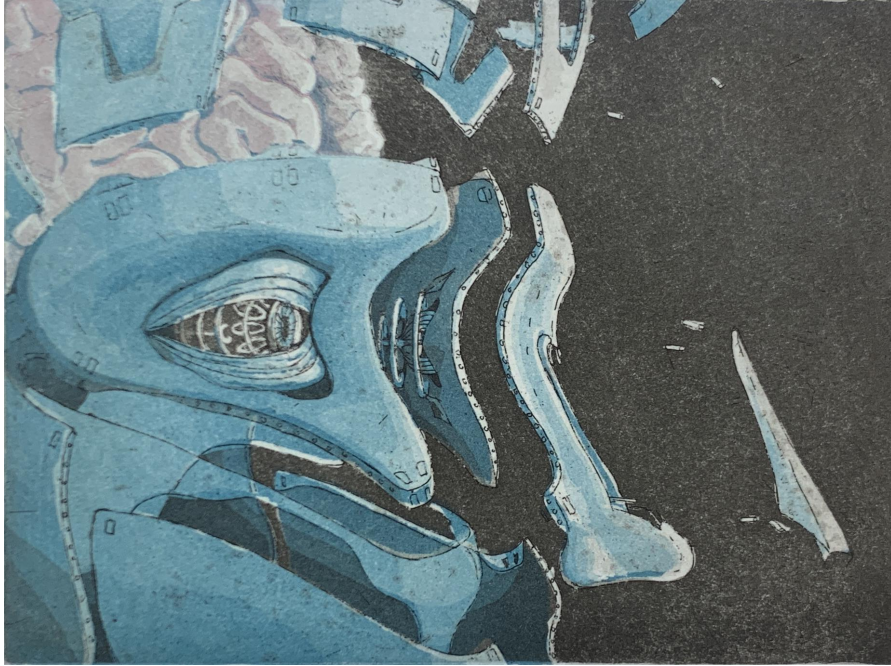
Genesis - Screenprint Version, screenprint, 42 x 148 inches, edition of 2, 2021



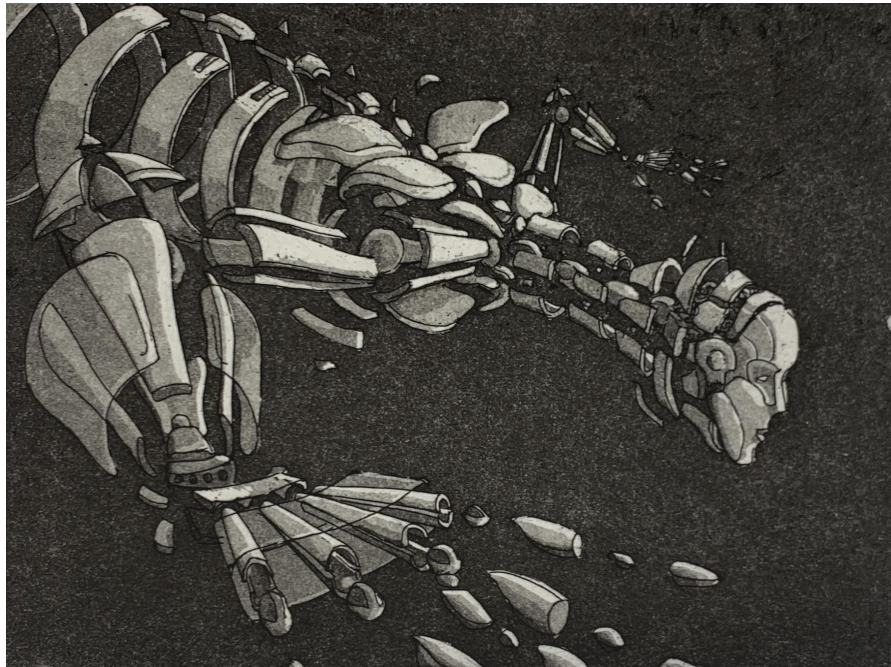
Untitled, etching, 15 x 20 inches, edition of 4 + 1 PP, 2021



Temple in the Sky, screenprint, 18 x 24 inches, edition of 10, 2020



Cyborg #4 detail, etching, 7.5 x 11 inches, edition of 3, 2019



Cyborg #1 detail, etching, 7.5 x 11 inches, edition of 5, 2019

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List of images

Untitled, 2021

Etching on paper, edition of 4 + 1 PP
15 x 20 inches

Genesis - Screenprint Version, 2021

Screenprint on paper, edition of 2
42 x 148 inches

Genesis, 2021

Woodcut on paper, edition of 12 + 3AP's
17 x 39 inches

Surfing, 2021
Etching on paper, edition of 10
21 x 32 inches

Landing, 2020
Woodcut on paper, edition of 9
43 x 32 inches

Details in the Fabric, 2020
Lithograph on paper, edition of 14
22 x 30 inches

Cyborg in the Dark, 2020
Screenprint on paper, edition of 5
30 x 22 inches

Cyborg in the Dark II, 2020
Screenprint on paper, edition of 12
30 x 22 inches

Temple in the Sky, 2020
Screenprint on paper, edition of 10
18 x 24 inches

Sleeping Cyborg, 2019
Etching on paper, edition of 4 + 1 AP
22 x 30 inches

Cyborg # 4, 2019
Etching on paper, edition of 3
7.5 x 11 inches

Cyborg #3, 2019
Etching on paper, edition of 3
7.5 x 11 inches

Cyborg #2, 2019
Etching on paper, edition of 5
7.5 x 11 inches

Cyborg #1, 2019
Etching on paper, edition of 5
7.5 x 11 inches

