

**Eye of the Beholder**

Acrylic, Mixed media, Pastel  
Dimensions – 2 panels (24in x 18 ¾ in)

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Statement of Purpose:

This piece is the result of several inspirations: geographical, proverbial and personal.

**Geographical Inspiration**

Although the physical work on this piece began in the summer of 2000, the mental and emotional crafting of this piece began in the fall of 1999 as I walked the along the streets of the Amalfi coast, Naples, Florence, Paestum, and many other breathtaking and inspiring places in Italy. Italy, which is completely devoted to religion and the concept/idea of God, hosts many cathedrals or religious shops on practically every corner. With every walk throughout the city and countryside, I was continually amazed at the variety of interpretations offered on what God was perceived to be.

Whether exhibited through art, architecture or just simple day-to-day actions, the thought of God was prevalent. For many of the natives, I had the feeling that in having so many places to worship as well as other religious reminders surrounding them, there was no excuse not to be aware of the Creator. I searched to find a way to interpret and express this thought of omnipresence in a work of art. As I absorbed the feelings, colors and other visuals of my surroundings, I found myself correlating this experience to the biblical verse in Proverbs, “The eyes of the Lord are in every place,” thus incorporating my perception of God in a nonrepresentational manner. This biblical inspiration led to yet another thought...

**Proverbial Inspiration**

When you look upon the face of someone, often a great deal, if not all, of that person’s story can be read. Still, nothing tells that story like the eyes, for as an old proverb states, “the eyes are the window to the soul”. From this thought, I began to research the work of past artists who incorporated dreams and the imagination into their work. Salvador Dali specifically, but other artists of the Surrealist movement looked to the words and works of psychoanalyst to portray the human mind. I looked at the works of the Ancient Egyptians and how the eyes were more geometrical shapes as opposed to being anatomically correct. The hieroglyphics contained symbols, which were used for letters and words. I also looked at the work of several Cubist artists and how they positioned the eyes in relation to other parts of the body. Were they rightly proportioned? Were they asymmetrical? What story did these eyes tell? This last question introduced the final inspiration for this piece...

**Personal Inspiration**

*I had come from a well-known family within my community in Chicago and my family name preceded me seemingly everywhere I went in Chicago. So, I traveled first to a small town in Iowa, then as far as Europe to escape and give myself some sense of anonymity. As I walked the streets of Italy, I wondered what story did others see written on my face? What story did *my eyes* reveal? Did they reveal my inner struggles? Did they reveal my search for assurance of an omnipresent of God?*

And so, from the convergence of these three paths, this piece was born.

