

FROELICK GALLERY

Michael Schultheis

Venn Constellations, 2017

In my previous geometric Soul Mate Models, I represented the two human halves as *limaçons*, which are beautiful snail-like shapes with an elegant interior and exterior loop. This curved form can be seen throughout my paintings, and was first discovered by the painter and mathematician Albrecht Durer (1471). For me, it represents the relative proportion of a person's interior and exterior consciousness, corresponding to the continuum of consciousness described by the Swiss psychotherapist Carl Jung (1875). The collective consciousness of two lovers may *overlap* in a symbiotic way, similar to the overlapping areas of two circles in a Venn diagram. This is inspired by the English mathematician John Venn, (1834).

In these new paintings, I explore personal stories of how I connect to people in my life. My relationships are represented by two overlapping limaçon curves, rendering a geometric model of our interior and exterior consciousness. This model describes how we find each other, informs our calibration to stay together, and prepares for when we are not.

The peak moments of this overlapping collective consciousness may be mapped through the years of our relationship, with the most emotionally salient memories forming a chandelier-like structure, and better understood through the botanical classification of flowering called inflorescence. This idea is inspired by the Peak-End Rule, the psychological heuristic discovered by Barbara Fredrickson and Daniel Kahneman (1993). The yearly celebrations of birthdays, anniversaries, and other "peak" emotional experiences form my Venn Constellations that I remember over time. When these peak memories are shared between two people, they become incandescent, and illuminate the essence of our relationship.

Geometric Predellas

At the very beginning of the Italian Renaissance (circa 1330), painters created large altarpiece compositions with multiple individuals, and then below the altarpiece, painted smaller studies called *Predellas*. My favorite Predellas are in the Maesta de Duccio, painted by Duccio di Buoninsegna (1308) in Siena, Italy. I lived and studied in Siena, and often visited Duccio's beloved masterpiece.

Over the last year, I have been painting small studies of geometric forms and their corresponding equations that summon those forms in my mind. I call them *Geometric Predellas*, inspired by Duccio. My small *Geometric Predellas* are vignettes that function as focused meditation devices: I write the equation, close my eyes, and paint the geometric form as it appears on the internal chalkboard of my mind.

Geometric Chassis

These bronze Geometric Chassis are the structural framework for the archetypal Soul Mate Model that I am exploring in the paintings. Archimedes presciently declared that if given a large enough lever, he could lift the entire world. The Indian philosopher Jiddu Krishnamurti (1895) described freedom as what lies beyond the field of consciousness.

In my Geometric Chassis, the interior loop is one's interior consciousness. Even if it is small, given the correct perspective, one can discovery freedom by perceiving the entire world.

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