

# EVAN LINDQUIST

ETCHING AN IDENTITY AS A "SCIENTIFIC ARTIST"

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copper."*

Evan Lindquist

by Charles Kaufman

In 2010, contemporary printmaker Evan Lindquist sat in his Northeast Arkansas studio hunkered over a copper plate under a sole source of light, using a burin, an ancient tool of engravers and goldsmiths, to create images. The setting was reminiscent of the Renaissance towns of Colmar or Nuremberg, where Martin Schongauer (c. 1450-1491) and, later, Albrecht Dürer (1471-1528), respectively, mastered the burin.

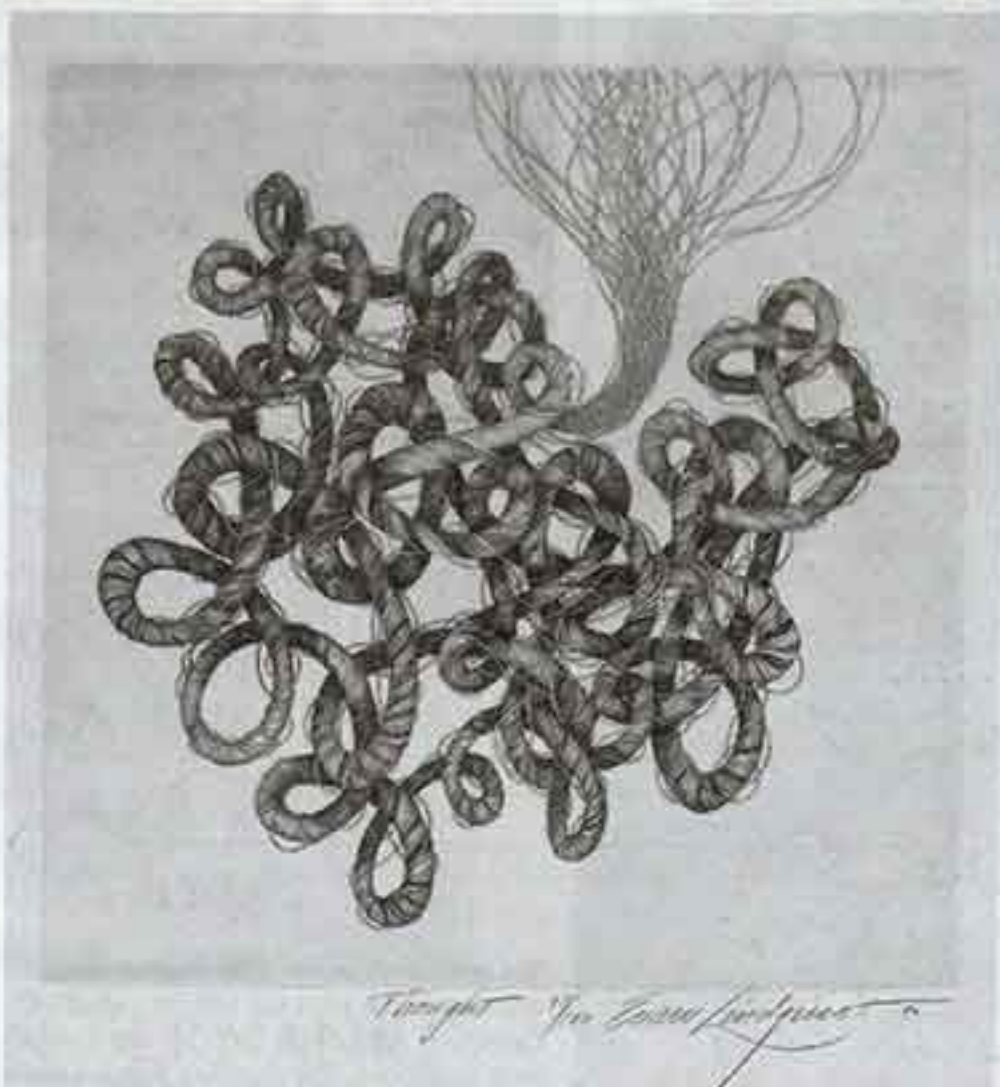
Like Dürer, which is to say unlike many contemporary artists, Lindquist also possessed a strong interest in science. In fact, so intertwined was Lindquist's interests in science and art that he has described himself as "an artistic scientist" or a "scientific artist." This duality was common to artists in centuries past. Lindquist's scientific interests began during early childhood when he began learning science from a biologist who lived next door. At the same time, he was schooled in art, first in calligraphy by his father, and later by others who introduced him to etching, drypoint, woodcuts, and eventually burin engraving. After double-majoring in art and biology at Emporia State University, Lindquist's art began to blossom at the University of Iowa, where he received a Masters Degree in a program shaped by printmaker Mauricio Lasansky.

At this formative stage, Lindquist focused more on technique than satisfying the marketplace. "Some people seek attention and recognition by submitting the biggest and most colorful work," Lindquist said. "I'm not big. I'm not colorful. I stayed with the small image with black and white, with the burin on the copper plate because this is what I was meant to do. I didn't know of anyone else doing this in the late 20th Century. People told me I was the most committed engraver anywhere. When I look at a plate and pick up a burin. I say, 'This is what I was meant to do. This is what I want to do.' I don't feel I'm myself unless I'm working on a piece of copper."

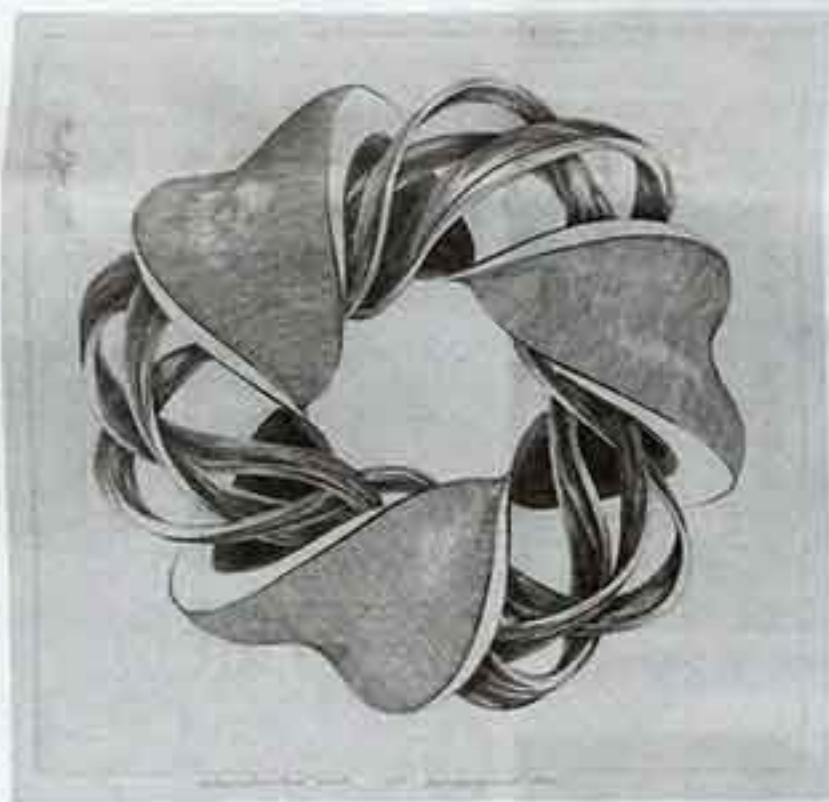
## STRANDS OF 'GENIUS'

This focus produced an originality and great technical proficiency in his images. Lindquist's calligraphy translated well to printmaking, from tight, complex, brainy fibers to figurative work. Long-time admirers of his work saw a signature style, though Lindquist resisted such characterizations.

Michael DiCerbo, a printmaker and contemporary curator at The Old Print Shop in New York, said he began following Lindquist's work in 1978. "Almost no contemporary artist exclusively uses the technique he uses in his work," DiCerbo said. "He's an important artist and quite respected, although I don't think many people in New York know him personally." That's because Lindquist chooses to stay beyond the gravitational pull of urban centers. And few people in New York are the least bit curious about Jonesboro, Arkansas, where Lindquist lives and worked for forty years at Arkansas State University, teaching printing and drawing.



Evan Lindquist, "Thought," engraving, 1970, (cat 62.) ed. 100, 305 mm x 305 mm. Image courtesy of the artist. ©Evan Lindquist/VAGA, NY



Evan Lindquist, "Contemplation: Twist of Fate" engraving, 1994, (cat 186) ed. 50, 475 mm X 476 mm. Image courtesy of the artist. ©Evan Lindquist/VAGA, NY

In the late 1960s and 1970s, Lindquist began fusing science into his art. Later he learned that a physicist had discussed the universe, using a "string theory," whereby all matter was composed of strings. While contemplating the physical universe, Lindquist started working on his fibrous "Contemplation" series.

Former students, colleagues and curators attest to his breathtaking technique and art. Jacob Lewis of Pace Prints Chelsea in New York characterized Lindquist's work as "genius" after evaluating three pieces submitted in the 26th Print Triennial at the Silvermine Guild Arts Center in New Canaan, Conn. Lewis said he was "conflicted" in choosing just one of the three works: *William Hogarth Engraves a Line of Beauty*, *Albrecht Dürer Engraves His Initials*, and *Claude Mellan Engraves a Self-Portrait*. The latter was selected as "Best of Show" from more than 500 artists. Lewis, himself a printmaker who has worked with Robert Kipness, Chuck Close and Jim Dine, heaped high praise on Lindquist's technique and subject matter.

The calculus imbedded in Lindquist's work reflects the scientific precision that's evident in scores of his prints. "My working process is one of calculation," he said. "I calculate what is happening. I calculate what I need with that and calculate the next step. A lot of times I'll go back to the beginning and start over and get ideas worked out on paper. I work through sketchbooks. When I feel I have a beginning place, I actually go to the copper plate. I find the old sketches suggest new journeys. The journey, for me, moves along, and I go wherever I can get into."

Unique among accomplished printmakers, including Dürer, is that Lindquist has independently pulled virtually every impression—more than 9,300 impressions—from almost 300 sets of prints during a half century of work. He once produced an image on stone and left the printing to students during a college visit in the '60s. "The problem (with having others assist with printing) is that my method of working is one where I feel I have to have complete control over it because I change my mind constantly," he said.

This unparalleled record provides Lindquist with a unique position in the history of art. It also underscores the fact that sometimes Lindquist travels alone, following an untrodden path into the future. At other times, he travels in the past . . . with Dürer, Mellan, and other trailblazing artists of the fifteenth century.

Lindquist's work has received more than 60 awards throughout the country. His prints have been featured in more than 60 solo exhibitions, included in more than 100 group exhibitions and more than 200 juried exhibitions. His prints are in the permanent collections of numerous important institutions. Among them are: The Albertina, Vienna, Austria; the Arkansas Arts Center, Little Rock; The Art Institute of Chicago; the Boston Museum of Fine Arts; Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence, Italy; Joslyn Art Museum, Omaha; Mississippi Museum of Art, Jackson; Municipal Gallery of Modern Art, Dublin, Ireland; Reina Sophia, Madrid, Spain; Nelson-Atkins Gallery, Kansas City, Mo.; New Jersey State Museum, Trenton; New Orleans Museum of Art; Portland Art Museum, Gilkey Center for Graphic Arts, Portland, Ore.; San Francisco Art Museum, Achenbach Foundation for Graphic Arts; St. Louis Art Museum; and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. In 2010, Evan Lindquist received the Society of American Graphic Artists Lifetime Achievement Award.

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