

# Grant M Brownlow

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## Artist Statement

The clanging and hissing of hydraulic presses as they open and close. The roar of a muscle car on a straightaway. The physical warmth of a freshly molded plastic part. These are some of the only topics and interests that my father and I have been able to bond over because he spent much of his time on the racetrack or in manufacturing factories related to the automotive industry. I have always had a strained relationship with my father. Talking about, and participating in, his interests have routinely been the strongest means of fostering a relationship between us. During my time in school, I financially supported myself by operating machinery in a plastics factory and took up working on automobiles to create and foster meaning between us. Ultimately these activities have served as a makeshift bridge and a crutch for our flawed relationship.

The environments where my father and I have found common ground become the reflections of my father that I see in myself. There is tension as I struggle to self-identify and create an individual identity that is separate and different from him. As a result, the imagery of my work often has a sporadic and chaotic feel. The compositions of my prints reflect on this reluctance to pick a single identity and highlight the anxiety which trails me regarding the reality of who I am today, how I got here, and how my family relationships have influenced me.

My work often uses multiples or repeated images which imitate the manufacturing environment and express how I see myself as an individually unique multiple of my father. Printmaking and the use of images in multiples are integral to my work and help to connect myself, my father, our unique experiences, and the topics we have bonded over. These repeated images are generally varied in scale and presented in either sets of two or three. These multiples are symbolic representations of myself, my father, and our shared experiences as alternate and overlapping versions of each other.

While exploring our relationship, I have come to terms with the fact that I have inherited some of the very traits I resented in my father such as selfishness, stubbornness, and bursts of overwhelming frustration. These negative traits are coupled with redeeming traits that I have gained from the same source. The contrasting bright bold colors and murky dark hues that appear in my work are derived from the environments which my father and I shared and comment further on the dichotomy of our relationship. These bold images and aggressive colors bursting out of the work are my way of communicating the internal conflict with my identity. I seek to find a resolution between the “self” of my past and the “self” I am currently working towards becoming.