

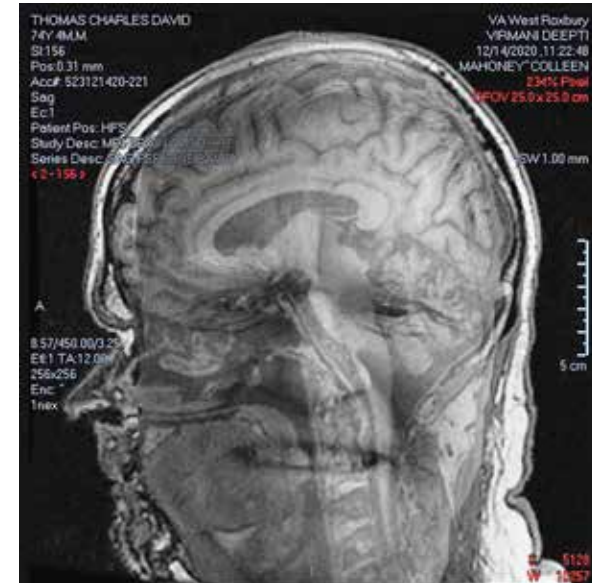
Untitled
Digital Print
2021
8 x 8 inches



“Commonsense ideas regarding our brains, our relationship to the external world, and the nature of Self shape how we broadly think about ourselves and the world. Most people believe our brains acquire information from the external world through our senses and then process this information to create an accurate representation of reality. Most further believe we are fully conscious of this reality, and we primarily make conscious decisions to navigate it.”

Dan Monroe

Untitled
Digital Print
2021
8 x 8 inches



“While eyes are necessary to see the world, visual experience is not created by our eyes. Instead, our eyes collect light from a very narrow part of the electromagnetic spectrum. Our brains convert this information into electrochemical data it uses to construct what we see. In truth, we see with our brains, and the world we see is highly abstracted. It emphasizes elements that may be of particular significance to our survival-- such as sudden motion by a large animal in dense bushes. Yet what we see is riddled with illusions and heavily influenced by our interests and even what we think.”

Dan Monroe

Untitled
Digital Print
2021
8 x 8 inches



"While we can learn to think in new ways, the unconscious part of our brains always plays a fundamental role and largely hidden role in our thinking. We are the owners of our thoughts, but we are certainly not the conscious author of all of them.."

Dan Monroe

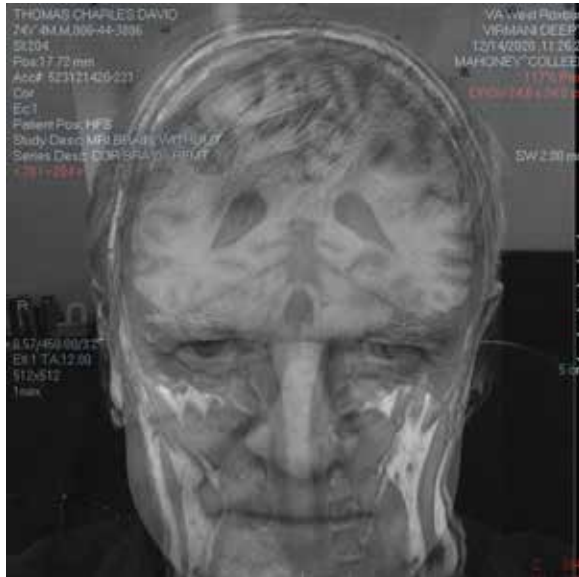
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Digital Print
2021
8 x 8 inches



"Discovering our brains work in radically different ways than we have assumed through most of our lives can be an exciting and, at the same time, disturbing experience. The way one's brain functions takes on a far more compelling set of feelings if one finds, like David Thomas, that one's brain is not functioning normally."

Dan Monroe

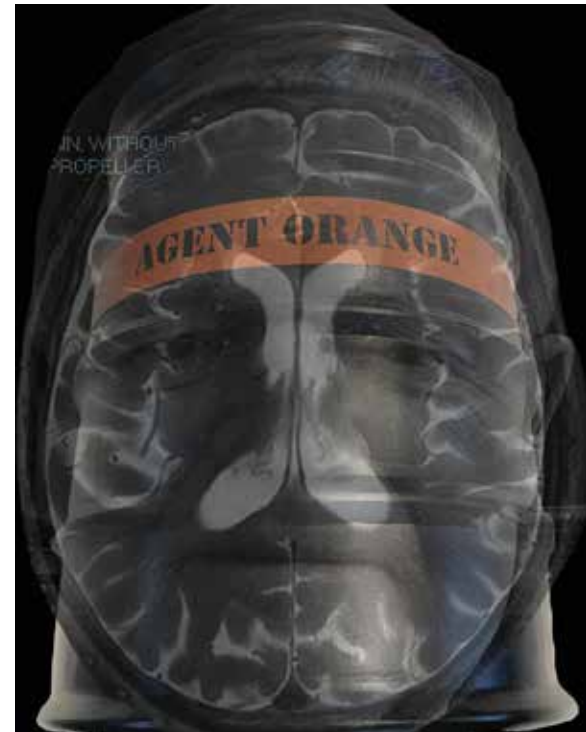
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Digital Print
2021
8 x 8 inches



“Through his Parkinson’s disease, David has discovered that his Self exists at the pinnacle of an incomprehensibly complex set of inter-connected neuronal networks and other structures and processes. If any of the core elements of this inconceivably vast system ceases to function normally, then the Self is changed. As a result, the body no longer works as it should. Neither does the Mind. The brain and the Self it creates must then adapt to its own malfunctions. Understanding and then dealing with these changes takes tremendous courage because adapting to physical, emotional, and cognitive malfunctions profoundly disrupts one’s world views.”

Dan Monroe

Untitled
Digital Print
2021
10 x 8 inches



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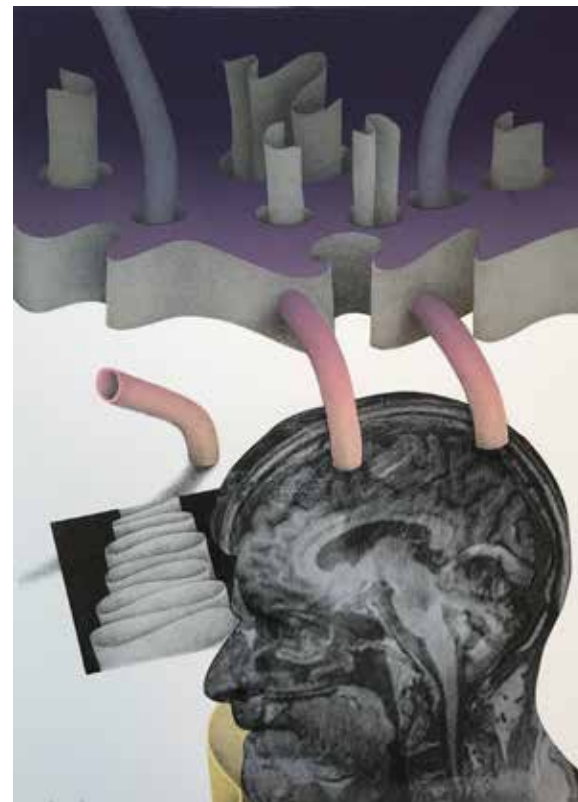
Midnight Marchland
Lithograph with Digital Print
1978 & 2021
20 x 16 inches



"David, an artist, an educator, and a Vietnam Veteran, learned several years ago that he has Parkinson's disease, most likely due to his exposure to Agent Orange during the Vietnam War. Parkinson's disease affects the nerve cells in the brain that produce dopamine. Dopamine is a neurotransmitter that enables messages to be sent between nerve cells."

Dan Monroe

Landscape for Tomorrow
Lithograph with Digital Print
1978 & 2021
20 x 14 inches



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Dan Monroe

Untitled
Lithograph with Digital Print
1977 & 2021
33 x 16 inches



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Dan Monroe

Untitled
Lithograph with Digital Print
1984 & 2021
13 x 17 inches



"David, like most people, gave little thought to how his brain worked before he was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease. Parkinson's led him to essentially restructure his understanding of himself by realizing he is his brain. It also forced him to understand that many things regarding his Self are entirely outside his control."

Dan Monroe

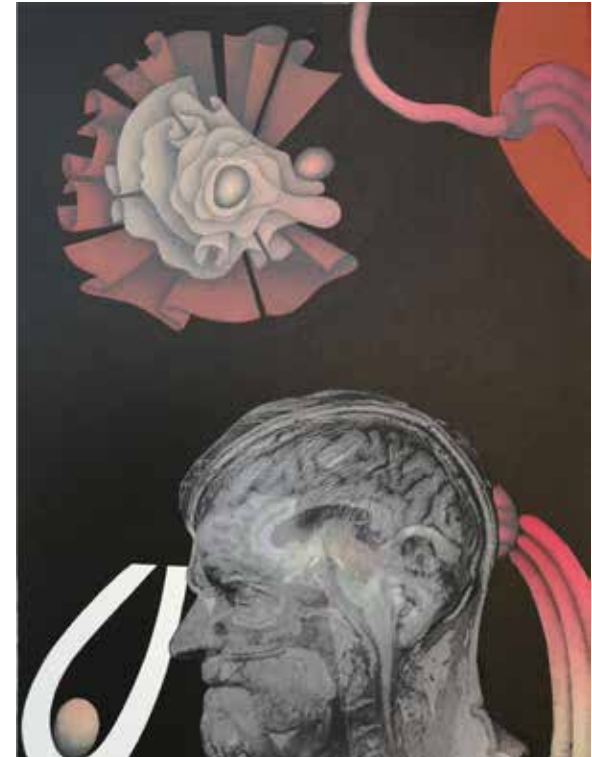
Birth of a Flower
Lithograph with Digital Print
1978 & 2021
14 x 22 inches



Fascinated by MRI images of his brain's activity centers at a given time, David has fused these brain images with pictures of his face. These images powerfully fuse internal and external views of David's Self reacting to its own uncontrollable dysfunctions. The impact of these images is haunting."

Dan Monroe

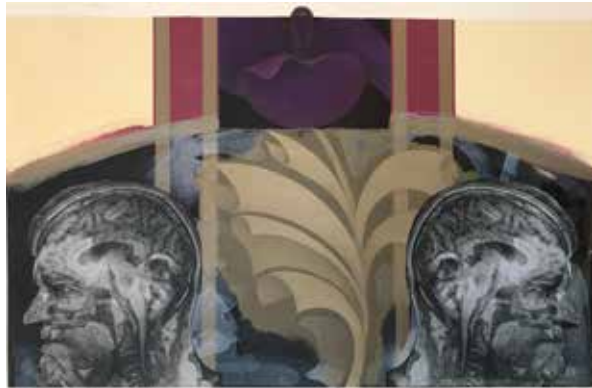
Untitled
Lithograph with Digital Print
1984 & 2021
13 x 17 inches



"In spite of the Army's assurances, David questioned how Agent Orange could so effectively kill plants and be harmless to humans. He also wondered what the United States was doing fighting in Vietnam soon after his arrival. Nonetheless, he served faithfully and bravely, driving an Army Major many miles through enemy territory for most of a year in a single unaccompanied Jeep."

Dan Monroe

Nocturnal Flower
Lithograph with Digital Print
1977 & 2021
15 x 24 inches



"During the Vietnam War, the United States sprayed 20,000,000 gallons of Agent Orange over 20% of Vietnam and parts of Laos and Cambodia. Agent Orange caused and continues to cause many severe or fatal disorders, including birth defects, numerous forms of cancer, and other conditions, including Parkinson's disease. As a result, millions of Vietnamese, Laotians, and Cambodians and tens of thousands of US soldiers have been and continue to be harmed by this form of chemical warfare.."

Dan Monroe

Untitled
Lithograph with Digital Print
1984 & 2021
13 x 17 inches



"Art has been an essential part of David's life as an artist and as an art educator. Faced with a debilitating and incurable brain disease, David has chosen to share his experience, his new discoveries, and his convictions through art. David's response to Parkinson's disease is a testament to the realization that even though we are our brains and our brains work in mysterious and surprising ways, these facts in no way compromise the creativity and courage of the human spirit."

Dan Monroe

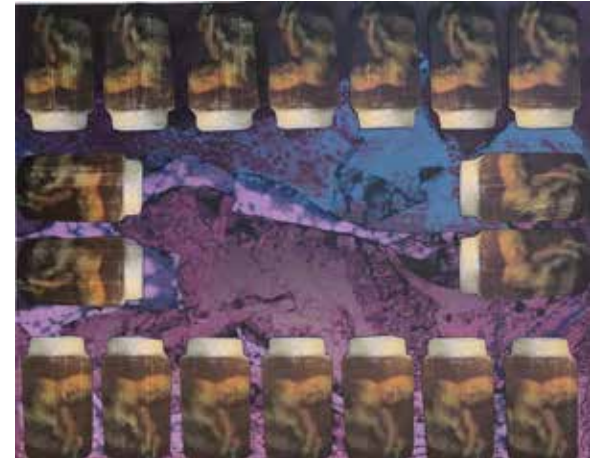
Volcanic Landscape
Lithograph with Digital Print
1979 & 2021
12 x 16 inches



“When I returned from my year in Pleiku, I wanted to express my feelings about that year before they faded into the background. My tour in Vietnam had changed my life. I was compelled to find a way to express the asymmetry of the effects of the war on the U.S. and on Vietnam. We mourn our 58,000+ American soldiers killed in Vietnam while they mourn the more than two million civilians killed in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. As a result of chemicals sprayed and high tonnage of bombs dropped by U.S. military this number will continue to increase in Vietnam for many decades if not centuries.”

David Thomas

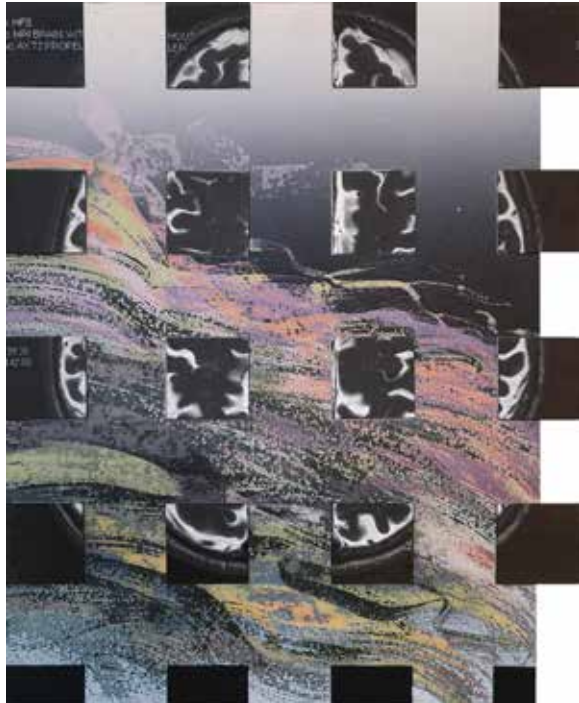
The Deep
Lithograph with Digital Print
1980 & 2021
13 x 16 inches



Little did I know when I returned to Vietnam in 1987, that I would spend the rest of my life trying to ease the pain caused by the American War there, to educate Americans here about the real tragedy of our invasion of Vietnam, and to humanize the people we had dehumanized in order to kill and poison them. I have been invited into the homes of our former enemy many times only to learn how much we have in common, not that which divides us. We have laughed and cried together and shared many beautiful memories and hopes for the future

David Thomas.

Flowing
Lithograph with Digital Print
1982 & 2021
17 x 13 inches



During the year I spent on Engineer Hill, I never really paid much attention to why nothing grew in this rich volcanic red soil of Vietnam's Central Highlands. I did know my unit was also responsible for killing the vegetation one hundred meters on each side of the roads we were constructing and at all work sites. This was primarily to take away the jungle growth where snipers and enemy soldiers could hide. We were told this would keep us safe.

David Thomas.

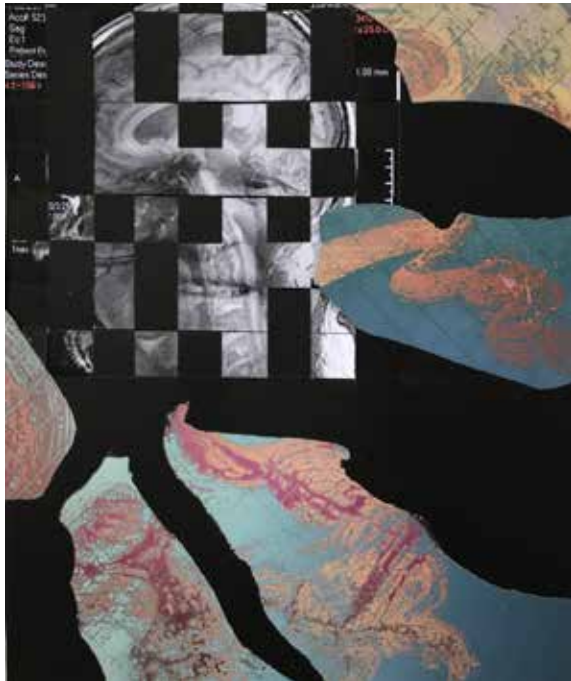
Banana 82
Lithograph with Digital Print
1984 & 2021
17 x 15 inches



Vietnam reports that some 400,000 people have suffered death or permanent injury from exposure to Agent Orange. It is also estimated that 2,000,000 people have suffered from illnesses caused by exposure and that half a million babies were born with birth defects due to the effects of Agent Orange. The U.S. government has consistently stated that no scientific evidence links Agent Orange/dioxin to adverse health effects found in Vietnam. How can this be?

David Thomas

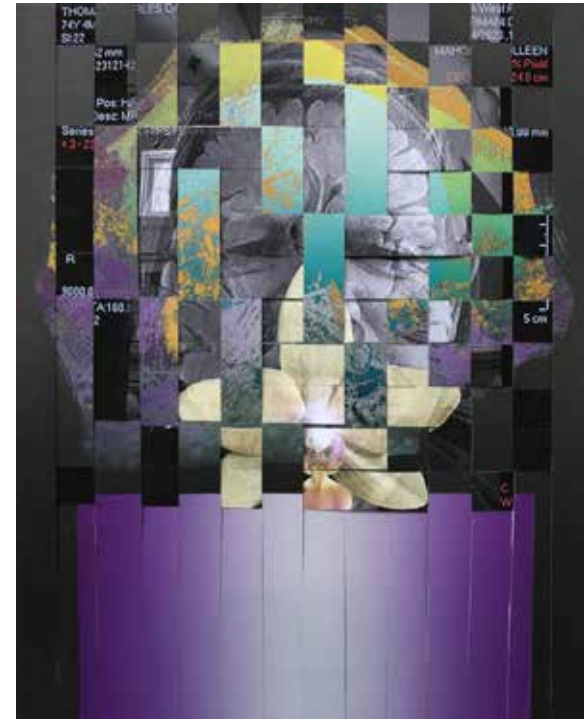
Fragments
Lithograph with Digital Print
1983 & 2021
16 x 13 inches



"On December 14, 2020, I saw my brain for the first time. My neurologist had ordered an MRI scan of my brain to check on the progress of my Parkinson's disease. After the scan was complete, I asked the technician for a CD of the "slices" of my brain. I wasn't exactly sure what I would do with them but was curious about what I would find on that CD. After looking at several hundred slices I became fascinated with the idea that everything about me and my entire life was somehow present in this incredibly complex organ."

David Thomas

Moonrise
Lithograph with Digital Print
1984 & 2021
18 x 14 inches



"I suddenly had a new subject to explore in my art. I didn't want simply to illustrate my brain, so I began this series by taking selfies of my face from different angles and expressions and then combined these with the MRI slices. It was fascinating to see my face and brain becoming one image and battling each other for dominance."

David Thomas

Untitled
Lithograph with Digital Print
1988 & 2021
30 x 22 inches



"I am concerned that the progression of my particular Parkinson's may not allow me to complete this series. Will my worsening cognitive and physical symptoms prevent me from finding some answers to the questions I have raised here? Or will this increase in symptoms simply become additional material for this series? Only time will answer that question. "

David Thomas

Untitled
Lithograph with Digital Print
1988 & 2021
22 x 30 inches



"Have you ever thought about how your brain works and about who controls what? I couldn't help but wonder if I would have any control of this disease and how it would progress. How much productive time do I have remaining? Would I have time remaining to complete this exhibition? What would I do after that? Will I be capable of initiating a new project?"

David Thomas

Birth of a Flower
Lithograph with Digital Print
1978
14 x 22 inches



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David Thomas

Buffalo Eagle Iron Works Presents
Lithograph with Digital Print
1976 & 2021
30 x 22 inches



"The purpose of this exhibition and catalogue are to ask questions about the function and limits of this incredible organ. My desire is that these images will inspire you to think more about your own brain and the way you arrive at conclusions. Our brains are at best the combination of what we inherited from our ancestors combined with what we have added since our birth. What we don't know is how this will all be used during our lifetime."

David Thomas

Fern
Lithograph with Digital Print
1976 & 2021
21 x 16 inches



"I am haunted by the fact that my brain supported my being sent to Vietnam by my government to kill and poison innocent women and children simply because they supported a Communist-Socialist form of government rather than a Democratic-Capitalist form of government. Why didn't my brain stop me? I had options. I could have gone to Canada or prison. What controlled my choice?"

David Thomas

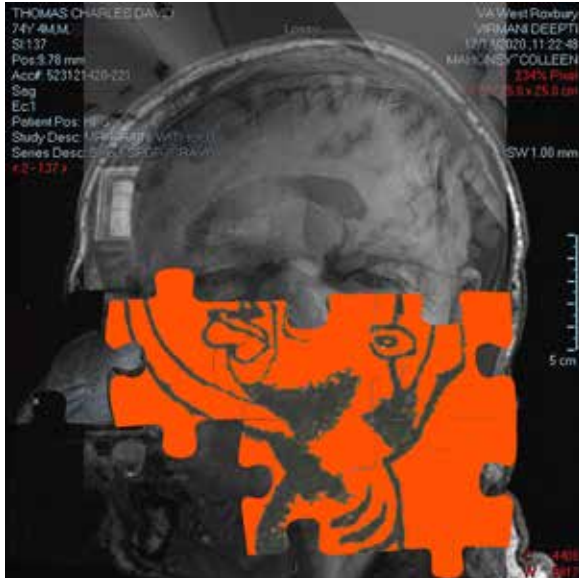
Untitled
Lithograph with Digital Print
1988 & 2021
30 x 22 inches



"Our brains are capable of learning not to touch a hot stove to protect us from injury and also how to make a rifle that can shoot twenty rounds in two seconds. Our brain can find cures for many horrible diseases while it can also create and use chemical and atomic weapons capable of unimaginable death and destruction. If human beings are to survive on this planet, we must now find a way to control better how we use our brains. Otherwise, we will most certainly cause our own extinction."

David Thomas

Untitled
Digital Print
2021
8 x 8 inches



Of Thomas's works, Sherry Goodman, director of education and academic relations at the UC Berkeley Art Museum wrote: "They're both dramatic and affecting in the seeming simplicity of the super-imposition (MRI and his face) while complex and profound in implication."

Sherry Goodman

Untitled
Digital Print
2021
8 x 8 inches



The idea came as he looked at images of his brain, part of the diagnostics of the disease. "This latest series is inspired by a set of MRIs," he said. "I became more and more fascinated with the idea of our brains. I didn't really think about it before. But when you have a neuromuscular disease, you think about it all the time."

Parkinson's Disease is a neuromuscular disease that can include tremors and shaking, stiffness, and difficulty walking. To counteract these symptoms, Thomas walks five miles each day, sometimes listening to National Public Radio, sometimes doing quiet thinking.

Lisa Rogers
Wellesley Weston Magazine

Untitled
Digital Print
2021
8 x 8 inches



The red tulip has been associated with Parkinson's awareness since 1980 when a Dutch horticulturist with PD developed a red and white tulip. In April 2005, the red tulip was launched as the Worldwide Symbol of Parkinson's Disease at the 9th World Parkinson's Disease Day Conference in Luxembourg.

This stylized red tulip drawing, with leaves shaped like the letters "P" and "D", was designed by early-onset PD patient Karen Painter. Karen and Jean Burns led the movement for it to become the nationally recognized symbol for Parkinson's Disease Awareness.



Untitled
Digital Print
2021
8 x 8 inches



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Untitled
Digital Print
2021
8 x 8 inches



So what is Parkinson's? The degeneration of the cells in one part of your brain that generate dopamine - they die. You have less dopamine in your system. I hate that Parkinson's is not seen for what it is, dopamine deficiency. People find they do not get as much pleasure as they used to. It is not as delicious when you have a meal, less fun less pleasure. Less liking. Loss of motivation, some call it loss of desire.

But there is a silver lining. People with Parkinson's Disease report "A sudden and new awakening of creativity and desire." Don't think only about the motor symptoms, as you look at how much El Dopa you need or want.

Dr. David Rose

Untitled
Digital Print
2021
8 x 8 inches



You can't just say that dopamine makes you more creative. It is good for artists to hear that. They are more motivated. They work hard. But it doesn't just automatically make you more creative.

Now the question I asked at the beginning of the talk. What makes it more/less likely you will get Parkinson's symptoms? Artistic occupations are associated with a reduced risk of Parkinson's Disease. Art is the expression of the soul and the Parkinson's patient's soul has a lot to express.

Dr. David Rose

