

Fractured Fathers

by Rachel Simmons & Benjamin D. Rinehart

Project Statement:

Fractured Fathers is a collaborative artists book created by Benjamin D. Rinehart from Appleton, Wisconsin and Rachel Simmons from Orlando, Florida. The process began with a conversation between close friends about their complex relationships with their fathers, Jim and Terry. In the summer of 2020, during the first pandemic lockdown, they interviewed one another over video conferencing and transcribed the conversations. Their discoveries lead to the creation of two flextangles and a third collaborative book based on the transcripts. For the flextangles, they used photos of their fathers augmented through digital manipulation and pressure printing. Everything was finalized during an in-person studio session in Appleton a year later. Through this process they found kinship between their common experiences & parallels between their family relationships and themselves.



Artists: Rachel Simmons & Benjamin D. Rinehart

Title: "Fractured Fathers"

Medium: collapsible box with archival pigment & pressure prints and vinyl labels; archival pigment printed flextangles and pamphlet book

Dimensions:

Container - 10" x 5.5" x 2.5" (closed), 15" x 18" (open)

Flextangles - 4.5" x 4.5" x 2"

Pamphlet - 10" x 5.5" x .1825" (closed), 10" x 11" x .1825" (open)

Year created: 2021

Edition size: 10

Number of pages: Flextangle - 4 surfaces, pamphlets - 36 pages combined

Description of materials &

printing: The paper used throughout this project was Bristol 20 pt. and Mohawk Superfine Text soft white 28 lbs. The flextangle images, text, and vinyl labels were printed on an archival Epson printer. Pressure printing with oil-based ink was used to create the designs on the container and cover. Magnets were used for the closure.

Price: \$1,000.00

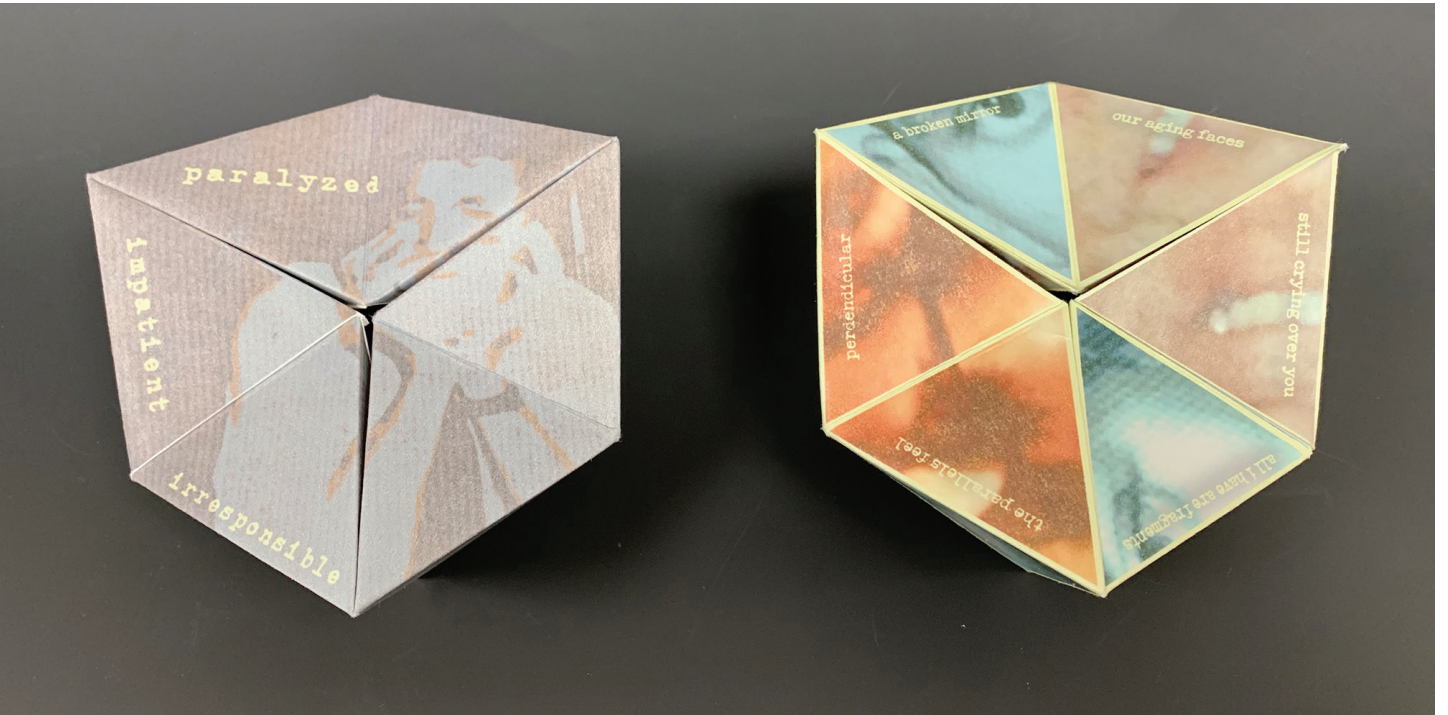
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Container



Flextangles



Pamphlet



Fractured Fathers

This artists book is a collaboration between Benjamin D. Rinehart who lives in Appleton, Wisconsin and Rachel Simmons who lives in Orlando, Florida. The process began with a conversation between close friends about their complex relationships with their fathers, Jim and Terry. In the summer of 2020, during the first pandemic lockdown, they interviewed one another over video conferencing and transcribed the conversations. Their discoveries lead to the creation of two flexangles and a third collaborative book based on the transcripts. For the flexangles, they used photos of their fathers augmented through digital manipulation and pressure printing. Everything was finalized during an in-person studio session in Appleton a year later. Through this



Rachel
I can hear you. I think it's working. Can you say a few things?

Ben
Okay. I can say a few things.

Rachel
Ha ha, okay, that seems to be working. Cool. Okay, so I wanted to ask you, what's your earliest memory of your dad?

Ben
Like from childhood?

Rachel
Yeah, is there a memory that jumps out at you?

Ben
When I was young I remember frequently asking

Ben
I should ask you some questions. I'm sorry, I'm just deep into my head at the moment.

So, did you have a close relationship with your dad when you were young?

Rachel
Absolutely. I mean, he was always a very affectionate person and he loved his kids. I was born in the '70s after my parents already had families through previous marriages. My dad had another daughter before me, and my mom already had three sons. After they married, they settled in Escondido, California where my youngest brother & I were born. My older brothers split their time between our house and their dad's.

When we were little, my dad loved to laugh, cuddle and play with me, but I think as I got older, my relationship with him changed. He started going

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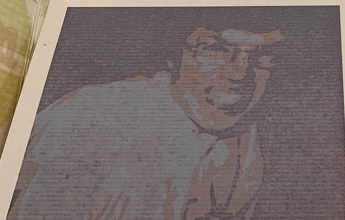
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any way, but I share a lot of his positive qualities, being able to laugh, being creative. I'm good at talking to people, and I think I can be charming get along well with other people, which he does, too.

Rachel
That's interesting. I mean, it's so complicated to how to figure out how your identity intersects with your father's.

Ben
I think that's good that you recognize the positive things that you and your dad had in common.

Rachel
Yeah, for sure. I loved him so much, but I'm still trying to figure out who he was six years after his death. Putting the pieces together one at a time.



I loved my dad. but I'm still trying to figure out who he was.

Transcript (Exerpts)

Ben Interview:

Rachel

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Ben

Okay. I can say a few things.

Rachel

Ha ha, okay, that seems to be working. Cool. Okay, so I wanted to ask you, what's your earliest memory of your dad?

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Like from childhood?

Rachel

Yeah, is there a memory that jumps out at you?

Ben

When I was young I remember frequently asking him to play with me and he never would. It wasn't really a part of his skill set. It was deflating, because he was always "busy" --in his den-- He had to write, read, and contemplate world matters. The kids fell by the wayside.

Rachel

And did you see other dads doing that kind of stuff? Did he seem different to you?

Ben

No, it seemed to be a fairly common experience amongst my peers, but there would be times where he was working in the garage and I could assist. I would sometimes see other families where their dads would play games or work on projects.

As a family we would ride bikes, but he never really encouraged or went out of his way to initiate anything.

Rachel

Just with you, or with everybody?

Ben

I think it was universal, but of the three kids I think he understood me the most. Primarily because we had similar temperaments. I think even at an early age my parents realized that I was gay. In hindsight, my dad seemed to be repulsed and attracted by this. Perhaps because he didn't have the freedom to express himself as freely.

Rachel

Was this similarity because of your sexual orientation? Or was it more than that?

Rachel Interview:

Ben

I should ask you some questions. I'm sorry, I'm just deep into my head at the moment.

So, did you have a close relationship with your dad when you were young?

Rachel

Absolutely. I mean, he was always a very affectionate person and he loved his kids. I was born in the '70's after my parents already had families through previous marriages. My dad had another daughter before me, and my mom already had three sons. After they married, they settled in Escondido, California where my youngest brother & I were born. My older brothers split their time between our house and their dad's.

When we were little, my dad loved to laugh, cuddle and play with me, but I think as I got older, my relationship with him changed. He started going

to grad school at night when I was in elementary school, and he never stopped going to school for the rest of his life. When he died at 67, he had a bachelors degree, two masters degrees and a PhD-- all earned while working full-time as a letter carrier and later a teacher.

So, the way you talked about your dad, always sequestered in his den studying--I can definitely relate to that. If my dad wasn't working, he was reading. I admired the way he pursued his education, trying to better himself and understand the world around him, but I missed playing with him.

We moved to Tampa to be near his parents and he got a job with the USPS. Carrying mail is a really hard job, it's physically exhausting, and he would leave before dawn and return for dinner, often eating with his eyes closed. He was so tired. On the weekends he did his readings and wrote papers

for class. He was enrolled in an evening master's program in international politics, with a focus on Russian studies--this was in the years before the Berlin Wall fell.

He became fully immersed in his thesis on Gorbachev and perestroika, a policy that opened the door to the West and signalled the end of the Cold War. That's all he wanted to