



**YearShaper: Champagne on Ice**

*To see a world in a grain of sand  
And a heaven in a wild flower,  
Hold infinity in the palm of your hand  
And eternity in an hour.*

William Blake  
*Auguries of Innocence* (1803)

*...art is not just a series of pretty objects; it is rather a way we have of articulating our interior life. We have a continuing and complex inner response to the external world, composed of various needs, emotions, thoughts, both fleeting and long-term. This inner life is not transparent to us, not self-interpreting; if we are to understand it we must give it some more perceptible shapes, and then examine the shapes. Art is one way of doing this.*

Michael J. Parsons, Ohio State  
University Art Education Professor,  
Author of *Aesthetics and Education*

## **MY ART:** **An Artist's Statement** *by Doug Titchenal*

### **What My Art Does:**

It Tells a Story

### **How my Art Connects to Other Art**

### **Why My Art Matters**

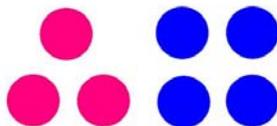
My Art Provides Insight

My Art Offers Inspiration



**YearShaper:  
Take the 'A' Train**

*It is the figurate quality of all positive whole numbers that allows 365 to be shaped as a box. Many other positive whole numbers make this shape, as well. Mathematicians call these numbers "centered squares."*



48



50



## WHAT MY ART DOES: It Tells a Story

The most important feature of my art is that it tells a story about numbers and shapes, patterns and symmetry, clocks and calendars. My dot creations are a form of real-life narrative art.

The piece shown here (*YearShaper: Take the 'A' Train*) tells the story of one year arranged in a square. A simple, true story illustrated graphically in a pleasing array of colors and shapes.

Each of the twelve sections tells the story of a month. Within each section, the dots tell yet more stories. Count the 28 dots in the blue section, and you know that it tells the story of February. Around the outside are four triangular shapes, each of which has thirty dots. Their story is: "Thirty days hath September, April, June and November." All the rest have thirty-one.

The shapes are arranged so that contiguous months touch. For example, of the shapes that touch the blue 28-dot February, three 31-dot sections touch at the top. The purple arrow shape speaks of January and either the yellow or the orange shape is March. Continue around to "read" the story of the rest of the year.

The 'code' is easy to unravel and the viewer can be his or her own narrator.

## The Main Theme

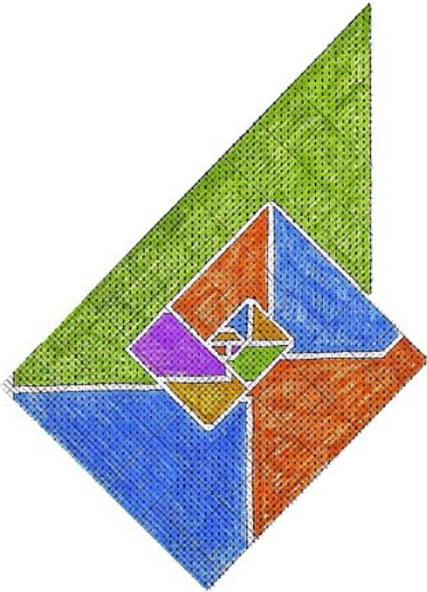
My designs have emerged from the idea that *every* positive whole number has a unique shape that can be drawn, named, and wondered at. This has been done for thousands of years.

Children at play will naturally construct shapes from bottle caps and pebbles, quickly realizing that "three" can be a triangle and "four" can be a square. Many man-made items carry within their shape a nearly instantly recognizable "number."

We associate a round pizza with eight slices. An egg carton with a dozen. A deck of cards with 52. A milk bottle with a quart. Even the pattern of stars in a 48-star U.S. flag is immediately recognized as different from that of the 50-star flag. Counting, or reading a label, is only necessary as a double check.

My creations could be called "time tools," as they involve the numbers associated with the clocks and calendars we use daily:

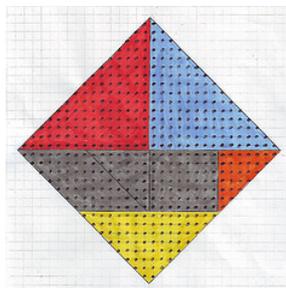
- 60 minutes
- 24 hours
- 7 days
- 52 weeks
- 12 months
- 365 days



*Fibonacci Sequence*



**Traditional  
Tangram Shapes  
Can Show Many  
Periods of Time**



**DayShaper: Tangram**

*A large part of self-understanding is the search for appropriate personal metaphors that make sense of our lives.*

George Lakoff and Mark Johnson,  
*Metaphors We Live By*

They can be seen as “timescapes,” landscapes of time. They are graphic narratives, time’s storytellers. As you use them, *Timescapes* will have the same effect on your inner “GPS system” as a highway’s center line or a parking lot’s stripes have on your driving.

These are not about philosophical or Einsteinian notions of time ...*unless you want them to be.*

### Variations on the Theme

- One of my favorite designs is based on the “golden ratio,” also known as the Fibonacci Sequence. Most people recognize it as it appears in the shape of a ram's horn, a nautilus shell, or a cornucopia. The beauty of my piece lies in the fact that the viewer need not understand nor study the mathematics of the Fibonacci Sequence. All that is required is curiosity.
- Games of chance, such as dice and cards, use artistic shapes to portray numbers. Number puzzles such as the seven piece Tangram, popular in Victorian England, were often ornately decorated with artistic designs. The goal of the game is to rearrange the pieces to make geometric shapes or animal figures. *By adding dots that represent minutes or days, I have adapted the Tangram to show time periods as diverse as 24 hours or 52 weeks.*

## HOW MY ART CONNECTS

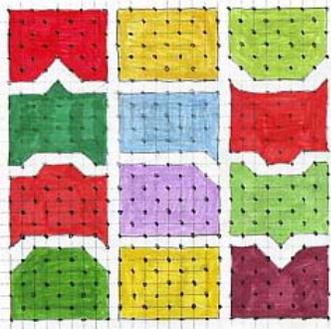
While this idea pattern may seem unique, the truth is my art has many cousins. I will mention an arbitrary few. A quick Google search of images using the requisite keywords will allow you to easily and visually see these genealogical connections.

*A personal note: I started my venture into digital photography in 2002 and my art designs in 2005. I was unaware of many of these connections until 2009.*

Many of my dot patterns are reminiscent of beaded designs, cross stitch, mosaic patterns, digital pixel art, spreadsheet art, and even “Script Ohio.” Christmas lights and Hasbro’s Lite-Brite® toy are other examples. Australian aboriginal art is famous for using dots.



**Franklin Park Conservatory,  
Columbus, Ohio**

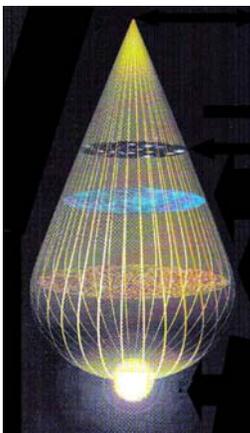


**YearShaper:  
Pointillist Patchwork #1**

This woman experiences  
the twelve months  
as a colored hula hoop.



Photograph by Kay Chernush,  
Smithsonian Magazine,  
February 2001



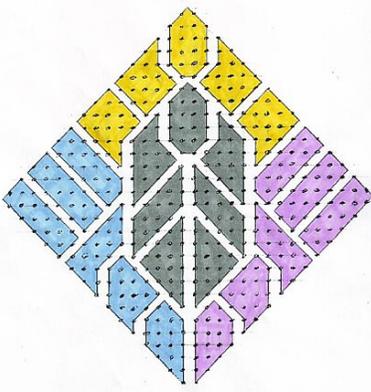
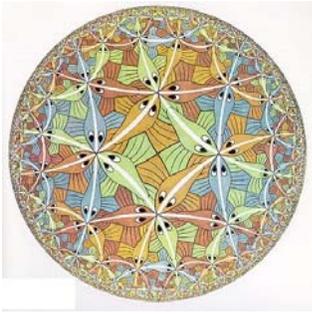
Artists and works that are “cousins” of my creations include:

- Japanese artist Tatsuo Miyama addresses time-based concepts via digital installations using LED lights.
- In 1999, Lori Canary used an electric Lite-Brite toy in an exhibition staged in collaboration with the Denver Art Museum's European Impression show.
- 7,000 slowly changing low-power LED lights are the medium for internationally-renowned/award-winning light design artist James Turrell. One of a rare group of architectural light projects in the U.S is his million dollar installation, *Light Raiment*, a multi-colored show seen nightly at the Franklin Park Conservatory's Palm House in Columbus, Ohio.
- Dots of paint were a staple for impressionist Claude Monet, who used blurring and imprecision to simulate a glance.
- Using futurist and pointillist techniques, and painting contrasting dots very close together, Giacomo Balla used the viewer's peripheral vision to recreate movement in time.
- With abstract shapes and large color blocks, Mark Rothko created some of the best examples of what is now called *Colorfield* painting. His work suggests that art could promote the physical sensation of time and “being there” with his art.
- Perceiving something through more than one sense at the same time is commonplace in art and is called *Synesthesia*. Russian painter Wassily Kandinsky is famous for synesthetic

## AN EXAMPLE OF SYNESTHESIA: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

artwork that combined color, smell, touch, and hearing. I combine counting with shape symmetry, color appreciation, and time perception and have also translated my visual rhythms into poetry, music, and 3-dimensional pyramids. Synesthesia is not limited to colors, however. *For Some, Pain is Orange* in the magazine *Smithsonian* (Feb. 2001) noted that for some synesthetes sounds taste like pickles, while others see the months of the year as colored shapes.

- Theoretical physicist Stephen Hawking sees time as pear shaped, as illustrated by this drawing by MoonRunner Design from Hawking's *The Universe in a Nutshell* (2001).



**DayShaper w/Sleep:  
Asymmetry in 4/4 Time**

*Art makes visible possibilities of order that would otherwise remain invisible. In short, art generates forms that would never exist without it.*

Niklas Luhmann, Eva M. Knodt,  
*Art as a Social System*



**YearShaper:  
Time Went That-a-Way**

- Leading Dutch graphic artist M.C. Escher (1898-1972) attempted to portray his vision of infinity in two dimensional works such as *Circle Limit III* from 1959.
- Piet Mondrian used the *golden ratio* extensively in his work and Salvador Dalí used it in his masterpiece, *The Sacrament of the Last Supper*
- The Rosicrucians, a society similar to the Freemasons, offer charts by H. Spencer Lewis showing a daily cycle with seven periods. I experimented with designs that divide a day into such common parts as halves, thirds, and sixths.

## WHY MY ART MATTERS

The possibility of perceptual change is at the heart of my work. My dot-pattern art has the capacity to elicit new responses by demonstrating that there are many ways to “see” time besides that of a typical clock.

### MY ART PROVIDES INSIGHT

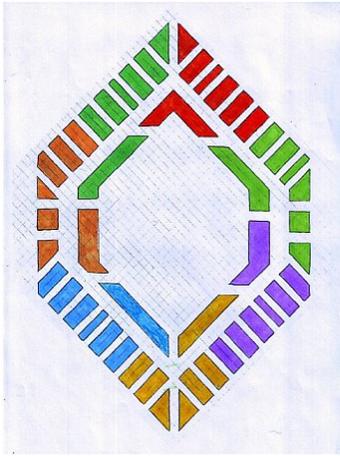
It is not unusual for artists to portray portions of time as separate, discrete elements. A common delineation point for this separation is sleep.

Many Australian aboriginal dot paintings have their roots in *Altjeringa*, or mythological dreaming journeys. *Altjeringa* (also called the Dreamtime) is often translated as the 'timeless time' or 'time out of time.' Australian film director Peter Weir uses his 1977 film *The Last Wave* to explain that, “Aboriginals believe in two forms of time; two parallel streams of activity. One is the daily objective activity; the other is ....called the dreamtime.”

*I have explored numerous examples of dot pattern art that focuses only on awake time. Many interesting patterns emerge when you figuratively separate “dreamtime” from “daily objective activity.”*

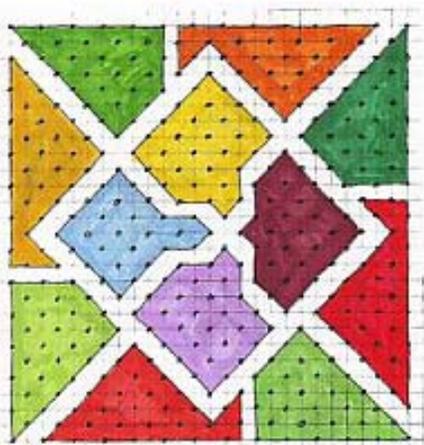
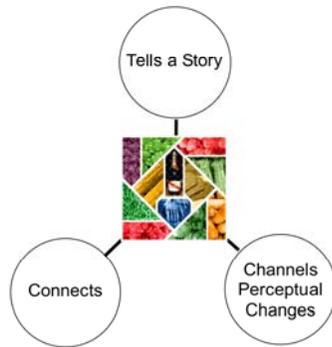
**Did you know that there are as many usable hours in a two-day “weekend” as there are in a 40-hour “work week”?**

This view of sleep time as separate from awake time is not unique to Australia. In 1963, pop artist Andy Warhol made a film called *Sleep*. Film critic Stephen Koch, in Ric Burn’s PBS documentary on Warhol, commented that, “The camera is looking at *the time in the day for all of us when literal clock time disappears* inside the sleeper's mind. We go into another kind of time - sleep time, dream time, in which hours and minutes are mixed up together.”



**WeekShaper w/Sleep:  
Labyrinth Time**

**A Simple Mind Map**



**YearShaper:  
Jazz Motif**

*Several of my mosaics illustrate sleep and awake time separately over periods longer than a day - for example, a week -- as in the WeekShaper here.*

### **MY ART OFFERS INSPIRATION**

Aboriginal art connects with my art in another way, as well. Aboriginal art consultant Adrian Newstead has suggested that some indigenous Australian art works "can be interpreted as sophisticated mind maps." Mind maps and time are often connected. For example, you can download Steven Covey's Time Management Matrix as a mind map.

*If there are advantages to non-linear thinking, why not apply it to something we all use constantly, such as numbers and time? My shapes offer a way to think about numbers and time differently from our internalized mental number "line."*

### **IN CONCLUSION**

In this artist statement, I have explored the what, how, and why of my art.

- **What my art does:** a simple context to interpret what my art can be.
- **How my art connects:** a universal portrait of a recurring link between numbers and art.
- **Why my art matters:** a new visual vocabulary to arrange everyday experiences using imagination as the paper and not the pen.

By focusing on using common shapes to construct ever larger and more complex patterns, I hope to illustrate the interlocking nature of the world I interact with every day. To me my shapes are shortcuts: Mental ways to think faster.

My art will have its deepest meaning when you unleash your mind and view it with your peripheral vision. My images are simple - it is their implications that will extend your reach.

*My appreciation goes to my wife, Aynn, our friend Linda Luzius, and my colleagues at Framemaker's Ltd., Dave and Nancy Wetterstroem.*