make one strive to be a good father and role model to his own children knowing that time and togetherness supersedes material possessions.

Aesthetics

For my Thesis I will complete twenty prints on paper and mixed media pieces on panel, which draw from the effects of having a father in prison. The body of work will measure 22x30 inches and will be completed in three full semesters. The main techniques will be silkscreen and relief, but I will also incorporate some monotype and mixed media elements. The direct reproductive qualities of silkscreen allow me to incorporate personal items such as letters from my father in prison. Though these letters will appear and fade in the background, they are essential to my thesis because they have been the foundation of this father and son relationship and often served as our only way to communicate. Silkscreen is also the preferred technique because of its ability to duplicate, build layers of color and images and capture detail. When a subject calls for less finesse I will turn to relief. The aesthetic qualities of relief are ideal for capturing the rough nature of the subject, especially when expressing "machismo". The focus will be human figures, which will express emotion, ideas and tell stories. They will be executed in a graphic, monochromatic style, with an
emphasis on line. The linear choice is homage to Mexican printmakers before me who often worked in a similar style. Its characteristics are bold, direct, and can be easily read, which makes it perfect for printmaking and social commentary. The monochromatic color scheme represents the lack of color in prison. It is also a metaphor for the "gray area", which we live in as one must balance between what is legal and illegal or ethical and unethical. These figures will be contrasted by color, street and cultural iconography and pattern such as the paisley bandana print, which represents gang affiliation.

The background color will often be red or blue, which represent street or prison gangs. For example, red and the bulldog represent the dominant street/prison gang in my region, "The Fresno Bulldogs". My father is from the south making him a Sureno (Southerner), which is represented by the color blue, and the number 13. This is important because even when he is free, it is still difficult for us to visit one another. The politics of street and gang life are complicated, but to make things simple, it is too dangerous for him to visit me in Fresno. It is easier for me to go south to visit him because I'm not gang affiliated. If someone confronts me there it's easier for me to lie or deny my hometown. Color and iconography are essential to navigating your way around streets and regions throughout California. For most of us it is common knowledge and if not followed correctly it can mean trouble with local gangs and even the law. For this reason color and iconography are an important aspect in my work as it helps tell the story or set the stage.

Portfolio Image #6
"AstrO.G. In Space" 2011, Mixed Media, 22.5"x15"
Activism and Influences

Art and activism go hand and hand. I feel like I’m an extension of the artists and printmakers before me who were socially active. My influences are Jose Guadalupe Posada, Taller de Gráfica Popular (People’s Graphic Workshop), The Mexican Muralists, Enrique Chagoya, Judy Baca, The Royal Chicano Air force, and Rupert Garcia. Through these artists I learned about the history and beauty of my Mexican/Chicano culture, but more importantly, I learned how to use my artistic voice to speak out.

Taller de Gráfica Popular
Iberto Beltrán, “Detengamos la guerra” 1951, 70 x 95.5 cm

Jose Guadalupe Posada, “Gran calavera eléctrica” 1900-1913
Influences

Color lithograph: 24 x 40"

Judy Baca, Guadalupe Mural Project 1990,
8' x 7' Detail, Acrylic on Panel
Rupert Garcia, Frida Kahlo, 2002/1975
Woodcut 35.5 x 24.5 in. (40 x 32 in.)

Royal Chicano Air Force Poster, 1970's
Another artist and activist who has been a great influence to me is Art Hazelwood. Art Hazelwood’s work addresses issues such as the economy, war, and homeless rights. He has also worked in the San Quentin State Prison Arts In Corrections program, assisting the teacher and ten students. Together they created a large relief print dealing with censorship. Like Art Hazelwood, I plan to use my work to be an advocate for poor and marginalized people.

Art Hazelwood, Addiction, linocut print. 9”x 6”. 1997

San Quentin State Prison Arts in Corrections Program Print
Social activism is the central theme in my work because I feel like my life experiences allow me to speak on a range of issues from an insider's perspective. To be silent would mean that I would be dishonest in my art. Honesty can hurt, it can put people off, and it can be painful, but honesty can also inform, it can educate and it can be beautiful. I once felt like I inherited shame, guilt, and burden, but this has transformed into pride and empowerment. My journey isn't over as I plan to visit my father in Soledad State Prison where he is serving a three-year sentence as a non-violent drug offender. This 150 mile pilgrimage to prison will not only reunite me with my father for the first time in years, but it will also serve as research and as emotional inspiration to my thesis.

Portfolio Image #7
"Steven Vargas" 2011
Mixed media on canvas panel 24"x24"
Timeline

Fall 2012
FA 800- Directed Study
FA 800- Directed Study

Spring 2013
FA 800- Directed Study
FA 800- Directed Study

Fall 2013
FA 800- Directed Study
FA 800- Directed Study
GS 674- Professional Practices & Communication for Fine Artists

Portfolio Image #8
"The Hood Alphabet" 2011. Mixed media book 6” x 7” x 2”
Portfolio Image #9
“Ritchie” 2011, Etching on paper 11” x 7.5”
Page Image # 10
"DaEvils", 2012, Handmade paper puppets, fabric and ink. 35" x 12" x 5"
“Sam” Sketch

Silkscreen on paper, 22”x30”