

*The following is a summary of the Sistine Chapel Project, as used in my archive for the **Agency of Unrealized Projects at the Serpentine Gallery, London.***

In addition to its pure genius, Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel is remarkable because it represents, in art history, the rare opportunity for an artist to present to the world a rather complete visual cosmology—something even Michelangelo, due to politics, economics, and ultimately the constraints of time and place found frustratingly difficult to achieve in other areas, such as the Tomb of Julius II.

Standing under Michelangelo's colossal ceiling at the beginning of the 21st century, however, one has to seriously wonder, *given the complex world in which we live, can such a project be realized today?* It is five hundred years later. We live, now, in a highly complex, global network society with its supporting cyber-infrastructure; its swarm of clashing individual and collective identities; its inadequate grand narratives; its numerous global social problems; and its conflicting religions, cultures, myths, artistic traditions, political systems, economies and historical narratives—so much difference. What cosmology could handle all of this complexity? As the last hundred years of history, theory, and art have shown us, the obvious answer is none; it is an unrealizable project.

There is, however, a necessary and important and more modest alternative, held by a growing network of globalization scholars, artists, eco-feminists, cyber-theorists, continental philosophers and complexity scientists—and expressed well by Bruno Latour in his e-flux article (Issue 23), *Some Experiments in Art and Politics* (See also his article *An Attempt at a Compositionist Manifesto*, *New Literary History*, 2010, Issue 41).

For Latour, success in handling globalization comes from replacing cosmologies with *compositions*. Unlike cosmologies, compositions are assemblages of negotiation, difference and heterogeneity; they are compromising, decomposing, compost piles; they are post-human, non-hierarchical, self-organizing, networked, evolving, adaptive complex systems; they are global and yet local, universal and yet relativistic; serious and yet ironically playful. And, given their nature, they are ultimately useful: they can be taken apart, added to, or reassembled to meet different global needs.

Following Latour and others, my goal for the current project—which I have been working on for the past two years—is to take apart, add to, and reassemble the major themes of Michelangelo's visual cosmology to create my own *global composition*. This composition will include a variety of artistic and scientific assemblages—painting, photo, video, sculpture, networks, computational models, etc.

The thematic purpose of my composition is to create an inclusive, secular, scientific and more positive view of the human condition in today's highly complex global network society. My composition draws extensively on the latest advances in globalization studies, complexity science, global mythology, the natural and social sciences and, equally important, my local culture as an Italian-American living in Cleveland Ohio (USA), including in my assemblages family and friends as many of the heroic characters.

As way of an introduction, [The Schematic View](#) presented on my website provides a quick overview of my six themes and the ten images I have so far completed, as overlaid on a schematic of the Sistine Chapel. (My ultimate architectural form, however, would be some type of network structure.) The [Close-up View](#) presented on my website provides a more detailed close-up of four of my completed images. All images start as photo-assemblages created on the computer with Adobe Photoshop and Adobe Illustrator. Some images, as shown in the Close-up, are then painted on canvas. This, then, is a basic introduction.