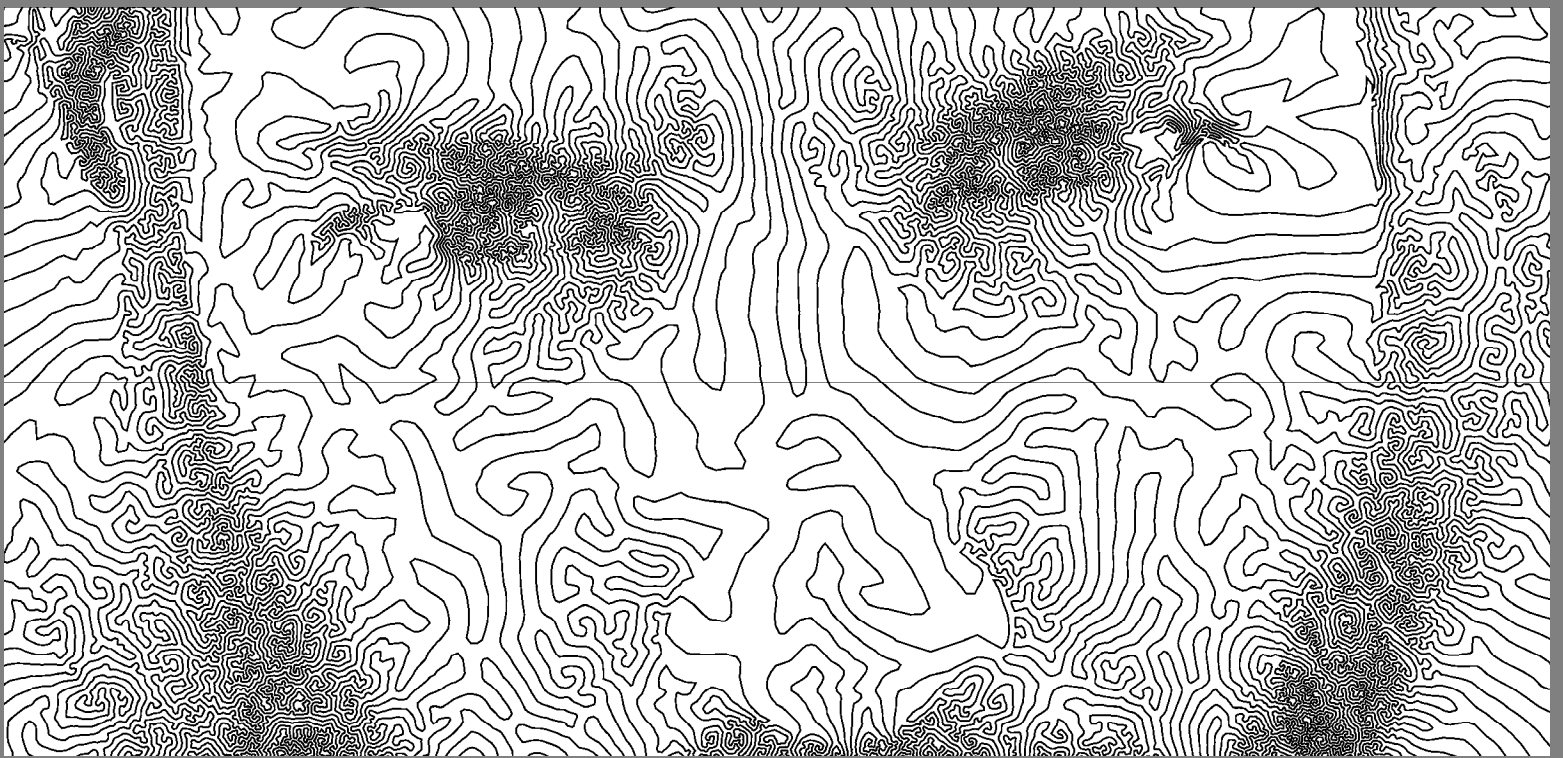


19- 21 november 2010, 11am-8pm
alliance francaise galerie romain rolland, 72 lodhi estate, new delhi

LABYRINTHS

evolving imagery
by karan sher singh



1. me [18"x23" ink on mylar]

We shall not cease from exploring,
and the end of all our exploring,
will be to arrive where we started,
and know the place for the first time.
-T.S.Eliot.

Labyrinths and mazes cradle millennia of legend and lore in their twisted articulations. They are often considered mankind's first creation born purely of human imagination. A nexus of spirituality, culture, art and science, their origins are shrouded in the same mystery they symbolize.



2. interlocking fern tiling [36"x3" ink on mylar]

In 2003 I was entangled by an art-puzzle book *Nouveaux Labyrinthes*, under a dusty pile near the Pompidou Center. A meandering journey followed, across continents, through pre-historic caves, into church crypts, on temple walls, within corn-fields and mostly in my own neural jungle.



i'ioiki, o'odham, arizona



hampton court



atlantic bronze age, galicia



indian manuscript 18th century



brain coral

Surely these glyphs, independently transcribed by so many over so long, are inspired by something physical or even celestial. Indeed many labyrinthine forms resemble erosion patterns, coastlines and even fingerprints. Inspired by these analogies a collaborator Hans Pedersen and I devised an algorithm by which curves representing paths evolve under the physical forces of nature, published as a technical paper *Organic Labyrinths and Mazes* in 2006. The organic labyrinths of this exhibition are created using curves evolving under these equations, guided by a mix of images, music and words. The curves are my brushes, the equations my paint and the imagery my inspiration. I believe that the earliest known labyrinths embodied such a symbiosis of art and science.

The choice of subjects is in many ways an autobiographical journey.

... abstract forms from my subconscious. ... portraits inspired by a life-long obsession with music, the labyrinths winding their way from start to finish like grooves on vinyl. ... themes anchored to my roots, others to nomadic forays around the globe. ... inspirations wandering through the infinite space of algorithmic parameters with some creative vision and mathematical intuition.

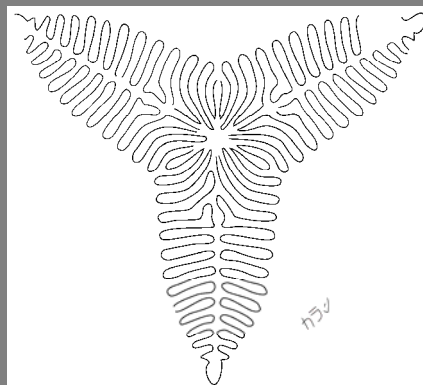
Semantically, a labyrinth is a meandering path that winds its way from start to end. A maze has forks, dead-ends and cycles but is conceptually just the dual, or the space between a labyrinth. Many of these images on exhibit are single closed curves evolved from circles, twisting and turning but never crossing. They are both the paths of labyrinths and walls of mazes depending on your point of view. These labyrinths capture details ranging from microscopic to planetary, engaging a viewer at many distances, each providing a unique perspective. The paths themselves encode a chronology, be it a story, lyric or melodic progression. Experience them!

NATURE

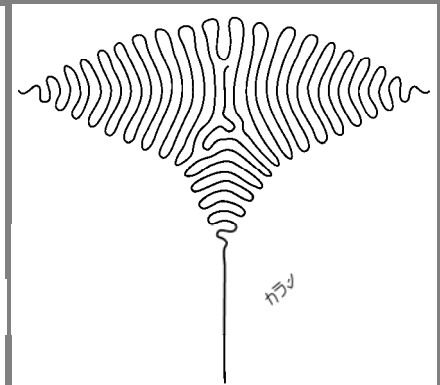
What did one path say to another?
I am drawn to you!



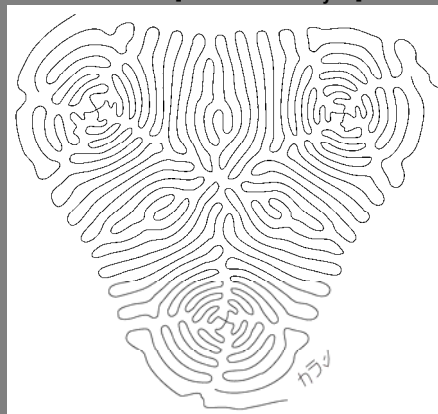
3. bodhi [3"x3" bamboo engraving]



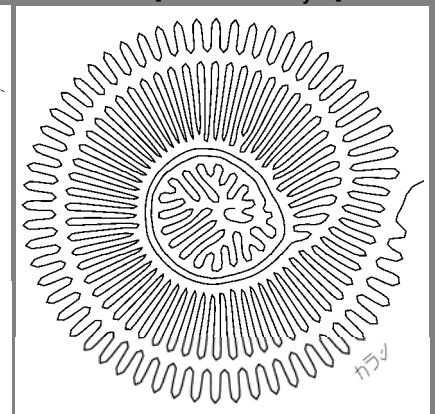
4. leaf [11"x10" ink on mylar]



5. tree [11"x10" ink on mylar]



6. mandala #1 [9"x8" ink on mylar]



7. mandala #2 [8"x8" ink on mylar]



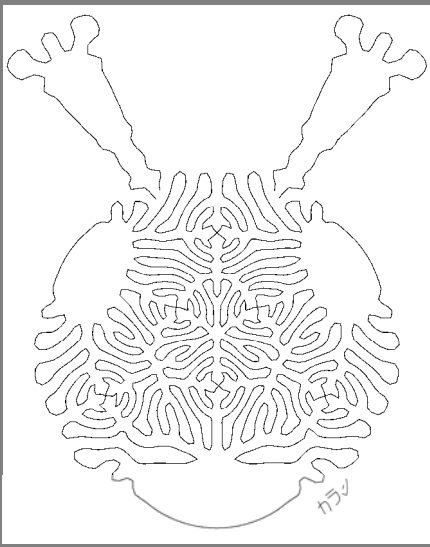
8. tattoo [3"x3" bamboo engraving]



9. brainwash [3"x3" bamboo engraving]



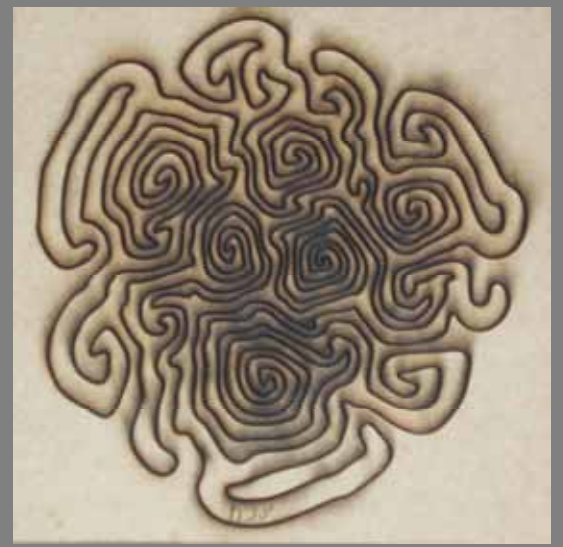
10. shadows [3"x3" bamboo engraving]



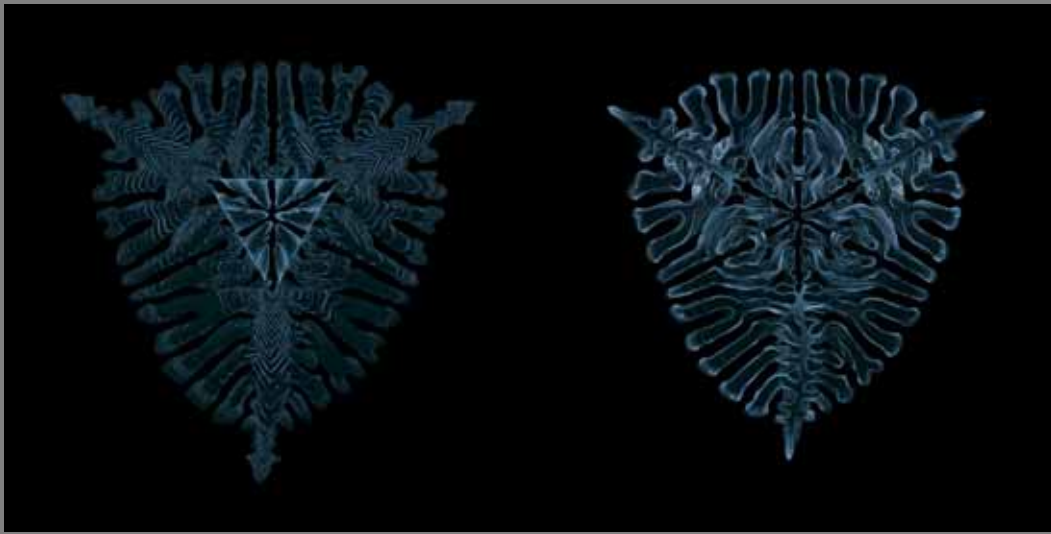
11. mantis [11"x14" ink on mylar]



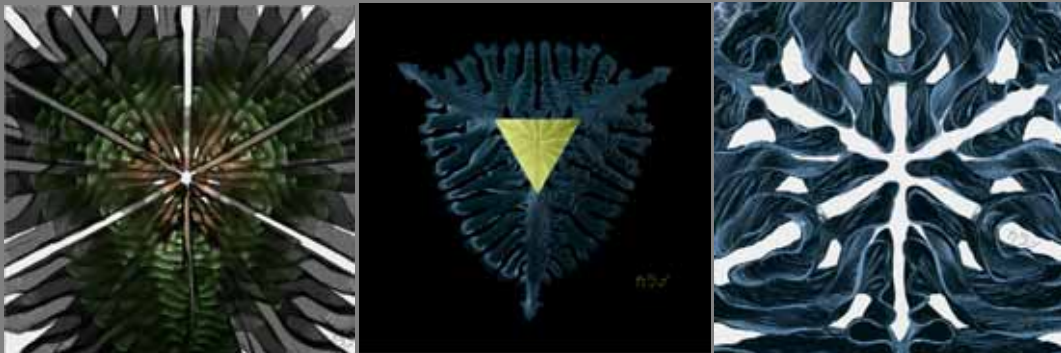
12. octokiss [15"x15" rotating pine engraving]



13. scream [12"x12" burnt hardboard]



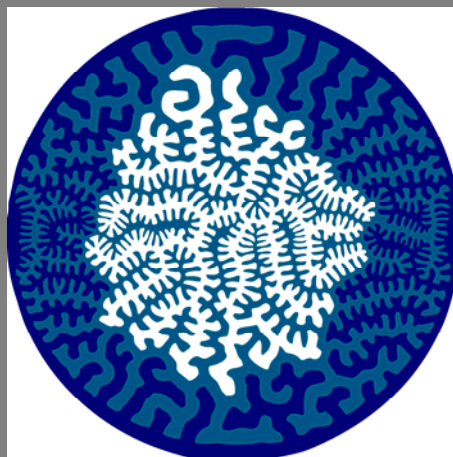
14. black and blue [80"x40" ink on bond]



15. eye of the storm [18"x6" photometallic montage]



16. vortex #1.4 [12"x12" ink on mylar]



17. centipedes [12"x12" hardboard]



18. vortex #2.2 [11"x14" hardboard]

HISTORY & RELIGION

Labyrinths touch all aspects of human life. Symbols of fertility and birth, purgatory and death, they find a ubiquitous meditative importance in religion. The diameter of the 11-circuit Chartres cathedral labyrinth is 42 feet, a millionth the earth's diameter. Within its 112 lunations allegedly lie encoded the secrets of the universe.



21. chartres [9"x12" giclee canvas]



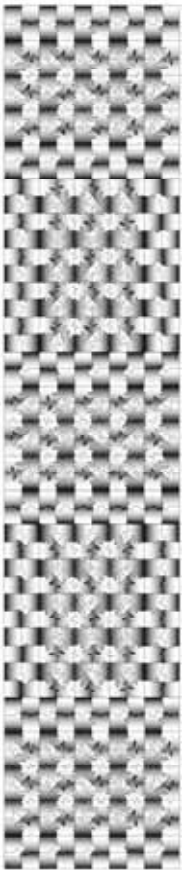
19. 0 [36"x36" ink on mylar, lightbox]



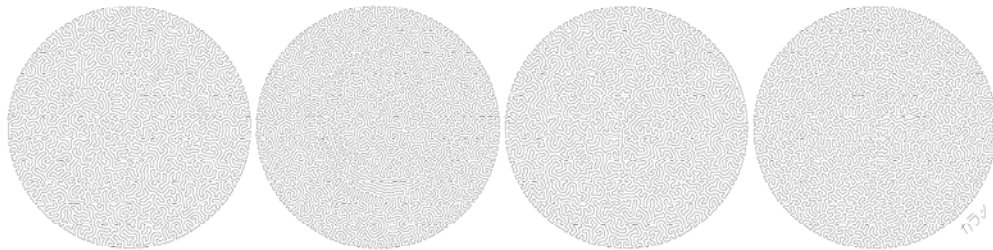
20. amaze in a maze [21"x19" ink on bond]



22. the blade and the chalice [13"x10" giclee canvas]



24. maya [9"x45" ink on mylar]

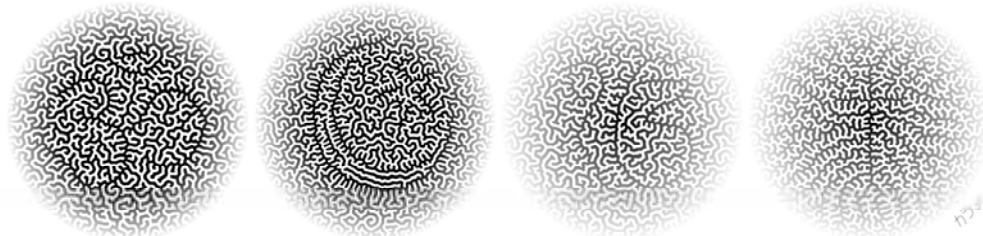


23. ek [47"x13" ink on mylar]

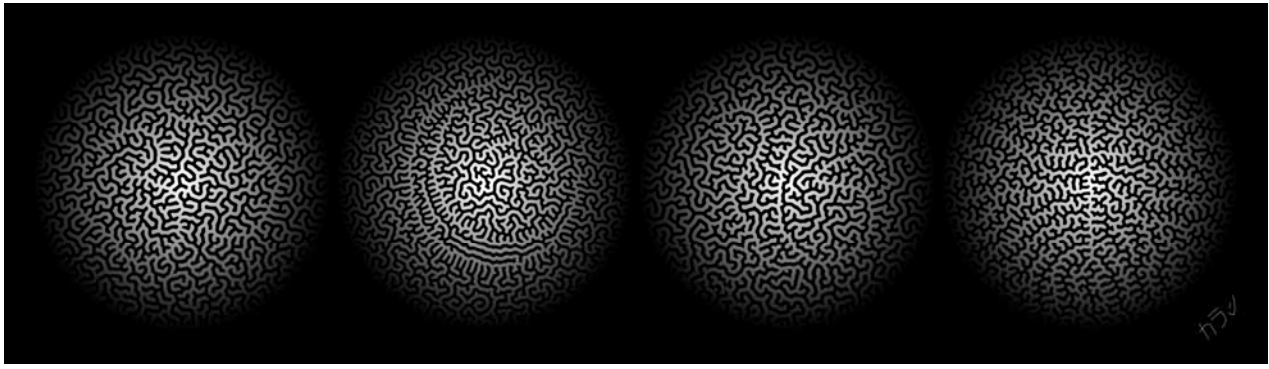
Four seemingly indistinguishable circles have but one thing to say . . .

enlightenment is not an answer,
it is also not the answer.
enlightenment is merely a lack of questions.

Man as a collective cannot do without religion because some men as individuals can. . . they put the fear of God into you. The circles below are the same as those above, save for the temporal deposits of human interpretation that colour the interior with their own indelible impression.



25. anek [47"x13" ink on mylar]



26. anek either way [47"x13" ink on mylar]

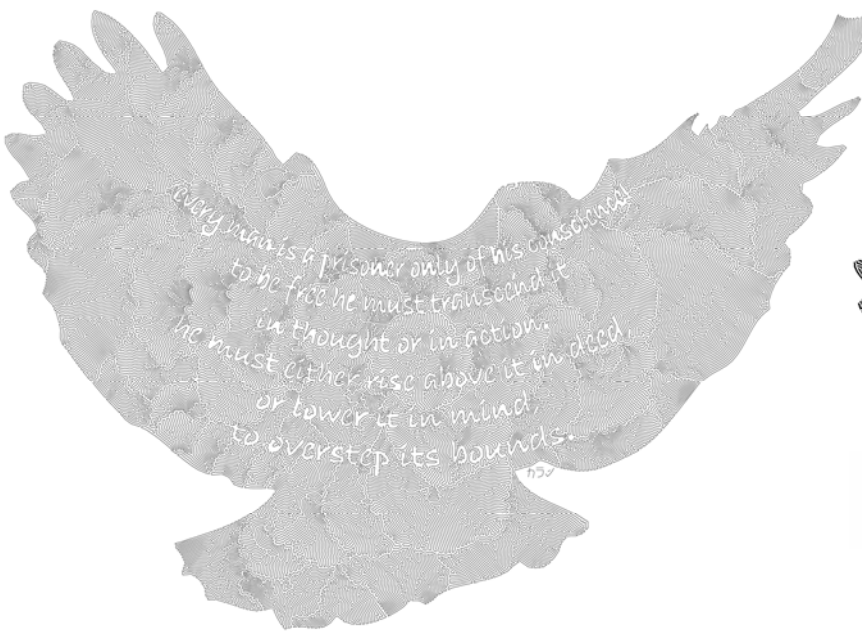
MYTH

How twisted the myth of the grand architect Dadaelus, in solitary flight.

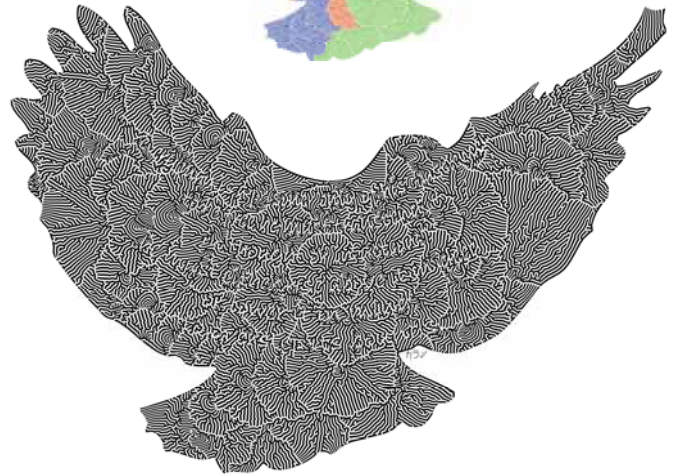
...he who built the great cretan labyrinth only to be incarcerated in it by king minos at the escape of his daughter ariadne and her love, the minotaur slayer theseus. ...he who bequeathed ariadne the clew that lead to the death of her half-brother, the monstrous creation of her mother pasiphae and the white bull gifted to minos by poseidon. he who fashioned a wooden cow, the instrument of pasiphae's lust. ...and he who having flown to freedom from his own creation saw his son icarus fall to the sea. a labyrinth is but a wall. ...and freedom, a point of view.



27. theseus [36"x30" ink on mylar]



every man is a prisoner only of his conscience
to be free he must transcend it
in thought or in action.
he must either rise above it in deed
or lower it in mind
to overstep its bounds.



28, 29, 30. freebirds [36"x24" ink on mylar, 18"x12" photometallic, 36"x24" ink on mylar]

ART

Labyrinths have been a creative inspiration to writers, musicians and artists. ...bach, borges, da vinci, dali, eco, escher, picasso. ...inspired by the inspired.



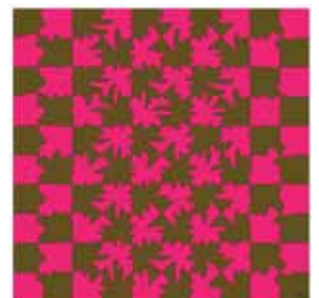
31. trapped [6"x4" photometallic]



32. quixotic [12"x18" ink on bond]



33. lab in a lab? [12"x12" photometallic]



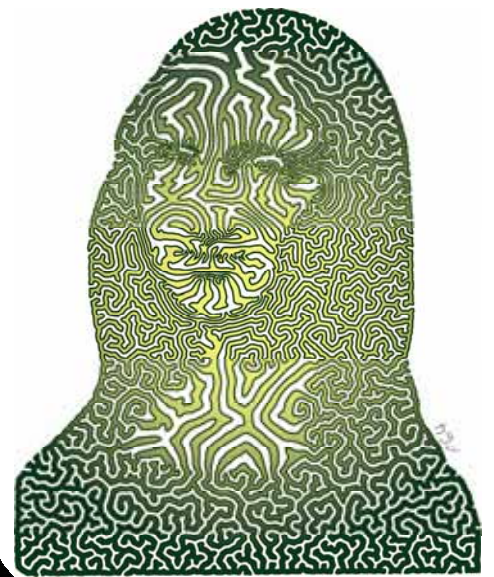
34. escheresque [12"x12" photometallic]



35. dali [20"x24" ink on mylar]



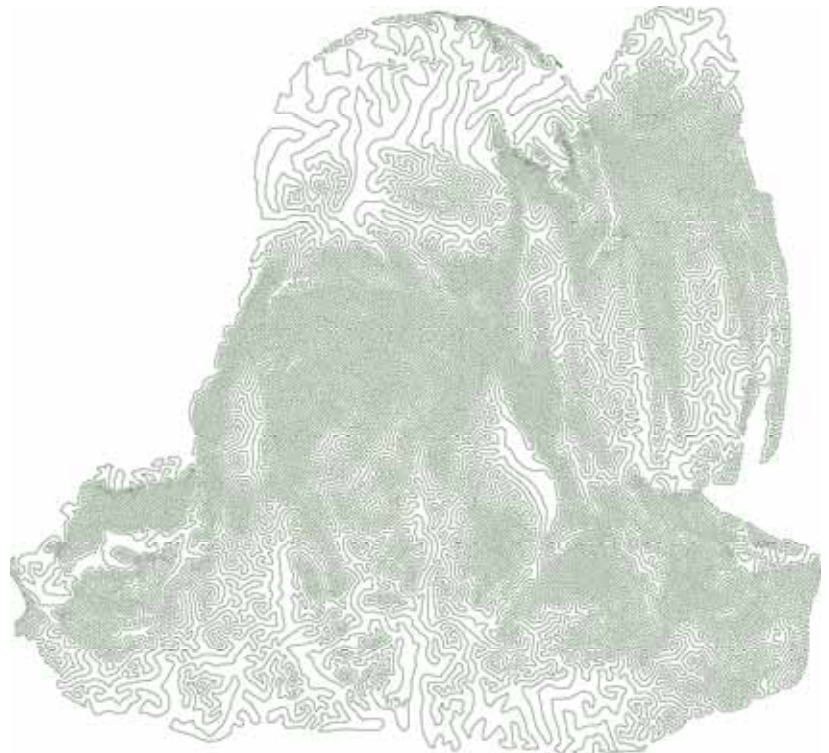
36. ryan [5"x10" giclee canvas]



37. maori mona [11"x14" photometallic]



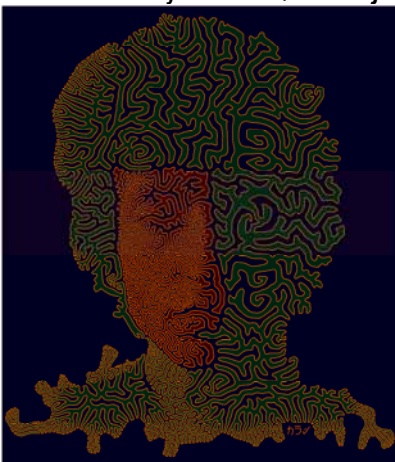
38. bismark [16"x24" ink on mylar]



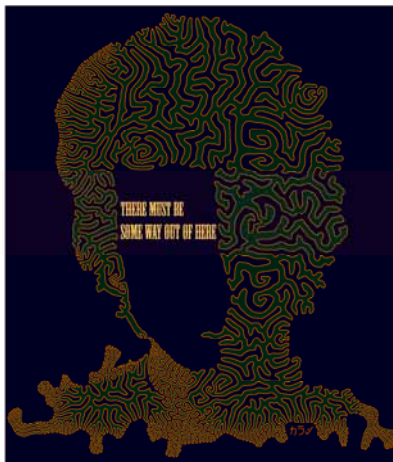
39. ranjit [36"x36" ink on mylar]

MUSIC

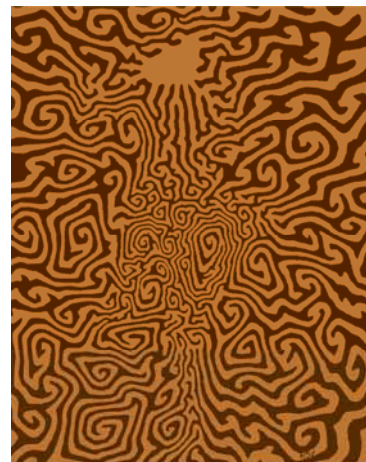
... There must be some way out of here, said the joker to the thief.



40. bob #1 [16"x17" ink on bond]



41. bob #2 [16"x17" ink on bond]



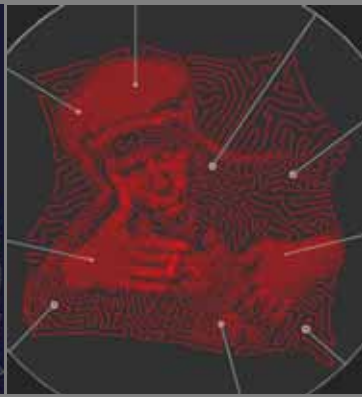
42. baker st. muse [10"x16" ink on bond]



43. jimi [14"x14" vinyl lightbox]



44. jim [60"x60" ink on bond]



45. tom [12"x12" photometallic]



46. muddy [39"x42" ink on bond]



47. feeling groovy [12"x18" photometallic, an interactive labyrinthine soundscape]



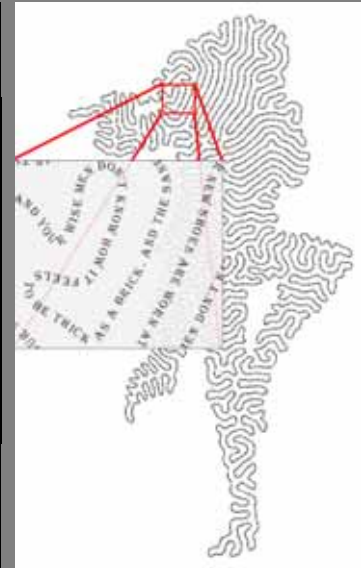
Feeling groovy is an interactive installation mapping four tracks from Pink Floyd's Dark Side of the Moon to the four circular labyrinthine images of the members of the band. The soundscape is explored by clicking and dragging the needle along the cyber-vinyl grooves.



48. koi hai [12"x16" giclee canvas]



49. ian [12"x18" photometallic]



50. thick as a brick [16"x29" ink on mylar]



51. cesaria [12"x12" photometallic]



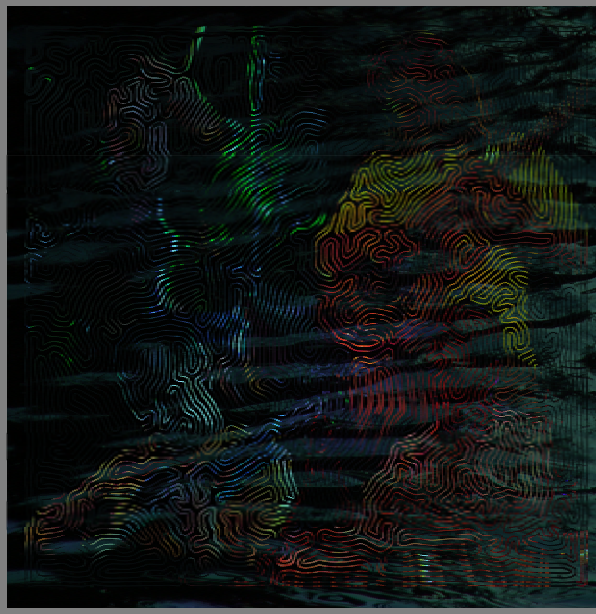
52. joni [12"x12" photometallic]



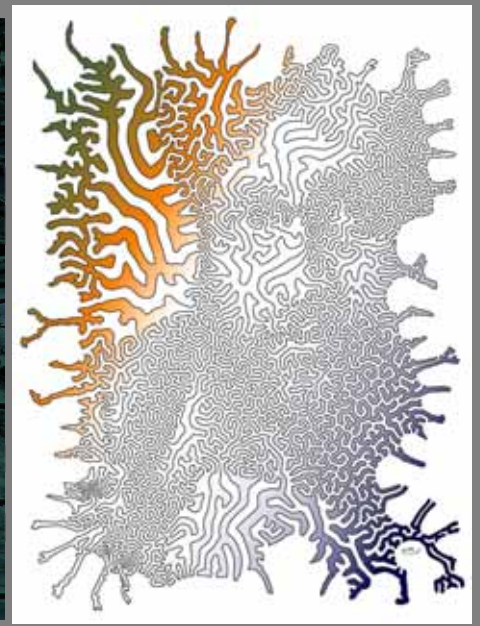
53. dun ringill [10"x13" vinyl and bond]



54. baaba [12"x18" photometallic]



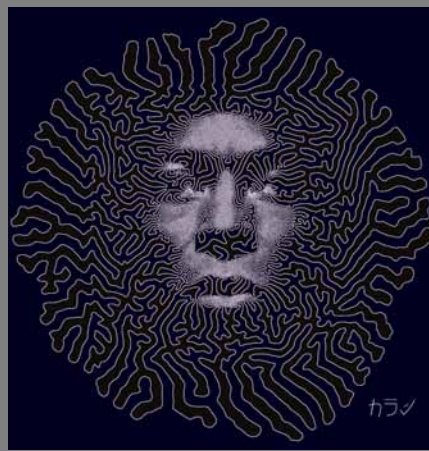
55. indian ocean [12"x12" photometallic]



56. rabbi [10"x13" ink on mylar]



59. the sky is crying [7"x9" maple guitar panel etching]



57, 58. many miles [18"x18" mylar, 6"x6" metal engraving, 18"x18" mylar, 15"x15" metal engraving]



60. srv [20"x22" vinyl etching] 61. stevie [25"x35" mylar] 62. wheels [14"x14" vinyl etching]



63. ustad [13"x12" ink on mylar, 9"x9" maple etching]



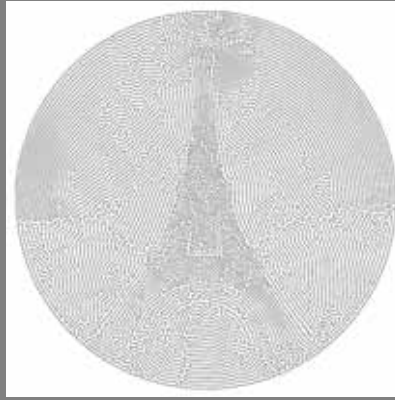
64. imagine [9"x9" maple etching]



65. crossroads, 66. rj [36"x36" mylar, 9"x9" maple etching]

ME

were these miles i have walked, mine to draw,
would you hang them on your wall,
next to the art you know so well,
next to smiling faces in foreign places,
would you hang them up at all.



67. eiffel [18"x18" ink on mylar]



68. nana [18"x18" ink on mylar]



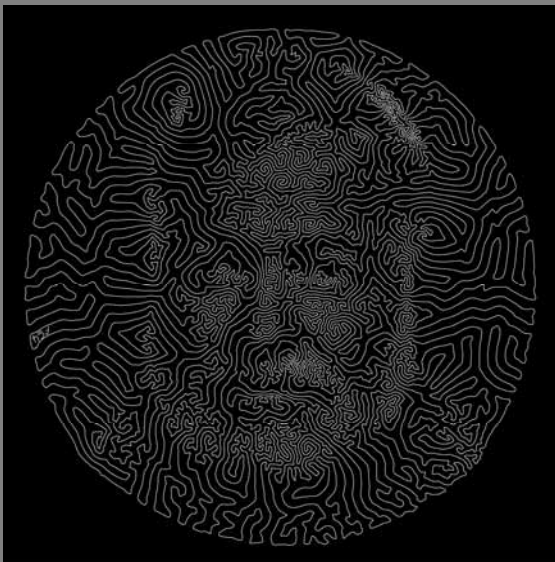
69. khushwant [11"x12" ink on mylar]



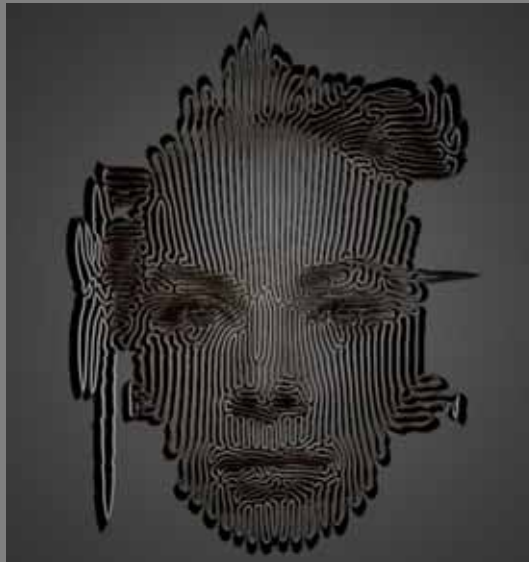
70. hemingway [book cover engraving]



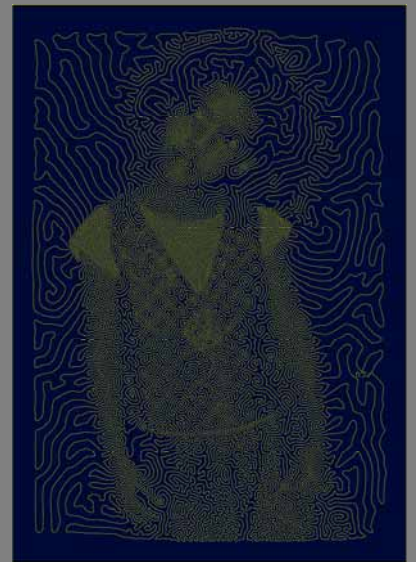
71. jules [36"x36" ink on mylar]



72. ernest [12"x12" photometallic]



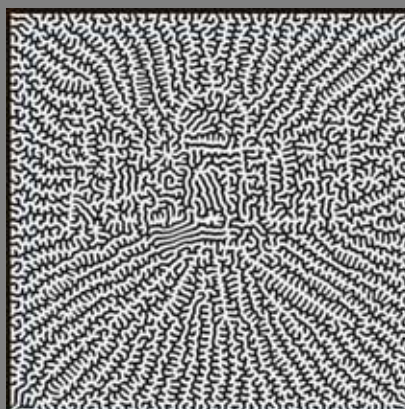
73. amazing grace [8"x10" mylar lightbox]



74. myra [12"x18" photometallic]



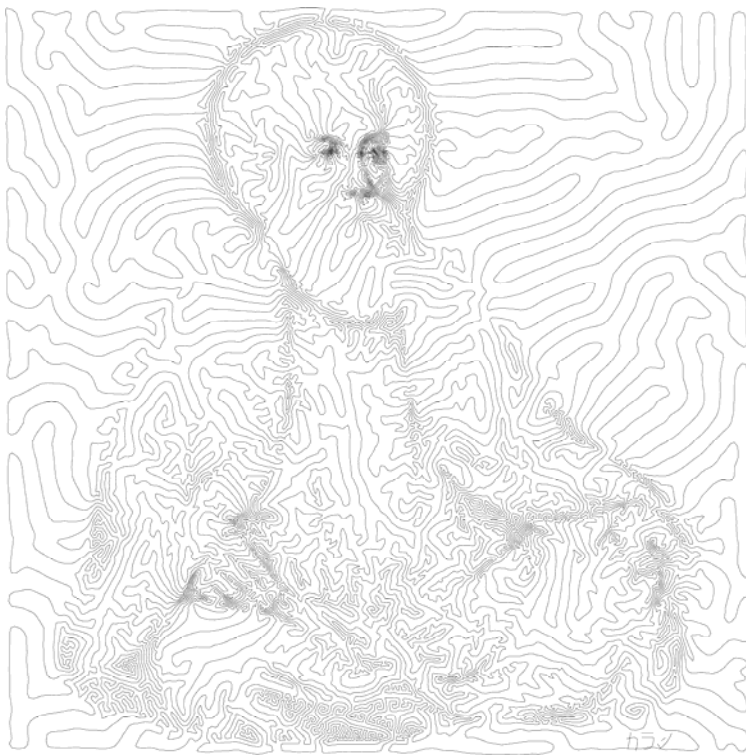
75. tootafay [18"x12" photometallic]



76. black taj white taj [12"x12" ink on mylar]



77. chakravyuha [18"x24" ink on bond]



78. guru [36"x36" ink on mylar]



79. bapu [36"x36" ink on mylar]



80. che [22"x22" ink on bond]



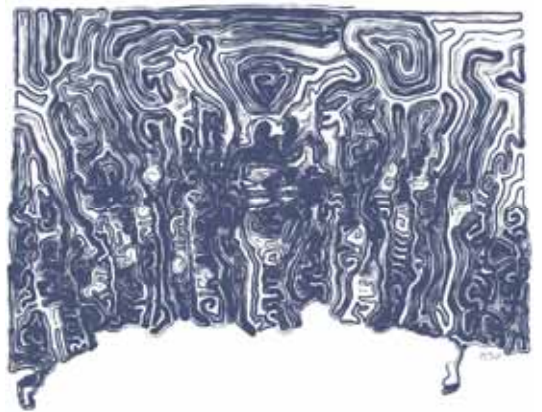
81. bicycle diaries [36"x36" ink on mylar]



82. conspiracy #0.5 [36"x28" ink on mylar]



83. art or frame [10"x10" woodcut]



84. conspiracy #1 [18"x14" giclee on canvas]

... with a little help from my friends: Hans Pedersen, Mo Morales, Pierre Dragicevic, Mira Falkenberg, Polu Singh, Chris Landreth, John Gibson.

i drew myself a labyrinth once,
to capture my imagination.
alas, it was not as twisted as my thoughts,
they got out!



Artist Bio and Statement

Karan Sher Singh was born and raised largely in Delhi. His mother Polu is an accomplished sculptor and his father Rummy tells fantastic stories. Inheriting both passions but the talent for neither he did the next best thing and aspired to be a human cannonball but crash landed into computer science at IIT Madras, where he discovered that mathematical equations could paint a picture as beautiful as any brush. He is currently a professor of Computer Science at the University of Toronto, where he co-directs an internationally reputed graphics and human computer interaction lab, DGP. He works at the intersection of art and science where the paint meets the polynomial. He was a technical lead on the Oscar winning animation software, Maya. His CG tools have been used on a number of films. He was the R + D director on the 2005 Oscar winning animation "Ryan". He lives between Delhi and Toronto with his tweezeles Anouck and Mastani. In less responsible days he tended bar at an izakaya in Nara, bungeed with hobbits in Queenstown and could make it down the ring road from V.V. to G.K. in 20 minutes flat on rollerblades. This exhibition on labyrinths marks a 5 year milestone of an ongoing personal journey through the fascinating world of labyrinths and mazes.



www.karanshersingh.com