



Art & Ancestry: Humans Rendered Apart

David Rygiol

<https://peacefulscience.org/articles/humans-rendered-apart/>

Discussion of ancestry invites a conversation about theology and kinship, but also about race. Some have wrongly thought there were many biologically-distinct groups, each with different intellectual traits and abilities. Do we all have equal worth and dignity? Society was set up by those who thought the answer was “no.”

Let us now remember our true origins. We are all linked together in a web of genealogical ancestry, sharing ancestors as recently as just a few thousand years ago. The human race is a single family, linked in a common story. Whatever our skin color, country of origin, ethnicity, or culture, we are all one family. We are one blood, one race, the human race.¹

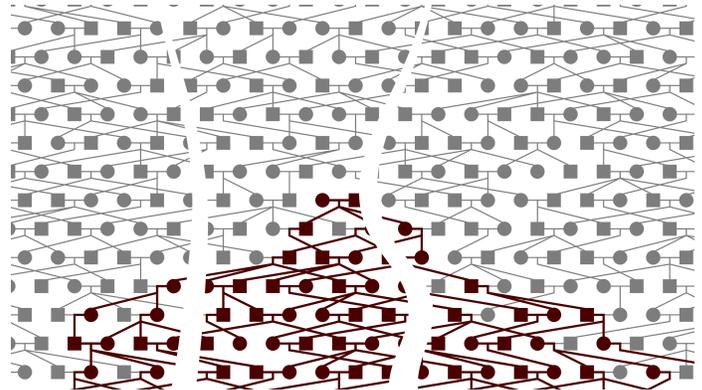
Peaceful Science is inviting artists into dialogue with science. This is the third image of a series by David Rygiol. *The Genealogical Adam and Eve* is written in five movements: Fracture, Ancestor, Human, Mystery, and Crossroads. This image is Rygiol’s response to Human.

For years now, many of us in St. Louis have been contemplating the meaning of race. We are reckoning our history. David Rygiol was working on this image for months, long before Breonna Taylor, Ahmad Abrey, and George Floyd were killed. This Father’s Day, we remember them, their fathers, and their children.



Our ancestors divided us. We forgot our connections to one another. Our one family was rendered apart. Now, we all inherit this shared history of racism. This history is messy. It is complex and potent. It needs to be reckoned with care, courage, and understanding. If racism is sin, it seems that every camp has a history of sin with which to reckon.²

This image shows a web of genealogical ancestry stretching into the past. A line of division appears, and rips through the web, rending arms and legs. The fractures, the dividing lines, they were not bloodless. Grieve what was lost that cannot be returned. Remember.



Rygiol’s image humanizes pedigree diagrams, like this one, that show our connections to one another. Our first understanding of race is enabled by forgetting the connections between us, the sharp tentacles that rip through our shared family. Rygiol’s image details the division in a different way.

1. Swamidass, J. (2019) *The Genealogical Adam and Eve: The surprising science of universal ancestry*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 132

2. *Ibid*, 130

References

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