

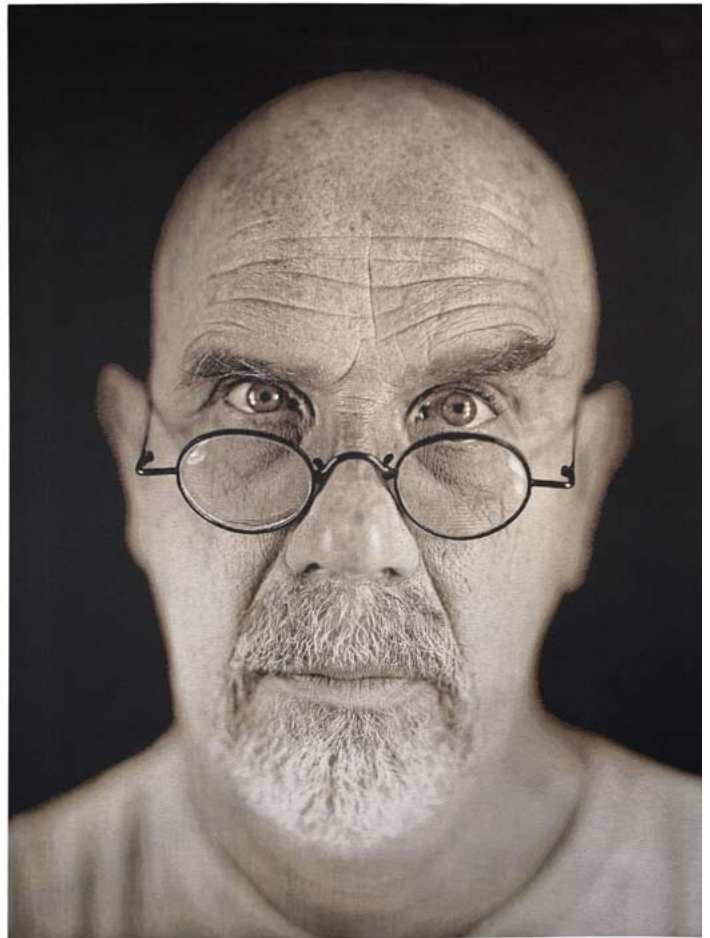
Chuck Close: *Self-Portrait*

For almost four decades, Chuck Close's face has emerged from tonal grids of fingerprints, pointillist dots, brushstrokes, paper pulp and countless other media. Close's countenance continues to serve as a constant throughout his experiments, allowing the artist to foreground his rigorous explorations of the properties and behaviors unique to each medium. A series of daguerrotypes begun in the mid-1990s has yielded a number of self-portraits, one of which became the basis for Close's second collaboration with the Magnolia Tapestry Project: *Self-Portrait*, an editioned Jacquard tapestry.

The formidable impact of *Self-Portrait* draws its strength from two sources, with origins separated by nearly two hundred years of history: on one hand, the lyricism and nearly infinite detail of a 19th-century photographic technique; on the other, the Magnolia Tapestry Project's digitally-driven approach to weaving, a result of experiments conducted only within the last decade. Perhaps more immediate, though, is the unmistakable message of Close's expression, a determined intensity amplified by both the scale and clarity of *Self-Portrait*. If one suspects that Close's resolve to continue refining his craft against all odds is demonstrated by his use of the tapestry medium, the indomitable look in his eye leaves no room for doubt. As the artist's face emerges in crisp, animated detail from the soft focus of its periphery, the viewer participates in a powerful somatic experience: a wordless, intimate confrontation with a dedicated pioneer.

About the Magnolia Tapestry Project

The Magnolia Tapestry Project emerged from artist John Nava's commission to decorate the vast interior walls of the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels in Los Angeles, which required a consideration of the acoustical demands of the space: the decorative element was to function practically by reducing unwanted reverberation, prompting an inquiry into the use of textiles. Nava and Magnolia Editions co-director Donald Farnsworth subsequently collaborated on a series of woven experiments which grew into an unorthodox approach to Jacquard weaving, whereby work by contemporary artists is translated into a digital "weave file" using custom calibrated color palettes developed at Magnolia Editions. The completed weave file is woven in Belgium on a double-headed Jacquard loom using 17,800 available warp threads.



Self-Portrait, 2006 - Jacquard Tapestry, 160 x 118 in. Edition of 10

In the same way that Tamarind and Gemini put the commercial lithographic technology of the 19th century into the hands of fine artists in the fifties and sixties, the Magnolia Tapestry Project is putting the electronic Jacquard loom to work in unexpected ways for contemporary artists. The Project includes tapestries representative of several generations and numerous art movements: the post-Surrealist visions of Bruce Conner; the abstract wizardry of Ed Moses; the Pop princesses of Mel Ramos; the monumental, Expressionistic figures of Leon Golub; the hyper-realism of Alan Magee and Guy Diehl, and the playful poetics of Squeak Carnwath and William Wiley are all re-envisioned in striking new editions. The Magnolia Tapestry Project has also produced tapestries by Doug Hall, Lia Cook, Lewis deSoto, D.J. Hall, Donald and Era Farnsworth, George Miyasaki, Rupert Garcia, Diane Andrews Hall, Gus Heinze, Robert Kushner, John Nava, Nancy Spero, April Gornik, and others. ■