



**Published by**  
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***Building a Just and Sustainable World***

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**EDUCATION CONNECTION | VISUAL LEARNING**

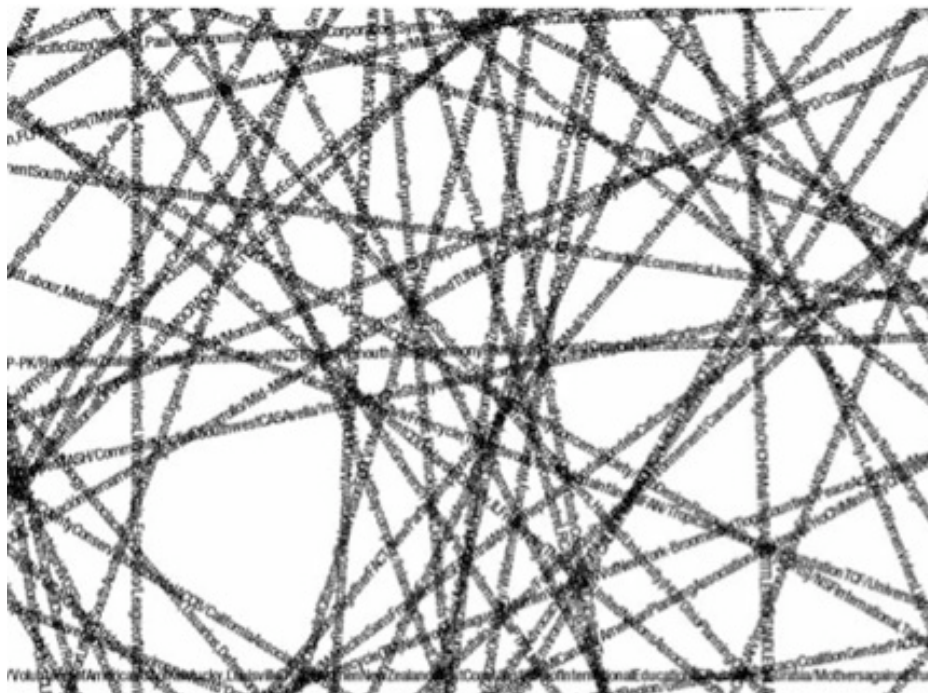
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Images, photos, and pictures stimulate the mind. For the viewer, they offer a chance to connect and question. They also offer potential for play and imagination, and pulling the observer into purposeful messages.

Most often, newspaper and magazine readers quickly glance at photos and their captions. With this YES! lesson plan, you and your students can luxuriate—and pause—to truly understand an image, its message, and why it's interesting (or not).

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**“Out of many, one”**



## EDUCATION CONNECTION | VISUAL LEARNING

### Step One: What do you notice? (before the facts)

Ask your students to make sense of the photograph by trusting their instincts of observation and inference. In doing so, the photograph offers possibilities and interpretations beyond a typical reading where the reader glances at the picture to reinforce their interpretation of the picture's title or caption. Do not introduce any facts, captions, or other written words outside of the image. You may hear: *fuzzy black lines, intersecting lines, white space, assorted angular shapes, tiny words, capital letters.*

### Step Two: What are you wondering? (thinking about the facts)

After you've heard what your students are noticing, you'll probably hear the peppering of questions: *Are those pipe cleaners? Is this from an Etch-A-Sketch? Is this something under a microscope? Is this a web of yarn? I see the word "DEMOCRACY." What does this have to do with the picture?* This is a good time to reveal the photo's caption, accompanying quote, and facts about the actual situation. Watch how the conversation shifts from what they believe to be true to discerning the facts about the photo.

#### Photo caption:

*E Pluribus Unum*, 2010

24 X 24 feet laser etched onto aluminum panels

"Depicts the names of one million organizations around the world that are devoted to peace, environmental stewardship, social justice, and the preservation of diverse and indigenous culture. The actual number of such organizations is unknown, but estimates range between one and two million, and growing." Photo by Chris Jordan

#### Photo facts:

Photographer Chris Jordan is famous for his giant works of art, making bold statements with maximum impact about mass consumption and waste.

Jordan's *E Pluribus Unum* is based on the work of Paul Hawken, author of *Blessed Unrest: How the Largest Movement in the World Came into Being and Why No One Saw It Coming*, and creator of a database of 130,000 organizations around the world. In Hawken's book, he talks of a new massive movement that brings together social justice and ecological restoration.

*E Pluribus Unum* is Latin for "Out of many, one." In other words, we may be individually different, but we are united. It is pronounced: ee ploor'ibus yOOnum. This phrase is also on the Seal of the United States, as well as on U.S. coins, even though it is no longer the official motto.

### More resources around the image

EXPLORE :: Paul Hawken

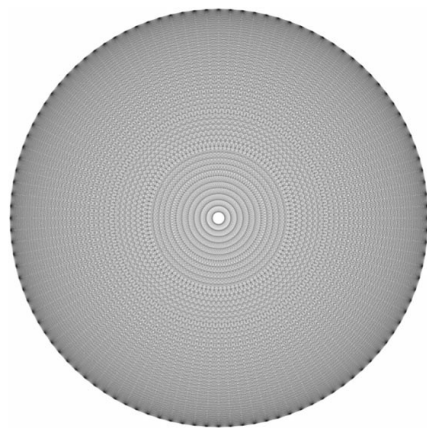
VISIT :: Chris Jordan

WATCH :: Midway Film

### Step Three: What next? (jumping off the facts)

Learning more about a photo leads to bigger questions and an opportunity to discuss broader issues and perspectives.

1. *E Pluribus Unum* is the motto printed on most U.S. currency. If you were in charge, what motto would you print on U.S. coins and bills?
2. It used to be that environmental and social justice issues were viewed separately. Now there is an environmental justice approach. Why do you think these two issues are seen as one? What are some environmental injustices you've heard of globally? In your community?
3. What issue or cause do you care about most—peace, environment, or social justice? Are you involved in any organizations devoted to these causes? Why or why not?
4. Chris Jordan states, "I think of this piece (*E Pluribus Unum*) as being like a compass, pointing toward a true source of hope and inspiration for our times." How would you describe or depict "our times"? What do you feel is a true source of hope and inspiration these days?



*Full view of E Pluribus Unum. Notice the black lines, just like main photo above.*