

The Hypostatic Union



72"x 30" wood, mirrors, driftwood

The Hypostatic Union is a vertical assemblage of mirrors and driftwood mounted on a varnished plywood base. The title of this piece is derived from Catholic theology. The term Hypostatic is used to refer to the union of divine and human natures in the one person, or hypostasis, of Jesus Christ—represented by the twisted piece of driftwood. It is classically expressed in the dogmatic definition of the Council of Chalcedon (451 C. E.) which taught that Christ exists in two “natures,” each of which retains its own characteristics. The council also asserted that each nature comes together in one “person” (or hypostasis in Greek). Literally, this piece has three mirrors of 12” diameter circles, representing the Holy Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in Christian theology. The driftwood is an abstraction of the crucified and resurrected Jesus Christ. Together these abstracted symbols recall the Trinity, Crucifixion, and Resurrection which are represented on all Catholic altars. However, the three circular mirrors in this abstract representation also allow viewers to interrupt and problematize the traditional notions of the Christian Trinity and the Hypostatic Union. Where does the union of the human and divine occur: above, beyond, within, between, among? The viewer now becomes a part of the Hypostatic Union, uniting the human and divine in multiple combinations. From various angles the viewer can see herself or himself—as well as other gallery visitors and artwork—reflected in the mirrors of the abstracted religious symbols. The Hypostatic Union then becomes open to fresh interpretations as the space between divine nature and human nature is reconceptualized. The imagined viewer can now see herself or himself as a Hypostatic Union reflected in the mirrors—although fragmented into multiple postmodern selves by the six vertical panels of mirrors. This insight gives agency to those who have been indoctrinated in the old catechism of a single Christian interpretation of Hypostatic Union – a theology which often repressed and sometimes deformed their human passions and divine natures.