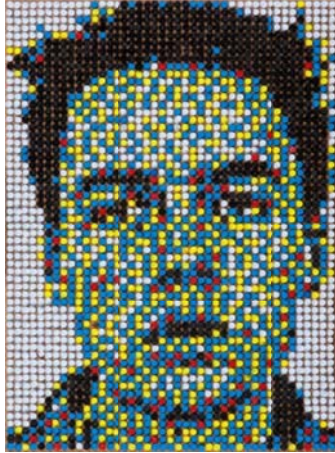




## Educator Introduction: *Eric Daigh: Happiness is a Target*

December 4, 2011 – April 1, 2012



Eric Daigh is a portrait artist living in Traverse City. His career as an artist changed significantly when he won acclaim in 2009 by taking 3rd place in the inaugural ArtPrize competition, held in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Since then, Daigh has gone on to group and solo exhibitions nationwide, including commissioned works and collections acquisition.

Daigh went to Central High School. He studied English at the University of Montana in Missoula.

Claiming to be a photographer sometimes and a painter at others, Daigh is probably best placed in the category of mosaic. His works often include an arrangement of small pixels, most notably pushpins, which form a larger picture.

### Online Resources

- Eric Daigh's website: <http://daigh.com/>
- Happiness is a Target installation in process at the Dennyos, video by the Record-Eagle: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hMmwDvm1LGQ>
- Eric Daigh featured on CBS Sunday Morning: <http://youtu.be/f4QjNHZQiKQ>
- Eric Daigh featured on mynorth.com: <http://www.mynorth.com/My-North/December-2011/Video-Interview-with-Northern-Michigan-Artist-Eric-Daigh/>

### THE HAPPINESS IS A TARGET EXHIBITION

*Happiness is a Target* features work from the very beginning of Daigh's career in pushpins, as well as recent work involving sculptural installations and street art.

Daigh writes of his work and this exhibition:

*In my work I aim to explore themes of individuality and representation. My subjects are imprisoned, diluted, marginalized. Their escape, however, is imminent.*



*Whether a symptom of corporate and social homogenization, or the four base pairs of DNA, we are products of just a small handful of variables. In five colors of plastic, you can be reproduced.*

*I enjoy very much making something digital with my hands. I enjoy making work that requires a physical proximity. I enjoy the fact that this work travels from the intangible, the binary, to the tactile, the singular.*

*By invoking these mediums, I hope to generate a dialogue and sentiment that has something to do with the effort, repetition, focus, discipline, absurdity, and love that went into its making.*



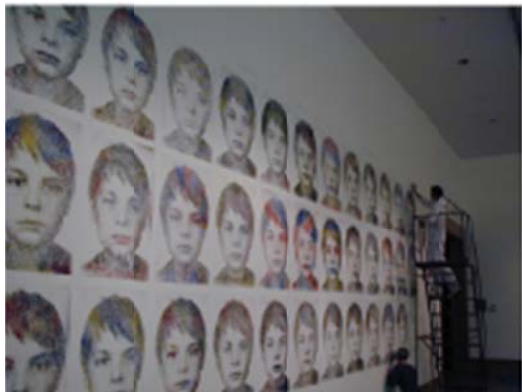
*Ultimately, then, I hope those themes come crashing through the human in front of you, and spill over onto those you're standing next to, those you know and those you have yet to know. I hope you spend more time staring at people's faces and that you feel something in the process.*

## **Process and Materials**

When creating a pushpin portrait, Daigh begins by photographing his subject. He then utilizes digital imaging software to break the image down to as few elements as possible, while maintaining some amount of detail when viewed from a distance. He then uses the software to create a grid that maps out, line by line, the sequence of pins in each color. Then pins are applied to a board by hand. A single portrait can consist of 25 – 100,000 pins, varying widely due to the size of the work.



Daigh uses only five colors of pins to create his portraits: white, black, red, yellow, and blue. Daigh started with pushpins purchased from Staples, which he would sort by color and then use, but now works directly with pin manufacturers to order pre-sorted yellow, red, blue, white, and black pins. This allows him to control the exact hue of the pins and to maintain consistency in size and color. He orders the pins from manufacturers in China, in large quantities (several thousand at once).



## ***Beanball***

For the exhibitions at the Denos, Daigh did a site-specific installation in the sculpture court entitled, *Beanball*. For this work, he used spray paint and stenciled directly on the gallery wall. He was influenced by street artists such as Banksy. The boy featured is Eric Daigh's son. The first step was to tape off the rectangles on the wall. Then he applied the stencil to each rectangle, using newsprint to cover blank or already painted

spaces and protect them from spray paint.