



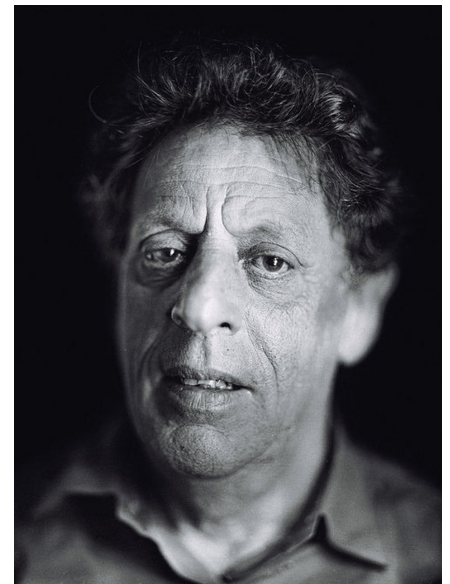
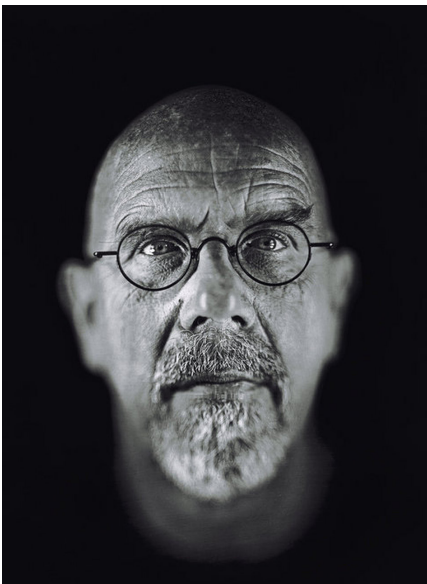
the picture show

PHOTO STORIES FROM NPR

Close-Up On Chuck Close

by CLAIRE O'NEILL
April 14, 2010 11:26 AM

If you ever have the pleasure of standing in front of a Chuck Close portrait, you will never forget it. First of all, the portraits are huge. Faces the size of your whole body — even bigger. And the detail is unbelievable. For the past few decades, Close has been one of the most preeminent pioneers in portraiture — experimenting in various media from photography to painting to block printing to weaving. Some call him a photorealist, but his style defies classification.



Self Portrait, 2006, made in collaboration with David Adamson Editions; Lorna Simpson, 2006, made in collaboration with David Adamson Editions; Philip Glass, 2006, made in collaboration with David Adamson Editions; Courtesy Pace/MacGill, New York/Images courtesy of Chuck Close and the Aperture Foundation

One of his methods is like pointillism reinvented — and even more painstaking, if you can imagine. He'll grid off a photograph, then translate each little square of information on a much larger canvas. And he does it all from a wheelchair; the artist was left severely paralyzed after spinal artery collapse in the late '80s.

He's been widely exhibited around the world, and his latest exhibition, organized by Aperture Foundation, opens today at the University of Hartford's Joseloff Gallery. This show, however, focuses on Close's experimentation in photography: luminous daguerreotypes and photogravures — and even photorealistic tapestries.

He is quoted in the news release:

"The thing I love about daguerreotypes is that everything I love in photography was already there in the beginning—1840. The incredible detail. The incredible range, from the brightest highlight of white, sometimes solarized, almost bluish in color, to the deepest, deepest darkest, most velvety blacks. I love the fact that, as opposed to so many photographs that are painting-sized, which 30 people can stand in front of, each daguerreotype requires the active participation of one viewer. It's intimate, one-on-one personal."

There's not enough room here to get into Close's rich biography. (A few key words: Fulbright, MOMA, Philip Glass, etc.) Learn more in this Charlie Rose interview — and explore his Web site.