

Inside Out: The Self Portrait Show

25 artists make themselves the object of their expression

It is often said that every work of art is a self-portrait, and to some degree this is certainly true. However, most art --in content, theme or intention is not about the self. Artists explore myriad facets of the universe, the natural, the social, and the abstract. What is special about this show is that each of the artists is intentionally producing a self-portrait --in most cases a new piece for the show. The work is new because self-portrait is not the artist's primary genre. And yet, there is great excitement on the part of the artists. Why is this? We must wonder. What is the place of self-portrait in culture? What does creative self-reflection have to say? If we look for a self, how does that change what we find in ourselves?

The Self-portrait is the most personal form of artistic expression. Making the self more public is a tingly experience. There is thrill and trepidation. It is an acutely focused, conscious choice about revealing and concealing elements of the self. What we choose to share about ourselves is a serious issue for everyone. The relationships we develop in our lives are critically affected by our decisions of what we choose to share, when, and with whom. We can disclose truth or fabrication --and art mirrors life. The artist may explore their own vulnerability, or just as likely present an idealized self. The artwork may be literal or vague, recognizable or abstracted --but whatever the form and degree of disclosure, we know it is a genuine glimpse. Truth or lie, realistic or abstract, it says something about the artist as a person.

I hope that this artistic presentation of selves will make people think about their own approaches to sharing who they are.

Great works of art evoke feelings, ideas, memories, and the human sense of wonder. I expect this show will do just that around a very meaningful topic --the self. And, perhaps the exhibition will in some small way, give insight into the commons --as the consciousness of 25 individual artists come together in community in one gallery.