IN HER OWN IMAGE

Self-Portraits by Women 1900-2018

October 18 - November 25, 2018

Amy Sudarsky, Curator
When my friend and former colleague, Hal Reddicliffe, asked me to curate this show, I did not anticipate the richness and range of painterly language that these self-portraits would represent. Through facial expression, engagement with the viewer, and emotional honesty, these paintings expand our understanding of what self-portraits can be. More than likeness, cultural nuance, and mastery of technique, this work asserts a psychological depth and wit that transcends concerns about beauty, class, or age. Showcasing paintings produced since the turn of the 20th century, this exhibition pays homage to women artists whose work has essentially re-defined self-portraiture as an important genre unto itself.

Thank you to all the artists who, through their extraordinary talents and sensibilities, participated in this show. Thanks also to Kate James, Executive Director and Sue Howland, Art Committee Chair for their support and enthusiasm.

Amy Sudarsky, Curator
Adjunct Professor, College of Art and Design at Lesley University

Front cover, clockwise from upper left, details from: Joan Brown, *Untitled (Self-Portrait in Turban with Eskimo Dog Pin)*, 1972 (also in initial cap above; see p.20 for full image credits); Catherine Kehoe, *SP in Red*, 2018 (see p.13 for full image credits); Renee Foulks, *Manifesto*, 2010 (see p.8 for full image credits); Diane Edison, *Self-Portrait*, 1996 (see p.23 for full image credits).
In Her Own Image: Self-Portraits by Women, 1900-2018, although not a chronological survey, canvasses over a century of American realist painting by and of women: from Violet Oakley's *Mourning Father* (1900) to Clarity Haynes’ *Self-Portrait with Tattoo* (2018) and much in between.

It’s interesting to look at people looking at themselves. What do they notice that we don’t? What do we notice that they don’t? After all, it’s difficult, if not impossible, to observe one’s own face from life, “in the flesh” as it were, to see one’s own eyes with one’s own eyes. This is the riddle of the genre. Without a mirror, photograph or painting, how do we begin to understand what we look like?

The expression “to look like” implies one’s appearance is different from one’s true self. In self-portraiture, particularly through the medium of paint, the act of looking and the resulting image are fused together, closing the gap between interior and exterior identities. When perceiving and describing oneself through the formal tools of color, shape and line, the body becomes other: a version, a specter, a clone. This often creates an uncanny sensation, such as in Diane Edison’s *Midlife* or Catherine Kehoe’s *Dark Days*, where the represented figures seem oddly familiar and alive, yet composed of areas of color on a surface.

There’s something awkward about looking at people looking at themselves, something vaguely voyeuristic and intensely intimate. A self-portrait gives a viewer permission to scrutinize the represented body to the same degree the artist has. One finds oneself studying a thinning hairline, a thigh gap, stretch marks—all areas of the body that the eye is trained to avert in person. Jenny Dubnau’s practice of honest self-description evidences the effects of time on the body, where skin pigmentation and wrinkles are chronicled over the long-term and flattery is beside the point.

It’s impossible to consider an exhibition of self-portraits by women without acknowledging the cultural conditioning of the gaze on them. Women’s bodies, particularly in the context of American commercial culture during the
historical period covered by this exhibition, have been the subjects of the constant scrutiny: of desire, judgment, and promotion. We see plenty of self-portraits today in the form of camera phone photos that saturate social media. Yet when considering the paintings in this exhibition I wondered why so few meet the criteria of a selfie. Darien Bird’s paintings are notable exceptions. They return a knowing glance to the viewer, as if they are intended for someone other than the artist herself.

How one is perceived by others is an important part of identity formation. This exhibition takes place at a moment when gender is increasingly claimed and defined by the individual, and passing as female can be vital to one’s own expression of identity. At the same time, last year’s women’s marches took place across the country where protestors wore “pussy” hats and held signs showing female anatomy as symbols of the fight for reproductive rights. In a broad cultural sense, we are taking a closer look at gender. So, what does it mean to have an all-female exhibition of self-portraits today?

The forty-nine works on view in In Her Own Image provide models for looking at oneself deeply, at one’s features, skin and what lies beneath. Two of my former teachers, Susanna Coffey and Anne Harris, are represented in this exhibition, as is a former student, Brandi Twilley. I look to these different generations of women artists for the ways that they expand the tradition of self-portraiture, painting what they feel as much as what they observe. Like others in the exhibition, they carve out time to look at and describe themselves in all of their complexity, as a way to process the changing world and how they envision themselves within it.

Josephine Halvorson
Professor of Art and Chair of Graduate Studies in Painting, Boston University School of Visual Arts
Rachel Christofi

#4, 2012, oil on canvas, 5 x 3 inches

Courtesy of the Artist
Pamela Hoss

Midlife, 2004, acrylic on paper, 72 x 28 inches

Courtesy of the Artist
Louisa Matthiasdottir
Self-Portrait with Orange Shirt, 1991, oil on canvas, 68 x 36 inches
Courtesy of Steven Harvey Fine Art Projects
Dana Clancy
Flock, 2004, oil on canvas, 20 x 22 inches
Courtesy of Adriana Zavala
Susanna Coffey
*Ringers*, 2016, oil on panel, 15 x 12 inches
Courtesy of Steven Harvey Fine Art Projects
Renee Foulks

*Manifesto*, 2010, graphite on paper, 24 x 24 inches

Acc. No.: 2013.21, Courtesy of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia
Museum Purchase
Ellen Lanyon

Hat, Pin & Scarf, 1999, acrylic on canvas, 22 x 22 inches
Acc. No.: 2011.1.94, Courtesy of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia
Art by Women Collection, Gift of Linda Lee Alter
Anne Gale
Self-Portrait, Sifting, 2015, oil on copper, 12 x 9 inches
Courtesy of the Artist and Dolby Chadwick Gallery
Stephanie Pierce

*Untitled*, 2013, oil on canvas over panel, 19 x 19 inches

Courtesy of Alpha Gallery, Boston
Anne Harris

Red Robe, 2009-2012, oil on canvas, 52 x 33 inches
Courtesy of Diane Lebel and Alan Harris
Catherine Kehoe

*SP in Red*, 2018, gouache on panel, 5 x 5 inches

Courtesy of the Artist and Howard Yezerski Gallery
Lois Dodd
*Shadow Painter*, 2008, oil on masonite, 14 x 20 inches
Courtesy of Alexandre Gallery, New York
Susan Lichtman
*Equinox Meal Study*, 2016, acrylic gouache, 9 x 12 inches
Courtesy of the Artist
Käthe Kollwitz
Selbstbildnis (Self-Portrait), 1921, etching, 8-3/8 x 10-3/8 inches
Courtesy of Childs Gallery
Zoë Bloom Levy
Dec 7, 2:08pm, 2015, oil paint, 36 x 24 inches
Courtesy of the Artist
Clarity Haynes

_Self-Portrait_, 2018, oil on canvas board, 18 x 14 inches

Courtesy of Donald Kohler & Philip Mah, New York
Susan Moore
*X-Back*, 1980, charcoal, 36 x 36 inches
Courtesy of the Artist
Joan Brown
*Untitled (Self-Portrait in Turban with Eskimo Dog Pin)*, 1972, oil enamel on canvas, 23-7/8 x 17-7/8 inches
Acc. No.: 2011.1.12, Courtesy of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia
Art by Women Collection, Gift of Linda Lee Alter
Elizabeth Menges
Ash Wednesday, 2008, oil on canvas, 8 x 8 inches
Courtesy of Lynne Allen
Brandi Twilley
Self-Portrait as a Crest Foods Employee, 2017, oil on canvas, 30 x 20 inches
Courtesy of the Artist
Diane Edison

*Self-Portrait*, 1996, oil on panel, 14 x 11 inches

Acc. No.: 2011.1.91, Courtesy of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia Art by Women Collection, Gift of Linda Lee Alter
Darren Bird
*Pink Self-Portrait*, 2017, oil, 14 x 11 inches
Courtesy of the Artist
Jenny Dubnau
Self-Portrait, Twisting, 2011, oil on canvas, 32 x 44 inches
Courtesy of the Artist
Susan Macdowell Eakins

*Self-Portrait*, ca. 1925, oil on canvas mounted to panel, 30 x 25 inches

Acc. No.: 1985.68.39.1, Courtesy of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia

Charles Bregler’s Thomas Eakins Collection, purchased with the partial support of the Pew Memorial Trust and the Henry C. Gibson Fund
Isabel Bishop

*Self-Portrait #2*, c.1927, oil on Canvas, 19 x 16 inches

Courtesy of DC Moore Gallery, New York
Violet Oakley
Self Portrait: The Artist in Mourning for Her Father, ca. 1900, oil on canvas, 25 x 20-1/16 inches
Acc. No.: 1982.10.1, Courtesy of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia
Gift of the Violet Oakley Memorial Foundation
Anne Harvey

Self-Portrait, ca. 1960, oil on panel, 32 x 25 inches

Courtesy of Steven Harvey Fine Art Projects
Katy Schneider
*Portrait with Olive and Mae and Ellis*, 1999, oil on panel, 10 x 8 inches
Courtesy of Steven Harvey Fine Art Projects
Kathy Liao
Self Portrait KCMO, 2017, oil on canvas, 60 x 40 inches
Courtesy of Prographica/KDR Gallery
Cathy Lees
*Fruit of Temptation*, 2005, oil on canvas, 38 x 64 inches
Courtesy of Alpha Gallery, Boston
Haley Hasler
*Portrait with Cranach, Plath and Arno Aged Nine Months*, 2017, oil on canvas, 72 x 34 inches
Courtesy of the Artist
Amy Sudarsky
*Mia*, 2009, oil on canvas, 55 x 43 inches
Courtesy of the Artist
Joanna Garmon
*Confrontation*, 2016, oil on canvas, 36 x 24 inches
Courtesy of the Artist
Maud Morgan
*Winter*, 1957, oil on board, 22 x 22 inches
Courtesy of Maud Morgan Arts
Barbara Swan
Self-Portrait with Paint Tubes, 1983, oil on canvas, 20 x 16 inches
Courtesy of Alpha Gallery, Boston
Concord Center for the Visual Arts
would like to thank Howland Capital
for their continued support of the arts:

HOWLAND CAPITAL

Additional Sponsors of this exhibition:
  Elise & Pierce Browne
  Joan Campbell
  Sara Campbell, Concord
  Tom Martin
  Virginia McIntyre & John Stevens
  Andrea & David Meyers
  Kathleen O'Hara & Malcolm Walsh
  Carmin C. Reiss & Eric D. Green
  Janet Silver & Jeff Wieand
  Nancy Traversy & Martin Lueck

Amy Sudarsky
My Hand, 2005, color pencil, 12 x 9 inches
Courtesy of Harold and Mimi Reddicliffe