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COMER, STANLEY DONNELL. Detailed Portraits and Figure Studies. (1978)
Directed by: Mr. Ben Berns. Pp. 3.

The exhibit consists of eight detailed portraits and five figure studies. This thesis was exhibited in the Weatherspoon Art Gallery, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, from April 30, through May 14, 1978.

A 35 millimeter color transparency of each work is on file at the Walter C. Jackson Library of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

DETAILED PORTRAITS

by

Stanley D. Comer

A Thesis Submitted to
the Faculty of the Graduate School at
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Fine Arts

Greensboro
1978

Approved by



Thesis Adviser

APPROVAL PAGE

This Thesis has been approved by the following committee
of the Faculty of the Graduate School at the University of
North Carolina at Greensboro.

Thesis Adviser 

Committee Members Walter Barker
Andrew Martin
Robert K. Campbell


April 21st 1978
Date of Acceptance by Committee

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Highest praise to God for the strength and mind he has given me. Special thanks and Love to my entire family; especially, my mother and father (Mr. & Mrs. William T. Comer Sr.). I wish to acknowledge the encouragement and support given by my fiancée, Carolyn. I also wish to acknowledge my sincere appreciation to my thesis advisor, Ben Berns, and the other members of my thesis committee, Andrew Martin, Gilbert Carpenter, and Walter Barker.

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CATALOGUE

Detailed Portraits:

<u>Title:</u>	<u>Medium:</u>	<u>Price:</u>	<u>Size:</u>
1. My Love (Mom)	Pencil	NFS	17 3/4" x 22"
2. My Strength (Dad)	Pencil	NFS	17 3/4" x 22"
3. Bro. Bill	Pencil	NFS	17 3/4" x 22"
4. Sis. Wanda	Pencil	NFS	17 3/4" x 22"
5. Bro. Mart	Pencil	NFS	17 3/4" x 22"
6. Sis. Ann	Pencil	NFS	17 3/4" x 22"
7. Sis. Pam	Pencil	NFS	17 3/4" x 22"
8. The Master Profiling (Self-Portrait)	Pencil	NFS	19 1/4" x 22"

In my portraits, I seek to capture the essence of the image which gives it its distinction. Studying the analogy of my work to that of the masters, I found that much of my preciseness is analogous to that of Eakins. It differs in that I do not seek to eliminate glamour or decoration from my portraits, because my personality seeks expressions of happiness and beauty. From Rembrandt I seek the solidity of forms as they proceed in, out, around and about themselves, but the variations of light and dark receive no special attention in my work.

I use three basic pencils, HB, 4B and 6B. Occasionally, I use some of the harder leads such as H, 9H, and 4H.

My portraits are of my family, close friends and famous individuals. Most of the portraits are done from photographs taken by me with a professional 35 millimeter camera. The backgrounds are not intended to convey meaning, but to create definite environments for the figures.

My interest in portraiture goes back to my early childhood, when I began drawing from class photographs. Then, I was not aware of the flatness of a photograph. Because of the inconvenience and expense of hiring models, I am still forced to use photographs. To compensate for the flatness of photographs, I have done extensive studies of the figure and face, in classes and on my own. During my studies, I have examined and observed the volumes, folds and curves of the human figure. Knowing which way a volume turns, a fold creases, a curve bends and how to make each move in its intended direction, is the key to successful drawing. With the help of my professors and through my own efforts, I now understand how to make each form move in its intended direction. Now when I draw from a photograph, I use it only to give me the basic image, relying on my knowledge of the way a form moves to accentuate form.

During the progression of each portrait, I experience excitement, joy, technical difficulties and close scrutiny. All of my experiences are used as food to nourish my growth in art. A portrait may be started from one of two places: The outside configuration or the inside construction. I have experimented with and have learned to use both approaches. Each approach has its advantages and disadvantages. I found that by starting from the inside and building out, ending with the outside configuration, the adjustments of angles, proportions and placements of required forms are minimal; however, size is harder to control, which is a problem if one is operating in a limited space. On the other hand, starting from the outside contours of the forms and working inward, placing the forms in their place within the outside configuration, requires me to make more adjustments of the forms, their size, angles, and proportions. Size is more easily controlled, because only minimal changes are required. I have combined the two approaches by first establishing the outside configuration, then placing in the inside forms to provide a sense of size and scale. From there, I work from the inside moving out.

The excitement comes when only enough lines are drawn to form a mental picture of the image. When I see the image coming, I literally begin talking to it, telling it: "I got you so come on out", as I continue to bring it out. When I have finished working the portrait out, and it is pleasing, I will say: "I told you that I had you", other times when it is not pleasing, the struggling begins. There is a little something that just will not fall in place. It is usually minute, and hard to detect, but it really throws off the unique characteristic of the picture.

I make close and distant observations until I spot it.

When the task is completed, I step back and view it with a feeling of accomplishment, and eye toward improvement and additions to my imaginary note pad of lessons learned, to be used on my next effort.