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MCELLEN, FRAN. An Exhibition of Self-Portraits. (1977)  
Directed by: Dr. Joan Gregory. Pp. 2.

The thesis consists of eight oil paintings and ten design marker drawings.

The thesis was exhibited in the Weatherspoon Gallery of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro from January 15, 1978 through January 29, 1978.

A 35 mm transparency of each work is on file at the Walter Clinton Jackson Library of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

AN EXHIBITION OF SELF-PORTRAITS

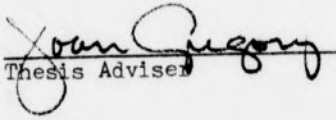
by

Fran Powell-McEllen

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  
1977

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

Jean Gregory

Committee Members

Ruth Campbell

Jean Gregory

Debra Kiani

Rusan Baskette

December 6, 1977

Date of Acceptance by Committee

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am deeply indebted to my husband, John McEllen, and to my mother, Gwen Jeffreys, who enabled me to pursue this degree through their encouragement and financial support.

For their helpful criticism and inspiration, I wish to thank Dr. Joan Gregory, Gilbert Carpenter, Setsuya Kotani and Susan Barksdale.

CATALOGUE OF THE EXHIBITION

1. Untitled. 1977. Oil on canvas board, 9" x 12".
2. Untitled. 1977. Oil on canvas board, 9" x 12".
3. Untitled. 1977. Oil on canvas paper, 12" x 16".
4. Untitled. 1977. Oil on masonite, 10½" x 12".
5. Untitled. 1977. Oil on masonite, 10" x 12½".
6. Untitled. 1977. Oil on masonite, 12" x 12".
7. Untitled. 1977. Oil on masonite, 12" x 12".
8. Untitled. 1977. Oil on masonite, 12" x 12".
9. Untitled. 1977. Design marker on paper, 7¼" x 8½".
10. Untitled. 1977. Design marker on paper, 7¼" x 8½".
11. Untitled. 1977. Design marker on paper, 7¼" x 8½".
12. Untitled. 1977. Design marker on paper, 7¼" x 8½".
13. Untitled. 1977. Design marker on paper, 7¼" x 8½".
14. Untitled. 1977. Design marker on paper, 7¼" x 8½".
15. Untitled. 1977. Design marker on paper, 7¼" x 8½".
16. Untitled. 1977. Design marker on paper, 7¼" x 8½".
17. Untitled. 1977. Design marker on paper, 7¼" x 8½".
18. Untitled. 1977. Design marker on paper, 7¼" x 8½".

The problem considered in the thesis exhibition is the self-portrait. My intention is to portray myself through the study and interpretation of the head as manifested by facial expression. These portraits are highly personal statements made about the essence of the person within the picture. The interaction between myself, the painter, and my own reflective image in a mirror becomes for me an extreme psychological experience. Since I believe that I am more familiar with my own physical features and emotional states than with any other persons, these factors should become apparent in the self-portraits. Contending with oneself involves special problems of introspection, objectivity and sometimes even agonizing self-examination.

The images generated have moved from a defined, studied approach toward a more expressive, painterly one. Whether working on drawings or paintings, I try to be as spontaneous as possible letting the images flow out of my feelings about each individual piece. I work through direct observation but take the liberty to emphasize certain facial characteristics of the sitter for expressive purposes. I often use heightened rather than local colors and dramatic lighting to exaggerate the sharpness of the planes. I am not trying to duplicate an exact copy of the person portrayed but rather a pictorial equivalent of that person's countenance and attributes.

The constantly changing human face creates complex

representational problems. Light moves across the face creating illusions and defining the bone structure which emerges beneath the flesh. The colors change and float out of shadows and highlights to produce the variety of forms. The emotional temperament of the person, the most nebulous factor, is in a constant state of flux posing numerous problems with which one must deal. In these self-portraits, the ways I view myself, my strengths and weaknesses, are openly displayed. It is my desire that these evoke some sort of response from the viewer.