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Painting the Persona

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Painting the Persona

By

Reed White

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

In

Art

(Painting)

Minnesota State University, Mankato

Mankato, Minnesota

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This thesis has been examined and approved by the following members of the student's committee.

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Painting the Persona

Artist Statement

I am an oil painter who paints the human form as a subject. My technique varies between loose transparent glazes to more realistic impasto, revealing the process in which I paint. My colors are often exaggerated and unrealistic.

I choose to paint people in my community because it reveals a story about the time and place I live in. I enjoy painting people because we are interesting as physical objects: color, form, the way our bodies change as we age, what we chose to wear, etc.. We come in many different sizes, colors, shapes, our postures and facial expressions articulate our emotions. We all have the experience of being human in common, and as a social species, are instinctively curious about other humans. We all have a story to tell, I try to express what I perceive with paint. I try to capture the persona of a person by painting with as few brush strokes as possible.

As an artist, I want my paintings to be interesting rather than a stagnant documentation of a person. I sometimes force the use of odd colors, outlines, incorrect perspective, etc., to escape the impulse to strive for perfection. When a painting is completely resolved, it loses something. There is a point when an unpolished painting has an energy, a vitality, and holds so much potential, a point at which the process is still evident. When the painting is purposefully imperfect, the viewer can focus on what I find to be important: the colors, the marks, the composition, the paint, and still see the persona of the person I painted.