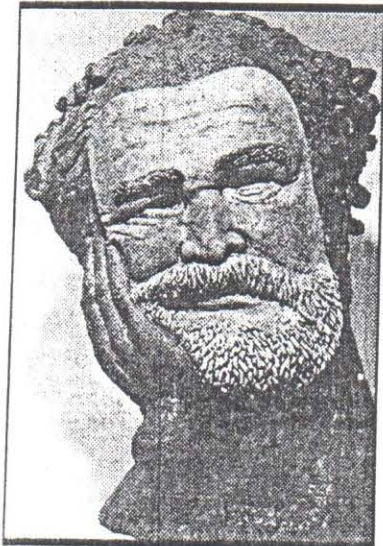


Contrasts, allegory spark special Summit exhibition

Many famous artists throughout history have become obsessed with painting their own likenesses, and not out of simple vanity.

"The artist's aim is not merely to record a likeness or convey a message, but the depiction of a psychological state... or even the allegorical representation of abstraction ideas," says Joan Good, curator at the New Jersey Center for Visual Arts, Summit.

With the help of Sharon Gill and Perijane Zarembok, Good has put together the exhibit "Self-Portrait: The Changing Self," on view at the center through May. It features 20 artists showing two works apiece from different stages of their careers.



'Bore,' a sculpture by Robert Arneson, on display in Summit through the New Jersey Center for the Visual Arts

While using a similar, realistic technique, Michael Bergt presents contrasting views of himself from 1986 and 1991. The earlier one, "Autoretrato," depicts the artist in a Spanish interior, seated on a stool and staring straight ahead as he paints. The second, "St. Michael," shows him standing in triumph on a shipping crate, a carpenter's level on his knee, cutout paper angels strung up behind him, and a gilded icon frame around it all.

Leonard Baskin depicts himself in a 1973 woodcut in fairly realistic terms, with a beard and a hint of a smile. By 1990 he becomes a generic, balding and far more expressionistic figure, one hand shielding his face, in the gouache "Weeping for Renzo Gazzini."

Luis Cruz Azaceta persists in comparing himself to insects. His colorful 1981 acrylic "The Artist Cockroach" shows him on all fours with bug body and a skyscraper growing from his head. By the time he paints "Guardian of the Eggs," in 1992, he has become a fly with a huge eye and a pointed tongue, holding a cracked egg that bears a man's face.

Hung Liu uses a super-realism to great effect. Her 1988 oil "Resident Alien" is a mural-sized enlargement of her "green card," complete with her picture and thumbprint. This year she created the mixed-media work "A Third World," also large; it features a sepia version of her face wrapped in a red scarf, with the gilded, three-dimensional silhouette of a building superimposed on her forehead.

In 1978, Joan Semmel painted the

oil "Sunlight," a photorealistic study of a nude, female body from its inhabitant's point of view. By 1988 she chose to present a more expressionistic vision of herself aiming a camera as she reflects in a floor-length mirror.

Humorous works with serious undertones come from Charles Parness. In the 1982 "Monarch," he wears an elaborate crown, but crosses his eyes in dismay as a striped butterfly alights on his nose. "Pearl" shows several of his alter egos dressed in Hawaiian shirts and wading in a pool, to re-enact the World War II battle with toy warships and Japanese bombers.

Jack Beal depicts his own stocky likeness in pastels—isolated and heavily shadowed in 1972, and posing by an anatomical drawing in his studio in 1986.

Among those who work in three dimensions, Jan Holcomb places himself outdoors. His abstracted body arches over a dark landscape, popu-