

Self-portraits: Art world's first 'selfies' on display at Greenhill

By Bruce Buchanan Special to Go Triad | Posted: Thursday, February 5, 2015 2:00 pm

GREENSBORO — Think the selfie is an invention of the smartphone age? Think again.

The self-portrait has a long tradition in art, and two related exhibitions at Greenhill explores the art of the self-portrait.

The dual exhibits are “Fritz Janschka’s Portrait Museum” and “Self-Portraits by N.C. Artists.”

Janschka, an Austrian-born artist and member of the “Fantastic Realism” school, offers his take on portraits painted by famous artists — with his own touch. The second exhibition is just what the title indicates: 33 N.C. artists exploring the self-portrait in a variety of media.

At 96, Janschka continues to create new work. The Greenhill exhibition focuses on some of his most recent art, in which he paints in the style of famous artists, such as Edward Hopper and Salvador Dali, in portrait paintings.

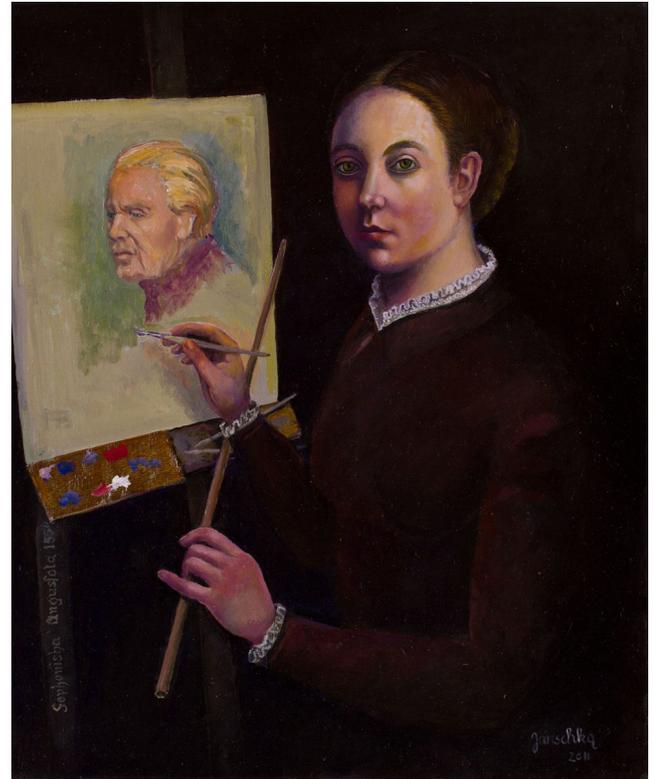
“It’s losing your personality in the work of another artist,” Greenhill curator Edie Carpenter said. “It’s also a history of art lesson.”

She noted that there is “an element of humor” in many of the homages, as well.

On Feb. 18, Janschka will visit Greenhill for a public celebration of his work through music and poetry.

In the N.C. Artists exhibition, “There are a lot of different themes being explored, including self-identity and perception of self,” Carpenter said.

For example, Alia El-Bermani’s self-portrait titled “The Boring Truth” captures the artist on a average,



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“Sofonisba Anguissola.” The work by Fritz Janschka is on display through April 2 at the Greenhill in downtown Greensboro. Janschka, an Austrian-born artist and member of the “Fantastic Realism” school, offers his take on portraits painted by famous artists — with his own touch.

busy day, rather than the romanticized version of self that artists often present.

Artist Juie Rattley III presents two self-portraits — one of the artist sleeping, and the other in a fighting stance. Carpenter suggests this represents the artistic process: dreaming up inspiration, followed by fighting with the canvas to bring these ideas to life.

Saba Barnard combines the traditional with the modern by presenting a framed QR code in the gallery. When visitors scan the QR code with their phones, they see Barnard's painted self-portrait.

Michael Ananian offers one of the most poignant self-portraits in the exhibition. In his piece, he paints his own reflection looking at a framed photo of his father.

Not all of the self-portraits are done on canvas. For example, Darren Douglas Floyd presents nine short video clips, filmed over a 10-year span. Sculptor Brad Spencer offers a 3-D self-portrait created from brick.

Greenhill is giving visitors a chance to participate in the self-portrait exercise as well using the hashtag "1512selfieportrait." The number "1512" refers to the number of hours the exhibitions will be on display.

"You take a selfie and put it on social media using that hashtag," said Lauren Davis Gordon, marketing and design guru at Greenhill.

Greenhill also will hold two adult workshops on "Self-Portrait Tapestries" on Feb. 26.

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