

Christine L. Wuenschel

Artist Statement

Many artists create self-portraits as a search for self-identity. The discoveries of self can often inform their work in relation to medium, subject, and concept. As I develop my work, self-portraits have allowed me to gain self-awareness and acceptance of my physical form.

Drawing is the most direct method I can use to depict images of the body. I use charcoal as a tool to create velvety flesh, etched into paper in black and white. The skin becomes part of the support on which it is drawn. Drawing also acts as a recording of every mark, every mistake, and every note throughout the process. Serving as a history of the work and a map of its creation, these marks allow the viewer to accompany me in my thought process. In drawing, I expose everything to the viewer. Nothing is hidden, and I open my mind to the viewer as I reveal my own body as my subject.

Revealing my entire body for viewing involves a certain amount of courage, but there is even more personal fortitude involved in the creation of these images. I have slowly unwrapped my body in my work, both for the viewer and for myself. The images have transitioned from closely cropped body parts to full head-to-toe self-portraits. It is a process of closely inspecting and scrutinizing parts of my body without eliminating or altering any flaws that are revealed in the figure. Many years of self-critique have increasingly stretched my own comfort levels with my body and my art, and in the process I have become more accepting of both. I have found that deciding to be exposed – deciding to be vulnerable – is empowering. I am proud to share the flesh that I have passionately carved into the picture plane. Through these pieces, I am owning my identity.