ALMINE RECH

Claire Tabouret
Masterworks on Loan

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On the occasion of its reopening, the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art at University of Oregon (Oregon, USA) will present *Mirrors & Reflections,* as part of its *Masterworks on Loan* series in the museum's newly reinstalled galleries.

Mirrors & Reflections comprises five new self-portraits by Claire Tabouret. Self-portraits have long been an integral part of Tabouret's practice; in 2012 she began making one self-portrait each day as a morning ritual. After two years she had made over 700 ink on paper works, which documented the daily variations of her own face. Just like water, a subject present in many of Tabouret's earlier works, the surface of the face is ever-changing. This constant physical movement reflects our own identity, which is just as dynamic. Painting has allowed Tabouret a more subtle and diverse way to represent identity through her portraits. In these new works, the eye of the painter is revealed, provoked by the act of looking at oneself over and over again.

Self-portrait (in the studio) shows the artist curled up on a couch, with a yellow background occupying nearly half the canvas. This heavy, empty space acts like a weight, suggesting the subject might soon disappear underneath it. A contrast to many of Tabouret's confident and heroic characters, this work along with *Self-portrait (hand)* reveal a more fragile, doubtful figure.

Self-portrait with George (green) reveals the tender relationship between the artist and her dog. With the subject holding the dog in her arms, the work conveys a sense of mutual caring and protection between the two.

Self-portrait (double) depicts the inherent mirror-like, Rorschach quality of these portraits. The viewer, in this case the artist, is looking at the paintings, but the paintings are also looking back at the viewer. For Tabouret, paintings always act as mirrors, reflecting your own attitudes back at you.

In *Self-portrait (orange)*, Tabouret's method of building with layers of neon underpainting creates a sense of light that emanates from within the subject. This work acts almost as a foil to the other self-portraits, depicting the artist as strong and self-assured amongst her more insecure counterparts.

These works, which were made prior to the beginning of the COVID-19 lockdown, take on a new meaning in a time of solitude and isolation. In a moment where most people are spending more time alone, these self-portraits become an even more poignant study.