

Self Portrait

Screen Recording 2024-10-9 at 9.26.32 AM

While this work is factually a computer screen recording, there's more. I am exploring a different concept of self-portraiture. Even so, the basic premise of the self-portrait remains the same: Remember me.

I received a Creality Ferret 3D Pro Scanner for my birthday. It can be operated as a stand-alone device, or as a hand-held portable one. The idea behind the scanner is that it will generate a 3D file drawn from the scanned subject which can then be printed with a 3D printer.

The user manual was interesting. It suggested scanning your head as a beginning exercise. I did this. Then I did it again. It wasn't easy. After the fifth or sixth try, I had results I thought I could work with.

Everyone who sees this scan agrees the image looks like me, but they find it unsettling. Perhaps it's because as you face the image, the left eye is higher than the right eye. Additionally, the right ear sticks out oddly and is disproportionately large. This distortion is caused by movement of the scanner while making the picture. I could have edited these distortions out but I chose to leave them as part of the process.

In the screen capture itself there are many pauses that seem unnecessary. This is actually how long it took me to figure out what & how I wanted to animate. The pauses reflect my mental processes in real time.

I saved the data in the .STL format. .STL is an abbreviation for stereo lithography, a very popular 3D file format. It is also the file format I've printed in 3D with the most success. This file did not print well. The self-portrait, though a 3D object, is like a Mobius strip. It's a loophole in reality. The inside is the same as the outside.

The object appears to be a mask. It's looking at you. But when you turn it over you find the inside is also looking out at you. Inside and outside are the same.

I hasten to add that this doesn't happen in all file formats. In the .DAE format, a bunch of lines vaguely resembling the mask are generated. It sort of works in the Creality .3mf format, but it fails here to give you a 180-degree view in rotation, flipping the mask on its back. I suspect this is because the object violates some rules of representation for 3D objects built into many variations of the file format software.

You can view this work unaided on your usual computer screen but the best way is to use a Meta headset at the 360 degree VR setting. I hope you enjoy my work.