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Artist's Statement

Ruth Dealy

By the time I turned thirty, I had painted for ten years without finding what I wanted to paint.

By then, I had achieved a fractured and chaotic surface that fascinated me, but I was frustrated by a lack of theme.

Every day that I entered my studio, I would check my face to see if there was any reality there that I could appropriate but every day I looked like a different person.

It suddenly dawned on me that this cast of thousands could serve me as well as Monet's haystack or any other constant that is mutated by light, time of day, and weather. Almost a scientific interest took hold of my work, it went very slowly and was much more exhausting than before, but I knew it mattered to me.

I can't paint the portraits full-time -- there are times when I can hardly bear to be submerged inside my own form; but over the years the paintings have piled up. They seem like my riches to me and I hoard them.

Mostly I think they are solitary, not social, and I'm not sure other people will see their solitude as prayerful, not troubled, but basically that is who they are.

Technically, they are all acrylic on unprimed canvas, some with dry and metallic pigments added.

Lately, I've been trying to eliminate the atmospheric paint and just confront the head itself, which makes the heads more difficult and naked but makes my job as artist all the more clear to me.

I want to tell what I see in the mirror without any editorializing, without the sophisticated paint of apology or manner. I hope I have.