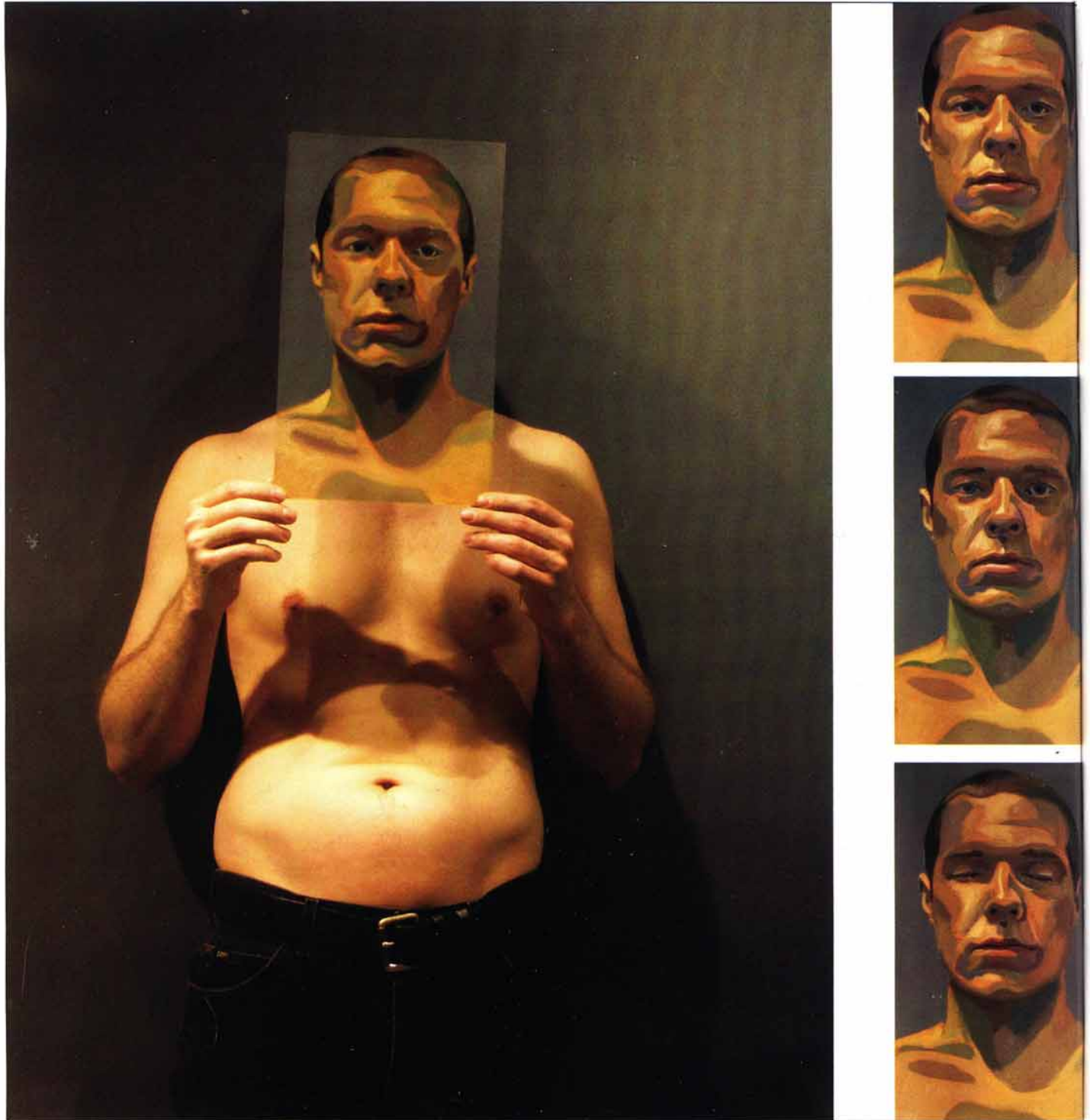
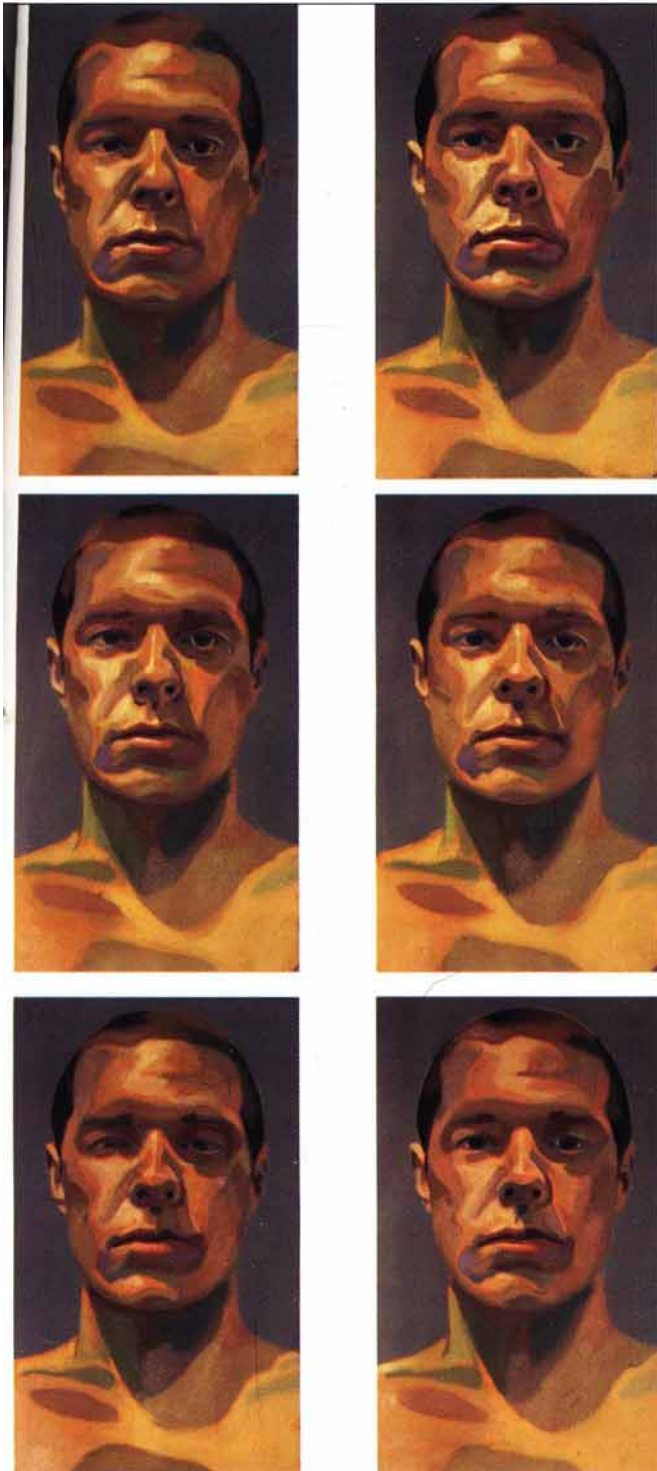


INTROSPECTION





BY JANET SCHARP

Like the Dadaists of the post-World War I era, Arlington painter Scott Hutchison mixes art with modern technology to create nonsense. Unlike the Dadaists, who were angry at the horror they had seen, Scott tries to inject humor in his animated art. His part-time teaching jobs—painting at The Art League and Georgetown University and drawing at George Washington University—free him to spend studio time on his own work: creating funny oil animations. One visitor to his Web site called his work “evocative and surreal”; several others noticed the influence of noted contemporary artist Lucian Freud (grandson of Sigmund Freud)—an artist Scott admires.

An Iowa native, Scott earned a B.F.A. at Drake University, where he studied various forms of visual arts, including drawing, painting, photography and sculpture. He subsequently completed an M.F.A. in painting at George Washington University on a Morris Lewis Fellowship. A figurative painter, Scott’s favorite masters are Caravaggio and Rembrandt, because of their deep and dark style. Scott’s paintings demonstrate his expertise in capturing gradations of shading. “I teach drawing,” he says, “and ...drawing was my first love within the arts. And so, I’ve really been fascinated with the shadows and the light.”



SCOTT HUTCHINSON

Scott’s style has changed dramatically in recent years. His self-portrait, “Waiting for God,” painted in 1997, shows him sitting on the floor, as he describes it, “in limbo, looking out a window—the outside world, looking at the heavens—with a skeleton demon breaking through the floor. [The figure is] looking away from the demon, not really reacting, just sitting there.” Through this painting, the artist was expressing his feelings of being an outsider when he first moved to the Washington, D.C., area. He followed up with a series of “metal” paintings—black, white and blue portraits of a woman weighted down by armor—and then a series of “cropped nudes,” depicting the torso of an overweight woman.

“BLINK,” OIL ON PAPER

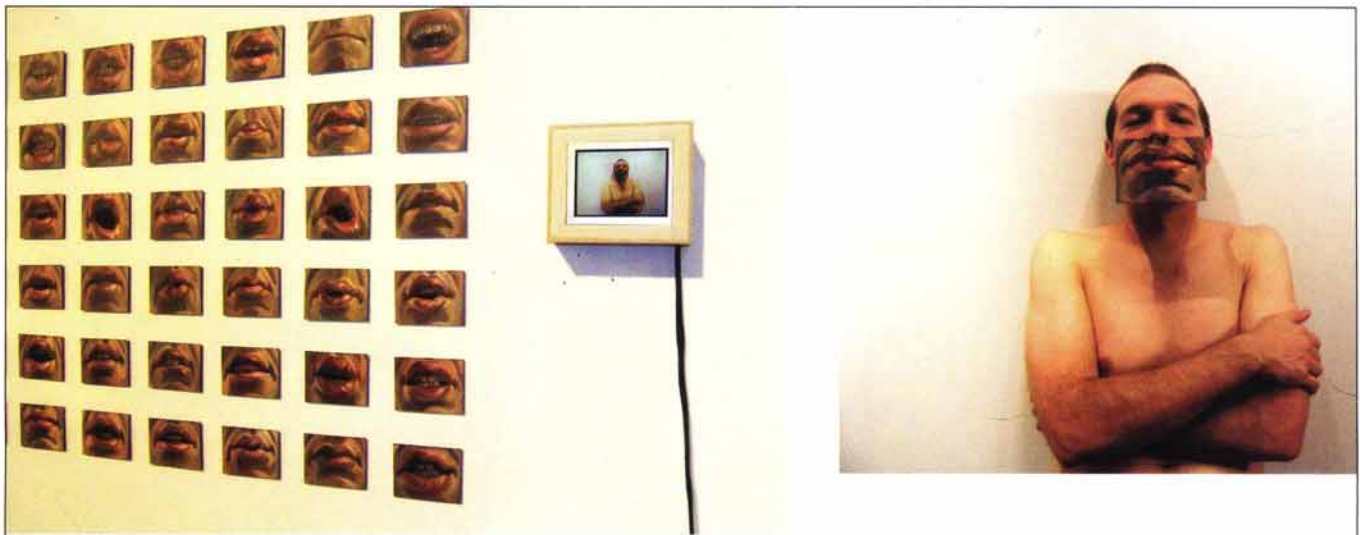


The idea for Scott's animated creations came from his undergraduate interest in animation. To get out of a rut, he decided to try incorporating his oils into a frame-by-frame method of animation. In doing so, he first creates images from oil paintings or photographs. The finished product usually includes one or more liquid crystal display (LCD) panels, a computer and sometimes a motion sensor, housed in a wooden box hanging on the wall, tied to a DVD player in a handcrafted box on the floor. Sometimes, he projects the images on the wall instead of using the LCD panels: "It's kind of contemporary looking," he says. In the past year, he has also expanded into video.

For subject matter, Scott concentrates on small parts of his body, such as his eyes, teeth or mouth, in five-inch-square paintings. "My work right now is very introspective," he muses. "I was doing these self-portraits and have done tons and tons of self-portraits. I wanted to continue painting myself, but I didn't want to do self-portraits anymore, ...and I know when you zoom in to a certain subject matter, you abstract it and change it, and it will change its implications.... If you just focus on one area, all of a sudden it becomes something else."

One of Scott's early interactive works, "Look," consists of two eyes moving together left and right in the direction of motion near the panel. Scott painted multiple pictures of his eyes to provide the art for the DVD. He also built the wooden housings for the components. Scott's friend Tom Edwards provided the programming. "Look" also has sound, but the words are unintelligible. "It sort of talks to itself," Scott says with a laugh. In the future, he plans to use a video camera to refine the movement.





"It could be so specific that, if you raise your hand, the eyes would follow," he conjectures.

Another piece, "Chatter II," features animations of his mouth. For this piece, Scott painted 42 versions of his mouth in different positions. He then arranged these paintings together in different sequences so that they would lip-sync a different phrase. This piece also includes a chattering sound, based on a digitally enhanced recording of Scott's voice.

One of Scott's funniest works, "Blink," started with 28 self-portraits. He then took 28 photographs of his body, with the paintings superimposed on his real face, creating a stop-motion animation. "When I run [the photographs] through the computer, the movie cycles through all 28 paintings at 26 frames a second. You can't tell, because the paintings are all so similar. But, every once in a while, it blinks. It's just kind of funny."

Two other works, "360" and "I Don't Know," feature the artist in motion. "360" is an oil-painted animation of his portrait spinning. "I Don't Know" consists of photographs of his naked body shown from the waist up, with ten different paintings of his mouth strapped on his face. To make the sound track, he repeated the words "I don't know" over and over.



Scott also created a surreal film by projecting a video of his face as it moved across his real face and recording the distorted image that resulted. He then printed stills and painted these. "I knew it would start abstracting [the self-portrait]," he explains. "It would start distorting it—allowing me to do something that I haven't done before. It disturbs me when I'm painting it... breaks up my comfort zone, gets me out of that."

Scott displays his art at numerous university and nonprofit spaces throughout the area and at the Fraser Gallery in Bethesda. When he sells an animated work, he gives the client the original paintings, the video and all the

components. "I spend a lot of time making it look nice," he says about the display. Through his Web site, he also markets pop versions of his art in the form of posters, mugs and T-shirts.

Scott and his bride of one year, artist Caroline Danforth, maintain adjoining studios at the Arlington Arts Center, 3550 Wilson Boulevard, Arlington. To learn more about his work, visit www.scott.hutchison.com, or contact him at scott@scotthutchison.com or 703-536-6701.



FACING PAGE, TOP: "GOOGLIES," AND "NOT A WHISPER"; THIS PAGE, TOP: "I DON'T KNOW," AND "LOOK" ALL WORKS ARE OIL ON PAPER.