

"10 Masters of the Self-Portrait, in Their Own Words." Artsy. (March 2014).



10 Masters of the Self-Portrait, in Their Own Words

As the Renaissance reasserted the importance of individuality (and mirrors became more widely available), self-portraiture exploded as a genre of its own—one that persists today in ever-expanding forms. Whether as a traditional model, a vehicle for formal experiments, or a stand-in for personas or identities, artists take advantage of the self as a readily available subject, both immediately relatable and rich with complex associations. Here, we present what ten of the genre's greatest masters have to say for themselves on the subject.

1. Rembrandt van Rijn: *"Practice what you know, and it will help to make clear what now you do not know."*

2. Vincent van Gogh: *"It isn't an easy job to paint oneself—at any rate if it is to be different from a photograph."*

3. Egon Schiele: *"I am so rich that I must give myself away."*

4. Frida Kahlo: *"I paint self-portraits because I am so often alone, because I am the person I know best."*

5. Andy Warhol: *"I usually accept people on the basis of their self-images, because their self-images have more to do with the way they think than their objective-images do."*

6. Chuck Close: *"It doesn't upset artists to find out that artists used lenses or mirrors or other aids, but it certainly does upset the art historians."*

7. Cindy Sherman: *"I feel I'm anonymous in my work. When I look at the pictures, I never see myself; they aren't self-portraits. Sometimes I disappear."*



Iké Udé
Sartorial Anarchy #1, 2010
Leila Heller Gallery
\$18,000

8. Yue Minjun: *"The first step was to create a style to express my feelings accurately, starting with something that I knew really well—myself."*

9. Chantal Joffe: *"In a way, the more the photo is crap, the better to paint from.... For the ones of me and my daughter, the more awkward and bad the photo, the better the painting turns out."*

10. Iké Udé: *"My clothes [and] accessories are precisely akin to a painter's palette and my body, akin to the canvas."*

Explore self-portraiture in The Warhol Museum's "Yasumasa Morimura: Theater of the Self" through January 12, 2014.