The Collection
and *The Human Journey*

What Does It Mean to Be Human?

The Self-Portrait

*Who Am I?* It is a question we all ask ourselves at one time or another. When an artist paints a self-portrait, the answer to this question is made visible, offering viewers an opportunity to consider notions of self and sources of identity.

How do we define ourselves? How much of who we are is what we do? What we think? Remember? Feel? How much of ourselves do we have in common with others, how much is unique and how much do we want to share with others? Some artists elect to depict themselves at work, thus defining themselves through their craft. Others are more interested in communicating their inspirations or aspirations. Many contemporary artists choose to examine themselves through metaphor, adopting surrogate symbols to express deeply (and perhaps universally) felt truths.

In their variety of responses to the same question, the self-portraits in Sacred Heart University's Collection suggest the rich potential for self-discovery offered by thoughtful reflection. Each self-portrait thus becomes an open invitation to explore the complexities that make a person an individual.

Anne Bolin, Ph.D.