

# Self-Portraits

Philip Akkerman

*Every weekday morning for the past twenty years, Philip Akkerman has set to work painting his self-portrait. To date, he has produced some 1,670 portraits—an average of two to three a week. He paints nothing else.*

*"In my series of self-portraits, the story of life is presented twice. In the first place in the picture. You see a head growing older. That goes without saying. But there is another story in which this process of growing older can be seen. And that is the story of technique."*

*At first, Akkerman thought of the portraits as a sort of conceptual-art project. "When I started painting self-portraits . . . I was not interested in what those paintings looked like. One day I painted this way and the next day that. As befits a young person, I couldn't care less. After a few years, I got bored with this and I wanted to do some real nice and beautiful paintings. To my sad disappointment I found out that I could not paint at all. So I became a technical nerd, spending half of the time in the library reading old manuscripts. Some ten years later I was able to produce any painting in any style." Bored again, he began "painting not just myself but all of mankind, in fact: all existence! In the end, I was convinced of the idea that we do not exist at all! Obviously, I could not go on that way any longer and recently I have decided to pick just one style and paint my self-portrait in that style for the rest of my days: no more variation, no more thinking, no more feelings."*