

# THE RADAR ART

BY AUDREY HUDSON



Scott Hutchison in front of *I Don't Know*

**GRAND POP** *With his fat-tastic nudes, Scott Hutchison made a splash; with his pop-surrealistic video installations, he may well make his mark*

There was a bit of a stir the last time artist Scott Hutchison's oversized, uninhibited paintings were showcased at the Fraser Gallery.

His five-foot-tall paintings of a nude, full-figured woman earned the artist—and the Bethesda gallery whose front windows the pieces occupied—some questionable publicity. The gigantic breasts and super-sized lady parts offended some passersby. Others, though, saw the majesty Hutchison's brush found in the landscapes of flesh.

This fall, the gallery will mount a new Hutchison show—this time in their Georgetown location—with a decidedly different twist. The show will feature three installations that combine art and technology: *Chatter*, *360*, and *I Don't Know*.

The works are an odd-but-enticing blend of painting, self-portraiture, video, animation and audio; call it animated art. In *Chatter*, for instance, Hutchison uses hundreds of oil paintings that depict luscious pink and purple lips essentially as animation cells for a video loop. The resulting video displays rapid animation of clicking teeth and pulsating lips.

*360* is a series of self portraits of the artist's torso, set in a continuous loop while acrylic paint strokes swirl about his head. Vocals are also part of the works. *I Don't Know* features 140 paintings of flesh-toned mouths caught in various expressive shapes that allow Hutchison to literally speak through his art. For viewing, the painting "cells" are hung on the gallery wall beside a large video screen where the final cut is looped. "I want my paintings to move instead of just sitting on the wall," Hutchison says. "It brings my artwork into this century."

The artist's pieces can confound some, but gallery owner Catriona Fraser is not worried. She says showcasing outstanding work—not mediocre-but-safe art—is her job. But Fraser admits it is a sophisticated palette that hungers for 140 paintings of lips—or even the oversized nudes. "It takes a special collector to buy his works," Fraser says. One of the area's most prolific gatherers of figurative paintings, Steven Krensky, is one such collector. Krensky, owner of the Light Street Gallery in Baltimore, displays one of Hutchison's paintings in his home outside Potomac.

Thirty-two-year-old Hutchison has exhibited in spaces and galleries throughout the Washington area and is also an art professor at The George Washington University. He credits his full-time gig in academia for allowing him to make art freely without worrying about its commercial appeal.

Although self-portraits often develop from lack of a model, it's not the only reason there's literally so much of Hutchison in his work. "It's partially for convenience, but art for me is very introspective," he says. Sometimes, though, Hutchison will seek a darker source, further muddying an age-old debate. Who was the model for those curvaceous nudes? He laughs, pauses, laughs some more, and pauses a little longer. "I actually should just come out and say it: I got it from a porn site." ■

*The Arlington Arts Center (3550 Wilson Boulevard, 703.248.6800) opens a solo Hutchison show with a reception September 16th, 6-9PM. Show runs through Nov. 5. The Fraser Gallery (1054 31st St., NW, 202.298.6450) show opens with a reception Nov. 18, 6-9PM, and runs through Dec. 14.*