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Excerpt from "FOR ART'S SAKE: The Life and Legacy of WILLIAM ASHBY McCLOY 1913-2000"  
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## McCLOY, William Ashby

### McCLOY ON McCLOY

On the occasion of a retrospective exhibition held at Slater Memorial Museum in 1991, McCloy wrote for the catalogue...

"This, my fourth retrospective in recent years, has been organized differently from those in the past. Instead of arranging the work chronologically, decade by decade, to make my development seem clear, steady, and logical, I have chosen to show it more by theme and issue to show the persistence and recurrence of certain preoccupations over the years. [*Early Training, Early Representational Work, Portrait Painting, Self Portraits, Influences, Still Life Painting, Landscape Painting, Religious Painting, Social Commentary, Pictorial Space-Picture Plane Relationships, Symbols vs Signs, Reactions, Abstract Painting, Print Series, Recent Works, Mural Designs and Public Sculpture, Autobiographical Sequence, and Sculpture*]. Despite the fact that many of the works on display are non-objective, particularly in recent years, I have been essentially a representational artist, relying on recognizable, preordered images to narrow the options of the viewer. Even the most abstract often include recognizable forms, usually parts of squares and circles - shapes to which traditional interpretations may be attached.

My intent has rarely, if ever, been purely aesthetic in nature. And the goal has been less communication than clarification, for myself if not necessarily for other viewers. When series have appeared, they have seldom been preplanned, and most of the time symbols and symbolic meanings have developed without conscious intent.

I have never been tempted to find "my style," to try to come up with something clearly my own, even though, from an exhibition point of view, this might have been advantageous. The world in my lifetime has been too complex, too full of contradictions and crises to make such narrowing seem sensible to me. During my seventy-eight years, I have lived through three world wars, major economic upheavals, radical reemphases in philosophy, and numerous transformations in the art that ensued. Not to have responded to some of these would mean that I had cut myself off from the real world.

Even so, despite what some may see as confusing diversity and contradictions in style over the years, to me what I have been able to do is essentially unified, as I hope this presentation will demonstrate. In my view, no artist has more than "one painting" in his system; just as much of his personality is determined in infancy, so too may be the range of his sensitivities."

William McCloy  
1991