

EN

KUNST
HISTORISCHES
MUSEUM
WIEN



Lucian Freud

8 OCTOBER 2013 TO 6 JANUARY 2014

INTRODUCTION

400)))

Lucian Freud is remembered as one of the most important painters of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. This exhibition, the first ever to be shown in Austria, presents a concise survey of his 70-year working career from an early wartime self-portrait of 1943 to the final, unfinished painting that remained in his studio at the time of his death in July 2011. It covers a range of different genres, from portraits of his family, close friends, wives and lovers, neighbours, fellow artists, aristocrats, working-class associates and animals, to still lifes, landscapes and – arguably his most sustained and remarkable achievement – his own self-portraits.

Installed more or less chronologically, the exhibition allows us to follow the radical stylistic development of Freud's painting across several decades: from early works, painted in meticulous detail with fine, sable hair brushes, through the 1950s, when he begins to paint standing up with coarser, hog-hair brushes in a much looser style, his first full naked portraits of the 1960s, and finally, in the latter part of the exhibition, the monumental canvases of the 1980s and 1990s.

His subjects, most of whom were not professional models, are portrayed in the intimate,

private surrounding of the studio. Sessions were demanding and could last for many months. Freud worked with extraordinary discipline and concentration on several paintings at a time, two made in daylight during morning and afternoon sittings, and a third at night under electric light. The subjects rarely met each other, but were famously well looked after, cooked for and entertained with recitals of music, poetry and limericks.

Presented within the Kunsthistorisches Museum, whose collections span almost four thousand years from Ancient Egypt to the great painters of the Middle Ages, Renaissance and Baroque, the exhibition also provides a unique opportunity to consider and examine Freud's interest in the art of the past. Freud's awareness and profound understanding of art history stand like bookends to his remarkable life. Growing up in Berlin between the wars, his childhood home was decorated with prints of Old Master paintings and drawings by Dürer, Titian, and Pieter Bruegel the Elder, including two seasonal landscapes from the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna, *Hunters in the Snow* and *The Return of the Herd*, a gift to the young Lucian from his grandfather Sigmund.

More than 80 years later, having emigrated with his family to Britain at the age of 11, Freud was moved to make a rare appearance on national television as part of a public appeal to save for the British nation two of his favourite paintings by Titian, *Diana and Actaeon* and *Diana and Callisto*. They were, in his words, “simply the most beautiful pictures in the world.” A film in which he speaks about the paintings is included in this exhibition, just a few steps away from a second, later version of *Diana and Callisto* belonging to the Kunsthistorisches Museum.

Many other old friends hang nearby, including Franz Hals, Hans Holbein and Peter Paul Rubens, probing self-portraits by Rembrandt, and Giovanni Bellini’s *Young Woman at her Toilet*, one of Freud’s favourite depictions of the female nude. Freud himself requested that his paintings be shown apart from the historical collections of the museum, in order that viewers should be encouraged to form their own associations between the two bodies of work.

The œuvre and legacy that he left behind are remarkable in any number of ways. For the honest, unsentimental and democratic manner in which he observed life, be it human,

animal or plant; for his unmatched capacity for prolonged scrutiny, and the unsparing, often intimidating intensity that accompanied it; for his utter disregard for flattery, moral judgement or any notion of the ideal; for his willingness to take a risk, both in life and in art, and his total commitment to that risk; and for his discipline, his stubborn persistence, and his holding firm to a position during the periods when his work was considered by many to be deeply unfashionable, before public opinion eventually swung back around.

Freud’s greatest paradox, and arguably one of his greatest accomplishments, was to appear too contemporary for the historical museum, and too historical for the contemporary museum. He worked outside of fashion, scandalising present-day audiences while drawing on the art of the past. He listened in to the conversations that had taken place across the centuries, and over time became part of those conversations himself. He was an artist both of his time, and for all time.

1

MAN WITH
A FEATHER
(SELF-PORTRAIT)

1943
Oil on canvas
76.2 x 50.8 cm

Private Collection



401)))

Painted when he was just 21, this is Freud's first major self-portrait and represents a defining moment in his early artistic maturity. It is the largest and most ambitious work that he produced during the war and was included in his debut solo exhibition in London in 1944. Freud paints himself alone, clutching a white feather in his hand. It was a gift from his first serious girlfriend, Lorna Wishart, a married woman several years his senior. Behind him, framed in the windows of a building, are the figures of a bird and a priest. On the ground below them several mysterious shapes float like icebergs. The painting's surreal, psychological atmosphere and candid anxiety recall existentialist literature of the 1940s, while its tight, linear brushwork and awkwardly elongated style point to Freud's close interest in Northern European painting.

2

DEAD HERON

1945
Oil on canvas
49 x 74 cm

Private Collection



402)))

Paintings and drawings of animals, and birds in particular, appear consistently in Freud's work of the 1940s. Reproductions of several watercolours by Albrecht Dürer had hung in his childhood home in Berlin, and one can assume that his own study and painstaking depiction of the relative textures of natural materials owes something to their influence. The dead bird was brought to Freud by his companion Lorna Wishart, who had found it in a marsh. Laid out upside down on an imaginary landscape, wings spread like a crucified phoenix, it presents a ruthless, clinical examination of death, decay and the tragic beauty that accompanies them, and a demonstration of Freud's developing powers of concentration.

3

MAN WITH
A THISTLE
(SELF-PORTRAIT)

1946
Oil on canvas
61 x 50.2 cm

London, Tate:
purchased 1961
Inv. No. T00422



403)))

Following the ease of travel restrictions at the end of the war, Freud and an artist friend John Craxton tried to reach France by stowing away on a Breton fisherman's boat. The attempt failed, and the two men travelled instead to the Scilly Isles, off the western tip of Cornwall. It was there that this disquieting self-portrait was painted. Freud has depicted himself looking out through a partly-shuttered window. On a ledge in front of him, occupying the foreground of the picture, lies a spiky thistle. It can be read both as a real object and as a psychological device planted in the composition to convey a mood of threat and wariness. The nervous, penetrating look in the artist's eyes serves only to reinforce this sentiment. Thinly painted and overtly realistic, this work has often been cited as an example of Freud's interest in Early Netherlandish painting.

4

GIRL IN A DARK
JACKET

1947
Oil on panel
47 x 38.1 cm

Private Collection



404)))

Freud began visiting Paris, first in 1946 while on his way to Greece, and again in 1947, with Kitty Garman, daughter of Lorna Wishart's eldest sister Kathleen Garman and the sculptor Jacob Epstein. *Girl in a Dark Jacket* is the first in a series of remarkable portraits of Kitty that Freud painted. Assembled with an unsparing, forensic precision, one strand of hair at a time, it has as many of the attributes of a drawing as it does of an oil painting. Kitty described sitting for Freud as 'like being arranged' and the glacial stare from her large, almost feline eyes conveys a sense of introspection and psychological alienation. They were married in the spring of 1948, and the first of two daughters was born later that summer.

5

GIRL WITH
A WHITE DOG

1950–1951
Oil on canvas
76.2 x 101.6 cm

London, Tate:
purchased 1952
Inv. No. N06039



405)))

Dressed in a bathrobe, the artist's pregnant wife Kitty sits on a bare mattress pressed up against a wall. The snout of a bull terrier rests on her thigh, one of a pair that they had been given as a wedding present. Freud had begun to paint its companion, who was black, but it was run over before the picture was completed. The painting is one of Freud's earliest depictions of a naked female subject, and the first of many that would examine the physical and psychological relationship between human and animal sitters. Seen in the context of his subsequent career, *Girl with a White Dog* represents an important transition in Freud's technique and style, assimilating and defining characteristics of both previous and later works. As it turned out, it would also be the last in the series of his portraits of Kitty. The couple separated not long after the painting was completed.

6

PORTRAIT OF
JOHN MINTON

1952
Oil on canvas
40 x 25.4 cm

London, The Royal
College of Art
Collection



406)))

John Minton was a painter, illustrator and respected teacher at the Royal College of Art. Independently wealthy, he supported many of his fellow artists: this painting was commissioned after Minton had seen Freud's first portrait of Francis Bacon, completed earlier the same year. One can detect a greater depth and humanity in this work in comparison to those that preceded it, and a candid sympathy for the subject. Minton, who had lost faith in his own talent, is a picture of anguish, vulnerability and pained regret. He eventually succumbed to his deep melancholy and alcoholism, taking his own life in 1957 at the age of 39.

GIRL IN BED

1952
Oil on canvas
45.7 x 30.5 cm
Private Collection



This is a portrait of Freud's second wife, Lady Caroline Blackwood, an aristocrat and heiress to the famous Guinness brewing dynasty. The two eloped to Paris in 1952, when Caroline was just 21, and lived together at a hotel on the Left Bank. They were married the following year. It is among the most loving and gentle of all of his portraits, tenderly capturing Caroline's wide-eyed innocence, and also demonstrates Freud's intense attention to detail. "I felt that the only way I could work properly was using maximum observation and maximum concentration," he later recalled. "I thought that by staring at my subject matter and by examining it closely I could get something from it. I had a lot of eye trouble, terrible headaches because of the strain of painting so close."

BANANAS

1953
Oil on canvas
22.9 x 14.9 cm
Southampton,
Southampton
City Art Gallery,
Inv. No. 85/1963



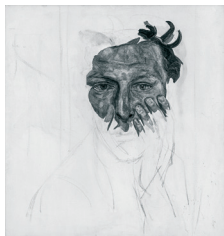
In December 1952, shortly before his 30th birthday, Freud travelled to Jamaica to escape the turmoil of his private life back in London. He stayed for several months with the author Ian Fleming and his wife Ann at their villa Goldeneye. Ann had been an early patron of Freud, sitting for a portrait in 1950 and introducing him to her circle of influential friends, among them the Devonshire family. The following summer, working outdoors in nature while Fleming wrote *Casino Royale*, the first James Bond novel, Freud painted this meticulously observed still-life. It was the first time that he had dedicated an entire canvas to the character of a plant. The painting was exhibited at the Venice Biennale the following year.

9

SELF-PORTRAIT

Ca. 1956
Oil on canvas
61 x 61 cm

Private Collection



This unfinished self-portrait provides a remarkable insight into Freud's working methods and technique. The basic structure of the image is sketched in charcoal, over which oil paint is then directly applied. Unlike many painters, Freud begins in the exact centre of the composition and works his way outwards to the peripheries of the composition. Seen in its unfinished state, it exudes what a critic of Freud's work once described as "the silent intensity of a grenade in the millisecond before it goes off." The brushwork evident in this work also signals the beginning of a bolder approach to painting that Freud adopted in the mid-1950s. He began to work from a standing position, and switched to coarser hog's hair brushes which loosened his strokes, making them bolder and more sensual.

10

PREGNANT GIRL

1960 – 1961
Oil on canvas
91.5 x 71 cm

Private Collection



One of the earliest naked portraits in Freud's oeuvre, this highly expressive painting depicts Freud's lover at the time, Bernardine Coverley, pregnant with their first daughter, Bella. The infant child, born shortly afterwards, can be seen in the neighbouring painting (Cat. No. 11). Sleeping on a sofa, her head turned away from the viewer and her swollen belly covered by a blanket, she is painted with a stronger physical presence and a more developed sense of volume, movement and contrast between light and shadow than had previously appeared in Freud's work. Coverley and Freud had a second daughter, Esther, two years later.

11

BABY ON
A GREEN SOFA

1961
Oil on canvas
56 x 62 cm

Trustees of the
Chatsworth Settlement



The subject of this tender portrait, the artist's newborn daughter Bella, is probably the youngest that he ever painted. Bella sleeps on a green sofa, innocently dreaming, with her arms raised, her white dress and chubby limbs silhouetted against the dark background. The tones and texture of her skin are marvellously nuanced, having been scrutinized every bit as hard as those of Freud's adult subjects. The painting hung for many years at Chatsworth House before its owners became aware of the child's identity. Bella is today a fashion designer, and her younger sister Esther a novelist.

12

RED HAIRE D MAN
ON A CHAIR

1962–1963
Oil on canvas
91.5 x 91.5 cm

Private Collection



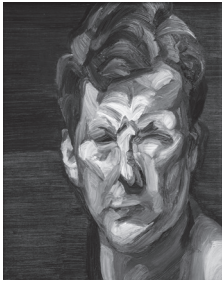
A young art student is portrayed crouching awkwardly on a chair. Behind him, almost like clouds or a range of mountains, lies a pile of dirty linen rags which Freud used to clean his brushes. They will become a recurring image in his paintings. For the first time we become aware of the setting of the studio, of the various props and devices which would soon become familiar. The fact that the subject of the painting is clothed altered nothing in terms of the artist's observation or scrutiny. "When I paint clothes," Freud once said, "I am really painting naked people who are covered in clothes. That's what I like so much about Ingres."

13

SELF-PORTRAIT

1963
Oil on canvas
30.5 x 25.1 cm

London, National
Portrait Gallery,
Inv. No. NPG 5205



412)))

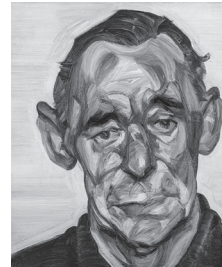
Freud returned to the idea of the self-portrait constantly throughout his career, in an ongoing study of the process of ageing and the change it inflicted on his own physical form. In 1963, shortly after his fortieth birthday, he painted two small self-portraits, of which this is one. His face is heavily faceted and rendered sculptural, almost mask-like, while his eyes are focused and directed downward. Over his career, Freud destroyed many more self-portraits than he kept. “They seem to go wrong so very often,” he remarked.

14

PORTRAIT OF
JOHN DEAKIN

1963–1964
Oil on canvas
30.2 x 24.8 cm

Private Collection



413)))

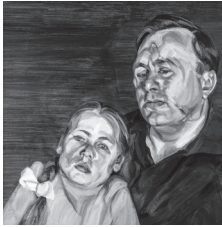
John Deakin was a close friend of Freud and part of a circle that frequented the bars and restaurants of Soho. A talented photographer, he worked on assignment for “Vogue” and was frequently commissioned by Francis Bacon during the 1950s and 60s to take portraits that would serve as the basis for some of his most well-known paintings, including a three-part portrait of Freud completed in the same year as this work. Painted from life, this small portrait does little to flatter its subject. An apparently quiet and unassuming man, Deakin was in fact a chronic alcoholic and Freud lays bare his troubled and self-destructive personality with a caring but unsparing monumentality.

15

A MAN AND HIS
DAUGHTER

1963–1964
Oil on canvas
61 x 61 cm

Private Collection



414)))

The man in this painting, Ted, was a bank robber who lived downstairs from Freud in Paddington at the time that the portrait was made. His face was lined with scars, an unfortunate signature of his violent employment. “He had a thick skin and was very well stitched up,” Freud recalled. He is painted sitting with his young daughter Sharon, her plait tied with a pure white bow, in a tender image of fatherly love.

16

CYCLAMEN

1964
Oil on canvas
45.7 x 49.2 cm

Private Collection



Freud is known to have painted several murals in his life. The only two still in existence both depict cyclamens; one in the dining room at Coombe Priory, a house in the Dorset countryside where Freud lived for some time with his second wife Caroline, the other in a bathroom at Chatsworth House, the ancestral seat of the Dukes of Devonshire. For this small painting, he placed a flowering plant in a ceramic sink on the balcony outside his flat in Paddington overlooking the canal. Cyclamens interested him as much for their strength in life as their theatrical weakness in death. “They die in such a dramatic way,” he once remarked. “It’s as if they fill and run over. They crash down, their stems turn to jelly and their veins harden.”

17

REFLECTION WITH
TWO CHILDREN
(SELF-PORTRAIT)

1965
Oil on canvas
91.5 x 91.5 cm

Madrid, Museo
Thyssen-Bornemisza



415)))

The strange foreshortening of the artist's body in this self-portrait was created by placing a mirror on the studio floor. Freud used mirrors both to remain true to visual experience – to avoid painting his mental image of a person – and to see himself from unconventional angles. Hiding his painting tools from view, Freud glares down at his own reflection, portraying himself as a detached and solitary colossus. Freud's young son and daughter, Ali and Rose Boyt, appear below the mirror's edge almost like apparitions, represented frontally as though in an entirely separate space. Their composition recalls the sculpted Egyptian portraits that appear in Freud's later painting *Still Life with Book* (Cat. No. 34).

18

NAKED GIRL

1966
Oil on canvas
61 x 61 cm

Collection Steve Martin



416)))

Naked Girl was Freud's first portrait of a complete naked figure. Until this point he had tended to concentrate his focus on the head. "I always started with the head; and then I realised that I wanted very deliberately not: the figure not to be strengthened by the head. The head is a limb, of course." Sprawled on a blanket on the studio floor, the girl's pose appears natural enough – her arms flop backwards of their own accord, her legs lock together as though in modesty – and yet the cropped composition and stark, unflattering lighting reveal a certain tension. The exposure of her genitalia and her weak, relaxed hands lend the subject a vulnerable and passive presence, making the artist's gaze seem dominant, perhaps even aggressive.

19

INTERIOR WITH A
PLANT, REFLECTION

1967–1968
Oil on canvas
121.8 x 121.8 cm

Private Collection



417)))

This painting is one of Freud's most experimental compositions. A large houseplant partially obscures the surface of a mirror, in which the artist's naked reflection is revealed, cupping his ear with a hand as though straining to listen. Complexities of scale and positioning – the artist is dwarfed by the plant's leaves, like a satyr in a forest – reveal Freud's increasingly innovative and playful approach to the staging of paintings. Although initially painted at night, Freud decided to make the work during the day, to avoid an over-dramatic reflection, and, perhaps, to maintain the strange enigma of the composition.

20

WASTEGROUND
WITH HOUSES,
PADDINGTON

1970–1972
Oil on canvas
167.5 x 101.5 cm

Private Collection



418)))

This painting, a view from the back windows of Freud's studio in Gloucester Terrace in north-west London, underwent a gradual evolution affected in part by the death of the artist's father in April 1970. The painting is haunted by a poignant sense of loss and decay. Deciding to remove human figures that were initially there, Freud instead focused on the discarded waste in the yard. "I felt somehow," he said, "that the rubbish was the life of the painting. I'm fascinated with the haphazard way it has come about, with the poignancy of the impermanency of it." Freud's landscapes can be seen as a catching of breath between the intense communion of his portraiture. "When I was under particular strain," he later said, "I didn't feel so like staring at people or bodies all day."

21

THE PAINTER'S
MOTHER

1972
Oil on canvas
35 x 27.2 cm

The Estate of the Artist



419)))

Following the death of his father in 1970, Freud's mother Lucie sank into a deep depression and once attempted suicide. Until that point, she had always treated her son with overwhelming attention: now Freud was able to return the favour. "I started working from her because she lost interest in me," he later recalled. Over the next seven years, four or five days a week, Lucie sat for around ten paintings and a number of drawings and etchings, introducing a new tenderness to the artist's work. The intense scrutiny and psychological discomfort of Freud's earlier work make way for a more sympathetic gaze, reminiscent of portraits by Rembrandt and Dürer of their mothers.

22

LARGE INTERIOR,
LONDON W.9

1973
Oil on canvas
91.4 x 91.4 cm

Trustees of the
Chatsworth Settlement



420)))

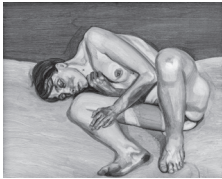
The uncanny psychological dislocation in this double portrait was partly inspired by Giorgione's *La Tempesta* (1506–08) and partly by its method of composition: the two figures, Freud's mother Lucie and his then girlfriend Lady Jacquetta Eliot, sat separately for the work. The sitters are connected through Freud himself – Lucie was grandmother to Jacquetta's son Francis – and through their apparent representation of opposites: youth and old age, naked and clothed. In every other respect they feel distant from each other. The work has a disconcerting starkness: the walls and floors have an almost sanatorium-like blankness. The artist's presence is indicated in the pestle and mortar placed beneath his mother's chair, used for grinding the charcoal that Freud mixed in with the pigment.

23

SMALL NAKED
PORTRAIT

1973–1974
Oil on canvas
22 x 27 cm

Oxford,
The Ashmolean Museum
WA1988.229; A1157



421)))

From the early 1970s, Freud started using the term “naked portraits” to refer to his paintings that take the unclothed human body as their subject. Treating the body as a portrait implies both an equal interest in every part of the body – from dirty soles to sun-reddened hands – and that the naked body has its own eloquence, comparable to a painted face. In *Small Naked Portrait*, Jacquetta Eliot seems to cower from the painter’s gaze, her physical vulnerability emphasised by the painting’s high viewpoint and the stark artificial nighttime light, like an inquisitor’s lamp. Yet the tenderness of her almost foetal position has an emotional resonance that gives this small painting all the startling power of one of Freud’s larger works.

24

PORTRAIT OF ROSE

1973
Oil on canvas
91.4 x 91.4 cm

Trustees of the
Chatsworth Settlement



423)))

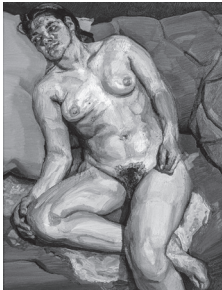
The titles of Freud’s portraits rarely identify their subjects, with the occasional exception of fellow artists and his own children. In this painting, Freud’s 20-year old daughter Rose Boyt sprawls on her father’s sofa in uninhibited nakedness, suggesting an intimacy that is both unsettling and confrontational. A discarded shoe and rucked sheets seem to imply a turbulent disrobing, and Rose’s face seems flushed, her right hand shielding her eyes in contrast with the frank revelation of her genitalia below. Points of sensitivity (nipples, fingers and feet) are accentuated with red, heightening Rose’s awareness of her surroundings.

25

ESTHER

1980
Oil on canvas
48.9 x 38.3 cm

Private Collection



424)))

For Freud's children, the experience of sitting for a portrait allowed them to spend time with their otherwise distant father. At the age of sixteen, Esther Freud had recently moved to London, and posed for her father on a number of occasions. "When I used to go and visit his studio I would always see nudes, so when he asked if I would like to sit for him, I said yes and without any thought or discussion, I took off my clothes and sat down." Asked later in an interview about the portraits of his daughters, Freud replied: "There is something about a person being naked in front of me that involves consideration; in the case of my children a father's consideration as well as a painter's. They make it all right for me to paint them. My naked daughters have nothing to be ashamed of."

26

MAN IN A CHAIR

1983-1985
Oil on canvas
120.7 x 100.4 cm

Madrid, Thyssen-Bornemisza Collections



425)))

This portrait of Baron Hans Heinrich Thyssen-Bornemisza depicts the art collector and industrialist seated in the artist's studio. It makes reference to the traditions of historical portraiture, in particular Diego Velázquez, while remaining thoroughly contemporary. Throughout his career, Freud received commissions for portraits, yet never sought to flatter or aggrandise his sitters. "People go on about how to be commissioned is on some way to be trammelled or harnessed or limited," Freud once remarked. "W.H. Auden said a very sensible thing about this. 'In the end', he said, 'it's a romantic idea. Whatever an artist does, they think they're commissioning themselves.'"

27

TWO JAPANESE
WRESTLERS BY
A SINK

1983–1987
Oil on canvas
50.8 x 78.7 cm

Chicago, The Art
Institute of Chicago,
1987.275



426)))

Freud worked on this small still-life painting intermittently for around five years. Although an unusual work in his oeuvre, its concerns – the representation of passing time, and the relationship of the body and its surroundings – resonate with other works by the artist. The wrestlers' bodies, seen in a cropped photograph behind the sink, find parallels in the floor tiles and the stained base of the sink, both of which take on a bodily aspect and palette. The dribbling taps, an allegorical symbol for the transience of life, contrast with the stillness and silence of the studio interior.

28

TWO IRISHMEN
IN W11

1984–1985
Oil on canvas
172.7 x 142.2 cm

Private Collection



427)))

The owner of a chain of betting shops in Northern Ireland sits in an armchair with his nineteen-year-old son behind him. Suited and booted, they appear to be somewhat out of place. Propped against the far wall are two unfinished self-portraits of the artist with a black eye, received after a disagreement with a taxi driver. Out of the studio window one can see a meticulously detailed landscape of Holland Park, West London, almost a separate painting within the painting. Eschewing the troubling psychology of Freud's earlier double portraits, this work evokes a sense of familial respect and generational continuity.

29

REFLECTION
(SELF-PORTRAIT)

1985
Oil on canvas
55.9 x 53.3 cm

Private Collection



428)))

Caught in the harsh light of an overhead lamp, the face of the artist is subjected to painstaking scrutiny. The crevices and sags of advancing age are transferred to the canvas as they are, without vanity. Painted when the artist was in his sixties, *Reflection (Self-Portrait)* has none of the cocksure attitude of his earlier self-portraits; his tired eyes gaze outward warily, their intense gaze diminished, like a light dimmed. The artist's untidy hair and bare shoulders suggest a person stripped to his naked essence, as Freud turns his unflinching eye on his own transforming reflection in the mirror.

30

DOUBLE PORTRAIT

1985–1986
Oil on canvas
78.7 x 88.9 cm

Private Collection



429)))

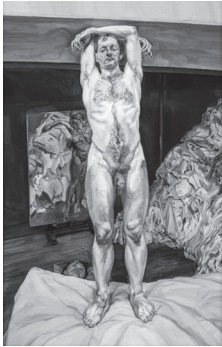
An old friend of the artist is portrayed reclining with her whippet, Joshua. The natural entwining of their bodies (snout on palm, limb on limb) conveys a sense of intimate affection and shared existence. Freud had practical reasons for painting dogs – they are dependable sitters when in the company of someone familiar – but distrusted their love of habit and order, something to which the artist was not himself disposed. He often spoke about his interest in the animal qualities of humans; here the sentiment is somewhat reversed, with the painting's title rendering human its canine subject.

31

TWO MEN IN
THE STUDIO

1987–1989
Oil on canvas
120 x 185.5 cm

Lewis Collection



430)))

Leaning on an easel behind the two male subjects of this daylight portrait is another canvas that was painted at night (*Standing by the Rags*, Cat. No. 32). Freud's practice of alternating daytime and nighttime painting was determined by the demands of the scene to be depicted: here, streaming daylight gives the work an open and somewhat casual atmosphere, despite its unusual composition. The writer and poet Angus Cook stands on top of a bed in an upright, frontal pose that brings to mind Jean-Antoine Watteau's *Gilles*, or perhaps a contemporary St. Sebastian, while his partner, the artist Cerith Wyn Evans, lies beneath.

32

STANDING BY
THE RAGS

1988–1989
Oil on canvas
168 x 138.4 cm

London, Tate;
purchased 1990 with
assistance from the Art
Fund, the Friends of
the Tate Gallery and
anonymous donors,
T05722



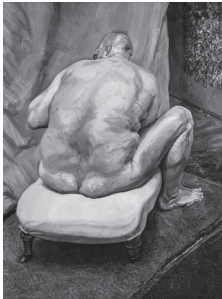
431)))

Propped up against a mound of hotel linen – used by Freud to wipe his brushes and palette knives clean – the painter Sophie de Stempel seems almost to be floating. A heater beneath the rags kept the cold studio warm during the nighttime sessions and allowed her to rest some of her weight against them; even so, her outsized feet seem tensed in support of her body. Freud examines the sensation of bodily gravity by depicting the figure vertically, and in doing so subverts the historical convention of the reclining nude.

**NAKED MAN,
BACK VIEW**

1991–1992
Oil on canvas
183.5 x 137.5 cm

New York, The
Metropolitan Museum
of Art; purchase,
Lila Acheson Wallace
Gift, 1993 (1993.71)



433)))

The Australian performance artist Leigh Bowery, an outrageous dresser who was an influential figure in the London club scene of the 1980s and 90s, was the first professional model to sit for Freud. He was asked by the artist to remove his many piercings, so as to be entirely naked. Bowery's charm, charisma and enormous physical presence, manoeuvred with the grace and delicacy of a dancer, enthralled Freud. His portraits of Bowery are among the most monumental of his entire career. This particular work was enlarged several times during its painting, with additions made to the sides and bottom of the canvas, indicating an increasing spontaneity of composition.

**STILL LIFE WITH
BOOK**

1991–1992
Oil on canvas
19 x 24.2 cm

Private Collection



432)))

Freud was interested in ancient Egypt from an early age; his maternal grandmother took him on afternoon visits to the Egyptian Museum in Berlin, while his paternal grandfather, Sigmund, amassed a world-class collection of Egyptian, Greek and Roman antiquities. This painting depicts an illustrated book of Egyptian history, *Geschichte Aegyptens*, by the renowned scholar J.H. Breasted that was published by Phaidon Press, Vienna, in 1936. Freud was given a copy of the book in 1939 when he was sixteen years old, and it would remain a lifelong companion. The two plaster heads illustrated dated from the time of Akhenaten in the fourteenth century BC. For Freud, they represented the epitome of portraiture. “By painting them I didn’t have to go very far afield,” he later said. “I thought about those people a lot. There’s nothing like them: they’re human before Egyptian in a way.”

35

NUDE WITH LEG UP
(LEIGH BOWERY)

1992
Oil on linen
182.9 x 229 cm

Washington, DC,
Hirshhorn Museum and
Sculpture Garden,
Smithsonian Institution;
Joseph H. Hirshhorn
Purchase Fund,
1993



434)))

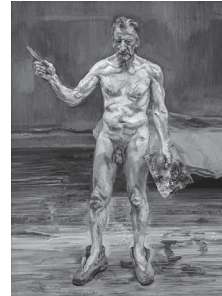
Freud's paintings of Leigh Bowery challenged traditional art historical conventions of the nude. The pose that Bowery himself devised for this portrait is pitched somewhere between male and female, his coquettishly reclining upper body contrasting with his splayed legs, revealing his flopping genitalia. It is both confident and intimately revealing, and a self-imposed test of physical endurance. Asked at the time about his experiences of sitting for Freud, Bowery replied: "The bonus is the quietness. You get a different sense of yourself. It's nice to have that level of attention. And a tension."

36

PAINTER WORKING,
REFLECTION

1993
Oil on canvas
101.6 x 81.7 cm

Private Collection



436)))

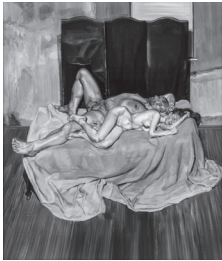
In December 1992, Freud turned 70 and set about working on his largest and most challenging self-portrait to date. "Now the very least I can do is paint myself naked," he said at the time. Wearing only his unlaced boots to avoid splinters from the studio floor, Freud faced the mirror, wielding his palette knife and encrusted palette like a sword and shield. The defiance of the pose is at odds with his own physical condition which conveys a profound pathos. Vulnerable and visibly weakened by age, he is both courageous and accepting of the ravages of time. Asked once if he was a good model for himself, Freud replied: "No. I don't accept the information that I get when I look at myself and that's where the trouble starts."

37

AND THE
BRIDEGROOM

1993
Oil on canvas
231.8 x 196.2 cm

Lewis Collection



435)))

Leigh Bowery sat regularly for Freud over a period of four years. *And the Bridegroom*, a remarkable painting whose title is borrowed from a poem by A.E. Housman, is in many respects the most tender and romantic of all. It depicts Bowery lying beside his seamstress and collaborator Nicola Bateman. The following year Bowery and Bateman were married, and seven months later Bowery died of an AIDS-related illness. Freud had been unaware of Bowery's condition until he was admitted to hospital. "I found him perfectly beautiful," Freud said, after his death. "He was a remarkable model because he was so intelligent, instinctive and inventive, also amazingly perverse and abandoned."

38

BENEFITS
SUPERVISOR
RESTING

1994
Oil on canvas
160 x 150.4 cm

Private Collection



437)))

Between 1994 and 1996, Freud produced four large paintings of Sue Tilley, a friend and later biographer of Leigh Bowery. Tilley would sit for him every weekend, and was sometimes persuaded to take an additional day off from work to spend at the studio. Fascinated by her voluminous proportions, Freud depicted her in a series of reclining poses that recall celebrated nudes of the past. The sofa that she lies on was bought specifically for her; its own form seems to echo the bulging contours of her body. Unusually for Freud, the title of the painting reveals Tilley's occupation as an official at the Department of Health and Social Security.

39

BENEFITS
SUPERVISOR
SLEEPING

1995
Oil on canvas
151.3 x 219 cm

Private Collection



438)))

Freud's portraits of Sue Tilley invite us to reconsider the idealised conventions of the reclining female nude. This particular work brings to mind paintings such as Manet's *Olympia* or the *Rokeby Venus* by Velázquez. Freud's interest, however, was far from an idealised one. He was, he said, "very aware of all kinds of spectacular things to do with her size, like amazing craters and things one's never seen before, my eye was naturally drawn to the sores and chafes made by weight and heat. [...] It's flesh without muscle and it has developed a different kind of texture through being such a weight-bearing thing."

40

AFTER CHARDIN
(LARGE)

1999
Oil on canvas
52.7 x 61 cm

Private Collection



439)))

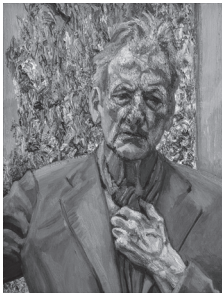
When Freud was asked by the National Gallery in London to produce a new work in response to a painting from their collection, he had no hesitation in choosing Chardin's *The Young Schoolmistress* (ca. 1735–36). It was a painting that he had admired for many years, as much for the artist's quality and handling of paint as for its honest and understated subject matter. Freud was granted permission to work at night in the museum over a period of several months, directly in front of the original painting. He painted two versions of it; in this, the larger of the two, he has subtly recalibrated the relationship between the two subjects. The reworking represents a remarkable dialogue between artists across almost three centuries of painting.

41

SELF-PORTRAIT,
REFLECTION

2002
Oil on canvas
66 x 50.8 cm

Private Collection



It is perhaps natural to expect a certain melancholy in self-portraits made late in an artist's life, but in *Self-Portrait, Reflection*, Freud is unflinching in his candid depiction of physical deterioration. He clutches at a noose-like scarf around his neck, heightening the tension in his ageing hands; his jacket, worn without a shirt, seems to be too large for him and further diminishes his physical stature. Standing in front of a wall encrusted with paint that he scraped and flicked each morning from the tops of his tubes of paint, his head seems almost to be enveloped by the impasto.

440)))

42

PLUTO'S GRAVE

2003
Oil on canvas
41 x 29.8 cm

Private Collection,
Courtesy of
Blain|Southern



This painting depicts the grave of Pluto, Freud's female whippet, in the garden behind his studio. A hatched carpet of autumnal leaves lies beneath the simple limestone marker. Small in size and almost daringly simple in composition, it manages nevertheless to convey an extraordinary pathos and sense of mortality. "I was rather excited by that painting," Freud later recalled, "because it's almost of absolutely nothing, so how the actual paint went down has just never been as important. By nothing, I mean there's not an eye, a nose or a mouth, in fact it's mainly of dead leaves. Since they couldn't be painted one by one, otherwise it wouldn't work at all, it's oddly related and seems of nothing at all. It is very like the garden on the other hand."

**PORTRAIT OF
THE HOUND**

2010–2011
Oil on canvas
150 x 150 cm

Private Collection,
Courtesy of Acquavella
Galleries



441)))

Freud's commitment to his work was such that he painted each and every day until the last two weeks of his life, when he was too frail to continue. *Portrait of the Hound*, an affectionate double portrait of Freud's long-term assistant David Dawson and his whippet, Eli, was worked on during a period of four years. It was left unfinished on the artist's easel when he died on 21st July, 2011. The figure of Dawson is largely finished; the last brush strokes that Freud made shaped Eli's attentively listening ear.

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with David Dawson, longtime assistant to
Lucian Freud
in English

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SAAL VIII

Jasper Sharp:
The Making of the Exhibition
in English

THURS, DEC. 5TH
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BASSANO-SAAL

Andreas Zimmermann:
Lucian Freud
und die Alten Meister
in German

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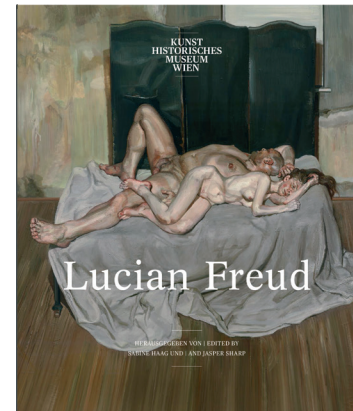
David Dawson
Man with a Blue Scarf
2004
Photographic print
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Sabine Haag and Jasper Sharp (Eds.)
Hardcover with book-jacket,
264 pages, in German/English
ISBN 978-3-7913-6503-9
€ 39,95



EDITOR

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Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien
Burgring 5, 1010 Vienna

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