



Next week we will look at one of the most famous figurative artists, David Hockney, and this week we will cover eight figurative artists more briefly. Figurative art has long been a feature of British art and the artists most often associated with figurative art since WWII are those of the 'School of London'. This is a term invented by artist R.B. Kitaj to describe a group of London-based artists who were pursuing forms of figurative painting in the face of avant-garde abstraction in the 1970s.

Last term we looked at a few figurative artists who painted between 1900 and 1950 including:

- **John Singer Sargent** (1856-1925), an American artist who worked in Britain and became the leading portrait painter of his generation.
- **Walter Sickert** (1860-1942), a painter's painter and one of the **most influential British artists** of the twentieth century.
- **Gwen John** (1876-1939). Gwen John, was an **intense and solitary artist** who was described by her brother Augustus John as the better artist.
- **Augustus John** (1878-1961) Augustus John was one of the **most popular society portrait** artists at the beginning of the twentieth century.
- **Laura Knight** (1877-1970) Knight was a painter in the figurative, realist tradition who was among the **most successful and popular painters** in

- Britain. In 1929 she was created a Dame, and in 1936 became the first woman elected to the Royal Academy since its foundation in 1768.
- **William Orpen** (1878-1931) an Irish artist who worked mainly in London. William Orpen was a fine draughtsman and a **popular, commercially successful, painter of portraits** for the well-to-do in Edwardian society. During the First World War, he was the most prolific of the official artists sent by Britain to the Western Front and as a Major he was allowed to stay longer. He donated most of this work to the British government.
 - **David Bomberg** (1890-1957) was an English painter, and one of the Whitechapel Boys. Bomberg was one of the most **audacious** of the exceptional generation of artists who studied at the Slade School of Art. He fell out of favour and has only recently been re-evaluated.
 - **Stanley Spencer** (1891-1959) is one of the great early **figurative artists** in Britain and his life was covered four weeks ago. I have included him here to remind you of his work.
 - **Victor Pasmore** (1908-1998), who went from figurative to abstract and so creates a link to next term's artists.

This week the artists we will cover are:

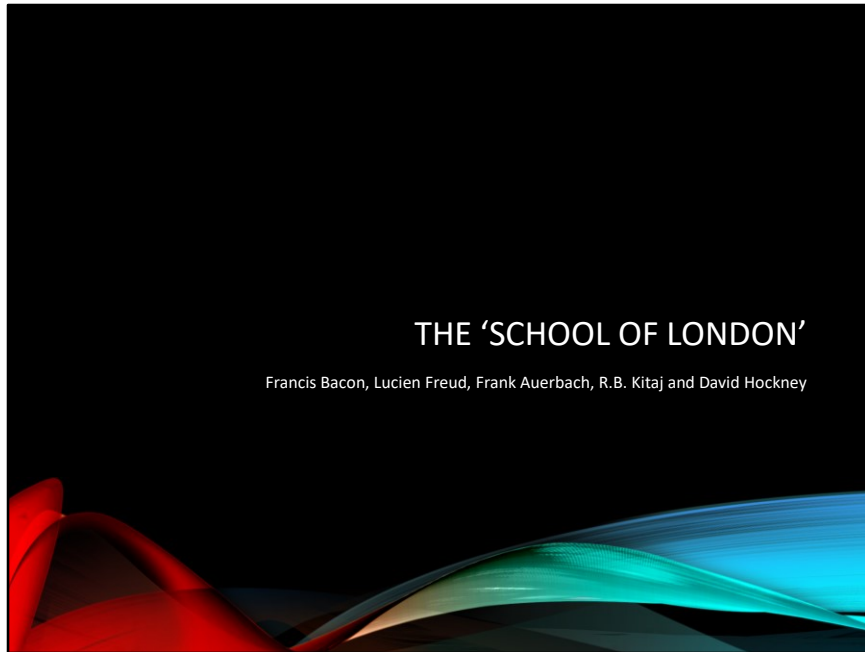
1. **Francis Bacon** (1909-1992), never went to school and was not formerly trained, started painting in his twenties but his breakthrough was not until he was 35.
 2. **Lucien Freud** (1922-2011), grandson of Sigmund Freud, fled Germany in 1933, expelled from schools, 40 children. Charismatic and 'paranoid'.
 3. **Frank Auerbach** (b. 1931), a German Jew sent to England in 1938 under the Kindertransport. He studied at St Martins and the Royal College of Art. Private and hard working.
 4. **R. B. Kitaj** (1932-2007) was an American artist with Jewish roots who spent much of his life in England. Text-based intellectual.
 5. **Euan Uglow** (1932-2000), passionate about painting. Precise nudes.
 6. **Peter Doig** (b. 1939), Scottish painter who lives in Trinidad. Humble and sincere artist.
 7. **Elizabeth Frink** (1930-1993), intellectual sculptor and author.
 8. **Anthony Gormley** (b. 1950), sculptor, Cambridge graduate who studied Buddhist mediation.
- Many of these artists were influenced by Walter Sickert.
 - There was also a mood of 'kitchen sink' art during the 1950s. The 'kitchen sink' artists painted ordinary scenes of everyday life. The best known were the Beaux Arts Quartet—John Bratby, Derrick Greaves, Edward Middleditch and Jack Smith.

They represented Britain at the 1956 Venice Biennale.



BRITISH ART SINCE 1950

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Other School of London figurative artists include Michael Andrews, Howard Hodgkin and Leon Kossoff.

Plus Euan Uglow and Anthony Gormley. Elizabeth Frink would also be included here if time permitted.



FRANCIS BACON (1909-1992)

- Francis Bacon (1909–1992) was an Irish-born British figurative painter known for his bold, grotesque, emotionally charged and raw imagery. His painterly abstracted figures are typically isolated in glass or steel geometrical cages, set against flat, nondescript backgrounds. Bacon **took up painting in his early 20s** but worked sporadically and uncertainly until his **mid-30s**. He drifted as a highly complex bon vivant, homosexual, gambler and interior decorator and designer of furniture, rugs and bathroom tiles. He later admitted that his artistic career was delayed because he spent too long looking for subject matter that could sustain his interest.



Francis Bacon (1909-1992), *Three Studies for Figures at the Base of a Crucifixion*, c.1944, each 94 x 73.7 cm, Tate

Matthias Grünewald (c. 1470-1528), *Mocking of Christ*, 1503-5, 109 x 74.3 cm, Alte Pinakothek, Munich

- His **breakthrough** came with the 1944 triptych *Three Studies for Figures at the Base of a Crucifixion*, which in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War, **sealed his reputation** as a uniquely **bleak chronicler** of the human condition. Remarking on the cultural significance of *Three Studies*, the art critic John Russell observed that "**there was painting in England before the Three Studies, and painting after them, and no one...can confuse the two.**"
- Tate caption, 'The title of this triptych refers to figures sometimes depicted at the foot of the cross in religious paintings. Bacon later related them to *The Eumenides*, vengeful **Furies** of Greek myth. Typically, he drew on various sources, including photography. The work's exhibition in April 1945 coincided with the release of the first photographs and film footage of the Nazi concentration camps. For some, Bacon's triptych reflected the pessimistic world ushered in by the Holocaust and the advent of nuclear weapons.'
- Painted in oil and pastel on **fibre board** and completed in two weeks. It was

painted in his ground floor flat in South Kensington which had previously been John Everett Millais's billiard room. The orange hue displays inconsistently across the canvasses, due in part to the low level of oil in the paint, which resulted in varying rates of absorption into the board. The pallid flesh tones of the figures were achieved by overlaying grey and white brushstrokes, while the figures' props were coloured using a variety of yellow, green, white, and purple tones.

- The figure on the left is most human-like and could be a mourner. The central figure has a mouth in his neck and is blindfolded like the figure in Matthias Grünewald's *Mocking of Christ*. The figure on the right is on a patch of grass and may be screaming or yawning. Inspection under infra-red shows the panels were heavily reworked and the central figure was surrounded by flower-like objects and there was a distant figure. Marks around the edge of the canvas suggest the composition was carefully calculated.
- He started painting images based on the Crucifixion in 1933 but his early work was 'beautiful, but lifeless'. He regarded his painting career as starting with this painting and tried to destroy all previous works and he insisted no retrospective should include any paintings pre-dating 1944.
- When asked by critic Jean Clair why his Crucifixion scenes tended to comprise mainly "**slaughter, butchery, mutilated meat and flesh**", Bacon replied, "that's all the Crucifixion was, isn't it? ... Actually, you can't think of anything more barbaric than the Crucifixion, and that particular way of killing somebody."
- Bacon said that he saw **images 'in series'**, and his artistic output typically focused on a single subject or format for sustained periods, often in triptych or diptych formats.
- His output can be crudely described as sequences or variations on a single motif;
 - beginning with the **1930s Picasso-informed Furies**,
 - moving on to the **1940s male heads** isolated in rooms or geometric structures,
 - the **1950s screaming popes**,
 - and the **mid-to-late 1950s animals and lone figures**.
 - These were followed by his **early 1960s variations on crucifixion scenes**.
 - From the **mid-1960s he mainly produced portraits of friends** and drinking companions, either as single or triptych panels.
 - Following the **1971 suicide of his lover** George Dyer, his art became more **sombre, inward-looking** and preoccupied with the passage of time and death. The climax of this later period is marked by masterpieces, including his 1982's "Study for Self-Portrait" and *Study for a Self-Portrait—Triptych*, 1985–86.
- Bacon in person was highly engaging and **charismatic, articulate, well-read** and unapologetically gay. He was a **prolific artist**, but nonetheless spent many of the evenings of his middle age eating, drinking and gambling in London's Soho with

like-minded friends such as Lucian Freud.

- After his lover, George Dyer's suicide he largely distanced himself from this circle, and while his social life was still active and his passion for gambling and drinking continued, he settled into a platonic and somewhat fatherly relationship with his eventual heir, John Edwards.
- Bacon was equally reviled and acclaimed during his lifetime. Art critic Robert Hughes described him as "the most implacable, lyric artist in late 20th-century England, perhaps in all the world" and along with Willem de Kooning as "**the most important painter of the disquieting human figure** in the 50's of the 20th century." Francis Bacon was the subject of two Tate retrospectives and a major showing in 1971 at the Grand Palais. Since his death his reputation and market value have **grown steadily**, and his work is amongst the most acclaimed, expensive and sought-after. In the late 1990s a number of major works, previously assumed destroyed, including early 1950s popes and 1960s portraits, re-emerged to set record prices at auction.
- On 12 November 2013 his *Three Studies of Lucian Freud* set the world record as the most expensive piece of art sold at auction, selling for **\$142,405,000**, until exceeded by the sale of Picasso's *Les Femmes d'Alger* in May 2015.



Francis Bacon (1909-1992), *Study for a Portrait*, 1952, 66.1 x 56.1 cm, Tate
 Sergei Eisenstein, still of nurse from *Battleship Potemkin*, 1925

- The painting has also been called ***Businessman I and Man's Head***. It shows the head and shoulders of an **unidentified male** figure wearing glasses, a white shirt, a suit jacket and a tie. The man appears to be screaming directly at a viewer, his mouth wide open and his teeth exposed.
- It dates from 1952 and may have been painted in the studio of another artist at the Royal College of Art. It **marks a crucial point** in Bacon's engagement with **portraiture**.
- One image that may have influenced Bacon is that of a **wounded, elderly nurse** in the stairway scene from Soviet director **Sergei Eisenstein's film *Battleship Potemkin* (1925)**, in which Tsarist soldiers carry out a massacre. The nurse wears cracked *pince-nez* glasses and has blood running down her cheek into her open, screaming mouth. Bacon saw the film in 1935 and painted from a book of stills from the film in 1944.
- In 1935, in Paris, Bacon purchased a **book describing diseases of the mouth** and he has described his obsession with the appearance of the mouth and teeth.
- **Men in suits** are a recurring motif in his work suggesting the power and status

associated with clothing but also, as here, the **vulnerability of the human being under the clothes**.

- When asked about his **use of a cage to frame** a figure or head Bacon said, 'I **cut down the scale of the canvas by drawing in these rectangles which concentrate the image down. Just to see it better ... I don't think it's a satisfactory device especially; I try to use it as little as possible. But sometimes it seems necessary.**'
- From 1947 until the end of his career Francis Bacon **painted directly** onto the **raw and unprimed side of the canvas** (rather than using the smooth, receptive surface provided by primed canvas), and in this work he emphasised the texture further, especially around the figure's eyes and mouth, by **rubbing sand into the paint**.

References

- <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/bacon-study-for-a-portrait-t12616>



Francis Bacon (1909–1992), *Study after Velázquez's Portrait of Pope Innocent X*, 1953, 153cm x 118.1cm

Diego Velázquez (1599–1660), *Portrait of Innocent X*, circa 1650, 141 × 119 cm, Doria Pamphilj Gallery, Rome

- Bacon ‘**mashed**’ his **portraits** through other images, streaking and sometimes trodden on the floor of his studio using his boots.
- “The painting illustrated on this page is based **Velázquez's portrait of Pope Innocent X**, a subject that Bacon treated – or mistreated - again and again. But the scream was never in Velázquez. Velázquez did not deal in screaming popes. It would have been more than his job of most favoured court painter to Philip IV of Spain was worth. No, the scream is snatched from a famous moment in a film by Eisenstein. Many of Bacon's images are palimpsests. Embedded within any particular image, there is often another image out of which the later image has grown. To what extent then has Bacon rendered this near sacred image utterly unholy, in fact near blasphemous?” (*The Independent*)
- Bacon was a lifelong atheist.

References

<http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/art/great-works/great-works-study-after-vel-zquez-portrait-of-pope-innocent-x-1953-153cm-x-1181cm-by-francis-bacon-8688702.html>



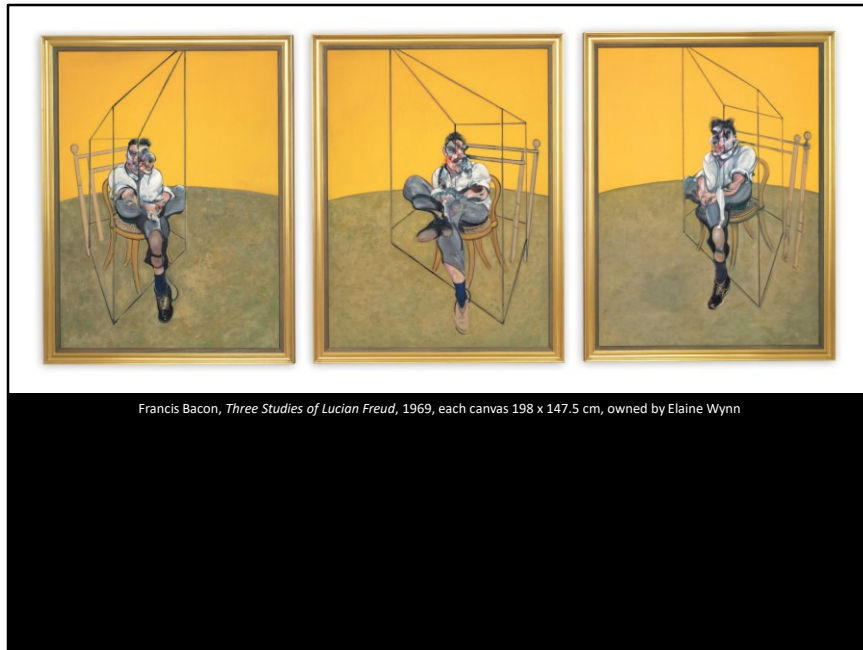
Francis Bacon (1909–1992), *Portrait of Isabel Rawsthorne*, 1966, 81.3 x 68.6 cm, Tate
John Deakin, Isabel Rawsthorne, photo

- At least one visit to Paris in 1946 brought Bacon into more immediate contact with **French postwar painting** and Left Bank ideas such as Existentialism. He had, by this time, embarked on his **lifelong friendship with Isabel Rawsthorne** (1912–1992), a painter closely **involved with Giacometti** and the Left Bank set. They shared many interests including ethnography and classical literature.
- Isabel Rawsthorne, also known as Isabel Lambert, (1912 – 1992) was a **British painter**, designer and **occasional artists' model**. During the war she worked in Black Propaganda. She was intimate with many members of the artistic bohemian society in which she flourished, including **Jacob Epstein, Alberto Giacometti and Francis Bacon**, and was **married three times**; to the journalist Sefton Delmer, the composer Constant Lambert and to Alan Rawsthorne.
- She was raised in Liverpool and studied at the **Liverpool College of Art**, won a **scholarship to the Royal Academy** in London and spent two years in the studio of the sculptor Jacob Epstein. Rawsthorne's first show was a sell-out and by September 1934 she was **living in Paris**. She worked with André Derain and lived

and travelled for a time with Balthus and his wife. She was painted several times by Derain and **Pablo Picasso**.

References

<http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/bacon-portrait-of-isabel-rawsthorne-t00879>



Francis Bacon, *Three Studies of Lucian Freud*, 1969, each canvas 198 x 147.5 cm, owned by Elaine Wynn

- This work is known for the fact that it was sold in November 2013 for **US\$142.4 million**, which at the time was the highest price attained at auction for a work of art (excluding inflation). As of January 2017 it is the 10th highest price paid for a work of art using unadjusted prices and the 3rd highest unadjusted price paid at auction.
- **Freud and Bacon** were introduced in **1945** by **Graham Sutherland** and they became **close friends** and rivals until they argued and **split up** in the mid-1970s. They **painted each other** and Bacon painted two triptychs, the first of which was painted in 1966 but has not been seen since 1992.
- All three paintings show Freud sitting on a **cane chair within a cage** on a mottled brown surface with a solid orange background. Behind each figure is a **bed head** that is taken from a **set of photographs** of Freud by John Deakin that Bacon used as reference.
- One historian wrote, "**Trapped here in a series of Baconian cages, a contorted Freud hovers from panel to panel like a coiled spring about to shoot out of the flat, airless picture plane.**"

- Christie's describe it as a '**true masterpiece**' although one art historian describes it as **not his best work**. It was **one of Bacon's favourite** works.
- The triptych was painted in 1969 at the **Royal College of Art** in London, where Bacon had a large enough studio to work on three adjacent canvases simultaneously. In the mid-70s the three paintings were **sold separately** against Bacon's wishes but in the 1980s a collector **reassembled** the works.



Lucian Freud (1922 – 2011) was one of the **most important and influential artists** of his generation.



Lucien Freud (1922–2011), *Reflection (Self-portrait)*, 1985, private collection, Ireland

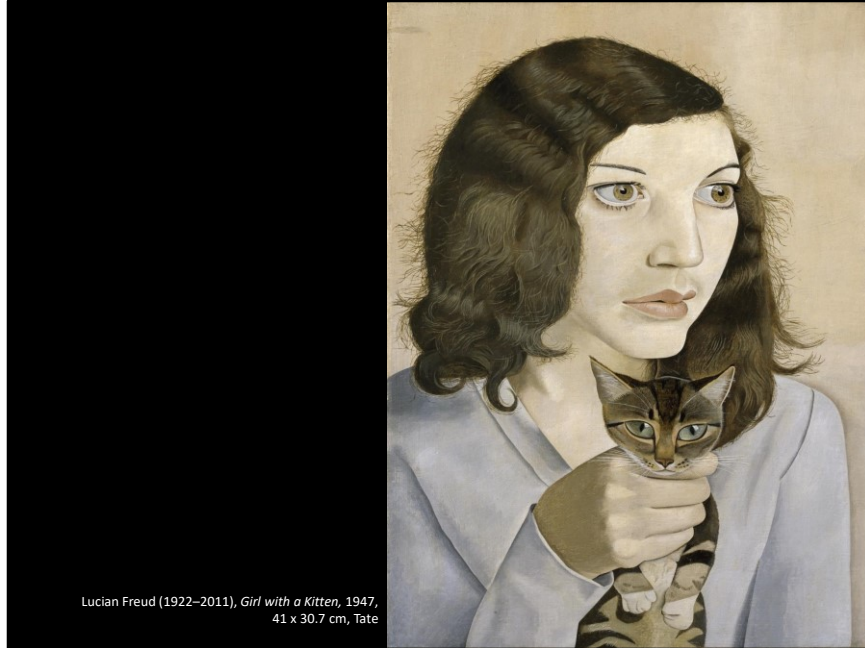
'I've always wanted to create drama in my pictures, which is why I paint people. It's people who have brought drama to pictures from the beginning. The simplest human gestures tell stories.'

Lucian Freud

- Paintings of **people were central** to Freud's work and this major exhibition, spanning over seventy years, is the first to focus on his portraiture. Freud was **born in Berlin**, the son of a **Jewish German** mother and Jewish Austrian father. He was **grandson of Sigmund Freud** and **elder brother** of the broadcaster **Clement Freud**. The family moved to St John's Wood in **1933** to escape the rise of Nazism. He was expelled from school for disruptive behaviour. He studied at the Central School of Art and **Goldsmith's College** before becoming a **merchant seaman** in an Atlantic convoy before being invalided out in 1942.
- He illustrated a book and had his **first solo exhibition in 1944**. In 1946 he travelled to Paris and then on to Greece. In 1952 he **eloped with Lady Caroline Blackwood** to Paris where they married the following year. They **divorced in 1959** which **broke his heart** and friends say he began to **drink heavily** and **get into fights**. He then

worked and lived in London for the rest of his life.

- Freud was part of a group of **figurative artists** that American artist **Ronald Kitaj** later called the '**School of London**'. The group was led by **Francis Bacon and Freud**, and included **Frank Auerbach**, Michael Andrews, Leon Kossoff, Robert Colquhoun, Robert MacBryde, Reginald Gray and Kitaj himself.
- Freud's early paintings are associated with German Expressionism, which he denied, and Surrealism because of the unusual juxtaposition of plants and animals.
- Freud is **rumoured to have fathered as many as forty children** although this number is generally accepted as an exaggeration. **Fourteen children have been identified**, two from Freud's first marriage and 12 by various mistresses including Suzy Boyt (b. 1935), Katherine McAdam (1933-1998), Bernardine Coverley (1943-2011), Jacquetta Eliot (b. 1943) and Celia Paul (b. 1959).
- In **2008**, ***Benefits Supervisor Sleeping*** (1995), a portrait of civil servant Sue Tilley, sold for **\$33.6 million** – the highest price ever at the time for a work by a living artist. On 13 October 2011, Freud's 1952 *Boy's Head*, a small portrait of Charlie Lumley, his neighbour, reached \$4,998,088 at Sotheby's London Contemporary art evening auction, making it one of the highlights of the 2011 auction autumn season. At a Christie's New York auction in 2015, *Benefits Supervisor Resting* sold for \$56.2 million, an auction record for the artist.



Lucian Freud (1922–2011), *Girl with a Kitten*, 1947, 41 x 30.7 cm, Tate

Lucian Freud (1922–2011), *Girl with a Kitten*, 1947, 41 x 30.7 cm, Tate

- By the end of the war he had developed this **thinly painted very precise linear style with muted colours**, best known in his self-portrait *Man with Thistle* (1946, Tate) and a series of **large-eyed portraits of his first wife**, Kitty Garman, such as this one, *Girl with a Kitten* (1947, Tate). These were painted with **tiny sable brushes** and evoked **Early Netherlandish painting**.
- Kitty Garman (1926-2011) was the eldest daughter of the sculptor Jacob Epstein and his lover Kathleen Garman. She married Freud in 1948, they had two daughters and divorced in 1952. Freud was having an affair with Lady Caroline Maureen Hamilton-Temple-Blackwood (1931-1996) daughter of the brewery heiress Maureen Guinness and the 4th Marquess of Dufferin and Ava. They married in 1953 but divorced in 1959.

References

- <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/freud-girl-with-a-kitten-t12617>



Lucian Freud (1922–2011), *Girl with a White Dog*, 1950–1, 76.2 x 101.6 cm, Tate

- From the **1950s**, he **began to work in portraiture, often nudes** (though his first full length nude was not painted until 1966), to the almost **complete exclusion of everything else**, and by the middle of the decade developed a much more free style using large hogs-hair brushes, with an intense concentration of the texture and colour of flesh, and much thicker paint, including impasto.
- *Girl with a White Dog*, 1951–1952, (Tate) is an example of a **transitional work** in this process, sharing many characteristics with paintings before and after it, with relatively **tight brushwork** and a **middling size** and viewpoint. With this technique, he would often **clean his brush after each stroke** when painting flesh, so that the colour remained constantly variable. He also started to **paint standing up**, which continued until old age, when he switched to a high chair. The **colours of non-flesh** areas in these paintings are **typically muted**, while the **flesh** becomes **increasingly highly and variably coloured**.
- It is a portrait of Freud's first wife, Kitty Garman.

References

- <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/freud-girl-with-a-white-dog-n06039>



Lucien Freud, *Large Interior, W. 11 (after Watteau)*, 1981-83, 185.5 x 198.2 cm, private collection

Jean Antoine Watteau, *Pierrot happy*, detail, around 1712, Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum, Madrid

- **By about 1960**, Freud had **established the style** that he would use, with some changes, for the **rest of his career**. The portraits in the new style often used an **over life-size scale** from the start, but were mostly relatively small heads or half-lengths. Later portraits were often very much larger, and appealed to galleries and collectors. In his late career he often followed a portrait by producing an **etching** of the subject in a different pose, drawing directly onto the plate, with the sitter in his view.
- Freud produced this painting using the **daylight flooding** in from the **newly-installed skylight** in his west London flat. Its composition **derives from a small painting** by the early-eighteenth century French artist, **Jean-Antoine Watteau**, showing a **Pierrot teased** by a group of flirting women. Freud's painting is focussed around **Suzy Boyt's son Kai (in yellow)** who takes the place of Pierrot. Around him are the women in Freud's life: his **daughter Bella** playing the mandolin, **Kai's mother to the right**, holding a fan, and the **painter, Celia Paul**, on the left. Freud

wanted one of his grand-daughters to pose for the smaller figure in the foreground, though in the end he had to make do with a **substitute**. He described the finished result as '**A slight bit of role playing**'.

- Watteau. Four characters stand around Pierrot sitting on a bench, face, legs slightly apart and hands placed symmetrically on his thighs. To his left, a woman dressed in pink and yellow leans toward him playing the guitar while a man dressed in Mezzetin, a plum suit with blue stripes, turns to listen. To his right, another woman, dressed in olive green and blue, touched his chin with a fan and looks at Mezzetin; his companion, grey and orange-yellow, is sitting on the ground, the arm familiarly placed on the woman's lap. Behind them, a cloudy sky pierces the dark grove and Pierrot behind the large statue of a Faun.



Lucian Freud (1922–2011), *Standing by the Rags*, 1988–89, 168.9 x 138.4 cm, Tate
 Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres (1780-1867), *Angelica saved by Ruggiero*, 1819-39, 47.6 x 39.4 cm, National Gallery

- Since the 1960s **the nude** has been an **important** part of Freud's work. Commentators have commented on the **disturbing accuracy** which he describes as '**revealing and intrusive, rather than rhyming and soothing**'. **Intense scrutiny rather than idealisation** is an important theme within Freud's work.
- Like many of Freud's pictures *Standing by the Rags* was painted in his London studio. The **motif of the mound of rags** first appeared in *Red Haired Man* 1962-3 (Erich Sommer Collection) but only became commonly recurrent during the late 1980s. The rags, which are in fact heaped in front of a **hidden radiator**, are used by Freud for **wiping brushes** and have been interpreted by some critics as a coded sign for the **artist's presence** in the image. Jeremy Lewison has compared the **smear paint** on the rags to **blood** and other bodily secretions.
- The degree of attention given to the detail and texture of the rags is equivalent to that given to the figure. The **shallow spatial depth** of the picture makes it difficult to tell whether the woman is **standing against or lying on** the rags.
- The painting has been compared to that of the female figure in **Ingres' *Angelica***

Saved by Ruggiero (National Gallery Collection, London), a painting that Freud included in 'The Artist's Eye' exhibition held at the National Gallery in 1987. The pose is also reminiscent of the figure of Christ being lowered from the Cross in old master paintings of the Deposition.

- The paint has been applied with a stiff hog-hair brush to create a textured appearance for the whole painting. The model's face, breasts and genitalia are rendered in a particularly thick impasto, which heightens their physical presence within the overall scheme. The physicality of the model is further enhanced by the warm, dark palette used for her body compared to the cool tones of the rags. In contrast to the ivory smoothness of a classical nude, **the flesh** of Freud's model is **sagging, mottled and flushed**. *Standing by the Rags* is one of Freud's largest paintings of the nude.

Notes

- The model is Sophie de Stempel. De Stempel sought out Freud after hearing her parents call him 'a disgusting filthy Jew'. She was an art student who trained at The City and Guilds School and modelled for Freud from 1980-1991.
- The subject of the painting by Ingres is taken from Ariosto's epic poem, 'Orlando Furioso' (Canto 10). Ruggiero, riding on a **hippogriff** (a mythological animal which was half horse and half griffin), rescues Angelica from a sea monster. This painting is a later and smaller version of a large picture on this subject which Ingres painted for Louis XVIII in 1819 which is now in the Louvre, Paris.

References

<http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/freud-standing-by-the-rags-t05722/text-summary>

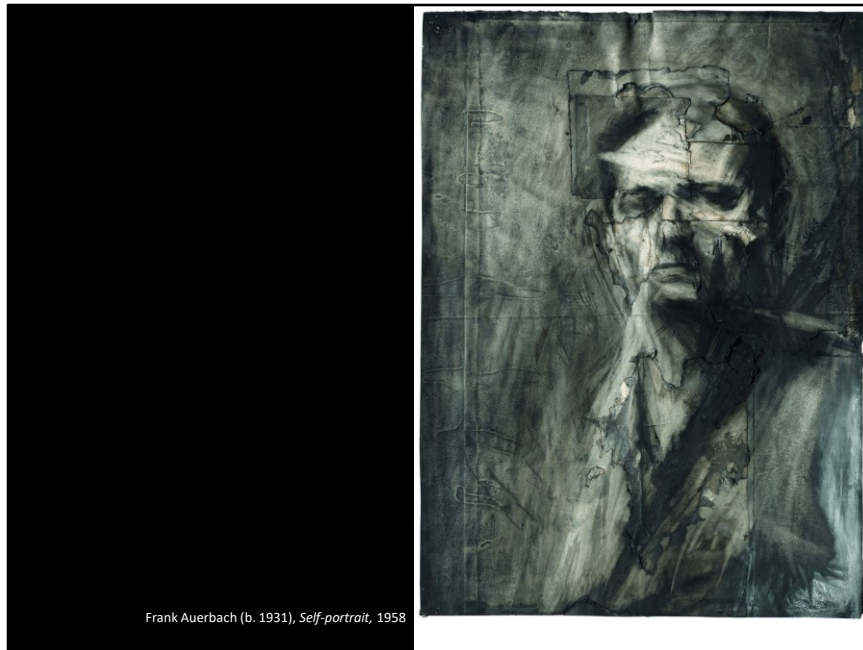


Lucian Freud (1922–2011), *Benefits Supervisor Sleeping*, 1995, private collection

- A very large portrait of "Big Sue" Tilley (see below), showing his handling of flesh tones, and a typical high viewpoint. She then weighed 280 lb (20 stone). She was a job centre supervisor and author of a biography of the Australian performer Leigh Bowery who also modelled for Freud.
- The painting held the world record for the highest price paid for a painting by a living artist when it was sold by Guy Naggar for US\$33.6 million (£17.2 million) at Christie's in New York in May 2008 to Roman Abramovich, the Russian billionaire owner of Chelsea Football Club. Freud's painting *Benefits Supervisor Resting*, sold for £35.8million (\$56.2million) in 2015 after his death in 2011, replacing *Benefits Supervisor Sleeping* as the most expensive Freud painting sold at auction.



- Frank Helmut Auerbach (born 29 April 1931) is a British painter. **Born in Berlin,** Germany, he has been a naturalised British citizen since 1947.



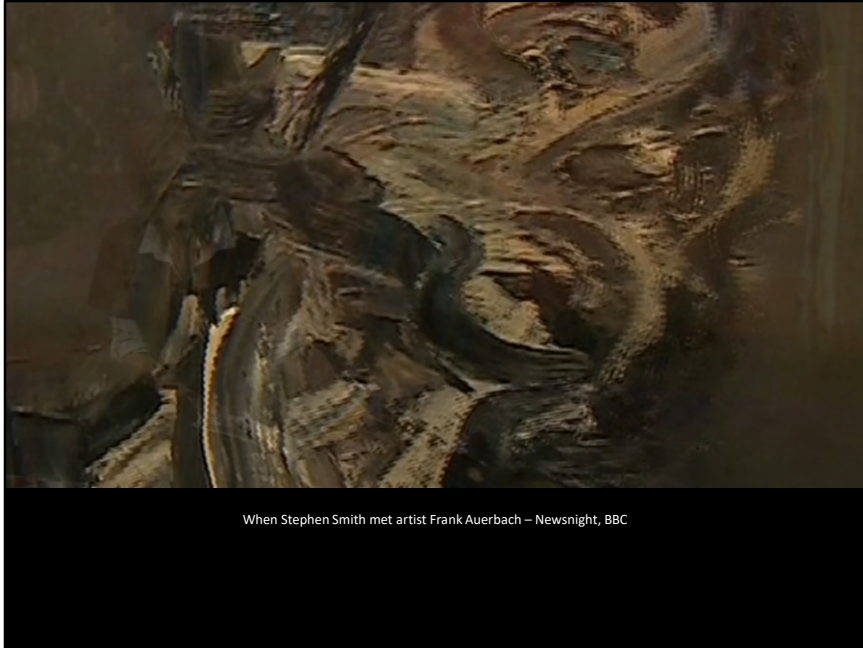
Frank Auerbach (b. 1931), *Self-portrait*, 1958

- *"It seems to me madness to wake up in the morning and do something other than paint, considering that one may not wake up the following morning."* Auerbach
- The **son of a patent lawyer** and an artist. He was sent to Britain under the **Kindertransport scheme** which brought almost **10,000 mainly Jewish children** to Britain to escape Nazi persecution. He was seven when he left Germany and his **parents later died in a concentration camp** in 1942.
- In Britain he **excelled at art and drama** and almost became an actor. He studied first at **St Martin's School of Art** from 1948 to 1952, and at the **Royal College of Art** from 1952 to 1955. Yet, perhaps the clearest influence on his art training came from a series of additional art classes he took at London's Borough Polytechnic, where he and fellow St Martin's student **Leon Kossoff were taught by David Bomberg** from 1947 until 1953.
- From 1955 he **started teaching** at schools and art colleges, from 1958-65 at **Camberwell School of Art**. His **first solo exhibition** was in London in **1956** followed by many others. In 1978, he had a major retrospective at the Hayward Gallery and shared the main prize at the **Venice Biennale in 1986**.

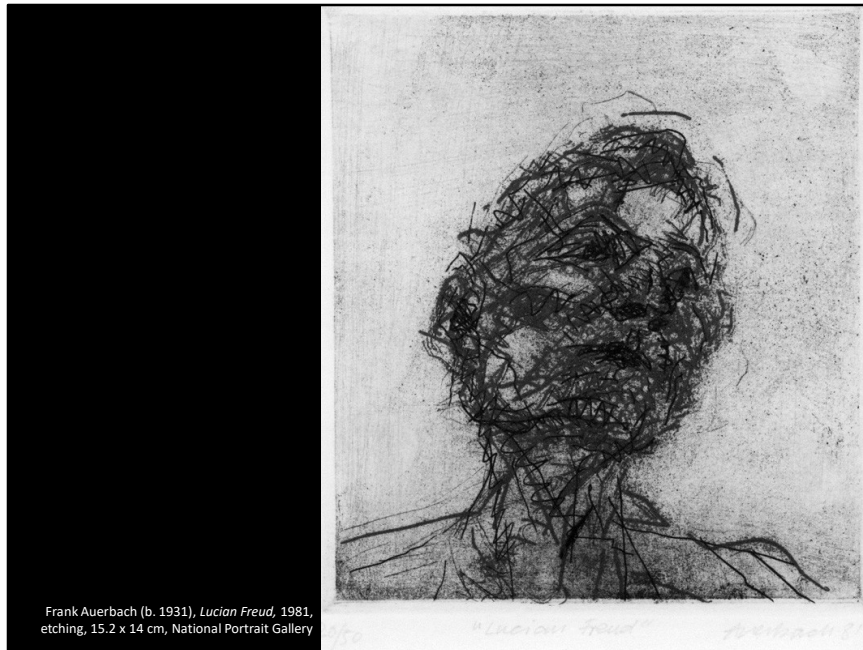
- Auerbach is a figurative painter, who focuses on **portraits and city scenes** in and around the area of London in which he lives, **Camden Town**. As well as painting street scenes close to his London home, Auerbach tends to paint a small number of people repeatedly, including Estella Olive West (indicated in painting titles as EOW), Juliet Yardley Mills (or JYM) and Auerbach's wife Julia Auerbach (née Wolstenholme). Again a similar obsession with specific subjects, and a desire to return to them to 'try again' is discernible in this use of the same models.
- His work is not concerned with finding a visual equivalent to an emotional or spiritual state that characterised the expressionist movement, rather it deals with the attempt to **resolve the experience of being in the world** in paint. In this the experience of the world is seen as essentially chaotic with the role of the artist being to impose an order upon that chaos and record that order in the painting. This ambition with the paintings results in Auerbach developing intense relationships with particular subjects, particularly the people he paints, but also the location of his cityscape subjects. Speaking on this in 2001 he stated: "If you pass something every day and it has a little character, it begins to intrigue you." This simple statement belies the intensity of the relationship that develops between Auerbach and his subjects, which results in an astonishing desire to produce an image the artist considers 'right'. This leads Auerbach to paint an image and then scrape it off the canvas at the end of each day, repeating this process time and again, not primarily to create a layering of images but because of a sense of dissatisfaction with the image leading him to try to paint it again.

References

<http://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-britain/exhibition/frank-auerbach/auerbach-introduction>



When Stephen Smith met artist Frank Auerbach – Newsnight, BBC (show first 2 mins 30 seconds)



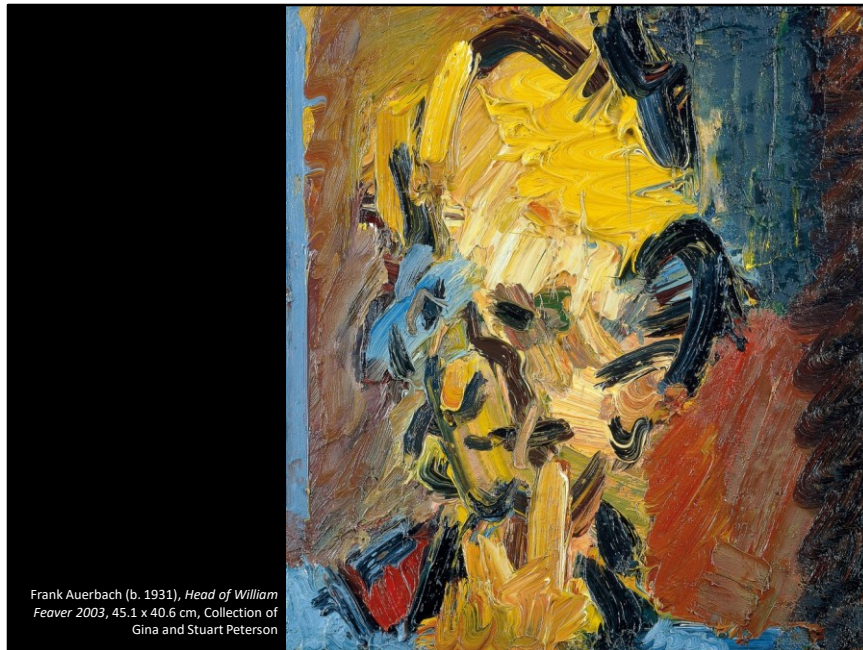
Frank Auerbach (b. 1931), *Lucian Freud*, 1981, etching, 15.2 x 14 cm, National Portrait Gallery

- This intensity of approach and handling has also not always sat well with the art world that developed in Britain from the late 1980s onwards, with one critic at that time, Stuart Morgan, denouncing Auerbach for espousing '**conservatism as if it were a religion**' on the basis that he applies paint **without a sense of irony**.
- As well as painting street scenes close to his London home, Auerbach tends to paint a small number of people repeatedly, including Estella Olive West (indicated in painting titles as EOW), Juliet Yardley Mills (or JYM) and Auerbach's wife Julia Auerbach (née Wolstenholme). Again a similar obsession with specific subjects, and a desire to return to them to 'try again' is discernible in this use of the same models.
- A strong emphasis in Auerbach's work is its **relationship to the history of art**. Showing at the National Gallery in London in 1994 he made direct reference to the gallery's collection of paintings by **Rembrandt, Titian and Rubens**.

References

- <http://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/portraitLarge/mw07374/Lucian->

[Freud?LinkID=mp06347&role=art&rNo=3](#)



Frank Auerbach (b. 1931), *Head of William Feaver 2003*, 45.1 x 40.6 cm, Collection of Gina and Stuart Peterson

- *'What I am trying to make is a stonking, independent, coherent image that has never been seen before...that stalks into the world like a new monster.'*
Frank Auerbach
- Auerbach was taught by the Vorticist **David Bomberg** (1890-1957) who had been taught by **Walter Sickert** (1860-1942), who met and learned from **Edgar Degas** (1834-1917), who was inspired by **Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres** (1780-1867) whose advice he never forgot, who was taught in turn by **Jacques-Louis David** (1748-1825), who was taught by **François Boucher** (1703-1770) the leading painter of the day, who was inspired by **Antoine Watteau** (1684-1721), who was influenced by **Peter Paul Rubens** (1577-1640). Auerbach said, 'I am a pygmy compared with Michelangelo ... Unless you try to do something in the shadow of these great people then it's all pointless.'
- Tate website: "Frank Auerbach is a British artist who has made some of the **most vibrant, alive and inventive paintings of recent times**. Often compared to Francis Bacon and Lucian Freud in terms of the revolutionary and powerful nature of his

work, his depictions of people and the urban landscapes near his London studio show him to be one of the greatest painters alive today.

- Tate Britain's exhibition, featuring paintings and drawings from the 1950s to the present day, offers fascinating new insights into his work the artist suggesting the selection of the first six galleries. The depth, texture and sense of space in a painting by Auerbach makes standing in front of one a unique and unforgettable experience.
- For half a century Auerbach has lived and worked in the same part of London, in **Camden Town**, one of the major subjects of his work. 'What I wanted to do was to record the life that seemed to me to be passionate and exciting and disappearing all the time.'
- **Painting 365 days a year**, he has continued discarding what he does, **scraping back the surface of the canvas to start and re-start** the painting process daily, continuing afresh for months or years until the single painting is realised in a matter of hours, having finally surprised him, seeming true and robust."

Reviews

- shocking and brilliant...get smacked in the face by the terrifying glory of the world Auerbach is stunned by every morning, **** *The Guardian*
Frank Auerbach's work emerges in all its rude, raw power in this astonishing new retrospective, **** The Telegraph
At his best Auerbach is without doubt our greatest living painter because he captures the soul, **** *The Times*
This is an excellent exhibition that any fan of painting should visit – a fitting tribute to a world class artist and his significant career, **** *The Londonist*
***** *The Evening Standard*
A unique exhibition on a unique artist. *HuffPost*
**** *City Am*
Auerbach has won his long tussle with paint and reality, again and again. With this exhibition, he joins the masters. *The Spectator*
**** *The Independent*
Many magnificently memorable images stand up for themselves in this great show. *The Financial Times*
Frank Auerbach has become our greatest living artist. *The Sunday Times*

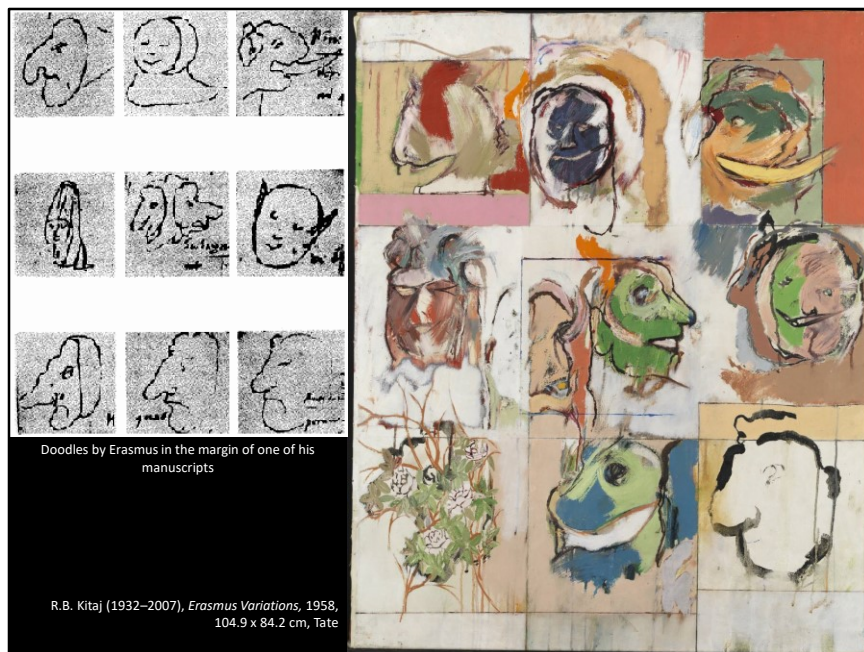
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<http://www.lrb.co.uk/v31/n20/william-feaver/in-the-studio>

<http://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-britain/exhibition/frank-auerbach>



- Ronald Brooks Kitaj (pronounced Ki-TIE) is an American artists who moved to Britain in 1958 to study art.



R.B. Kitaj (1932–2007), *Erasmus Variations*, 1958, 104.9 x 84.2 cm, Tate

- Kitaj was **born in Cleveland, USA**, produced this work early in his career, while he was at the Ruskin School of Art in Oxford. He had moved to Britain in 1958 to study art, having served for two years in the American army in Europe. 'This was the first modern art I committed', he later wrote of *Erasmus Variations*. '[I]t was the first synthesis of some of the ideated strands that would probably never leave me or my art: Symbolism-Surrealism, the spectres in books, and the woman question among others.' (Quoted in Livingstone, 2010, p.232.)
- In 1976, at the height of **minimal art and conceptual art**, the American painter R.B. Kitaj, then based in Britain, organised an exhibition titled ***The Human Clay*** at the Hayward Gallery in London. It exclusively consisted of **figurative drawing and painting**, which proved to be **highly controversial** to an **art world** which was **dominated by abstraction**. In his catalogue text, Kitaj used the term '**School of London**' loosely to describe the artists he had brought together. The name has stuck to refer to painters at that time who were doggedly pursuing forms of figurative painting.
- The chief artists associated with the idea of the School of London, in addition to

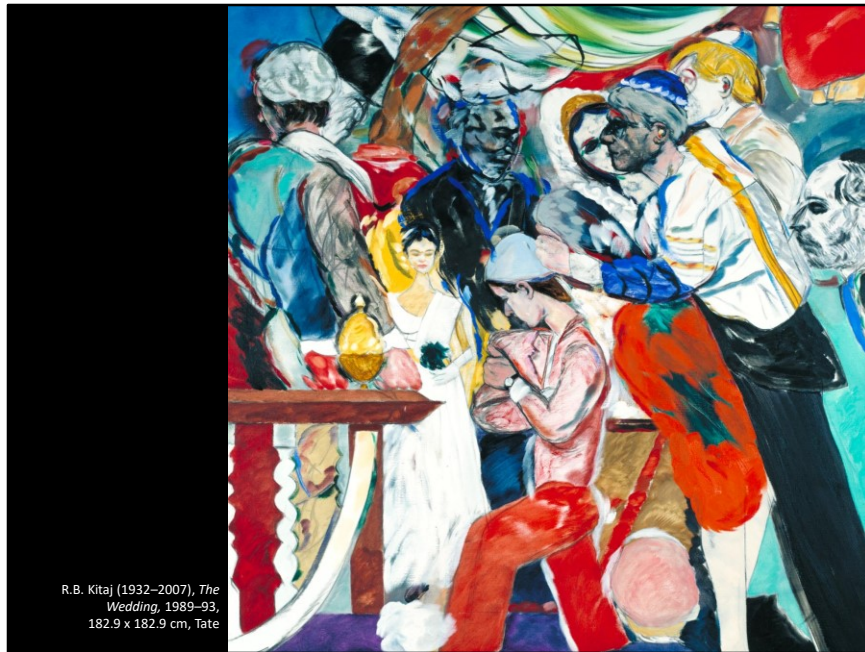
Kitaj himself, were Lucian Freud, Francis Bacon, Frank Auerbach, David Hockney (although living in the USA), Michael Andrews, Howard Hodgkin, and Leon Kossoff. The work of these artists was brought into fresh focus and given renewed impetus by the revival of interest in figurative painting by a younger generation that took place in the late 1970s and the 1980s

- Tate website, “This painting’s composition is based on a **grid made up of nine squares** in three rows of three. In **each square is a face**, with two faces appearing in profile in the central square. Each face is cartoon-like and sketchily painted in muted colours. The artist’s method of smudging colours and his use of **heavily diluted oil paint**, which has **left drip marks** on the canvas, create an impression of **fluidity and spontaneity**. The borders of the grid are blurred as the different background colours of the squares seem to spill into one another.
- The work’s title refers to the initial source for the image, a series of **doodles the Dutch humanist scholar Desiderius Erasmus** (1466–1536) made in the margins of a manuscript he was annotating. Kitaj encountered Erasmus’s scribbled faces in one of the first books he read while in Oxford, the biography of the scholar by the historian Johan Huizinga (1872–1945). Kitaj’s composition follows the grid-like arrangement imposed on Erasmus’s doodles in the reproduction in Huizinga’s book, and his faces have broadly the same exaggerated features as those drawn by Erasmus.
- To Kitaj, Erasmus’s absent-minded doodles suggested a **prefiguration** of the method of **automatic drawing** (that is, drawing made without the intervention of reason) that would later be favoured by the **Surrealists**. In *Erasmus Variations*, the artist employs a loose and gestural method of painting evocative of abstract expressionism. The work thus links the surrealist belief that automatic drawing provides an insight into the workings of the mind with a similar idea implied in gestural abstraction: that the artwork reveals the personality of the artist (Livingstone, 2010, pp.16–7).
- Kitaj derived the style and technique of painting that he used in *Erasmus Variations* specifically from the Dutch-born abstract expressionist painter **Willem de Kooning** (1904–97), in particular the images of female nudes de Kooning made in the late 1940s. Kitaj explained: ‘De Kooning’s surreal-automatic ‘Women’ were my favourite action paintings of the School of New York, a recalcitrant or truant of which I had been during my Manhattan years, and so I adapted something of that mode here; Double Dutch (Erasmus and De Kooning, both of Rotterdam).’ (Quoted in Livingstone, 2010, p.232.)
- As much of Kitaj’s subsequent output, this painting is autobiographical in content. Although not designed as portraits, each distorted face suggested to the artist the identity of a woman he had known. ‘These marks were but fanciful fronts for sweet secrets of from my nether or surreal life’, he wrote, ‘[as] I assigned each disguised visage in this picture to a Woman I had known in fleeting encounters.’

(Quoted in Livingstone, 2010, p.232). ”

Notes

- These doodles of grotesque heads and other scribbles are found in Erasmus's manuscript copy of the *Scholia to the Letters of St. Jerome*, preserved in the Library of Basle University and published by Emil Major (*Handzeichnungen des Erasmus von Rotterdam*, Basle, 1933). Erasmus worked on this manuscript shortly after his arrival in Basle in August 1514. His edition of the *Letters of Jerome* was published by Froben in 1516 (see p. 90).



R.B. Kitaj (1932–2007), *The Wedding*, 1989–93, 182.9 x 182.9 cm, Tate

- Tate website: “This painting depicts the **wedding of Kitaj and the American artist Sandra Fisher** (1947-94) which took place in **1983**, some six years before this painting was begun. The couple first met in Los Angeles, where Kitaj was teaching. Upon his return to London in 1972, they became reacquainted. Kitaj wrote the following text to accompany the painting's exhibition in the 1994 Tate Gallery retrospective:
*Sandra and I were married in the beautiful old Sephardic Synagogue founded in London by Rembrandt's friend, Menasseh ben Israel. Under the chupa (canopy), aside from my children and the Rabbi in top hat, **Freud is on the left, Auerbach in the middle, then Sandra and me, and Hockney (best man) is to the right of us.** Kossoff appears at the far right, transcribed from a drawing by John Lessore. **I worked on the painting for years** and never learned how to finish it even though painter friends, including most of those in the picture, gave me good advice about it which I took up and changed things all the time. In the end, **instead of finishing it, I finished with it and gave it away** to a deserving old friend.*
- The Bevis Marks Synagogue in the City of London belongs to the congregation of

the Spanish and Portuguese Jews, and was founded in 1700. The painting synthesises various moments which occurred during the ceremony. The artist, on the right side, wears the traditional shawl of Jewish bridegrooms, and leans forward to embrace the bride. On the left, wearing a top hat, is the Rabbi Abraham Levy, his face partially obscured. **Kitaj's three children are also portrayed:** his elder son Lem, his adopted daughter Dominie as a bridesmaid in a white sari, and Max, whose head rises from the lower edge of the canvas and who was not actually at the ceremony. (The son of Kitaj and Sandra, Max was born a year after the marriage.)

- Kitaj has described **Picasso's *Les Femmes d'Alger*** as '**the most important influence' on this picture**, 'not a source but a hovering presence' (unpublished Board note presented to Tate Gallery Trustees, July 1993). The Wedding brings together several crucial themes in Kitaj's art and thought, including his increasing awareness of his identity as a Jew. The prominent depiction of several of the so-called 'School of London' artists relates to Kitaj's identification of these artists as part of a group of painters who were linked by friendship, their response to great masters, their emphasis on drawing and their concern with the human subject."

References

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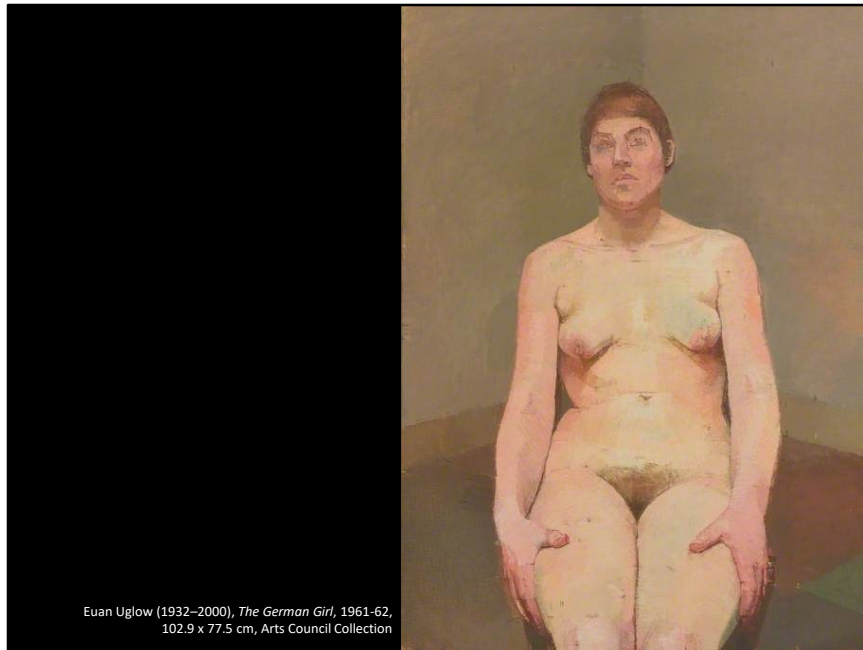


EUAN UGLOW (1932-2000)

- **British artist Euan Uglow** (1932–2000) maintained a **lower profile** than others of his generation, yet his beautiful, intelligent, humane, and often witty landscapes, still lifes, and figure studies are today gaining the recognition they so clearly deserve. Many critics and admirers now consider **Uglow one of Britain's greatest post-war artists**.

References

- Catherine Lampert, Richard Kendall, Euan Uglow, *Euan Uglow: The Complete Painting: Catalogue Raisonné* (2007)
<https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=Zolm1eKn2CEC>
- <http://paintingperceptions.com/euan-uglow/>

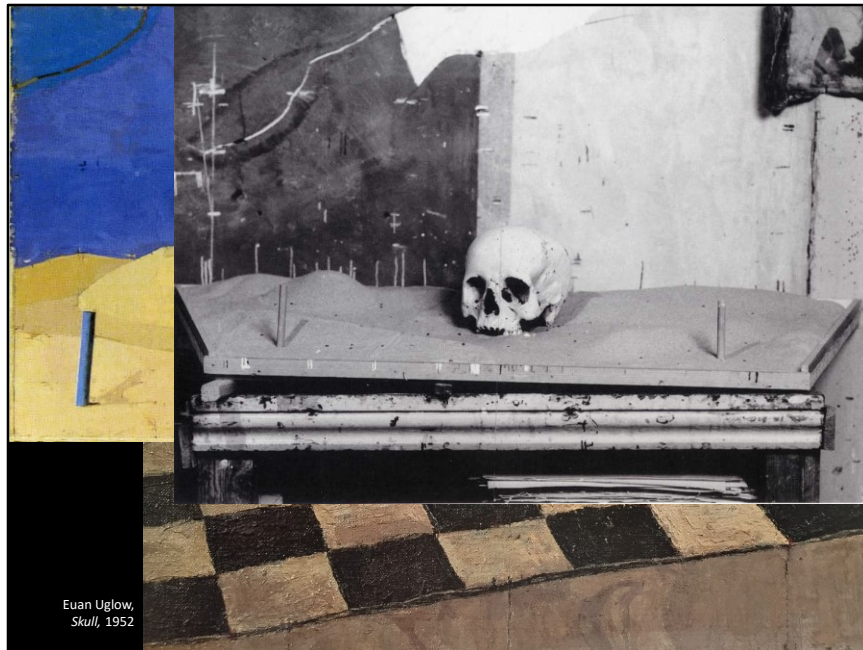


Euan Uglow (1932–2000), *The German Girl*, 1961-62, 102.9 x 77.5 cm, Arts Council Collection

- Uglow is **famous for his nude** and still life painting such as *The German Girl* and *Skull*. In 1962 he was at the centre of a storm at the municipal art gallery in Bradford, Yorkshire, when a local councillor had one of Uglow's paintings, *German Girl*, removed from an Arts Council exhibition at the gallery - claimed the painting 'offended decency. His method was meticulous, involving a great deal of measuring and correction to create images that are not hyper real, but appear almost sculptural. Since Uglow worked at glacial speed - sometimes taking five years to finish a painting - and since he only ever painted from life, the model would be compelled to keep up this pose for some length of time. One of his subjects went from getting engaged to being divorced during the course of the painting for which she was sitting.
- Uglow was **born in London** in 1932 and **lived in Tulse Hill** where his father was an accountant.
- Uglow attended the Camberwell School of Arts and Crafts when he was 15. He was immediately recognised as a talented young man passionate about painting. He

was influenced by William Coldstream who instilled an obsession for precision and measurement. The art world was steeped in abstraction but he admired Lucien Freud, Francis Bacon and Giacometti. He also admired Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko and Barnett Newman who we saw last week.

- **Refusing compulsory military service**, Uglow was registered as a **conscientious objector in 1954**, and spent two years undertaking **community work**, assisting in the restoration of a war-damaged church by Christopher Wren in the City of London, redecorating the house of the artist Patrick George, and helping on a farm in Surrey.
- Success in art was not immediate, and **he did not sell a painting until eight years after leaving art school**. During this time he took a variety of part-time teaching jobs, most notably at the **Slade** from 1961, an institution with which he was to be associated for the rest of his life.
- In **1962** he was at the **centre of a storm** at the municipal art gallery in Bradford, Yorkshire, when a local councillor, Horace Hird, had one of Uglow's paintings, *The German Girl*, **removed** from an Arts Council exhibition at the gallery. Hird claimed the painting '**offended decency**'.
- Despite this, Uglow was generally a **shy artist who shunned publicity** as well as honours, including an offer to become a member of the **Royal Academy** in 1961. However, he **did become a trustee** of the National Gallery in London in 1991, although, in his own words, he was generally ignored by the other trustees.
- As this indicates, Uglow worked directly from life, and one of the features of his paintings was that he **did not** attempt to **hide the process** of construction. **Remnants of the measurements** he took and the drawing guide he used remain visible in the finished paintings.



Euan Uglow, *Skull*, 1952

Euan Uglow, *Skull*, 1994-7, 32.39 x 63.5 cm

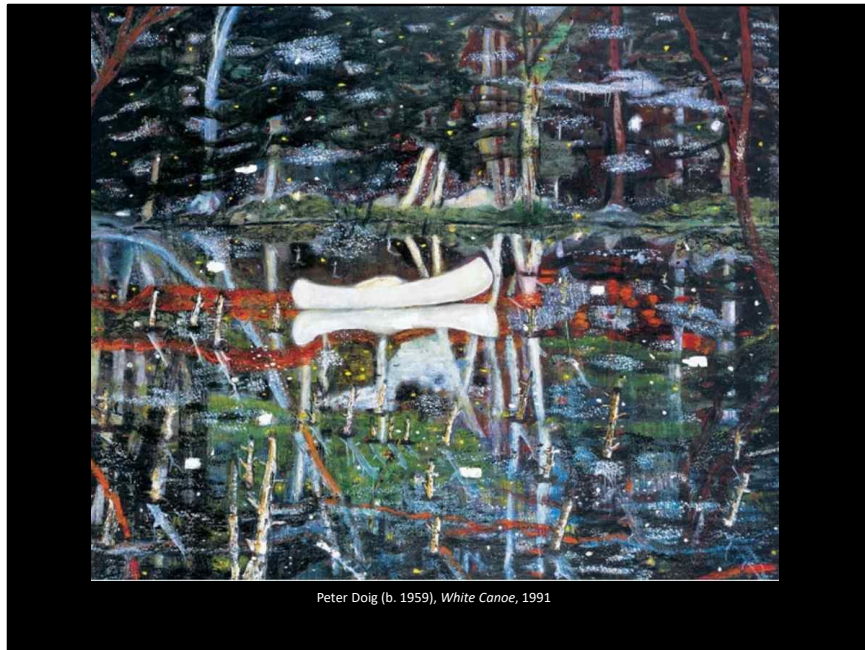
- The Skull marks a turning point in his art and he never wanted to sell it.
- 'Although he experimented with acrylic on several occasions, Euan Uglow always used oil as his natural means of expression. To him, it seemed an ideal and seductive medium. As he said himself: "it has marvellous clarity...is so extraordinarily flexible...the idea of having transparent colours and opaque colours... I have a dipper and usually 13 or 14 colours out, going from white through the yellows, reds, blues and greens to raw umber and black, from right to left". He would paint in the usual, fat-over-lean manner, and he did not mind going back and removing paint if a painting was not going according to plan. He would take great care to keep his colours clean and free of contamination, and would wash his brushes thoroughly. He would sometimes keep a specific tone in reserve, and immersed in water, so that he could start painting again with the exact same colour when required.' (The Art Digger)

References

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Peter Doig (b. 1959) is a Scottish painter and one of the most renowned living figurative painters.



Peter Doig (b. 1959), *White Canoe*, 1991

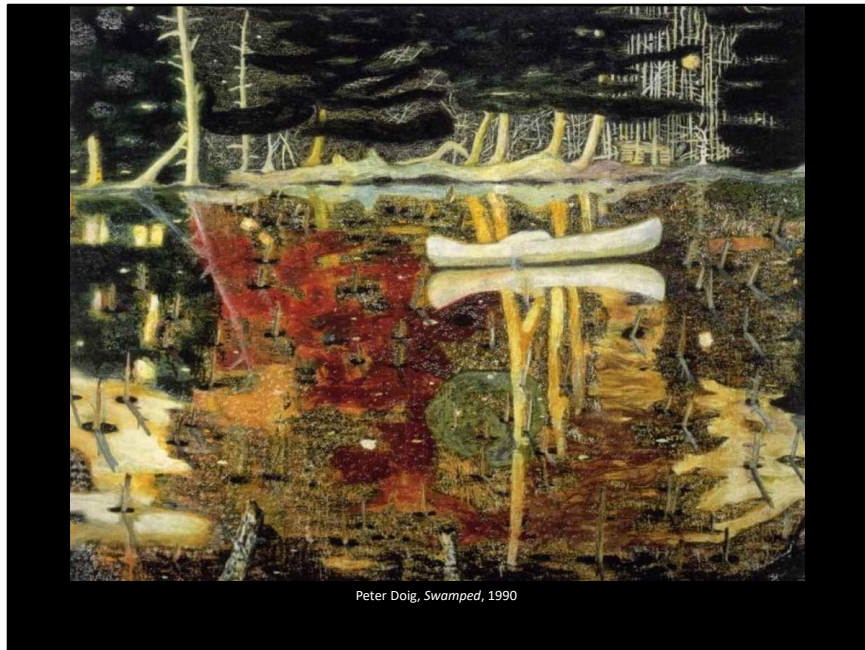
- Art critic Jonathan Jones (*The Guardian*, 16 May 2015) said about him: "Amid all the nonsense, impostors, rhetorical bullshit and sheer trash that pass for art in the 21st century, Doig is a jewel of genuine imagination, sincere work and humble creativity."
- In 1962 Doig moved to Trinidad with his family and he has lived there since 2002. He moved to London in 1979 to train at the Wimbledon School of Art and then Chelsea School of Art. He had had many major exhibitions and since 2000 has worked in Trinidad with his friend and fellow artist Chris Ofili. He also became professor at the Fine Arts Academy in Düsseldorf, Germany. In 2013, his painting, *The Architect's Home in the Ravine*, sold for \$12 million at a London auction. Art critic Jonathan Jones said about him, **'Amid all the nonsense, impostors, rhetorical bullshit and sheer trash that pass for art in the 21st century, Doig is a jewel of genuine imagination, sincere work and humble creativity.'**
- One of the most renowned of the current figurative artists. He has never been a 'Young British Artist' as there are no coloured dots, stuffed animals are unmade beds. He has settled in Trinidad since 2002. In 2007, this painting, *White Canoe*,

sold at Sotheby's for \$11.3 million, then an auction record for a living European artist.

- *White Canoe* is one of the Doig's best-known works. Executed in 1991, this is certainly the best of a series of "canoe" paintings which he executed just after leaving Chelsea School of Art in the early 1990s. At its most fundamental, painting is about the nature of looking, and the power of the reflection has always mystified us as the secondary version of reality – in much the same way as painting itself.

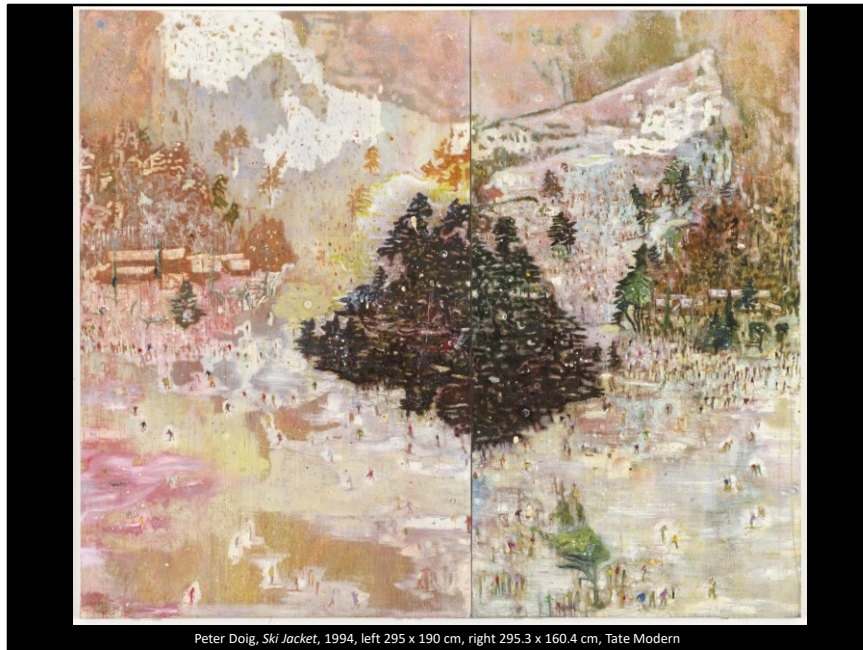
References

<http://www.widewalls.ch/peter-doig-artwork/>



Peter Doig, *Swamped*, 1990

- Peter Doig's masterpiece *Swamped*. Painted in 1990, *Swamped* marks a pivotal moment in the artist's career, falling shortly before Doig's graduation from the Chelsea College of Art and Design and his being awarded the prestigious Whitechapel Artist Prize, which culminated in a solo exhibition at the Whitechapel Art Gallery in 1991. This painting was sold for \$25,925,000 at Christie's New York in 2015.



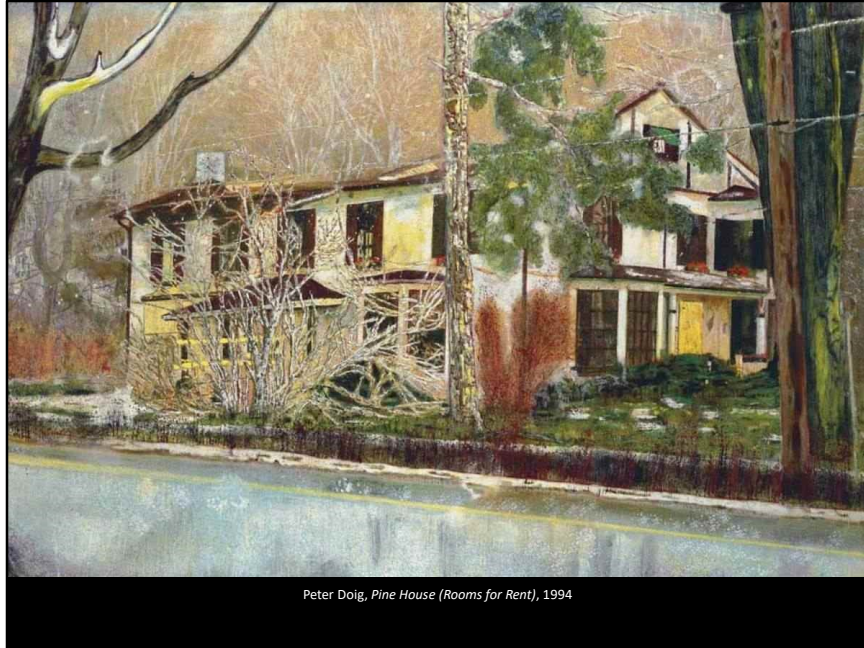
Peter Doig, *Ski Jacket*, 1994, left 295 x 190 cm, right 295.3 x 160.4 cm, Tate Modern

- This is *Ski Jacket* by Peter Doig, one of the most famous figurative artists working today. It is a **diptych of unequal panels** that he **painted from a photograph of people learning to ski on a Japanese mountain**.
- Doig said, '*Ski Jacket* ... is about the **fumbling and awkwardness** when learning to ski, how when you start skiing you slip all over the place, yet over a period of time you learn to cope and eventually manage to ski. *Ski Jacket* depicts **beginner skiers**. If you look carefully you can see that they are all groping to stay on their feet, they are in very awkward positions, and whilst there are other things going on in that painting, that sense of **awkwardness** was one of the things that attracted me to that image. And I think **painting is a bit like that**, it takes time to actually take **control of the 'greasy' stuff – paint**. But I have also used the way you perceive things when you are in the mountains; for example when you are feeling warm in an otherwise cold environment, and how the light is often extreme and accentuated by wearing different coloured goggles. I've used that as a way of **accentuating the colours** in the paintings, to the extent that they appear seemingly **psychedelic**. There used to be these **rose-tinted goggles** that made everything look as pink as cotton candy.'

- Doig has made several paintings of snow scenes **inspired by Claude Monet**. He has said: 'I often paint scenes with snow because snow somehow has this effect of drawing you inwards and is frequently used to suggest retrospection and **nostalgia and make-believe**' He spent most of his **childhood in Quebec** where snow sports were common.

References

<http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/doig-ski-jacket-t06962>



Peter Doig, *Pine House (Rooms for Rent)*, 1994

Peter Doig, *Pine House (Rooms for Rent)*, 1994, 180 x 230.5 cm

- Executed on a vast, immersive scale, *Pine House (Rooms for Rent)*, painted in 1994, represents one of Peter Doig's most important works. It was painted in the same year the artist was **nominated for the Turner Prize** and won the first prize in the Prix Eliette von Karajan. It is widely believed that the artist's best artworks were created in this period. *Pine House (Rooms for Rent)* was **sold for \$18 million**, at Christie's New York in 2014.



Peter Doig, *Rain in the Port of Spain (White Oak)*, 2015, 56th Venice Biennale, Michael Werner Gallery

Peter Doig, *Rain in the Port of Spain (White Oak)*, 2015, 56th Venice Biennale, Michael Werner Gallery

- This work by Peter Doig was shown at the 56th Venice Biennale in 2015. Doig is unusual in that he still paints while other artists create videos and engage in performances. Nicholas Serota, Director of the Tate asked him why he still painted when 'No one is really talking about painting'. Doig told him, 'I still have pictures to make'.
- The Telegraph wrote, 'The imagery derives from Doig's familiar repertoire: lush, sticky, dream-like visions, reminiscent of Le Douanier Rousseau, and evocative of half-memories of life in the Caribbean ... The largest composition, *Rain in the Port of Spain (White Oak)* (2015), features a hallucinogenic orange lion prowling before the yellow façade of a jail. Why is it there? Who set it free? Is it real or symbolic? Perhaps both? A whisker away from the lion's muzzle, though, the narrative mystery recedes. Instead, the focus becomes the outrageous, flame-like flicker of this powerful beast's thickly painted mane. As light bounces off a nearby Venetian canal and streams through the window, this, for a magical moment, feels like justification enough to continue painting in the 21st century.'

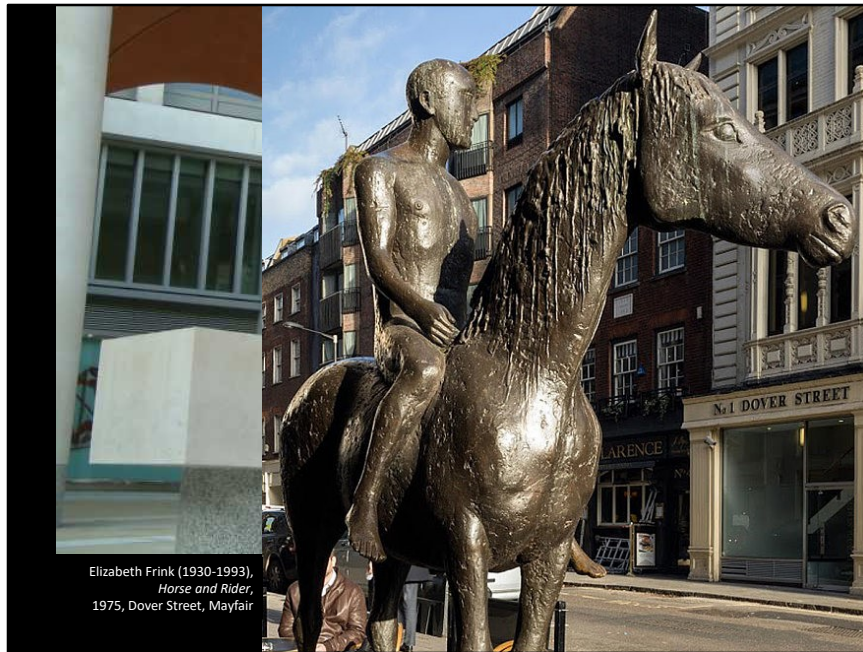
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<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/art/venice-biennale/11628222/Peter-Doig-Palazzetto-Tito-Venice-review-theres-life-in-painting-yet.html>



ELIZABETH FRINK (1930-1993)

- Elizabeth Frink is a sculptor who was born in 1930.



Elizabeth Frink (1930-1993), *Paternoster*, 1975, bronze, 213 x 328 x 81 cm, Paternoster Square, near St. Paul's Cathedral, also known as Shepherd and Sheep or Shepherd with his Flock

Elizabeth Frink (1930-1993), *Horse and Rider*, 1975, Dover Street, Mayfair

- Frink was born in Thurlow, Suffolk, England in 1930. From 1947-1949 she attended the Guilford School of Art and from 1949-1953 she studied under Bernard Meadows and Willi Soukop at the famous Chelsea School of Art. She was awarded a Doctorate by the Royal College of Art in 1982. In 1990, a book entitled Elisabeth Frink: Sculpture and Drawing 1950-1990 was published in Washington, D.C. by the National Museum of Women in the Arts. The British Postal Service released a commemorative stamp honouring her as one of the outstanding women of the 20th Century. Dame Elisabeth Frink died in 1993.
- The property company, Trafalgar House commissioned this work and *Horse and Rider* in Dover Street, Mayfair. *Paternoster* reflects the former use of the site as Newgate market to sell livestock and meat. It may also have religious overtones. It was unveiled in 1975 by Yehudi Menuhin. At the same

References

<http://sounds.bl.uk/related-content/TRANSCRIPTS/021T-C0466X0012XX-ZZZZA0.pdf>



Elizabeth Frink, *Riace Figures*, 1986, Yorkshire Sculpture Park

Elizabeth Frink, *Riace Figures*, 1986, Yorkshire Sculpture Park

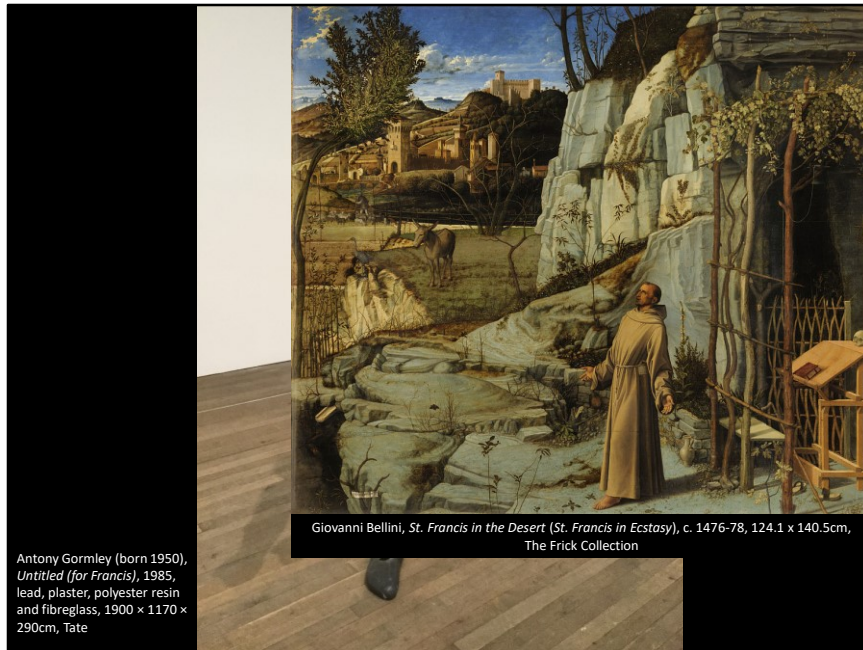
- The Tate has one of the four Riace figures Frink produced. The Tate says they were, “inspired by the discovery of two fifth-century BC Greek bronze sculptures in the sea off Southern Italy in the 1970s. Frink saw them on display in Florence and described how 'the original figures are very beautiful, but also very sinister'. The bronzes depict ancient Greek mercenaries: warriors who would fight in exchange for sacrificial offerings in their benefit. A lifelong supporter of Amnesty International, Frink has said, 'Thuggishness is a bit of a preoccupation with me. It hinges on all my humanitarian sentiments'.”
- The Riace bronzes are two full-size Greek bronzes of naked bearded warriors, cast about 460–450 BC that were found in the sea near Riace in 1972. The bronzes are currently located at the Museo Nazionale della Magna Grecia in the southern Italian city of Reggio Calabria, Italy.
- Among her best-known works are the *Eagle Lectern* in Coventry Cathedral, *Horse and Rider* in Dover Street. Just off Piccadilly and the *Kennedy Memorial* in Dallas, Texas. Elisabeth Frink's honorary titles include degrees from Oxford University, the

University of Surrey, University of Warwick, University of Exeter, and Cambridge University.



ANTHONY GORMLEY (B. 1950)

Anthony Gormley (b. 1950) The youngest of seven children born to an Irish father and a German mother. He grew up in a Roman Catholic family in Hampstead Garden Suburb with the initials AMDG, which were, according to Gormley, selected to stand for *Ad maiorem Dei gloriam* - "to the greater glory of God". He went to a Benedictine boarding school in Yorkshire before reading archaeology, anthropology and history at Trinity College, Cambridge. He travelled to India from 1971 to 1974 to learn about Buddhism and then attended Saint martin's School of Art, Goldsmiths College and the Slade School of Fine Art from 1977 to 1979. At the Slade he met the artist Vicken Parsons (b. 1957) who he married in 1980 and they have three children.



Antony Gormley (born 1950), *Untitled (for Francis)*, 1985, lead, plaster, polyester resin and fibreglass, 1900 × 1170 × 290cm, Tate

Giovanni Bellini, *St. Francis in the Desert (St. Francis in Ecstasy)*, c. 1476-78, 124.1 × 140.5cm, The Frick Collection

- Antony Gormley is a figurative artist who uses forms derived from life. This is Gormley's *Untitled (for Francis)*, which was made in 1985. Like many of his other works it was made directly from his own body. He was wrapped in clingfilm and then covered in two layers of plaster. When it had dried the cast was cut from his body, reassembled and then covered in fibreglass and resin. Twenty-four sheets of lead were then hammered over the figure and soldered together.
- If you look closely you will see that the figure has been pierced in the breast, hands and feet by small holes cut in the lead. The attitude of the eyeless figure, standing with head tilted back, feet apart and arms extended to display the palms of its hands, resembles that of a Christian saint receiving the stigmata. Stigmata are the five marks left on Christ's body by the Crucifixion although one of these wounds is in the breast, rather than, as tradition dictates, in the side. The title *Untitled (for Francis)* refers to saint Francis of Assisi who allegedly received the wounds of Christ in 1224 and specifically it refers to Giovanni Bellini's *St Francis in*

Ecstasy (c. 1479-85).

- Although he was brought up as a Catholic he lost his faith after spending three years in India studying Buddhist meditation. His ability to meditate enables him to stay still while his body is covered in plaster. He uses his own body not to produce a self-portrait but to examine the physical and spiritual relationships between all of us and the world around us. He uses the physical body to talk about the spirit and to things which cannot be seen.
- What does the work mean? At a time when art is becoming more abstract his return to the body could be considered old-fashioned but he avoids this by using the body as a universal symbol. It is about our inner life, the boundary between each of us and the world and the relationship between all of us and the natural world. He did not want to create a beautiful object for our enjoyment but he wanted to create something that makes us think who we are and our relationship with the world. According to Gormley, this work reflects his concerns about the survival of the world and the human beings in it.
- So, we can see that what appears to be a figure is being used to convey abstract ideas. Let us now turn to an abstract artist.

Notes

- Anthony Gormley was born in 1950 in London where he continues to live and work. In the late 60s he studied archaeology, anthropology and art history at Cambridge. He spent three years in India studying Buddhist meditation and healing and in the late 70s he studied sculpture at the Slade School of Art. Since the 1980s he has worked with the human figure and often works directly from his own body. He was awarded the Tate Turner Prize in 1994 for *Testing a World View* (five identical iron figures bent at a right angle at the waist). His best known work is *The Angel of the North* which was completed in 1998.
- He uses his own body to capture a lived moment which is then transformed into another zone of time. The body is a place where '**meaning can arise**'. Gormley uses lead to provide a shield or shell that conceals and protects an inner space. Lead is heavy and impenetrable but it is also poisonous.
- 'Untitled (for Francis)' is a plaster mould of the artist's body, reinforced with fibreglass and encased in a skin made from sheets of soldered lead. His wife, the painter Vicken Parsons, first wrapped his body in clingfilm then covered it in two layers of plaster and jute cloth. When set the shell was cut open, reassembled and reinforced with resin. Twenty-four pieces of standard roofing lead were then hammered over the cast. The lead surface varies in colour from dark to light grey. Gormley said that it is untitled to discourage too specific an iconographic reading. However, he explained that its subtitle refers to Giovanni Bellini's painting of St Francis of Assisi receiving the stigmata, *St Francis in Ecstasy*. It is one of a group of seven standing figures made around the same time. The five eye-shaped 'wounds' suggest an openness to outside experience and provide access to the centre of the

work. It is one of only two of Gormley's works dedicated to individuals. It is to do with openness to all levels of being. This breast aperture has four slits extending from cardinal points around it. He could have welded them slits together but he liked the pentagram or house shaped wound. He said, **'For me the work suggests that in order to be whole you have to be wounded.'**

- Gormley comments, **'I am interested in the body but not as appearance...Your body belongs to my visual experience more than it does to you.'** I had a choice to either a spiritual life and not engage with the world or a sculpture and engage with real things in the world. [My work] 'only begins to breath outside the gallery'.
- Gormley says, **'sculpture, for me, uses the physical as a means to talk about the spirit ... a visual means to refer to things which cannot be seen.'**
- Gormley was brought up as a Catholic but has lost his faith because Buddhist meditation taught him to deal with the here and now..

References

<http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/gormley-untitled-for-francis-t05004>

<http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/gormley-untitled-for-francis-t05004/text-catalogue-entry>

<http://www.tate.org.uk/download/file/fid/4659>

<http://www.tate.org.uk/context-comment/video/antony-gormley-artists-talk> (1hr 23mins)



Anthony Gormley (b. 1950), *The Angel of the North*, 1998

- Gormley's best known works are *Angel of the North* (1994-98) in Gateshead, *Another Place* on Crosby Beach near Liverpool and *Event Horizon* which premiered in London in 2007, Madison Square in 2010, Sao Paulo in 2012 and Hong Kong in 2015-16.
- The *Angel of the North* is a contemporary sculpture, designed by Sir Antony Gormley, located near Gateshead in Tyne and Wear, England. Completed in 1998, it is a steel sculpture of an angel, 20 metres tall, with wings measuring 54 metres across.
- According to Gormley, the significance of an angel was three-fold:
 - first, to signify that beneath the site of its construction, coal miners worked for two centuries;
 - second, to grasp the transition from an industrial to an information age,
 - and third, to serve as a focus for our evolving hopes and fears.
- Work began on the project in 1994 and cost **£800,000**. Most of the project funding was provided by the **National Lottery**. *The Angel* was finished on 16 February 1998.
- Due to its exposed location, the sculpture was built to withstand winds of **over 100**

mph (160 km/h). Thus, foundations containing 600 tonnes of concrete anchor the sculpture to rock 70 feet (21 m) below.

- The Angel aroused some **controversy in British newspapers**, at first, including a "**Gateshead stop the statue**" campaign, while local councillor Martin Callanan was especially strong in his opposition. However, it has since been considered to be a **landmark** for North East England and has been listed by one organisation as an "**Icon of England**". It has often been used in film and television to represent Tyneside, as are other local landmarks such as the Tyne Bridge and the Gateshead Millennium Bridge. The sculpture is also known by some local people as the "Gateshead Flasher", because of its location and appearance.

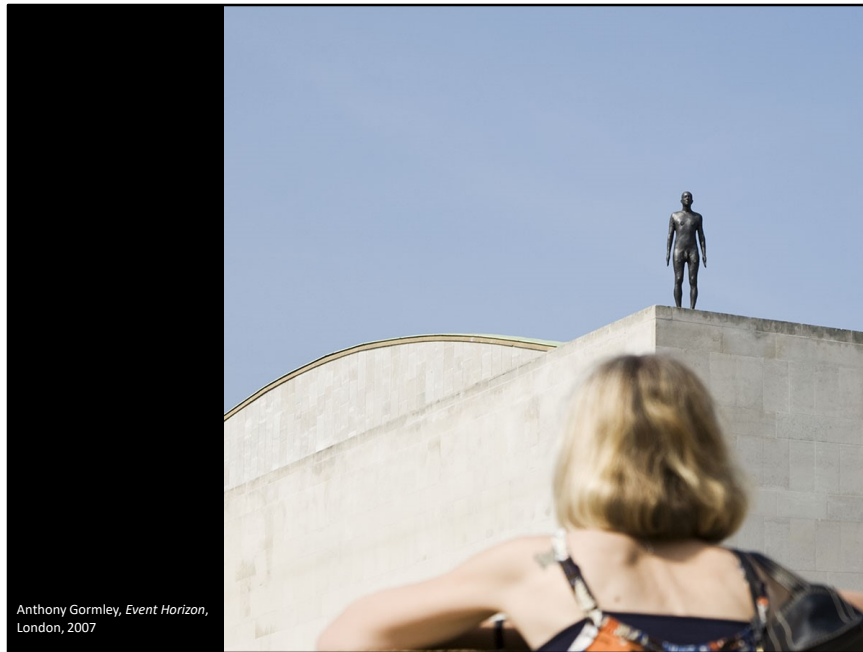


Anthony Gormley, *Another Place*, 1997

- *Another Place* is a piece of modern sculpture by Antony Gormley. Now permanently erected on Crosby Beach, England, it was due to be moved to New York in November 2006, but there was a controversial proposal to retain the work at Crosby. It was stated in the local paper, the Crosby Herald, that they may stay for a decade, but at a meeting on 7 March 2007, Sefton Council accepted proposals that would allow the sculptures to be **kept permanently at Crosby Beach**.
- *Another Place* was first exhibited on the beach of Cuxhaven, Germany, in 1997 and after that in Stavanger in Norway and De Panne in Belgium.
- The work consists of **cast iron figures** which face out to sea, **spread over a 2 mile** (3.2 km) stretch of the beach between Waterloo and Blundellsands. Each figure is **189 cm tall** (nearly 6 feet 2½ inches) and weighs around **650 kg** (over 1400 lb). In common with most of Gormley's work, the figures are **cast replicas of his own body**. As the tides ebb and flow, the figures are **revealed and submerged** by the sea. The figures were cast at two foundries, Hargreaves Foundry in Halifax, West Yorkshire, and Joseph and Jesse Siddons Foundry in West Bromwich.
- *Another Place* is a subject of local controversy in Merseyside. Some consider the

statues to be "pornographic" due to the inclusion of a simplified penis on the statues, whilst others see them as beautiful pieces of art which have brought increased tourism revenue to the local area.

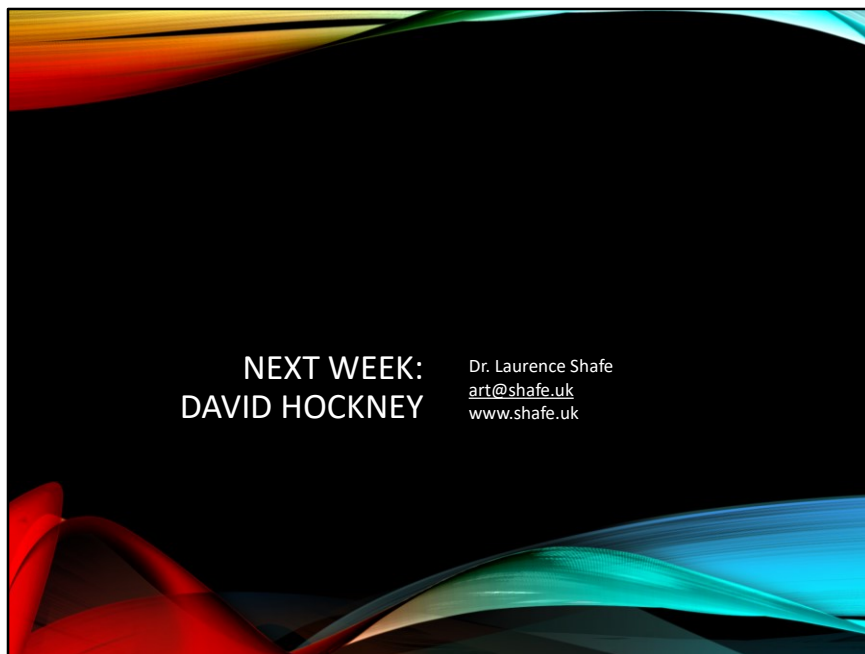
- Originally the statues were **due to be relocated** in November 2007. Those who use the front for **watersports** voiced the strongest resistance to the iron men staying, as they claimed the statues posed a **safety problem**. Art lovers and local businesses lobbied for the statues to stay. Gormley himself agreed with the proposal to keep the statues at Crosby Beach, saying the location was "ideal". The works became a major tourist attraction on Crosby Beach north of Liverpool.
- In March 2007 permission was granted to have *Another Place* permanently installed at Crosby. Initially, coastguard authorities expressed safety fears, saying people could become stuck in soft sand and be cut off by the tide when viewing the statues up close. Conservationists also complained that bird-feeding areas had been compromised by the extra tourist traffic. The planning committee decided to move 16 of the statues back away from an area used by small sailing craft. Three others are being re-sited away from bird feeding areas.



Anthony Gormley, *Event Horizon*, London, 2007

- *Event Horizon* (2007) – along the South Bank of the Thames, London, England; (2010) around Madison Square, New York City; 2012 in São Paulo, Brazil; 2015-16 in Hong Kong.
- The figures were cast from Gormley's own body. Originally mounted in London in 2007, the project consists of **31 life-size anatomically correct male bodies**, 27 constructed of fiberglass and four of cast iron. They were placed on prominent buildings on the South Bank.
- The figures were occasionally mistaken for suicide attempts. One building in Hong Kong asked not to be included after an employee jumped to his death from the building's roof.
- One critic wrote, "**Using distance and attendant shifts of scale within the very fabric of the city, [*Event Horizon*] creates a metaphor for urban life and all the contradictory associations – alienation, ambition, anonymity, fame – it entails.**"
- Gormley describes his statues as "**...showing solitary figures installed in groups yet retaining their sense of solitude and reflection.**" He said of the London installation that "**it was great to see an individual or groups of people pointing at the horizon. This transfer of the stillness of sculpture to the stillness of an**

observer is exciting to me: reflexivity becoming shared."



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