Lucian Freud (1922–2011) was one of the great realist painters of the twentieth century. Freud had a life-long preoccupation with the human face and figure. Family, friends and lovers were his subjects and, sometimes, when no-one else was available, himself. Sitters were drawn from all walks of life, from the aristocracy to the criminal underworld, but he rarely took on commissions. Freud’s portraits often record the life of a relationship. Highly personal and private, they are an enigmatic record of time spent behind the closed door of the studio. The paintings demonstrate the unrelenting observational intensity of his work. The exhibition spans seven decades and is arranged broadly chronologically, beginning with his early explorations of the portrait.

‘I work from people that interest me and that I care about, in rooms that I live in and know’

Lucian Freud
MAN IN A CHAIR

This is a portrait of Baron Hans Heinrich Thyssen-Bornemisza. Like so many of the paintings in this exhibition, it makes reference to the traditions of historical portraiture, in this case Diego Velázquez, while remaining thoroughly contemporary. This is a private view of a powerful figure; his gaze is downward and he sits beside the painter’s discarded rags, his feet cropped from the lower edge of the composition. Freud pays attention to the cut of the suit and the fabric is rendered in as much detail as flesh.

Oil on canvas, 1983–5

Thyssen-Bornemisza Collections
Freud’s first subjects included self-portraits, portraits of his friend, the patron and collector Peter Watson, and his tutor, the painter Cedric Morris. In Girl with Roses, a portrait of Freud’s first wife Kitty Garman, the artist pays forensic attention to every detail, from the subtle tonalities of her skin to each individual lock of hair. These psychologically charged portraits of Kitty are characterised by a distinctive, unsparing vision and linear approach which led the art historian Herbert Read to describe him as ‘the Ingres of Existentialism’.

‘You’re living and your relationships grow or decay’
CEDRIC MORRIS

Cedric Morris (1889–1982) was Freud’s tutor at the East Anglian School of Painting and Drawing, and Freud was an admirer of his work. Although still only eighteen when he painted this, his talent had already been noticed. Sir Kenneth Clark, Director of the National Gallery admired and encouraged his work, and the Evening Standard reported that Freud ‘promises to be a remarkable painter… intelligent and imaginative…’

Oil on canvas, 1940

Amgueddfa Cymru-National Museum of Wales
2

MAN WITH A FEATHER
(SELF-PORTRAIT)

This is the earliest self-portrait in the exhibition. In this surreal painting, Freud depicts himself holding a feather. On the ground behind him there are several mysterious shapes, and in the background we see shadowy figures of a beaked bird and a man wearing a hat. Freud did not reveal what they represented.

Oil on canvas, 1943

Private Collection
GIRL WITH A KITTEN
Oil on canvas, 1947
Tate: Bequeathed by Simon Sainsbury 2006, accessioned 2008

GIRL IN A DARK JACKET
Oil on panel, 1947
Private Collection

GIRL WITH ROSES
Oil on canvas, 1947–8
British Council Collection

These paintings depict Freud’s first wife, Kitty Garman (1926–2011), the daughter of the sculptor Jacob Epstein and collector Kathleen Garman. These works, particularly Girl with Roses, suggest a tender, almost courtly love. Pregnant at the time, Kitty holds the rose almost like a medieval attribute. She described sitting for Freud as ‘like being arranged’. He achieved works of such detail by using fine sable brushes.
GIRL WITH A WHITE DOG

The artist’s use of *chiaroscuro* delineates Kitty’s features, making her look older than her years. She sits on a bare mattress, pressed up against the wall panelling with a grey blanket for a backdrop. Her exposed breast is echoed in the form of the English bull terrier’s muzzle in her lap. The couple separated not long after the painting was completed.

*Oil on canvas, 1950–1*

Tate: Purchased 1952
FRANCIS BACON

Francis Bacon (1909–92) was an important early influence on Freud. Their friendship dated back to the 1940s, and they were part of a circle of artists who spent time together, frequenting Soho drinking houses. This is one of three drawings of the artist in this pose which Bacon orchestrated; made in the same year Freud painted his portrait. Freud appears in a number of Bacon’s paintings, including his triptych, *Three Studies for a Portrait of Lucian Freud*, 1965.

Pencil, 1952

Private Collection courtesy of Ivor Braka Ltd, London
Hotel Bedroom, a double portrait of the artist with his second wife Caroline Blackwood, was the last painting Freud made sitting down at the easel, and can be seen in the adjoining room. In the mid-1950s he began to move towards a more vigorous approach. This was influenced by his decision to begin painting standing up and to use coarse, hog’s hair brushes. Painted in 1958–9, Woman Smiling marks a transitional moment when, for the first time, he draws attention to the landscape of the face. In 1966 Freud made his first naked portrait of a whole figure, rather than focussing on the head. In this room are some of the artist’s first depictions of the figure. Although painted over forty years ago, their unrelenting scrutiny still has the power to shock.

‘When I stood up I never sat down again’
PORTRAIT OF JOHN MINTON

The artist and illustrator John Minton (1917–57) commissioned this painting after seeing Freud's first portrait of Francis Bacon, completed in 1952. The artist shows a marked attention to detail in this characteristically intense study.

Oil on canvas, 1952

Royal College of Art Collection
FATHER AND DAUGHTER

This portrait of a father and his daughter sees Freud move away from portraits that only depict single figures. It is also an example of the artist pulling out slightly from his subjects, to include aspects of their setting. Here the man is partially hidden behind a beaded curtain. His daughter faces us with a child’s direct gaze. Freud was to revisit the father-daughter relationship, as we can see in several paintings in this exhibition.

Oil on canvas, 1949

Private Collection, London; courtesy Timothy Taylor Gallery, London
GIRL IN BED
Oil on canvas, 1952
Private Collection

HOTEL BEDROOM
Oil on canvas, 1954
Gift of The Beaverbrook Foundation.
The Beaverbrook Art Gallery Fredericton, Canada

These are portraits of Freud’s second wife, Caroline Blackwood (1931–96). Girl in Bed was painted after they eloped to Paris and were living at the Hôtel la Louisiane. Loving and gentle, it conveys Blackwood’s wide-eyed innocence, in stark contrast with the haunting, oppressive composition of his double portrait Hotel Bedroom, painted just two years later. The artist and his wife are in the same room but they appear to be entirely separate from each other.
WOMAN SMILING

This portrait of the artist Suzy Boyt marks a transitional point in Freud’s work. For the first time he reveals the landscape of the human face. He paints her mottled skin and makes us aware of the bone structure beneath her flesh. An unusual aspect to this painting is that the sitter is smiling. Boyt was a pupil of Freud’s when he taught at the Slade School of Art. They went on to become lovers and had children together.

Oil on canvas, 1958–9

Private Collection
LARGE INTERIOR, PADDINGTON

Freud explores the use of a high viewpoint in this portrait of his young daughter, Ib Boyt. She looks vulnerable, lying semi-naked in a foetal position. An overgrown plant towers above her. It has shed some of its dead leaves on to the paint-spattered floorboards. Her father’s presence is felt in the shape of the shabby jacket that hangs behind his daughter. An older Ib appears again later in the exhibition.

Oil on canvas, 1968–9

Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid
MAN’S HEAD (SELF-PORTRAIT)
Oil on canvas, 1963
The Whitworth Art Gallery, University of Manchester

SELF-PORTRAIT
Oil on canvas, 1963
National Portrait Gallery, London

INTERIOR WITH HAND-MIRROR (SELF-PORTRAIT)
Oil on canvas, 1967
Private Collection

In 1963 Freud produced two of these self-portraits in quick succession. *Man’s Head (Self-portrait)* shows Freud looking down on us. In *Self-portrait* his face is more abstracted: almost mask-like. *Interior with Hand-Mirror (Self-portrait)* is a more critical self-view. His face is seen almost as though he is part of the background. He said he used mirrors in order to paint the person he could not see in his mind’s eye, to try and see himself in unexpected ways.
JOHN DEAKIN

The photographer John Deakin (1912–72) was one of Freud’s close friends. He worked for Vogue, and took pictures that chronicled the lives of Francis Bacon and his Soho circle. However Deakin, who had a self-destructive side to his personality, did not consider that his own work was of any great merit and would have preferred to have been a painter. Freud depicts his florid, troubled face and his thick, prominent ears.

Oil on canvas, 1963–4

Private Collection
WOMAN IN A WHITE SHIRT

By the time this portrait was made, Freud had abandoned his soft sable paintbrushes in favour of brushes made from coarser hog’s hair. His brushwork has become bolder and more vigorous. There is a sculptured, visceral quality to this portrait of the Dowager Duchess of Devonshire. A friend of the artist, she remembered him as being ‘mercurial … will of the wisp … you can’t describe his being’. Although she enjoyed sitting for the artist, she later remarked that this portrait, painted in her thirties, made her look much older.

Oil on canvas, 1956–7

The Trustees of the Chatsworth Settlement
MAN IN A BLUE SHIRT

This is a portrait of George Dyer, Francis Bacon’s lover. He looks down, a troubled expression on his face. While Bacon’s paintings depicted him as a turbulent character, Freud shows him to be a more vulnerable man. He paints his harelip and his broken nose. The redness of his exposed chest is made more intense by the blueness of his shirt. Dyer committed suicide in 1971.

Oil on canvas, 1965

Private Collection
PREGNANT GIRL
Oil on canvas, 1960–1
Private Collection

BABY ON A GREEN SOFA
Oil on canvas, 1961
The Trustees of the Chatsworth Settlement

The pregnant woman is Bernadine Coverley, the mother of Bella and Esther Freud. The artist painted her when she was pregnant with Bella, who can be seen as a baby in the neighbouring work. Freud did not believe that there was such a thing as bland, generic skin. Even an infant's flesh did not escape his close examination. The baby lies fast asleep, arms instinctively raised above her head. Her body is given the same objective scrutiny that Freud gave to animals. Although the infant is one of his daughters, the painting hung for years at Chatsworth House before her identity was known to the owners.
These three paintings are of the same subject. The two nude portraits are startling in their directness; there is something predatory about the artist’s gaze. In *Naked Girl* the woman holds her arms above her shoulders, defensively, her legs clamped together. By cropping her legs at the knee attention is drawn to her genitalia. Freud was interested in people as animals, observing that without clothes, human beings reveal their basic instincts and desires.
RED HAired MAN ON A CHAIR

In this painting Freud moves further away from his subject to give an elevated view, placing him within the studio setting, which feels like a stage. The figure squats on a chair with a mound of rags lined up against the wall behind him. This is the earliest work in which we see the linen rags the artist used to clean his brushes. They are a recurring image in Freud’s paintings.

Oil on canvas, 1962–3

Private Collection
A MAN AND HIS DAUGHTER

This painting is both a violent image of a man with livid scars on his face, and a tender depiction of the close relationship between a father and daughter. They are painted as though they are one body, the girl with a long golden plait tied with a pure white bow, and her unblemished skin contrasting with that of her father. The man lived in a flat beneath Freud in the run-down part of Paddington where he had lived since the 1940s.

Oil on canvas, 1963–4

Private Collection
In the 1960s and 1970s, Freud continued to explore more complex compositions and drew back from the head to reveal the whole body, sometimes, as in the portrait of Harry Diamond, placed in the context of the artist’s studio and living space. Freud’s gestures become increasingly dynamic: in *Figure with Bare Arms* he presents the sitter’s body as an exaggerated triangle. A series of paintings of the artist’s mother, Lucie, hang in the adjoining room. These can be placed in the tradition of artists’ portraits of their mothers from Rembrandt to Van Gogh. The intensely moving paintings displayed here are a record of that close relationship.

‘As far as I am concerned the paint is the person. I want it to work for me just as flesh does’
INTERIOR WITH PLANT, REFLECTION LISTENING (SELF-PORTRAIT)
Oil on canvas, 1967–8
Private Collection

REFLECTION WITH TWO CHILDREN (SELF-PORTRAIT)
Oil on canvas, 1965
Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid
A houseplant dominates the foreground in *Interior with Plant, Reflection Listening (Self-portrait)*. Behind it, a mirror reflects the painter, his hand cupping his ear. Naked, he appears to be an extension of the leaf. Although he regularly embarked on self-portraits, Freud found them challenging.

*Reflection with Two Children (Self-portrait)*, another large canvas in this room with a towering figure of Freud, was the first time he used the word ‘reflection’ in a title. He used a mirror placed on the floor, creating a low angle and a strange viewpoint. Two of his children, Ali and Rose Boyt, appear as doll-like figures in the foreground and they seem oblivious to the giant figure of their father.
PORTRAIT OF A WOMAN
Oil on canvas, 1969
The Trustees of the Chatsworth Settlement

PORTRAIT OF A MAN
Oil on canvas, 1971–2
The Trustees of the Chatsworth Settlement

The painting of Mary Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire is a sympathetic portrayal of a woman in old age. Freud believed that painting should be psychological and, while not flattering, the portrait of her son Andrew Cavendish, the 11th Duke of Devonshire, is a frank representation of a man in middle age. He said: ‘I sat for him thirty-six times in all … the whole process was so protracted that it really took over one’s life’.
PADDINGTON INTERIOR, HARRY DIAMOND

Seen from a high viewpoint, light falls over the sitter making him look uncomfortable, as though he is unwillingly exposed to our scrutiny. He seems out of place, seated and fully dressed, with a bath and basin behind him, evidence that Freud was living and working in the same space. Freud had been a friend of Harry Diamond, a photographer and Soho habitué, since the 1950s. This is one of three portraits he made of him. Diamond found the experience of sitting for Freud depleting, saying: ‘If someone is interested in getting your essence down on canvas, they are also drawing your essence out of you…’

Oil on canvas, 1970

Victoria Gallery & Museum, University of Liverpool
In this portrait of the artist Frank Auerbach (b.1931), his powerful forehead dominates the canvas. The two men had been friends since the mid-1950s, when Francis Bacon introduced them at the French House in Soho. They were great admirers of each other’s work and saw each other frequently. It was at the time he made this portrait that Freud began to use Cremnitz white, a dry pigment with a stiff consistency that goes some way to replicating the texture of flesh. Auerbach later said of Freud’s work: ‘The subject is raw, not cooked to be more digestible as art…’

Oil on canvas, 1975–6

Private Collection
NAKED PORTRAIT

The woman lies in an awkward position, half-huddled up against a brass bedstead. She has the defensive attitude of a caged animal; it is as though the painter’s tools that perch on the paint-splashed stool in the foreground threaten her. Freud liked to bring a sense of drama to his portraits, just as artists he admired from the past. He believed that if a painting did not have drama, it did not work. It was just paint out of a tube.

Oil on canvas, 1972–3

Tate: Purchased 1975
24

THE PAINTER’S FATHER
Pencil on paper, 1970
Private Collection

THE PAINTER’S MOTHER
Oil on canvas, 1972
Private Collection

LARGE INTERIOR, W9
Oil on canvas, 1973
The Trustees of the Chatsworth Settlement

THE PAINTER’S MOTHER READING
Oil on canvas, 1975
Private Collection, Ireland

THE PAINTER’S MOTHER RESTING
Oil on canvas, 1976
Private Collection, Ireland
Freud’s portraits of his mother, Lucie, are among his most tender. They were a labour of love and a sensitive study of old age. Following the death of her husband Ernst in 1970, the year the drawing of the painter’s father was made, Lucie’s grief brought on a deep depression and her previously overpowering interest in her son diminished. Freud found it was then possible for her to sit for him. Over a period of seven years Freud was able to keep a watchful eye over his mother by painting her. The only time he did not paint her alone was in Large Interior, W9, a double portrait in which the women appear oblivious to each other’s presence. They seem like opposites: youth and age; clothed and naked. They were painted separately and never met during sittings.
In 1977, Freud moved to a more spacious studio in west London, where he installed a skylight to provide stronger light. Enjoying the freedom to paint on a larger scale, he made these three ambitious works that deal with issues around the acts of painting and sitting. In these paintings we see an opening out of the composition to reveal the surroundings in which the subjects sit and the cityscape beyond the room. Freud required the sitter to be present even when he was painting the background, aware of their impact on the space they occupied. *Large Interior, W11 (after Watteau)* is the most complex composition Freud had attempted up until that moment.

‘I think of painting as a continuous group portrait’
LARGEN INTERIOR, W11 (AFTER WATTEAU)
Oil on canvas, 1981–3
Private Collection

TWO IRISHMEN IN W11
Oil on canvas, 1984–5
Private Collection, Ireland

PAINTER AND MODEL
Oil on canvas, 1986–7
Private Collection, New York

For Large Interior, W11 (after Watteau) Freud gathered together people who were close to him to create a group portrait based on Jean-Antoine Watteau’s, Pierrot Contente (1712). Two Irishmen in W11 combines a portrait of a father and son with two small, unfinished self-portraits against the studio wall, and a portrait of west London seen through the window. Painter and Model is an allegory of painting with a reversal of traditional roles. As the artist Celia Paul paints a male nude, her naked foot presses suggestively on a tube of paint.
Freud would work on several paintings concurrently. They were divided into day and night pictures, which were never swapped. At night, large electric lights would cast strong shadows. Sitters would come and go but were always kept separate from each other. They were well taken care of with gossip, poetry and good food. In return they had to be punctual and have, as Freud put it, ‘an inner life that’s ticking away’, which would occupy them in the silences while he painted. The last portrait Freud made of his mother is also here. Although painted several years before her death, dressed in white, there is a sense of inner calm.

‘When I paint clothes I am really painting naked people who are covered in clothes’
Both portraits were painted in his studio at night. When Freud painted skin he would remix his paint after nearly every brushstroke in order to make sure that no single colour dominated. In *Naked Portrait II*, we get a sense of the lethargy of late pregnancy. The sitter in *Naked Girl with Egg* is the painter, Celia Paul (born 1959). She is seen in several of Freud’s portraits.
NAKED GIRL

This portrait recalls an earlier painting, Large Interior Paddington (1968–9). A naked figure lies with her face partially hidden behind her arm, which allows Freud to focus on her physical form and how it relates to the surroundings. Looking down on her from above, he is able to observe her closely. Freud’s subtle use of colour differentiates between the tones of her flesh and the shades and texture of the material on which she lies.

Oil on canvas, 1985–6

Private Collection
NAKED MAN WITH RAT

This painting seems to be all about limbs. A naked man lies with his head thrown back against the arm of the sofa. His legs are splayed and one arm is raised. His right hand holds a rat, its tail curls over the man's inner thigh and dangles close to his penis. Tail and penis are both different kinds of appendage. We get the sense here that Freud did not care about gender or ego; people were simply another species of animal.

Oil on canvas, 1977–8

State Art Collection, Art Gallery of Western Australia
Purchased 1984
REFLECTION (SELF-PORTRAIT)

Freud was in his sixties when he painted the two self-portraits in this room. They are reflections on life as well as reflections in a mirror. The youthful arrogance of his earlier self-portraits has gone, replaced by these more harsh assessments. In the earlier painting Self-portrait (1981–2) he stands in profile, looking sideways at his reflection with an eagle-like stare. Reflection (Self-portrait) from 1985 is a particularly introspective work: his gaze is elsewhere; his eyes appear to look inward. Painted under bright lights, Freud's head casts a dramatic shadow on his chest. The artist said: ‘The way you paint yourself, you’ve got to try and paint yourself as another person.’

Oil on canvas, 1985

Private Collection, Ireland
These paintings reveal a particular intimacy between the artist and the sitter. Two of them depict his daughters, Esther and Ib, while the third is a portrait of his lover, the artist Celia Paul. In each painting we are aware of long hours spent lying in the warmth of the studio. Freud was careful to choose sitters who interested him, and who would enjoy spending time with him. A painting might take over a year to complete.
In 1990, Freud met the Australian performance artist, Leigh Bowery at the Anthony d’Offay Gallery and invited him to sit. Bowery chose to sit for Freud naked, without the trappings of the outrageous costumes and body piercings for which he was known. The resulting paintings are ambitious and, according to Freud, less autobiographical. He said of Bowery: ‘He was a remarkable model because he was so intelligent, instinctive and inventive, also amazingly perverse and abandoned.’

‘He was still in a sense performing because of his physical awareness, which was extraordinary’
LEIGH BOWERY (SEATED)
Oil on canvas, 1990
Private Collection

NUDE WITH LEG UP
Oil on linen, 1992
Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC Joseph H. Hirshhorn Purchase Fund 1993

AND THE BRIDEGROOM
Oil on canvas, 1993
Lewis Collection

GIRL SITTING IN THE ATTIC DOORWAY
Oil on canvas, 1995
Private Collection
Despite his size, Leigh Bowery was delicate and supple. Freud had always shunned working with professional models, but as a performer, Bowery was able to invent and sustain demanding poses. The two men developed a close relationship and for four years Bowery was his most consistent model. He said that sitting for Freud was like having a university education. Unknown to the artist, Bowery was gravely ill with AIDS.

*And the Bridegroom* (the title taken from the poem ‘Epithalamium’ by A.E. Housman) is a relaxed and moving portrait with his wife, Nicola. We see her again, perched in an attic doorway around the time of Bowery’s death.
Freud used hotel linen as rags to clean his brushes and palette knives. They suggested the landscape of the studio and provided a compositional device when they appeared in paintings. Included here are two portraits of the artist Sophie de Stempel. *Standing by the Rags* then appears in the background of *Two Men in the Studio*, a double portrait of artists, Angus Cook and Cerith Wyn Evans.

‘What do I ask of a painting? I ask it to astonish, disturb, seduce, convince’
TWO MEN IN THE STUDIO
Oil on canvas, 1987–9
Lewis Collection

STANDING BY THE RAGS
Oil on canvas, 1988–9
Tate: Purchased with assistance from the Art Fund, the Friends of the Tate Gallery and anonymous donors 1990

In *Standing by the Rags* we can almost feel the woman’s weight against the tangled pile of rags. Her over-sized feet root her to the ground. Beneath the mounds of soft linen, a makeshift structure supports the pose. In *Two Men in the Studio*, the man stretching his body on top of the bed sheet partially covers the painting of Sophie de Stempel on the easel behind him. A playful composition, the dynamic pose of the standing figure contrasts with the shadowy sleeping head beneath the bed.
Leigh Bowery introduced Freud to friends he thought might interest him of whom his clubbing friend, Sue Tilley, was one. For Freud, painting Tilley, known as ‘Big Sue’, was a continuation of his fascination with flesh, although he talked about not wanting to over indulge his ‘predilection towards people of unusual or strange proportions’. Freud’s titles rarely give away a model’s occupation and his ‘Benefits Supervisor’ series is one of the exceptions.

‘It’s flesh without muscle and it has developed a different kind of texture through being such a weight-bearing thing’
Sue Tilley (or Big Sue, as she came to be known) lies languidly on the sofa in a bohemian artist’s studio, far removed from her day job as a civil servant working for the Department of Social Security. Freud was initially fascinated by her size, however as time passed her proportions became more ordinary to him. Freud’s portraits of Tilley are a celebration of flesh and as feminine as Manet’s *Olympia* or the *Rokeby Venus* by Velázquez, although far less idealised.
IX

The final sections of the exhibition span the last twenty years of Freud’s life and include paintings of his assistant, David Dawson, members of his family and a series of intensely observed heads and figure paintings, some seen here for the first time. By the 1990s Freud’s international reputation was firmly established. However, his world remained the studio and the close circle of people who sat for him. In his final years Freud continued to be intrigued by the naked form. The late female nudes were a departure from his depictions of ‘Big Sue’ and hark back to his earlier studies, continuing his life-long fascination with the portrait.

‘I don’t think my fame made people less interested in my paintings’
Bella

This painting of Freud’s daughter, the fashion designer Bella Freud, uses an extraordinary perspective. She sits back in the chair: her head in the distance while her long legs and seemingly large feet stretch towards us into the foreground. We have already seen Bella portrayed earlier in the exhibition, but here she appears to be more composed and mature. There is a sense of the connection and mutual respect between her and her father. The portrait was painted over a period of three years, with a year-long break in the middle while Freud made an etching.

Oil on canvas, 1996

Private Collection, New York
NAKED PORTRAIT STANDING

This nude figure stands with her arms crossed behind her back; her head and sturdy legs are cropped in an unusual way, so that her body resembles a tree trunk. Freud consciously emulates a painting he admired, *Study of the Trunk of an Elm Tree* (c.1821), by John Constable. It was a picture he first saw on a visit to the V&A, when he was a student. He also made a three-part etched version of the portrait and an etching after Constable’s elm.

Oil on canvas, 1999–2000

Private Collection, Courtesy of Sotheby’s
NAKED PORTRAIT WITH RED CHAIR
Oil on canvas, 1999
Lewis Collection

FLORA WITH BLUE TOENAILS
Oil on canvas, 2000–1
Private Collection, Courtesy of Acquavella Galleries

NAKED SOLICITOR
Oil on canvas, 2003
Property of a Distinguished Private Collector, Bali

RIA, NAKED PORTRAIT
Oil on canvas, 2006–7
Private Collection

Freud was in his eighties when he painted these nudes. Each model was painted only once, and although their poses are similar, the portraits are all very different to look at. What they share is a remarkably sensitive and delicate handling. The paintings show how fresh Freud’s work continued to be; he was still experimenting and challenging himself, even towards the end of his life.
Freud in his eighties was as energetic as ever and painted every day, making rigorous demands on his sitters, such as his friend and riding companion Brigadier Andrew Parker Bowles. Freud’s constant model and companion in his final years was the painter, David Dawson, his assistant since 1990. Nowhere is Freud’s abiding theme of the complicity between the human and the animal more evident than in his paintings of Dawson with the whippets, Pluto and Eli. For the last four years of his life Freud worked on Portrait of the Hound, an affectionate double portrait of Dawson and Eli exhibited here for the first time. They are painted as equals; their bodies share the same rhythms. Unfinished at the artist’s death, the last brush strokes he made created Eli’s ear, alert and listening.

‘I am inclined to think of “humans”... if they’re dressed, as animals dressed up’
DAVID HOCKNEY

David Hockney calculated that this portrait took 130 hours to complete. Early each morning he would walk from his house in Kensington to Freud’s studio in Holland Park, where he would sit until about midday. While Freud paused to mix paints the two men would talk: their subjects ranged from painting to gossip about mutual friends and acquaintances. When Hockney asked his friend to return the favour, and pose for a portrait, Freud sat for two and a half hours.

Oil on canvas, 2002

Private Collection, Courtesy of Acquavella Galleries
MAN IN A BLUE SCARF

Freud preferred to paint using earthy tones, but one of the most striking features of this portrait of the art historian and critic Martin Gayford is the depth of colour in his blue scarf. Gayford leans forward slightly, as though he is about to engage us in conversation. Although we only see his head, to sustain this pose he had to keep his legs in the same position, ensuring that he maintained the right weight and balance.

Oil on canvas, 2004

Frances Bowes
SELF-PORTRAIT, REFLECTION

This is a quiet, reflective painting of the artist as an old man. Freud wears a jacket, but no shirt. He clutches at his scarf as though it is a noose around his neck. What is remarkable is the way he has depicted his head using impasto, building up the layers of pigment until he seems to disappear into the paint-encrusted wall behind him.

Oil on canvas, 2002

Private Collection, Courtesy of Acquavella Galleries
SUNNY MORNING – EIGHT LEGS

If any painting reveals the playfulness in Freud’s work, it is this portrait of his assistant, the artist David Dawson and Freud’s whippet Pluto. Dawson lies with his arm wrapped affectionately round the dog. Human and animal are intertwined. It was as he was working on the painting that Freud realised there was something missing from the composition. He decided to incorporate a mirror image of Dawson’s legs coming out from underneath the bed.

Oil on canvas, 1997

The Art Institute of Chicago, Joseph Winterbotham Collection
THE BRIGADIERS

Bold colours are a feature of this painting: the red stripe on his trousers, medal ribbons, brass buttons and golden brocade. It could be a typical military portrait, until you observe the sitter’s melancholic look and his unbuttoned jacket revealing a paunch. This portrait of Brigadier Andrew Parker Bowles was inspired by a much smaller portrait in the Collection of the National Portrait Gallery: James Tissot’s Colonel Frederick Gustavus Burnaby (1870). Both sitters were in the same regiment.

Oil on canvas, 2003–4

Mr Damon Mezzacappa
ELI AND DAVID
Oil on canvas, 2005–6
Private Collection

PORTRAIT OF THE HOUND
Oil on canvas, 2011
Private Collection, Courtesy of Acquavella Galleries

David Dawson and his whippet Eli are the subjects of these affectionate late portraits. Sitting off-centre with the dog on his lap, Eli and David portrays a man and his dog looking entirely at ease with each other: Portrait of the Hound gives us a glimpse of how the artist worked, spiralling the image out from the centre. This was to be Freud’s last painting. He continued to work on it until he was too frail to carry on. It was left unfinished on his easel when he died.
ETCHINGS
On display in the Ondaatje Wing Main Hall

Lucian Freud made drawings and etchings as a young artist and his skills as a draughtsman were much admired. He returned to print-making later in his career and generally produced etchings of a sitter after he had painted them, drawing directly onto the plate with the subject in front of him. He used fine lines to describe the face and in Girl with Fuzzy Hair the medium is used to great effect to delineate his subject’s corkscrew hair. In Self-portrait: Reflection, the artist’s face appears to be chiselled out of the heavily worked background. This bears a remarkable resemblance to the plates of two plaster heads in The Egyptian Book. Freud was given Geschichte Aegyptens, a book of Egyptian history, in 1939 and it remained an artist’s companion throughout his life. The two heads illustrated were from El-Amarna, Egypt and, for Freud, embodied the power of portraiture.
MEMBERSHIP

Enjoy unlimited free access to exhibitions without needing to pre-book. You can also enjoy special Members-only Evening Private Views and Afternoon Previews and receive a 10% discount in the Gallery’s Shops, Portrait Restaurant and Portrait Café. From just £40 by Direct Debit. Join today at the Members Desk, online at www.npg.org.uk/members or call 0207 321 6281.

KEEP IN TOUCH

Sign up for the Gallery’s free e-newsletter at www.npg.org.uk and follow us on Facebook or Twitter.

PORTRAIT RESTAURANT

One of London’s finest dining rooms with stunning views of the city, serving a modern British menu. Closes one hour before the Gallery except on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays when it closes at 22.00, last orders 20.30. Booking advisable: 020 7312 2490

FORTHCOMING EXHIBITIONS

The Queen: Art and Image  
17 May – 21 October 2012

BP Portrait Award 2012  
21 June – 23 September 2012

The Lost Prince: The Life and Death of Henry Stuart  
18 October 2012 – 13 January 2013
TALKS AND EVENTS

A full range of events accompanies the exhibition, highlights include Annie Freud and a distinguished cast for readings of her father’s favourite poems. Celebrate *Freud on Film* as Tim Marlow and Jake Auerbach introduce their documentary screenings. Discover how the exhibition was created with curator Sarah Howgate. Critic Martin Gayford and ‘Benefits Supervisor’ Sue Tilley share their experiences of sitting for Freud. Conversations delve into sexuality, size and beauty. Uncover Freud’s London stomping ground on a walking tour. Spend a day exploring Freud’s life and work at a Symposium on Saturday 21 April with speakers including Catherine Lampert, William Feaver and Sarah Howgate.

On Thursdays and Fridays until 21.00 enjoy *Late Shift* - a mix of art, music, drinks, tours and workshops. Friday evening art classes include drawing in the Gallery, painting workshops and life-drawing sessions, including Sue Tilley modelling. Show your *Lucian Freud Portraits* exhibition ticket at the *Late Shift* Bar to enjoy 2-for-1 drinks. Find out more at www.npg.org.uk/lateshift

See the ‘What’s On’ guide or the website at www.npg.org.uk for full details of all events.
YOUNG PEOPLE

Painting Portraits: Expressive
Sunday 4 March
11.00 – 16.00

Explore Freud's later work and create your own expressive portrait with artist Peta Taylor.

Painting Portraits: Linear
Sunday 1 April
11.00 – 16.00

Paint a linear portrait inspired by Freud’s earlier works with artist Sadie Lee.

Under the Skin: Portrait Poems
Wednesday 11 April – Friday 13 April
11.00 – 16.00

Work with poet Ross Sutherland to create work exploring artist/sitter relationships.

To book places in advance for the Young People’s programme (14 – 21 year-olds), please call 020 7312 2483 or email youthbookings@npg.org.uk

SECONDARY SCHOOLS PROGRAMMES

For information on group visits, workshops and Teachers’ CPD for Lucian Freud: Portraits, please see www.npg.org.uk/learning

Please note, all visits must be booked in advance. Contact education@npg.org.uk or 020 7312 2483.
PUBLICATIONS

Lucian Freud Portraits
A richly illustrated, comprehensive catalogue by curator Sarah Howgate, with contributions by Michael Auping and John Richardson, accompanies the exhibition. Includes a chronology of Freud’s life and previously unpublished interviews with the artist.
RRP £35 (hardback), £25 (Gallery-exclusive paperback)

Lucian Freud: Painting People
This informative paperback guide to Freud’s portraiture includes an appreciation by David Hockney, an introduction by Martin Gayford and a selection of more than fifty works featured in the exhibition.
RRP £10

Postcards, posters, sketchbooks and other exhibition-related items are also available to purchase from the Gallery’s shops and online at www.npg.org.uk/shop