

of folk and tribal art to reveal alternative representations of 'male' and 'female'.

#### Room 4

The exhibition concludes with a work by Thomas Schütte from his *Trio* (1993) series, installed alongside the powerful *Reflection (Self-Portrait)* (1985) by Freud. Schütte's work, a sculpture showing three figures made from wax, paint, rope and found materials, suggests the schizophrenic nature of human psychology, provoked by personal histories, memories and our fragile mortality. Similarly, Freud's depiction of himself is raw, unromantic, and completely self-aware. As we leave the space, we hear a rendition of *Hurt* sung by Bernie Brennan—originally performed by Nine Inch Nails and later interpreted by country music legend Johnny Cash—which seems to touch on the vulnerabilities and self-awareness evoked by these two artists whose work bears witness to our fallible natures: "*Beneath the stains of time / The feelings disappear / You are someone else / I am still right here*".

Text by Ann Marie Peña, Director, Frith Street Gallery, London, written in consultation with Daphne Wright.

Exhibition curated by Daphne Wright.

#### IMMA Collection: Freud Project

This project marks the establishment of the Freud Centre within the Garden Galleries; the first time that IMMA has dedicated gallery space to a single artist over an extended period. Enabled by capital funding from the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, the Freud Centre is intended as a space for close looking, thinking, and learning. The overall Freud programme includes annual exhibitions, artists' commissions, talks, seminars, learning activities and research partnerships that provoke reflection on Freud's work and how it relates to the present.

For a full programme of associated talks and events and for bookings visit [www.imma.ie](http://www.imma.ie)

IMMA wishes to express deepest thanks to Daphne Wright for her ongoing commitment and dedication to the project.

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Front cover:

Marlene Dumas  
*Kissing the Floor*, 2014  
Watercolour on paper  
39.5 x 46.5 x 4.5 cm  
Private Collection, London,  
Courtesy of Frith Street Gallery

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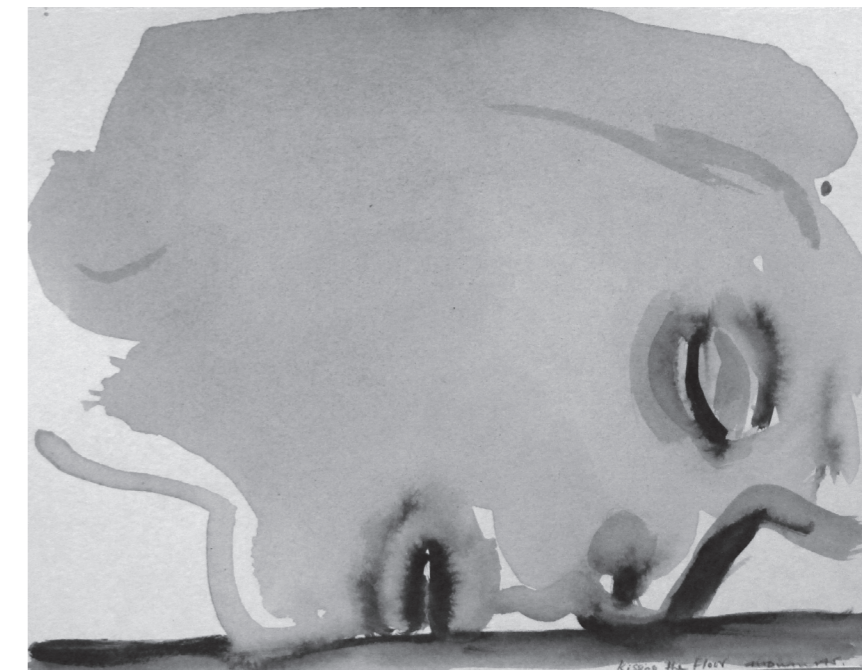
Royal Hospital  
Kilmainham  
Dublin 8  
D08 FW31, Ireland

+353 1 612 9900  
[imma.ie](http://imma.ie) / [info@imma.ie](mailto:info@imma.ie)



IMMA  
FREUD CENTRE  
15 FEBRUARY – 2 SEPTEMBER 2018

## IMMA Collection: Freud Project *The Ethics of Scrutiny,* *Curated by Daphne Wright*



**IMMA Collection: Freud Project is a major five-year initiative for IMMA, where fifty-two works by Lucian Freud—thirty-two paintings and twenty works on paper—have been lent to the Collection by a number of private lenders. As part of Museum programming around the project, IMMA has invited visual artist Daphne Wright to curate an exhibition in response to the works on loan, which include some of the Freud’s most remarkable and memorable pieces.**

**Lucian Freud chose his subjects from people who entered his life through various means, from acquaintances he encountered regularly during his gambling days, to members of his family and inner circle of friends, all of whom modelled for him within the tight constraints of his studio. Through his portraits, some painted over many months or even years, we see a body of work that examines the complex relationships between artist and sitter. More broadly, we see paintings that deal with the psychology of looking.**

**Taking as a starting point these specific aspects of Freud’s intimate and insular studio practice, Wright’s exhibition, *The Ethics of Scrutiny*, explores themes of vulnerability, longing and loss, which permeate the painter’s work, while also looking to the works of other artists who, in various ways, address the inherent complexities of representation. Placing Freud’s paintings alongside the work of artists Gwen John, Alice Neel, Kathy Prendergast, Wiebke Siem, Marlene Dumas and Thomas Schütte, writers Emily Dickinson, John Berger and Lydia Davis; psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud; and singer Bernie Brennan, *The Ethics of Scrutiny* calls into question how we see ourselves, how our gazes fall onto one another, and importantly how our identities shift over time.**

## Ground Floor Room 1

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The exhibition begins with four observational watercolours of plant and animal cells by Lucian’s grandfather, pioneering psychoanalyst, Sigmund Freud (1856-1939). Painted when he was a young man, the watercolours reveal an avid interest in exploring the basic cell structures of plants and animals. They probe the issue of our relationship to the natural world, particularly within the context of Charles Darwin’s theory of evolution.

Set alongside these watercolours are reproductions of a selection of Emily Dickinson’s (1830-1886) radical and intimate *Envelope Poems*. Originally considered scrap pieces of paper or notes referencing longer pieces, recently these works have been more accurately credited as intimately wrought, scrutinising poems which deal with the complexities of our common psyche. Acoustically drawn, the poems reveal a writer in complete control of language, dissecting her surroundings with brutal but poignant observations. Both his grandfather’s watercolours and Dickinson’s poems point to Lucian Freud’s own clinical analysis and naked examination of his subjects.

## Room 2

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The figure in Gwen John’s (1876-1939) painting *Nude Girl* (1909-1910) returns the viewer’s gaze steadily. Alongside this work hangs a small still life, *Interior* (1925), which the artist painted in her studio. Documented on film and projected to actual size, the two paintings appear as ghosts of themselves, overlaid with the gentle soundtrack of an observing crowd. In the soundscape you may also detect the murmuring internal machinations of a 16mm camera filming, slight trembles which

emphasise the intensity and private other-worldliness so present in John’s work. Alongside these projections, the delicate *Self Portrait, Nude Sketching* (1908-1909) provides a further contrast to many of Freud’s own works in which the artist’s gaze seems to dismantle its subject, even when he is portraying himself. In John’s paintings the subjects themselves appear to be analysing their audiences, looking back at the viewer with a quiet but weighty stillness.

## Room 3

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Leading into Room 3, Freud’s *Head of a Girl* (1975-1976) demonstrates the vulnerability of a young lover being watched, or more accurately, a young woman lowering her eyes as she is examined in depth. The examination is further intensified as we hear author James Salter (1925-2015) reading Lydia Davis’ short story *Break It Down* (1983). Spoken with intimacy and rigour, we listen as Salter gives voice to Davis’ male protagonist delivering his perspective on a fleeting relationship; mapping the private details of an 8-day affair as he tries to calculate exactly what love costs.

The broken-down intricacies of romantic relationships are further evaluated in Marlene Dumas’ painting, *Kissing the Floor* (2014). This small watercolour echoes an earlier work by the artist inspired by the infamous shower scene from Alfred Hitchcock’s *Psycho*, which concludes as the actress Janet Leigh falls dead on the tiled floor. Like many works by Dumas that are inspired by images from films, newspapers, magazines or television, *Kissing the Floor* takes a specific reference within popular culture or social consciousness as a starting point to think more broadly about the themes presented within it.

## Basement

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As we consider the artist’s gaze, we continue into the Basement Gallery, where a number of Freud’s paintings hang alongside two segments from *Ways of Seeing*, the 1972 BBC television series created by John Berger (1926-2017). Unravelling the complexities of representation, particularly how women assess the ways in which they look at their own bodies and at each other; Berger’s ground breaking series illustrates the ways in which we draw from various sources to build images of ourselves. In the segments chosen by Wright, we are taken through an analysis of the female nude in European historical artworks, within which, Berger argues, women have traditionally been represented solely as objects of desire and consumption, and almost exclusively filtered through male perspectives.

## First Floor Room 1

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Proceeding to the first floor exhibition spaces, we enter a gallery with a modestly-sized sculpture of a bouquet of flowers. Entitled *Small Bouquet 2* (2007), this work by Kathy Prendergast is a cast made from dried flowers saved by the artist’s parents from their wedding day. This memento—converted from disintegrating flora into impenetrable bronze—has been transformed into a simple monument, memorialising the importance of those ordinary rituals and private moments we share throughout our lives. By contrast, a living begonia sits nearby in the same gallery. This common houseplant provides an air of domesticity but also contains a secret family history, having been cultivated from a cutting taken from a mother plant grown by Sigmund Freud who was reputedly an enthusiastic amateur horticulturalist.

Like his grandfather, Lucian was intrigued by plants, painting them with the same scrutiny as he did his human models. We see this in *The Painter’s Mother Resting I* (1976), a canvas depicting a poignant moment of vulnerability for a woman in the latter stages of life. Resting with her head on pillows and her arms up in an almost infantile gesture, the floral pattern of his mother’s dress is intricately rendered, mapping in detail the soft angles of her body in repose. This piece is juxtaposed by Freud’s *Self-Portrait* (1949), an earlier work by the artist painted in thin coats and cropped tightly as if to mimic an identity photograph. Together these three works and simple houseplant, along with an interview on plant intelligence by plant biologist Ottoline Leyser, depict the cycle of human life and its enmeshment within the natural world around us. In her research, Leyser undertakes a nuanced line of inquiry into epigenetics—a scientific field that looks at additional information layered on top of the sequence of letters that makes up DNA—in relation to plant biology. Her ideas allow us to consider how our own human existence runs in parallel to that of plants and, in doing so, to explore the potential of an evolved collectivity and diversity of relationships with one another.

## Room 2

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Artists have long been aware of the challenges arising from how they choose and represent their subjects, especially when exploring the idea of ‘otherness’ as it relates to their own experiences of race, gender, sexuality, class or religious belief. Such an exploration is evident in Alice Neel’s (1900-1984) arresting portrait *Josephine Garwood* (1946), painted in Spanish Harlem, the area of New York where the artist did some of her best-known works. Neel, a white woman who moved to Harlem in the late 1930s from the bohemian area of Greenwich Village in lower Manhattan, painted a side of

life in the city that she saw as being overlooked by others at the time. Her work, often portraits of casual acquaintances, members of immigrant communities and people she encountered on the street, depicts a powerful connection between artist and sitter.

Similarly, Freud often chose his subjects from his circle of peers who spanned a wide range of people from all walks of life. His large painting, *Two Brothers from Ulster* (2001), depicts two men the artist returned to as sitters several times. Freud’s laboured depiction of their physicality demonstrates a relentless scrutiny, yet this closeness of looking also establishes a sense of distance between the artist and the two men; they become flesh. Also hanging in this room is a watercolour by Marlene Dumas entitled *One* (2014), which depicts two heads kissing so intimately that their mouths have become one. The artist often draws from found images of celebrities or people depicted in news media to find the subjects of her paintings, disguising identities through fluid paintwork and exaggerated forms. For Dumas, the blurring of identities is a means of exaggerating emotion and pulling us more closely into a relationship with her subjects.

## Room 3

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Freud’s formidable *Woman in a Butterfly Jersey* (1990-1991), a portrait of Bindy Lambton—long-time friend and sitter for the artist—is installed alongside Wiebke Siem’s *Untitled* series (2000) of watercolours and a sculpture from her *Maskenkostüme* body of work. Siem’s works playfully bring forth the idea that sexuality and culture can be explored through the intermixing of ‘gendered’ costumes. While Lambton’s striking angular features seem at odds with conventional western ideas of femininity or beauty, Siem’s work draws on aspects