

The nature of the artist/sitter bond is especially considered here. The artworks point to the psychological challenges of spending time under observation. What is it like to sit for a portrait and be studied? What are the power dynamics at play? Is it an endless, intensive, anxious experience? Can it be liberating, enthralling and empowering? For Freud it was essential that he observed his subjects from life, unlike many artists who work from photographs or from memory. This often meant the sitter returning up to sixty times for one painting. Developing a relationship with those who sat for him was important in terms of creating insightful portraits. The pose of the sitter would evolve over repeated sittings and this experience, Freud believed, enabled him to capture the sitter's true character.

The person depicted in *The Big Man* (1976-1977) was one of Freud's regular sitters. For him, sitting for extended times for his portrait was not a trying exercise. Like the artist Rebecca Horn, whose sculpture *Take me to the other side of the ocean* is on display on the ground floor, this sitter also experienced an extended period of isolation in a sanatorium, in his case due to a childhood illness.

Thinking about whether a painting is a fixed object, *The Pearce Family* (1998) is an interesting example of a document of life observed over extended periods of time. The painting began as a portrait of the artist's daughter Rose Boyt and her husband Mark Pearce, but Freud decided to literally extend the canvas as Rose's family grew, wanting to let, "the subject to finish the picture: allow the life full swing."

Edward McGuire worked in a forensic manner similar to that of Freud. His painstaking painting methods resulted in as few as four completed paintings a year. In *Portrait of Paddy Collins* (1983), the remote and stilted pose of the sitter, artist Patrick

Collins, is characteristic of McGuire's work and is indicative of the difficult task of sitting for long periods of time.

Investigating self-reflective approaches to portraits, Mark Manders creates evocative sculptural installations that reimagine the concept of the self-portrait. The faces and forms in his surreal sculptures tend toward being expressionless and idealised. In the context of thinking about the relationships between sitter and artist, *Figure with Iron Ruler* (2004) explores the outcomes and implications when artist and sitter are the same person.

#### Associated Talks and Events

Further information and reading and for a full programme of IMMA talks and events programmed in association with this exhibition, please see the IMMA website [www.imma.ie](http://www.imma.ie)

Have a question about an artwork? Want to know more? Ask any member of our Visitor Engagement Team, easily identifiable through their blue lanyards.

Exhibition curated by Johanne Mullan, Collections Programmer, assisted by Emer Lynch, Curatorial Assistant and Christina Kennedy, Senior Curator: Head of Collections and lead curator of IMMA Collection: Freud Project.

IMMA wishes to express deepest thanks to the Freud lenders for their generosity and vision and to those who have generously donated artwork to the IMMA Collection.

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Front cover:  
Phil Collins, *Young Serbs (Caca)*, 2001, Lightjet print on fuji crystal archive paper reverse mounted behind diasec, 74 x 92 cm, IMMA Collection, Donation, 2018.

**IMMA  
FREUD CENTRE  
04 OCTOBER 2018 – 19 MAY 2019**

## **IMMA Collection: Freud Project 2016-2021 Gaze**



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***IMMA Collection: Freud Project*** is a major five-year initiative for IMMA, where fifty-two works by painter Lucian Freud (1922-2011) are on loan to the museum's Collection by private lenders. During this unique project, IMMA will present a series of Freud-related exhibitions each year. The third exhibition in the series, *Gaze* continues to actively explore Freud's practice by positioning other works from the IMMA Collection alongside selected works by Freud.

As the title suggests, the exhibition is concerned with a human gaze; be it of the artist, the sitter or the viewer of an artwork. *Gaze* examines the relationships between the artist and sitter as well as the representation of the nude in art and the often visceral portrayal of the body. In so doing, the exhibition prompts questions about how we, as viewers, experience and analyse the gaze. You are encouraged to journey from room to room, allowing space for reflection, but always considering who is gazing at whom. At times you are sharing the viewpoint of the sitter, at times the artist, but you are involved in a constant exchange of perspective between viewer, artist and sitter.

Showing alongside works by Lucian Freud, the exhibition includes work by Marina Abramović, Stephan Balkenhol, Phil Collins, John Coplans, Dorothy Cross, Pauline Cummins, Ann Hamilton, Edward Hopper, Rebecca Horn, Annie Leibovitz, Mark Manders, Edward McGuire, Danny Osborne, Thomas Ruff and Hannah Starkey. The exhibition also includes work by Albrecht Dürer and Rembrandt van Rijn from the Madden/Arnholz Collection.

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## Ground Floor Room 1

In this room *Large Head* (2001) by Stephan Balkenhol is placed alongside a selection of portraits by Lucian Freud. Both artists rejected producing abstract works in favour of figurative art, which depicts the human form. Though their choice of material differs, the directness of Freud's paintings and etchings is echoed in the rough surface

of the Wawa wood chiselled and carved by Balkenhol. Skin is portrayed by both artists as a breathing, blemished organ and both artists' bold approach to depicting flesh holds a mirror up to their sitters.

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## Room 2

This room presents work by Lucian Freud, Phil Collins and Thomas Ruff. Here, questions are posed in relation to the subject of the gaze and the enduring relationship between artist, sitter and the viewer. *Young Serbs* (2001) is a series of portraits by Phil Collins of young people living in Belgrade. Collins focuses on close-up and sometimes partial views of the faces of young people known to him, as they lie on the grass. Themes of youth and nature are to the fore, while the actual gaze of the young people seems distant and disenchanting.

Similarly, Thomas Ruff photographed young people with whom he was familiar. These passport-style portraits are monumental in scale and are startlingly frank. The gaze of the sitter peers back at the viewer. Alongside these photographs, another portrait of young people is presented; *Bella and Esther* (1988) by Lucian Freud. This painting is one of a major series of portraits of Freud's daughters painted in the 1980s. Reclining on a chesterfield sofa, a sense of ease with each other is clear in the work.

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## Room 2a

*The Picture is Still* (2001) by Ann Hamilton was created with a tiny finger-mounted camera, used to intimately trace a photograph of the face of Hamilton's young son. The close distance between hand/camera/eye and image causes the picture to come in and out of focus, giving form to the flat photograph of the face.

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## Room 3

After suffering serious lung damage as an art student due to working with toxic materials, Rebecca Horn used her

imagination to find solace in fantasy, helping her to escape the tedium of her extended time in a hospital isolation ward. The metal spike in *Take me to the other side of the ocean* (1991) suggests a pendulum measuring the passage of time, and the blue pigment echoes the colour of the ocean over which the artist's daydreams carried her.

Echoing the intimacy of Hamilton's *The Picture is Still*, Horn's *Cockfeather Mask, Performance II* (1970-1995) documents a kinetic sculpture/performance work, in this case focused on communication and sexual display. In the photograph, Horn is wearing a mask made of elaborate feathers. The artist has described how she used the mask to alter her interaction with others, "With the feathers I caress the face of a person standing close to me. The intimate space between us is filled with tactile tension. My sight is obstructed by the feathers. I can only see the face of the other when I turn my head, looking with one eye like a bird."

Hannah Starkey's images appear as though the sitters have been caught unaware, lost in thought. However, her photographs are meticulously staged, akin to a film set. Knowing about the careful planning behind the work shatters the illusion of honest, candid moments. *Untitled, August 1999* – created two decades ago – holds particular relevance in our Instagram-driven age, and calls into question the increasingly staged way in which people are photographed, by themselves and by others.

In contrast to Starkey's artistic process, a distinguishing feature of Freud's paintings is their sense of reality. In his work, he subjected each detail to intense scrutiny, from his sitters and their clothing to specifics within his studio surroundings; in this case, *Landscape with Bat* (1980), from the bat's short-hair fur to the gangly plants surrounding it. As a result, Freud's portrayal of nature in this work is as compelling as his representation of humans.

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## First Floor Room 4

We know that Freud was familiar with several works by old masters; Freud's parents hung prints of watercolours by Albrecht Dürer on their walls, while his grandfather Sigmund Freud gave him colour reproductions of Pieter Bruegel's *The Months*. In this room, Dürer's *The Great Horse* (1505) is placed in relation to Freud's *A Filly* (1970), in recognition of these early artistic influences, and to highlight the deep connection he felt to animals. Animals were a recurrent theme within his portraits, appearing on their own or alongside human sitters. *Triple Portrait* (1987-1988) is an excellent example of this. Freud once confessed, "I am inclined to think of 'humans'...as animals dressed up."

Dorothy Cross shares Freud's deeply intuitive understanding of the natural world, with animals acting as a constant source of inspiration in her work. From the use of cow hide to sharks and marine life, Cross explores the constantly changing relationship between the animal and human in the natural environment. *Lover Snakes* (1995) features two snakes entwined in a pose that echoes *Double Portrait* (1985-1986) by Freud.

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## Room 5

This room examines the themes of age and the self-portrait. Freud's exquisitely painted *The Painter's Mother Resting, I* (1976) is charged with melancholy and beauty. Two key self-portrait paintings by Freud are also presented, the earlier from 1949 when he was aged 27, and the later from 1985 when he was 63 years old. In the latter, *Reflection (Self-Portrait)* (1985), Freud is far from the ungainly nude subject of his many other portraits and self-portraits. The signs of age are not spared, but Freud directs his gaze beyond the canvas, as if to challenge you, the viewer. In *Two Irishmen in W11* (1984–1985), two unfinished self-portraits of the artist with a black eye are also discreetly painted into the background of the painting.

John Coplans also documented his ageing male body, in his case using photography from the mid-1960s onwards. His direct black-and-white self-portraits challenge the taboo of age; "I have the feeling that I'm alive, I have a body. I'm seventy years old, and generally the bodies of seventy-year old men look somewhat like my body. It's a neglected subject matter... So, I'm using my body and saying, even though it's a seventy-year-old body, I can make it interesting. This keeps me alive and gives me vitality". Annie Leibovitz also uses photography to create compelling portraits. Her photograph of artist Louise Bourgeois, then aged 86, portrays the subject's powerful persona whilst showcasing the spirited nature of Leibovitz's own artistic practice.

Rembrandt is often credited with this modern approach of rendering the sitter in their natural state. The inclusion of *The Great Jewish Bride* (1635) in this room refers not only to Freud's interest in the old masters but is comparable to the cross-hatching print techniques that you can see in Freud's etching *Self-Portrait: Reflection* (1996).

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## Room 6

This room explores the nude and how artists often go beyond what society considers beautiful, in order to present a truer representation of the sitter's identity.

*Annabel* (1990) by Freud is contrasted with *Female Nude Seated* (1972) by Danny Osborne. Both sitters are captured in similar poses, however we are likely more accustomed to seeing the classical representation of *Female Nude Seated*. This pairing challenges how we may consider both artists' representation of the nude - are we always objective or do we carry preconceived ideas of beauty?

Also challenging the role of the viewer, the notion of beauty and the institution of art, *Art Must Be Beautiful, Artist Must Be Beautiful* (1975) by performance artist Marina Abramović is an example of how she consistently tests her physical

and mental limits. In *Freeing the Body* (1975), a documentation of a six-hour performance, the artist moved her body to the rhythm of drums, eventually expending all her energy until she falls to the ground where she remains, exhausted.

*Nude* (c.1920) is a double-sided drawing presenting three figure studies by Edward Hopper. His wife, artist Josephine Nivison Hopper, was his only model and was crucial to Hopper's success. On the far wall of his studio, between the windows and beside his easel, he placed a mirror; when he looked at it he could see into the studio behind his, which was occupied by his wife. She, in turn, was watching him.

The composition of the figures in *Freeing the Body* and *Nude* is echoed in the watercolour by Cecily Brennan entitled *Melancholia I* (2005). While similar in arrangement, the figure in Brennan's work lies in a vulnerable position, the face concealed from your gaze, portraying both physical and psychological trauma.

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## Room 7

In this room Pauline Cummins presents an alternative perspective to the art-historical treatment of the nude. *Inis t'Oirr: Aran Dance* (1985) focuses on a woman's act of knitting a jumper for her male partner. The Aran sweater is presented as sensuous and strong, made by a woman for a man. The artist has said of the work, "The woman's voice begins talking about drawing and knitting but becomes more explicitly sexual as the tape proceeds. She describes arousing the man. She does not objectify the man, but she is in control, she is the observer."

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## Basement

This room establishes a tense atmosphere, inspired by spaces where people are obliged to sit and wait - a domestic sitting room, a patient in the doctor's waiting room, a sitter posing for a portrait in the artist's studio.