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| Freud, Lucian (1922-2011) |
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| Lucian Freud was a British painter and draughtsman whose work is characterized by his intense figure studies and muted palette. Born in Berlin on 8 December 1922, Freud was the grandson of Sigmund Freud. His family moved to England in 1933, where he would remain for the rest of his life. In 1939 Freud acquired British citizenship; in the same year, he studied at the East Anglian School of Painting and Drawing, under Welsh-born painter Cedric Morris. Freud’s work is characterized by a realism of the flesh, as seen in his portraits and nudes, and by dramatic charge. From the late 1950s, Freud’s work became freer in his handling of paint, which is conveyed by the exploration of the spatial contours of faces and bodies. His figures are situated in stark interiors which add to the pervasive feeling of alienation. Freud was part of the post-war generation of British realist painters who were preoccupied with the human figure. He is loosely associated with Neo-Romanticism and is part of the ‘School of London’ with other artists including Francis Bacon, Michael Andrews and Leon Kossoff, however this grouping was primarily based on social affiliations rather than on shared artistic preoccupations, with the exception of their common interest in the human form. He was a master of realism and his merciless approach stripped the human being down to its gruesome nakedness. |
| Lucian Freud was a British painter and draughtsman whose work is characterized by his intense figure studies and muted palette. Born in Berlin on 8 December 1922, Freud was the grandson of Sigmund Freud. His family moved to England in 1933, where he would remain for the rest of his life. In 1939 Freud acquired British citizenship; in the same year, he studied at the East Anglian School of Painting and Drawing, under Welsh-born painter Cedric Morris. Freud’s work is characterized by a realism of the flesh, as seen in his portraits and nudes, and by dramatic charge. From the late 1950s, Freud’s work became freer in his handling of paint, which is conveyed by the exploration of the spatial contours of faces and bodies. His figures are situated in stark interiors which add to the pervasive feeling of alienation. Freud was part of the post-war generation of British realist painters who were preoccupied with the human figure. He is loosely associated with Neo-Romanticism and is part of the ‘School of London’ with other artists including Francis Bacon, Michael Andrews and Leon Kossoff, however this grouping was primarily based on social affiliations rather than on shared artistic preoccupations, with the exception of their common interest in the human form. He was a master of realism and his merciless approach stripped the human being down to its gruesome nakedness.  In the 1940s he was chiefly interested in drawing and focused mainly on studies of faces. He also experimented with Surrealism as demonstrated by *The Painter’s Room* (1943-4), which shows an incongruous grouping of unconnected objects, like a potted plant, which would appear in later works. His early paintings are relatively flat and stylized. From the late 1950s onwards Freud’s handling of paint became freer, in its broader treatment and application, which he achieved by using hogs’ hair brushes instead of sable. This was also conveyed by the exploration of the spatial contours of faces and bodies and a richer palette. His rougher brushwork was suggestive of space, structure, and texture. This work stood in contrast to earlier work that was more intent on cultivating an intricate and meticulous surface. From the 1950s onwards Freud was more interested in probing the flesh and exploring the anatomy of the individual, imparting an experience of corporeality, which he did so deftly in masterpieces such as *Benefits Supervisor Resting* (1994) and *Benefits Supervisor Sleeping* (1995). In the 1980s and 1990s his work became more ambitious in both style and content with more diverse formats used as seen in *Large Interior, WII (after Watteau)* (1981-3) for example, which features five sitters and has a more modelled sense of form.  File: 'Interior at Paddington' (1951), by Lucian Freud.jpg  'Interior at Paddington' 1951 1  Source: Image can be found at <http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/picture-of-month/displayPicture.aspx?id=171>  Freud’s work can be described as autobiographical insofar as he preferred to paint people in his life and in surroundings that were known to him, such as inner-city Paddington where he spent much of his career. Sitters included his mother and daughters, his first wife Kitty Garman, and the performance artist and fashion designer Leigh Bowery who posed for a number of works in the early 1990s. He also painted portraits of a number of his contemporaries, such as David Hockney, Francis Bacon and Frank Auerbach. Freud’s intimacy with his sitters is conveyed in the attention to detail of physiognomic and bodily expression, which imparts a strong sense of character and the sense of privacy that his paintings capture, which is a shared relationship between painter and sitter and was nurtured through the hours, days or months through which the sitter would pose. And yet in spite of this intimacy, his austere depictions convey an objectivity that is unflattering, extreme, and at times voyeuristic. We are looking at the person stripped bare. His existentialist portrayals contain individuals lost inside themselves in bare, stark, interiors that are devoid of warmth. The addition of random and isolated objects in the room – a dish of eggs, a rat, a pestle and mortar – all of which are rendered naturalistically and given equal weight, contribute to the surreal atmosphere and pervasive sense of alienation. The stripping away of any background details of the identity of the sitter also intensifies the viewing experience as there is little to distract from the raw realism.  Freud’s acclaim as a painter of the flesh was celebrated in the Tate’s 2002 major retrospective of his work, which toured to Barcelona and Los Angeles. Freud continued to paint until his death on July 20th 2011 in London, leaving an unfinished painting of his assistant and close friend David Dawson and his whippet, *Portrait of the Hound*, which was displayed in the National Portrait Gallery’s 2012 show of his portraits. |
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