

With a pair of Timed Admissions in hand, **Pawn** paid a visit to the Royal Academy of Art, in Piccadilly. These two shows — Lucian Freud: *The Self Portraits*; and Antony Gormly — couldn't be more different from each other. The former looking, preeminently, inward, the latter outward. But also, in scale; the Freud intimate and close, the Gormly huge and expansive. This post addresses Freud, the next Gormly.

The focus of Lucian Freud: *The Self Portraits* is on fifty portraits made by the painter during a nearly 70-year career. From the first flat work from 1940, through to the last piece, completed in 2002 (he died in 2011), we see a wide range of works, from drawing to the thick impasto Freud is so well known for. In many cases, through supporting material — sketches, etc. — we see multiple versions of the same piece, whether studies or aborted attempts. Some of the latter are nearly blank canvases, with just an outcropping of paint on an otherwise incomplete background of sketch marks.





Hotel Bedroom, 1954



Sketch for Hotel Bedroom, 1954 (forgive reflections)



While there are fifty pieces in this exhibition, not all are strictly self portraits. Pieces have been included, such as *Freddy Standing, 200-2001* and, from the same period, *Flora with Blue Toenails*, Freud's own inclusion in the works is limited to his feet, perhaps, or some other reflection in a well placed mirror. Were it not for this being pointed out to us, we may well wonder why these pieces are in this show.

At fifty pieces this is an impressive show, especially as so many of them had to be scouted from private collections. But these represent just a small sample of the self portraits Freud made over the course of so many years. Most, alas, were destroyed.

While several of the pieces are familiar and widely known, as previously mentioned, several are held in private collections, so are less often exhibited. Here's a few more snaps, mostly of these lesser seen works...









An earlier version of Reflection with Two Children (Self Portrait), 1985, we see an intention to depict himself with his hand on his hip, not resting on his waist, as it ultimately ended up (below)



Reflection with Two Children (Self Portrait), 1985

I don't accept the information that I get when I look at myself and that's where the trouble starts.

*Lucian Freud*

In this final series, including some of the last self portraits completed (which are preserved) we can see Freud's acute reckoning with his own aging. (Note: Apologies for the crooked angles, but it was very crowded, and hard to get a good shot sometimes)









That's all for Freud. More on Gormly in the next post...