

Out of Hours

Art

were related to Lucian Freud. Geordie Greig writes:

'He was accused of infidelity, cruelty and absenteeism as a father, yet in spite of sometimes defiantly selfish behaviour some of his children and girlfriends, and even the children of his girlfriends, would defend him over what was pretty indefensible behaviour. All his life he got away with it. He was so charged with charm and charisma, few were immune to his power of seduction on some level.'

This book is perhaps too preoccupied with gossip about the amorous part of Freud's life. Some people might even find reading the index a bit overpowering. *'I travel vertically, rather than horizontally'* is how he described his mingling of social classes.

However, in spite of all that, what comes through loud and clear is the fact that painting was the main occupation and driving force behind everything he did during his long, creative and certainly never boring life.

Aart van Kruijsbergen

Painter, London.

E-mail: aartvank@hotmail.com

<http://aartvankruijsbergen.com/>

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MAD, BAD AND SAD: WOMEN AND THE MIND DOCTORS

Freud Museum, London

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The house is unmistakably Sigmund Freud's, although he only occupied it for a year. Emigrating to England as a result of Germany's annexation of Austria in June 1938, Freud died there in 1939. Now a museum, visitors can see his collection of heavy furniture, rich cloths, and archaeological treasures and totems of many traditions: Greek, Roman, Mesopotamian. He called them his 'old and grubby gods' who aided him in his work. Archaeology and psychoanalysis were closely connected for Freud since both require digging to reveal the truth.

Inspired by Lisa Appignanesi's acclaimed 2009 book *Mad, Bad and Sad: Women and the Mind Doctors from 1800 to the Present*, the exhibition is billed as:

'... highlighting the experience of women and their relationship to those who confined, cared for and listened to them. It also shows how women today conduct their own explorations of mind and imagination in challenging works of art.'

An ambitious brief, but not one that I'm sure was completely pulled off. However, this is a very interesting exhibition and

definitely worth a visit. The somewhat oppressive interior served to overwhelm the art a tad. Perhaps this is also symbolic? The weight of history anchoring down and providing the backdrop to modern female artistic expressions. Despite this you couldn't really argue with Sarah Lucas's forthright *Suffolk Bunny (1997–2004)* which was placed in Freud's study. What could we infer from this? A joke at Freud's expense? Women as subjects but now taking over the house with humorous, unequivocal, in-your-face art? The patriarchal gaze upturned. To further underline the point we also had Helen Chadwick's arresting *'adore; abhor'* a duo of fuzzy-feltish familiar female forms.

Upstairs was a selection of photographs and other artefacts looking back at female patients. These women were treated according to the wisdom of the day with a broad brush applicable only to the female gender, where mental distress was deemed as 'hysterical'. We learn that Marilyn Monroe was treated by Anna Freud with the 'talking cure' and see the famous portrait of inmates at the Salpêtrière, Charcot's asylum in late 19th century Paris, where women performed their 'madness' and 'hysteria' to male doctors and paying spectators.

There is a charming painting by 'Wolf man' Sergei Pankejeff, a Russian aristocrat and one of Freud's most famous patients. Freud wrote up his case to show the importance of infantile factors in the development of a neurosis. During psychoanalysis Sergei returned constantly to an early childhood dream in which he saw wolves sitting on a tree outside his bedroom.

Freud's views of women were limited and limiting, but he certainly nailed the power of the unconscious, our unseen drives and desires, and the development of neuroses. A heavy cigar smoker, Freud had battled mouth cancer since 1923 and undergone several operations. On 21 September 1939 aged 83 he asked his doctor to administer a fatal dose of morphine and died that day in his study.

Moir Davies

Assistant Editor, *BJGP*.

E-mail: mdavies@rcgp.org.uk

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Suffolk Bunny in Freud's Study, Sarah Lucas © Sadie Coles HQ and Freud Museum London.

