

Self Portraits



Rembrandt

A masterpiece of the final style, "the calmest and grandest of all his portraits"



Leonardo, *Self Portrait in Old Age*



Sofonisba Anguissola (c.1532 – 1625)

An Italian Renaissance painter born in Cremona to a relatively poor noble family. She received a well-rounded education, that included the fine arts, and her apprenticeship with local painters set a precedent for women to be accepted as students of art. As a young woman, Anguissola traveled to Rome where she was introduced to Michelangelo, who immediately recognized her talent, and to Milan, where she painted the Duke of Alba. Elizabeth of Valois, the queen of Philip II of Spain, was a keen amateur painter, and in 1559 Anguissola was recruited to go to Madrid as her tutor, with the rank of lady-in-waiting. She later became an official court painter to the king, and adapted her style to the more formal requirements

of official portraits for the Spanish court. After the queen's death, Philip helped arrange an aristocratic marriage for her. She moved to Sicily, and later Pisa and Genoa, where she continued to practice as a leading portrait painter, living to the age of ninety-three.

Her most distinctive and attractive paintings are her portraits of herself and her family, painted before she moved to the Spanish court.

She died at age ninety-three in Palermo. Anguissola's example, as much as her oeuvre, had a lasting influence on subsequent generations of artists, and her great success opened the way for larger numbers of women to pursue serious careers as artists.



Jacques Louis David

This picture, which he painted in prison after the fall of Robespierre, expressed--perhaps more fully than the others--David's power and truthfulness, his determination, lucidity, and self-respect.

We can read the painter's character in his own rendition: willful, reserved, passionate, and agitated. We need only to look at him to understand why he threw himself into the Revolution with such fervor; above all, we understand--and this may be the most interesting psychological aspect of the work--how David was simultaneously a portraitist and a history painter. His scrutinizing gaze flashes with both acumen and eagerness. He had the gift of seeing more intensely than other people; he has an inquisitive air about him. He tried to make his rendering more forceful--his fingers tightly clasped around the brush and palette are an involuntary admission. Finally, an almost fierce passion can be seen in his gaze, the passion to penetrate reality, to discover its meaning and purpose. The portraitist wanted to grasp the core of human nature, the history painter wanted to give it an ideal form.



Goya, *Self Portrait in the Studio* 1793-95



Turner, c1799



Gustave Courbet



Paul Cezanne, 1878-80



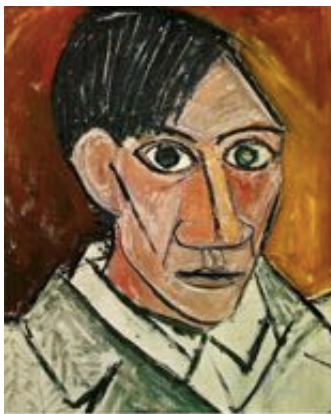
van Gogh 1889



Gauguin,
Self portrait with the Yellow Christ 1891



Raol Duffy 1899



Picasso 1907



1901



Richard Gerstl

Although Gerstl did not associate with other artists, he did feel drawn to the musically inclined; he himself frequented concerts in Vienna. Around 1907, he began to associate with composers Arnold Schoenberg and Alexander von Zemlinsky, who lived in the same building at the time. Gerstl and Schoenberg developed a mutual admiration based upon their individual talents. Gerstl apparently instructed Schoenberg in art.

During this time, Gerstl moved into a flat in the same house and painted several portraits of Schoenberg, his family, and his friends. These portraits also included

paintings of Schoenberg's wife Mathilde, Alban Berg and Zemlinsky. His highly stylized heads anticipated German expressionism and used pastels as in the works by Oskar Kokoschka. Gerstl and Mathilde became extremely close and, in the summer of 1908, she left her husband and children to travel to Vienna with Gerstl. Schoenberg was in the midst of composing his Second String Quartet, which he dedicated to her. Mathilde rejoined her husband in October.

Distraught by the loss of Mathilde, his isolation from his associates, and his lack of artistic acceptance, Gerstl entered his studio during the night of 4 November 1908 and apparently burned every letter and piece of paper he could find. Although many paintings survived the fire, it is believed that a great deal of his artwork as well as personal papers and letters were destroyed. Other than his paintings, only eight drawings are known to have survived unscathed. Following the burning of his papers, Gerstl hanged himself in front of the studio mirror and somehow managed to stab himself as well.

The incident had a significant impact on Arnold Schoenberg and his "drama with music" (i.e., opera) *Die Glückliche Hand* is based on these events.



Arnold Schoenberg, 1910



Laura Knight *Self Portrait with Nude*, 1913

In 1913 Knight made a painting that was a first for a woman artist, *Self Portrait with Nude*, showing herself painting a nude model, the artist Ella Naper. The painting is a complex, formal composition in a studio setting. Using mirrors, Knight painted herself and Naper as seen by someone entering the studio behind them both. As an art student Knight had not been permitted to directly paint nude

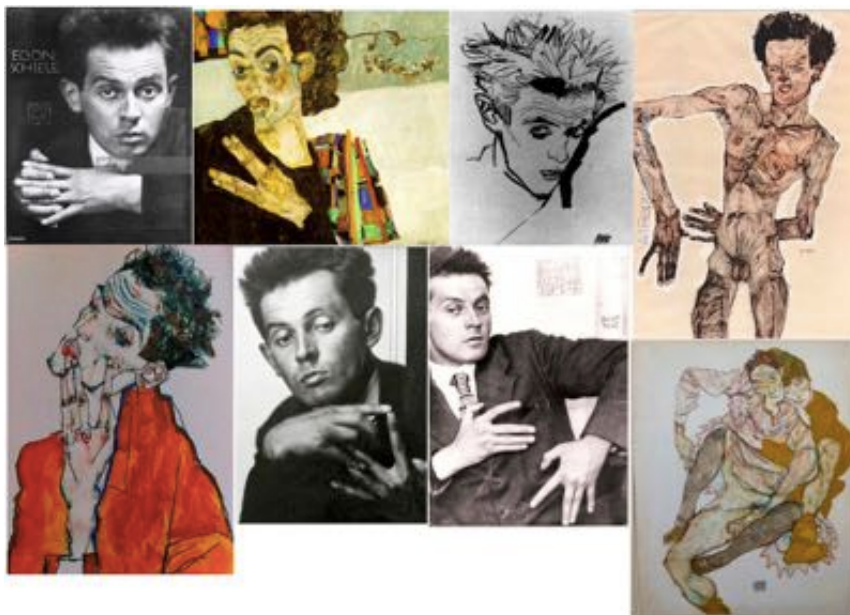
models but, like all female art students at the time, was restricted to working from casts and copying existing drawings. Knight deeply resented this, and *Self Portrait with Nude* is a clear challenge, and reaction, to those rules. The painting was first shown in 1913 at the Passmore Edwards Art Gallery in Newlyn, and was well received by both the local press and other artists. Although the Royal Academy rejected the painting for exhibition, it was shown at the International Society of Sculptors, Painters and Gravers in London, as *The Model*. The Daily Telegraph critic called the painting "vulgar", and suggested that it "might quite appropriately have stayed in the artist's studio". Despite this reaction, Knight continued to exhibit the painting throughout her career, and it continued to receive press criticism. After Knight's death the picture, now known simply as *Self Portrait* (1913), was purchased by the National Portrait Gallery, and is now considered both a key work in the story of female self-portraiture and as symbolic of wider female emancipation. In 2015 Simon Schama described the painting as a "masterpiece" and "incomparably, her greatest work, all at once conceptually complex, heroically independent, formally ingenious and lovingly sensual."



Ernst Ludwig Kirchner,
Self Portrait as a Soldier 1915



Max Beckman,
Self Portrait with Champagne Glass 1919



Egon Schiele



David Bowie



David Bomberg, 1937

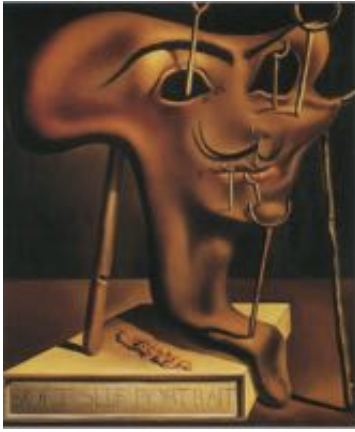


Frida Kahlo, 1940



Stanley Spencer

Laird Markow: "I am struck by the intense self-scrutiny of these portraits. Stanley Spencer painted one in 1959, five months before he died, when he knew he was dying of inoperable cancer. He was sixty-eight at the time. I appreciate the seeming acceptance and honesty expressed in the moment. There is also honesty and openness in the self portrait he did in 1914, when he was 23 years old. In the earlier painting he appeared to be working at perfecting his craft. The later painting has a lighter, more spontaneous approach."



Dali, *Self Portrait with Fried Bacon* 1941



Siqueiros, 1945

David Alfaro Siqueiros (1896 - 1974,) was a Mexican social realist painter, better known for his large murals in fresco. Along with Diego Rivera and José Clemente Orozco, he established "Mexican Muralism." He was a Marxist-Leninist in support of the Soviet Union and a member of the Mexican Communist Party who participated in an unsuccessful attempt to assassinate Leon Trotsky in May 1940.



Giacometti



Lucian Freud
Reflection with two children 1965



Francis Bacon 1971



David Hockney 1954, 2003



Chuck Close

Chuck Close (born 1940) is an American painter and artist and photographer who achieved fame as a photorealist, through his massive-scale portraits. Close often paints abstract portraits of himself and others, which hang in collections internationally. Although a catastrophic spinal artery collapse in 1988 left him severely paralyzed, he has continued to paint and produce work that remains sought after by museums and collectors. Close also creates photo portraits using a very large format camera.



Cindy Sherman

All of the women posing here are Sherman herself being different people through the same medium. These self-portraits aren't self-portraits after all, but rather commentaries on cultural stereotypes of women in popular media and society as a whole.



Joëlle Poulos

French photographer