

Art Appreciation 2020

January 2020: LUCIAN FREUD & BRIDGET RILEY

In January the group met at a member's house, the topic being exhibitions we had recently visited. The first subject was the exhibition, Lucian Freud, the self-portraits, which had been showing at the Royal Academy in London.

Lucian Freud was born in Berlin in 1922 but came to England with his parents in 1933. In the late 1940s he chose to make portraiture the main focus of his work, and he became renowned for paintings of great intensity and often frank, disquieting honesty. He often turned this upon himself, and the exhibition was mainly his self-portraits. Although his subject matter remained largely the same, the style in which they were executed changed over the years. In his early period Freud experimented with a graphic, linear style, but by the 1950s this had developed into a more painterly approach, with his strokes bolder and the paint thicker. He continued to portray himself with naturalism, and his later paintings depict his ageing body with great honesty.

The second half of our talk was given by a member who had seen the Bridget Riley exhibition. Whereas Freud had painted in a representational manner, Bridget Riley was purely abstract. She is known for optical illusional work, producing paintings that dazzle the eye, and create a sensation of movement. Whereas her early work was in black and white, her later work developed into colour. An interesting point we learnt was that her early work was shown on traditional canvases, while some of the current work was painted directly onto the wall. At the end of the exhibition they will be painted over and disappear completely.

In February the Broadway cinema was showing a screening of the exhibition, so those who were not able to visit the original were able see it there.



Lucian Freud



Bridget Riley