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## Lucian Freud's Unseen Drawings Arrive At Acquavella Galleries (PHOTOS)

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[Lucian Freud](#) is one of the most formative artists in figurative painting. Before his death last year, he created unsettling portraits of mottled, swampy naked flesh. Stripping off the previous conventions of portraiture, Freud portrayed friends and models splayed out bare for all to see, simultaneously confrontational and vulnerable. When we heard that Acquavella Galleries was holding an exhibition of Freud's drawings, we were especially intrigued. What would [one of the richest artist's](#) work be without its signature ingredient, paint?



*"Dark Haired Neighbour," © The Lucian Freud Archive*

The exhibition, curated by William Feaver, features over 80 works from 1940 to present day. The drawings provide a fascinating minor key to Freud's major painted oeuvre. The two create a harmonic understanding of not just an artistic style, but a life view. [In a new book accompanying the exhibition](#), Feaver writes about Freud's need for "drawing speaking to painting," where the "charcoal strokes" helped determine where to start and end the picture. Freud's works, whether painted or drawn, express a constant anxiety, like something is swarming in the background,

drawing connections between his grandfather, Sigmund Freud, and the existential angst of Friedrich Nietzsche. He did with paint what Diane Arbus did with a camera, which simultaneously attracted and repulsed us through their unique take on the eccentricities of the human form.

While Freud's paintings drown in the ugliness of his painted world, the drawings present a more fine tuned investigation of the smaller details; his inner philosophies are projected onto his models' overflowing exteriors, while their interior states are never addressed or even seen. The drawings have a far broader style in which real-life materials are explored and given weight. Dry hair looks different than greasy hair which looks different than cloth which looks different than skin.

While in his paintings everything sort of bleeds together through the globs of paint, the drawings remain differentiated. This, of course, has much to do with the wide time frame represented in the exhibition as well as the broad subject matter, ranging from mythical animals to Freud's own father on his death bed. The styles too diverge greatly, some works shade flesh obsessively as if charcoal were a substitute for paint. Others build solely on line, looking like an early Picasso or even El Greco. [In the book accompanying the exhibition](#), Feaver calls the show "a choice build-up of arrested potential." The works all present an urgent need to push forward, to push past comfort and knowledge into wobbly territory. The exhibition gives Freud fans an opportunity to shade in the gaps between the lines of Freud's known paintings. If you think you know his style you will be challenged. As always, Freud pushes further.

*Freud's drawings will show at [Acquavella Galleries](#) in New York until June 9.*