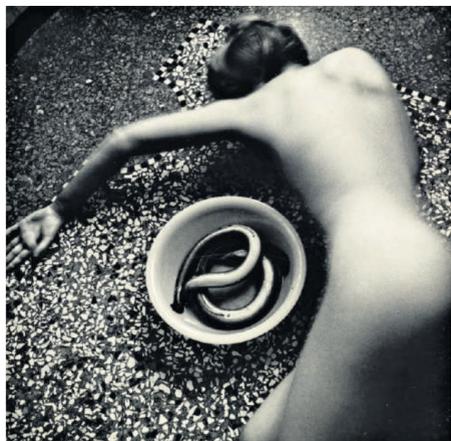


Arts



'Any urge to create weepy shrines is undermined by the sheer life force of the work on display'

Flesh that's weak but wonderful



female talents of the Seventies who embraced the Gothic alongside newly emergent magic realism: Angela Carter and Kate Bush spring to mind.

Despite these synchronicities, there's a sense that the show's intended "conversation" between artist and photographer is less a dialogue than a juxtaposition of soliloquies. Schiele is the most explosive of painters: dark psychological currents burst from the frame and twist at your gut.

He dispenses with backdrops in constant pursuit of the body's shifting outline, yet you feel the Vienna of Sigmund Freud coursing all around his figures. To look at an image like *Self-Portrait in Black Cloak*, *Masturbating* (1911), where self-pleasuring has never looked so miserable or futile, is to walk naked yourself into the age of anxiety. Schiele is Shakespearean in his determination to reveal the more grotesque side of humanity. Arms end in Caliban-like clubbed hands, elbows and knees jut like knots on gnarled trees.

Yet there's powerful allure in this rejection of formal beauty. Like many of the strongest sexual compulsions, we are attracted and excited by what simultaneously repels us. There may be no fiercer come-on in art than the 1918 crayon sketch of *Woman in Boots with Raised Skirt*, flashing her vulva while ogling the viewer with a vixen glare.

Woodman's photographs, by contrast, make their impact by stealth. The monochrome prints are almost all modest in size, compelling the viewer to move ever closer to observe subtle details until you feel, like Alice, you could pass through the looking glass into the frame. Indeed, Woodman experimented with mirrors, but voided the expected reflection from the frame, warding off your hungry gaze.

The influence of the surrealists is also obvious: a door-frame hangs horizontally in mid air; a single lily seems to leer round the corner; a woman's contours are echoed by coiled eels in a bowl. I gasped out loud at the image of Woodman's flesh pinched and puckered by clothes pegs, like the devil's own surgical clamps (*Untitled, Boulder, Colorado*, 1972-75).

Life in Motion affords a unique opportunity to contemplate two of the most subversively brilliant observers of human flesh in art history. If Schiele roars you out of your comfort zone, Woodman whispers conspiratorially in your ear. Where Schiele shows bold sexual transaction, Woodman gives you angels. I hesitate in these gender neutral days to talk of yin and yang energy and yet these tensions underpin four rooms of alternating work. Prepare to be discombobulated – and enraptured.

Tate Liverpool until Sept 23; tate.org.uk, 0151 702 7400

Exhibition

Life in motion: Egon Schiele/ Francesca Woodman

Tate Liverpool

★★★★★

By Rowan Pelling

photography. Hence the exhibition's title: *Life in Motion*.

An alternative title might be "live fast, die young." Always nudging gently at the edges of the viewer's perception is the knowledge that Schiele was 28 and beginning to achieve widespread acclaim when the Spanish flu felled him in 1918 (three days after it claimed his wife Edith and their unborn child), while Woodman was only 22 when she committed suicide on New York's East Side in 1981.

It's perhaps unavoidable that both have come to represent their own individual anthem for doomed youth. Schiele emblematises a prodigious generation wiped out by the Great War and contagion, while Woodman, whose posthumous fame has burgeoned since the Eighties, has become an icon for third wave feminists and the Prozac classes. Her playful, experimental work – like Sylvia Plath's before her – is often viewed too narrowly through the prism of sexual politics.

What *Life in Motion* manages brilliantly, in its juxtaposition of Woodman and Schiele, is a loosening of their mythological moorings. Any urge to create weepy shrines is undermined by the sheer life force of the work on display. Here are two brilliant individualists consumed by their mediums, inspired by the nude,

working urgently to pin down the dragonfly flit of ideas and not yet facing the creative person's deadly fear that inspiration may have its limits. You're a thousand miles away from Picasso's on-off preoccupation with impotence.

There's earnestness aplenty, but flashes of humour too. I giggled at Woodman's image of three naked young women, all of them holding a photograph of the photographer's likeness over their face like the film poster for *Being John Malkovich*.

To move through the show's four rooms is to experience a sharp pang of envy for the gusto of youth, its careless squandering of vitality and its ceaseless innovation. You watch

Schiele pull away from the elegant, elongated human studies of his mentor Klimt to seek raw physicality in ever more discordant sprawlings of the human body and an increasing tendency to green-grey hues of flesh, as if some canker lurks beneath the skin. His 1913 *Self-Portrait in Crouching Position* looks like a human spider.

There's a growing preoccupation with arms skewed at right angles, clawed hands and splayed limbs, the jagged darkness of the line offset with rude splashes of red on nipples or lips, or the pale coral tip of a penis: badges of sex that will not be suppressed.

Woodman, meanwhile, who took her first self-portrait at the age of 13, is

seen playing ever more boldly with light, space, props and proportions. There's a fey quality to her early work (glimpses of dolly shoes and knee socks that scream "manic pixie dream girl"), which gives way to an eerier, more resonant mad-woman-in-the-attic vibe. It's hard not to see her work in the context of other luminous

Yin and yang: Francesca Woodman's *Eel Series*, top left; Egon Schiele's *Standing Male Figure (Self-Portrait)*, main

Life through the Goodwood supremo's lens

Charles March, Duke of Richmond, tells *Lucinda Everett* about his 45-year career as a photographer

While there's no "typical" career path for a duke-in-waiting, there are a few things you don't expect. Leaving Eton at 16, for example. Or secretly living in London while you're supposed to be at college, and landing a job on set with Stanley Kubrick.

But Charles March, now the 11th Duke of Richmond and owner of the Goodwood Estate in West Sussex, has always been driven by an obsession – "a kind of illness", he calls it – with photography. Highlights of his 45-year career will be exhibited in Rome this month, including a new series taken on the remote island of Jura.

March first caught the photography bug aged 10, but developed a full-blown affliction as a teenager at Eton. He practised all he could, but it was an uphill struggle. "I wasn't loving Eton and they weren't loving me much either. There was no real enthusiasm about photography [there] and I was passionate to do it."

Arguably, his real education began as a stills photographer on Kubrick's 1975 film *Barry Lyndon*. Kubrick spent every evening going through March's pictures. "He was a very good photographer and would tell me what not to do and what to try instead," says March. "And he was very forgiving – as long as I didn't get it wrong twice. But



Unique: by using a slow shutter speed, March has developed an abstract, painterly style

my biggest lesson was that there was no compromise on anything."

Next, March worked on a health education programme in Africa, where, alongside his day job, he photographed locals, kick-starting three years as a reportage photographer for the likes of *Tatler* and Italian *Vogue*, before he moved into advertising. For the next 11 years, he took still-life and special effects photographs for brands like Levi's, Glenfiddich, De Beers, and Marks & Spencer.

"What I loved about that time was the magic of photography," he says. "There were lots of tricks with mirrors and sets. Things would take weeks to do and lots could go wrong, which was exciting. Now, with CGI, you can do anything. The magic has gone."

In 1991, duty called March back to Goodwood and he took over the estate, a move he describes as "a wrench". He threw himself into the role, though, founding the car-racing festivals that help bring 750,000 visitors to the estate every year. Even so, he couldn't stop taking pictures, developing a new technique that

has defined his style ever since. By moving the camera around on a slow shutter speed, he creates abstract images full of twisting swirls that could be mistaken for brush strokes. "It's an impression over a period of time," explains March. "I'm not trying to take a picture of the place. I'm trying to give an impression of a feeling of where I am. If there's something I feel is the important bit of the image, I'll move the camera in a way that enhances that." Like the



horizons in his *Seascape* series – huge, vivid shots of the Bahamian coastline – which stay pin sharp among blurry, undulating waves. To make them, he moved his camera from left to right: "It was all about being horizontal and looking out thousands of miles over millions of years – those views haven't changed," he explains.

Nature has always been central to March's work, partly because of the "deep and emotional relationship" he feels there is between the camera and nature, but also thanks to his lifestyle.

His first two exhibitions, *Nature Translated* (2012) and *Wood Land* (2015), captured the beauty of the family estate and his later work has been completed on business or family trips. The Jura shots, for instance, were taken over six years of holidays.

His process is time-consuming. "I'm shooting thousands of frames to get just one. It's a total hit and miss and the best ones I can't repeat. I don't really know quite what I did. It's just a moment of coming together."

The biggest challenge? "Going through all the pictures," says March, who took 40,000 *Seascape* pictures and selected 22 for Rome. "My wife's told me never to take a picture of that beach ever again. But I kept thinking I could do it better."

Back home, he finds it just as hard to resist the pull of his studio. "It's just down the passage so I'll slope off for a few minutes to look at something. I work on photography at the weekends, or very late at night."

March doesn't have a plan beyond the current pre-exhibition mania – "I just want to get it done and never do it again!" he laughs – but he seems nostalgic for his analogue work.

"Digital is good for what I'm doing now, it's a very exciting medium, but [my early work] was technical and mechanical and I miss that."

Whatever he chooses, he won't be stopping any time soon. "I can't stop, I don't know why. I wish I could. Like [I should have] with that bloody beach!"

Photographs 1980-2017 by Charles March runs from tomorrow to June 30 at the Galleria del Cembalo in Rome. galleriadeltcembalo.it

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