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Jenny saville art

Jenny Saville RA (born 7 May 1970) is a contemporary British painter associated with the Young British Artists. She is known for her large-scale painted depictions of nude women. Saville went to the Lilley and Stone School (now The Grove School Specialist Science College) in Newark, Nottinghamshire, for her secondary education, later gaining her degree at Glasgow School of Art (1988-1992), and was then awarded a six-month scholarship to the University of Cincinnati where she states that she saw "Lots of big women. Big white flesh in shorts and T-shirts. It was good to see because they had the physicality that I was interested in a physicality that she partially credits to Pablo Picasso, an artist that she sees as a painter that made subjects as if "they were solidly there...not fleeting.". At the end of Saville's postgraduate education, the leading British art collector, Charles Saatchi, purchased her senior show. He offered the artist an 18-month contract, supporting her while she created new works to be exhibited in the Saatchi Gallery in London. The collection, Young British Artists III, exhibited in 1994 with Saville's self-portrait, Plan, as the signature piece. Rising quickly to critical and public recognition in part through Saatchi's patronage, Saville has been noted for creating art through the use of a classical standard—figure painting. Although Saville's chosen method is traditional, she has found a way to reinvent figure painting of nude women, Saville has also emerged as a Young British Artist (YBA). Much of her work features distorted flesh, high-caliber brush strokes and patches of oil color, while others reveal the surgeon's mark of a plastic surgery operations in New York City. Saville has dedicated her career to traditional figurative oil painting. Her painterly style has been compared to that of Lucian Freud and Rubens. Her paintings are usually much larger than life size. They are strongly pigmented and give a highly sensual impression of the surface of the skin as well as the mass of the body. She sometimes adds marks onto the body, slightly deviating into subjects with "floating or indeterminate gender," painting of transgender people. Her published sketches and documents include surgical photographs of liposuction, trauma victims, deformity correction, disease states and transgender patients. Saville's work will be exhibited at the 2018 Edinburgh Art Festival at the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art exhibit NOW. Saville's painting Strategy (South Face/Front Face/North Face) appeared on the cover of the Manics' 2009 album Journal for Plague Lovers. The top four UK supermarkets stocked the CD in a plain slipcase, after the cover was deemed "inappropriate". The band's James Dean Bradfield said the decision was "utterly bizarre", and commented: This is a part of the Wikipedia article used under the Creative Commons Attribution-Sharealike 3.0 Unported License (CC-BY-SA). The full text of the article is here - Villa Vassilieff - 21, avenue du Maine 75015 Paris (France) — info[at]aware-art[.]org — +33 (0)1 55 26 90 29 © 2025 Archives of Women Artists, Research and Exhibitions. Tous droits reserved for all countries. Human perception of the body is so acute and knowledgeable that the smallest hint of a body can trigger recognition.—Jenny SavilleIn her depictions of the human form, Jenny Saville transcends the boundaries of both classical figuration and modern abstraction. Oil paint, applied in heavy layers, becomes as visceral as flesh itself, each painted mark maintaining a supple, mobile life of its own. As Saville pushes, smears, and scrapes the pigment over her large-scale canvases, the distinctions between living, breathing bodies and their painted representations begin to collapse. Born in 1970 in Cambridge, England, Saville attended the Glasgow School of Art from 1988 to 1992, spending a term at the University of Cincinnati in 1991. Her studies focused her interest in "imperfections" of flesh, with all of its societal implications and taboos. Saville had been captivated with these details since she was a child; she has spoken of seeing the work of Titian and Tintoretto on trips with her uncle, and of observing the way that her piano teacher's two breasts—squished together in her shirt—became one large mass. While on a fellowship in Connecticut in 1994, Saville was able to observe a New York City plastic surgeon at work. Studying the reconstruction of human flesh was formative in her perception of the body—its resilience, as well as its fragility. Her time with the surgeon fueled her examination into the seemingly infinite ways that flesh is transformed and disfigured. She explored medical pathologies; viewed cadavers in the morque; examined animals and meat; studied classical and Renaissance sculpture; and observed intertwined couples, mothers with their children, individuals whose bodies challenge gender dichotomies, and more. A member of the Young British Artists (YBAs), the loose group of painters and sculptors who came to prominence in the late 1980s and early 1990s, Saville reinvigorated contemporary figurative painting by challenging the limits of the genre and raising questions about society's perception of the body and its potential. Though forward-looking, her work reveals a deep awareness, both intellectual and sensory, of how the body has been represented over time and across cultures from antique and Hindu sculpture, to Renaissance drawing and painting, to the work of modern artists such as Henri Matisse, Willem de Kooning, and Pablo Picasso. In the striking faces, jumbled limbs, and tumbling folds of her paintings, one may perceive echoes of Titian's Venus of Urbino (c. 1532), Rubens's Christ in the Descent from the Cross (1612-14), Manet's Olympia (1863), and faces and bodies culled from magazines and tabloid newspapers. Saville's paintings refuse to fit smoothly into an historical arc; instead, each body comes forward, autonomous, voluminous, and always refusing to hide. November 30, 2023-February 10, 2024Davies Street, LondonOctober 17-December 22, 2022rue de Castiglione, ParisNovember 12-December 22, 2020980 Madison Avenue, New YorkJune 13-July 26, 2014Britannia Street, LondonSeptember 15-October 22, 2011980 Madison Avenue, New YorkJune 13-July 26, 2014Britannia Street, LondonSeptember 15-October 22, 2011980 Madison Avenue, New YorkJune 13-July 26, 2014Britannia Street, LondonSeptember 15-October 22, 2011980 Madison Avenue, New YorkJune 13-July 26, 2014Britannia Street, LondonSeptember 15-October 22, 2011980 Madison Avenue, New YorkJune 13-July 26, 2014Britannia Street, LondonSeptember 15-October 22, 2011980 Madison Avenue, New YorkJune 13-July 26, 2014Britannia Street, LondonSeptember 15-October 20, 2014Britannia Street, LondonSeptember 20, 2014Britan the world, with time and tension, and with growth in this excerpt from her Marion Barthelme Lecture, presented at the Menil Collection, Houston, in 2024. Gagosian hosted a conversation between Jenny Saville and Martin Gayford, art critic and author, in conjunction with the exhibition Friends and Relations: Lucian Freud, Francis Bacon, Frank Auerbach, Michael Andrews at Gagosian, Grosvenor Hill, London. Gayford also spoke with the artist about her works in the exhibition, Jenny Saville: Latent at Gagosian, Paris. She addresses the genesis of the title and reflects on the anatomy of a painting. An exhibition curated by Sergio Risaliti, director of the Museo degli Innocenti, and the Museo di Casa Buonarroti through February 20, 2022, the presentation features paintings and drawings by Saville from the 1990s through to work made especially for the occasion. Here, Risaliti reflects on the resonances and reverberations brought about by these pairings. Jenny Saville speaks with Nicholas Cullinan, the director of the National Portrait Gallery, London, about her latest self-portrait, her studio practice, and the historical painters to whom she continually returns. The Winter 2020 issue of Gagosian Quarterly is now available, featuring Jenny Saville's Prism (2020) on its cover. Jenny Saville shares a selection of the books, films, and more that have been her companions in the quiet of the shutdowns in recent months and as she looks ahead to a new exhibition next year. Jenny Saville speaks with Nicholas Cullinan, the director of the National Portrait Gallery, London, from her studio. They discuss portraiture, her latest work, and her art historical influences, as well as the shifting nature of perception in the age of digital communication. The two artists discuss being drawn to difficult subjects, the effects of motherhood on their practice, embracing chance, and their shared adoration of Cy Twombly. Jenny Saville reveals the process behind her new self-portrait, painted in response to Rembrandt's masterpiece Self-Portrait with Two Circles. The Spring 2019 issue of Gagosian Quarterly is now available, featuring Red Pot with Lute Player #2 by Jonas Wood on its cover. On the occasion of a major survey of the artist's work, Dr. Simon Groom, Director of the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh, studies the evolution of Jenny Saville's practice. See more from Fairs & Collecting See all News for Jenny SavilleSee all Museum Exhibitions for Jenny SavilleA brush with... Jenny Saville by Ben LukeRequest more information aboutJenny SavilleSee more at the Gagosian ShopInstagramYouTubeXFacebookTikTokPinterestWeChatArtsy Jennifer Anne Saville (born 7 May 1970) is a contemporary English painter and an original member of the Young British Artists. Saville works and lives in Oxford, England and she is known for her large-scale painting for contemporary art. Some painting a new and challenging method of painting the female nude and reinventing figure painting for contemporary art. scale. Monumental subjects come from pathology textbooks that she has studied that informed her on injury to bruise, burns, and deformity. John Gray commented: "As I see it, Jenny Saville's work expresses a parallel project of reclaiming the body from personality. Saville worked with many models who underwent cosmetic surgery to reshape a portion of their body. In doing that, she captures "marks of personality for the flesh" and together embraces how we can be the writers of our own lives. "She is one of two women to have made the top 10 auction lots sold in 2023. Jenny Saville Chapter (for Linda Nochlin), 2016 Pinto Gallery 4,650 USD Jenny Saville Chapter (for Linda Nochlin), 2016 Pinto Gallery 5,000 USD Jenny Saville Self-Portrait, 1992 Crane Kalman Gallery Sold Jenny Saville Self-Portrait Self-Portrai 2023 Auction Closed Jenny Saville Red Stare, 2012 Sale Date: November 7, 2023 Auction Closed Jenny Saville is often credited with reinventing figure painting for contemporary art, as well as originating a new and challenging way of painting the female nude. Saville is part of the generation of concept-driven British artists that came of age in the 1990s, the YBAs, but unlike her contemporaries, Saville's primary interests are painting and figureation. Whether in her oil paintings of fleshy bodies, or charcoal drawings of layered and overlapping figures, Saville combines figureation and abstraction to create direct and unidealized images of the human form. Drawing on precedents from the history of art, she presents bodies (often damaged, dimpled, or altered) that speak to our contemporary moment. A prolific artist, she is one of the most important painters working today. From the beginning of her career, Saville has engaged in an intense exploration of the body and its representation. Saville borrows conventions from a long tradition in figure painting, whether in poses borrowed from Madonna and Child painting of Willem de Kooning in his Woman series. Saville appropriates these techniques associated with male masters to show her own point of view as a woman. A painter of flesh with all its marks, blemishes and folds, Saville is best known for her large-scale paintings of towering fleshy female nudes set against a blank background. These figures represent the artist's desire to tackle taboo issues around motherhood, plastic surgery, dieting, exercise, and the representation of women in art and popular culture, themes that had mostly been missing from the history of paintings of the female nude and turns it upside down. Where paintings of the female nude tend to be small in size, centered in the picture frame, reclining in a docile manner and with extremely smooth, flat skin and beautiful unblemished features; her paintings are huge with layers of thick paint, bruised surfaces, hair, and figures that seem to be trying to escape the picture plane. The female nude is traditionally painted by men for other men to look at. Saville challenges this dynamic by often painting herself, often naked - becoming artist and artist's model, and thus claiming agency as the subject and author of her work. Saville's paintings of her own naked body towering over a viewer. They threaten the status quo of the clothed, male artist and naked woman model so central to art historical paintings of nudes. In her later work, Saville pays less attention to the built up layers of paint that characterize her early paintings in favor of the drawn lines (in charcoal) that allow for the overlapping of multiple figures in order to evoke movement, memory, and time. Progression of Art1992In this monumental nude self-portrait ample breasts and dimpled folds of flesh loom large on the canvas. Viewed from below, the weighty figure dominates the frame. On the fleshy torso, Saville has inscribed the words of French feminist theorist Luce Irigaray: "delicate," "supportive," "irrational," "decorative," and "petite," all written backwards. Using this as a means of countering preconceived notions about the representation of women, Saville has literally branded these words on the painting disgusting, big women. I'm painting women who've been made to think they're big and disgusting." In this and other early paintings, Saville subverts traditional notions of female beauty and femininity that have long dominated Western art. In the case of Branded this challenging of convention takes place through the artist's use of her own body. Art Historian Marsha Meskimmon has argued that "Saville's work interrogates our perception of the female body in challenging ways. To use the self in this way is to come full circle in the questioning of fixed identity and the body." An important early work, Branded is often cited as a painting which made figurative painting popular in contemporary art. The work challenges the typical female nude (which is small, delicate, and 'beautiful') by making a huge painting with thick paint, which looks down on the viewer and flows out of the edges of the picture plane. Painting, Oil on canvas 1993Saville's striking self-portrait, Plan, makes use of extreme foreshortening to present an uncompromising image of the female nude. Working from photographs rather than life, she presents a snapshot, a fleeting glimpse of a figure that struggles to be contained within the frame. The brushwork is both delicate and aggressive, often building up thick impasto on the painting's surface. She is nonetheless able to capture every vein, every dimple, every splotchy bit of flesh, and every strand of hair. Looking directly at the viewer over the marked terrain of her body, Saville calls our attention to complicated issues surrounding women's bodies, plastic surgery, and the "cult of exercise." The lines drawn on the flesh resemble the lines on a topographical map. They also reference the lines drawn by plastic surgeons on the skin of their patients in preparation for body are the marks they make before you have liposuction done to you. They draw these things that look like targets. I like this idea of mapping the body, not necessarily areas to be cut away, but like geographical contours on a map. I didn't draw on to the body. It evokes the idea of cutting into the body. It evokes the idea of surgery. It has lots of connotations." Regarding these inscribed lines, some scholars have suggested: "In this mapping of the body as an area of problematic terrain a relationship is set up between perceptions of the natural and the planned. The question of who is exercising control over this 'plan' remains troubling and implicates the viewer of the image." Plan was painted in 1993 and later exhibited by Charles Saatchi in Young British Artists III at the Saatchi Gallery in 1994. It was also included several years later in Sensation, the groundbreaking and controversial 1997 exhibition of Young British Artists at the Royal Academy of Art. An important early work by Saville, Plan is emblematic of her concern for depicting women as subjects rather than objects and is another painting in which the artist is both the subject and the painter, something that had previously been almost unheard of, especially in paintings of nudes. In her attempt to draw on the history of the female nude, while also showing women as they see themselves, Saville has given her figures a weighty presence that combines empathy, apprehension, vulnerability, and awe. Painting, Oil on canvas 2004-05In Passage, a striking, confident nude woman is shown in a near recumbent position with outstretched legs that extend out beyond the picture frame. Thickly painted, though seemingly unfinished, Passage continues Saville's interest in sensuously painted, though sumptuously handled brushwork that reveals the influence of a painter like Willem de Kooning, who was similarly drawn to representations of the body and flesh. The figure, a transgender woman with a 'natural' penis and surgically enhanced breasts, reclines provocatively, looking seductively at the viewer. In Passage, the position of the figure and the handling of the brushwork direct our gaze from the legs over the torso and breasts, to the head, creating a landscape of the body, a sort of "gender landscape," to use Saville's terminology. Passage was painted when Saville was living and working in Palermo, Sicily. During this time, she began photographing transvestites and transgender people in Rome, which she then used as source material. Saville was interested in these bodies as hybrids that are both natural and artificial. Although Passage was painted from photographs, it is not a portrait in the traditional sense. She has said that she tried "to find bodies that manifest in their flesh something of our contemporary age. I'm drawn to bodies that emanate a sort of state of in-betweeness: a hermaphrodite, a transvestite, a carcass, a half-alive/half-dead head." At a time when LGBTQIA issues are coming to the fore, Passage reveals the body as a social construct and sympathetically represents an untypical, transgender woman's body. The figure floats, according to Linda Nochlin, in "that postmodern realm of gender nirvana, brilliantly theorized by Judith Butler as a zone of shifting sexual identities and the rejection of essential difference between male and female." Oil on canvas 2011In this vigorously painted and chaotic self-portrait, based on Renaissance nativity scenes, Saville depicts herself in the final stages of pregnancy, struggling to keep hold of two writing infants over her swollen belly. She has drawn and erased the figures multiple times, overlapping and thick fleshy painting. The movement in the painting and the use of drawing makes Mothers stylistically different from her earlier work. In this regard, Saville has spoken of the influence of her children: "They've shown me my creativity again. I was in danger of becoming a sort of genre painter in the tradition of Freud, Bacon, and Auerbach. But when you're four, you don't know genres exist. So to follow their lead and take away the rules and paint any way you like has been very thrilling. It's opened up a lot of possibilities: ways to draw, ways to paint, and what kind of bodies I want to paint." This new freedom can be seen in her inclusion of multiple impressions on a single canvas, the use of slashing lines, and the slippage between painting and drawing that characterizes her later work. Taken from the series Continuum, with Mothers Saville began (after the birth of her two children) to examine how pregnancy changes a woman's body. She also began to deal directly with the subject of motherhood drawings turn quickly into an examination of the way mothers and babies have been presented in art." And indeed, Mothers is reminiscent of such Renaissance Madonna and Child images as Leonardo's The Virgin and Child in her parents' home. Mothers is an important example of such influence, but it is also entirely in keeping with her interests in representing the human form. This self-portrait, which shows the artists as a mother can also be related to artists such as Mary Kelly and Merle Ukeles Liederman, who make art about their own role as mothers. This painting manages to combine classical art historical influences with contemporary aims and interests, and complicates the roles of painter and model, by representing herself as the mother, who seems a lot more realistic than the virgin mothers painted by the Old Masters. Oil on canvas 2011At eight feet long, Mirror is a monumental monochrome drawing in charcoal. Multiple reclining figures are intertwined against a backdrop that evokes both Renaissance painting and the decorative patterning of Matisse. Saville's use of charcoal allows for both the layering of time. In a dramatic break from the thick impasto of her earlier paintings, Saville has said that in order "[t]o layer bodies, I've needed to hold back on the surface." In so doing, Saville is able to suggest movement and memory (memory of experience, but also of art history), allowing the viewer to perceive many things at the same time. In Mirror, the obscured faces of famous female nudes from art history peer out at us. We see Manet's Olympia, Giorgione's Sleeping Venus, the angular limbs of Picasso's early nudes, but also the face of the artist, not once, but twice, at least. She is doubled, mirrored, as the title of the work suggests. By doubling her image, Saville presents herself as both subject and object, artist and model. Like Olympia, she gazes out at the viewer, implicating us in a complicated exchange surrounding the act of looking and the long history of representing the female nude in Western art. In this sense the mirror was in process, it was provisionally titled History of the Reclining Nude. "In these pieces, I'm trying to get simultaneous realities to exist in the same image," she says. "The contradiction of a drawing on top of a drawing replicates the slippage we have between the real world and the screen world. But it's about the memory of pictures, too." The interest in the history of the reclining nude in art history makes sense given her preoccupation with the human body, particularly the female body. "I'm fascinated about the way perspective is a game of space and surface, and how artists have played that game, trying to find harmony and balance, through the figure of the reclining nude." Charcoal drawing 2013-14Saville's painting of two intertwined bodies, one black, one white, recalls the title of Manet's Olympia of 1863. Her heavier, thick painting style is mingled with feverish marks and slashes, reminiscent of a cityscape in the background. Art historian John Elderfield has noted Olympia masterfully combines drawn lines and painted values, bringing together painting and drawing in a single work. Both figurative and abstract, the overlapping bodies and forms are set off by a rectangular frame that appears to be resting on the picture plane producing the effect of a painting, with the two bodies trying to escape the edges of the picture frame. On closer examination, it is unclear if we are seeing multiple bodies or two bodies moving over time. Saville enjoys playing with the viewer's perception: "Bits of feet, stomach, and I enjoy the mystery involved in the viewer's search through the visual rubble." Olympia is part of a series of paintings that Saville has titled Oxyrhynchus, after an Egyptian archaeological site, which represents for her "culture in pieces - fragments captured in layers of time." Olympia, and other works from the series, are about experience and memory, about experience information today. This idea of strata, of layers of images seen through time, of images within images, it's like the way we see the world through computers: not as a single reality, but many realities at the same time." In Olympia she refigures the relationship between the two figures in Manet's famous painting (the reclining white nude woman and the black servant girl) so that they are locked in a frantic embrace - the painting uses imagery, brushstrokes, and its title to question and challenge how this and similar relationships have been uncritically represented throughout painting's history. Charcoal and oil on canvas Jenny Saville was born on May 7, 1970, in Cambridge. Her parents, both educators, moved Jenny and her brothers and sister frequently from school as her father pursued a career as a school administrator. After attending several schools, she finished secondary school at Newark, Nottinghamshire. As a child, Saville's parents encouraged her to think and work independently. She was first attracted to painting at the age of eight. Her mother recognized her talents early and cleared out a broom closet for Saville to use as her first studio. She cites her uncle, Paul Saville, an artist, art historian, and former head of Liberal Arts at Clare College, as an early influence. He took her to museums, but also to Holland and Italy, in order to expose her to Old Masters as well as modern artists. It was her uncle that encouraged her to pursue an art degree at the Glasgow School of Art in the late 1980s, graduating in 1992 with a BFA. She attended the school because of its reputation as a painting school, saying, "Every day you walk up those steps it makes you become an artist." Without a grant or funding, she worked as a waitress in order to support herself and pay for a studio where she could paint. During her time at Glasgow School of Art, she received a six-month travel scholarship to study in the University of Cincinnati. Saville recalls seeing "big women and big white bodies in shorts and Tshirts," an experience that influenced her to take on the un-idealised female nude as the primary focus of her early works. She enjoyed success during her last year at Glasgow School of Art and was selected twice by the National Portrait Gallery before her final graduate exhibition in the summer of 1992. In a rare feat, she sold most of the paintings from the show and an example from the exhibition subsequently appeared on the cover of the Times Saturday Review in September 1992. The cover came to the attention of art collector and advertising executive Charles Saatchi, who sought her out and offered her a contract to paint over the next eighteen months, with a promise to purchase and exhibit any paintings she produced during that time. With little money and a propensity for making large-scale paintings in oil, the contract from Saatchi allowed her to produce work without financial constraints. Saville was offered an opportunity to return to the USA in 1994. Intrigued by the nature of plastic surgery, a phenomenon that was on the rise in the mid-1990s, she began observing surgeries in the office of a New York plastic surgeon. Alongside contemporaries such as Damien Hirst, Tracey Emin, and Sarah Lucas, Jenny Saville's work was included in the 1994 Young British Artists III exhibition at the Saatchi Gallery, and in the 1997 Sensation exhibition at the Royal Academy of Art in London, which was taken from Saatchi's collection. Much lauded in the UK, Sensation sparked controversy when it traveled in 1999 to the Brooklyn Museum. Although she was included in these important exhibitions, Saville never considered herself part of the Young British Artists, most of whom worked in mediums other than painting, which she had devoted herself to since an early age. Despite living and working in the UK, Jenny Saville has shown her work most frequently in New York. She has said that she feels a greater affinity to American painters like Willem de Kooning and Cy Twombly, than she does to the more conceptually driven work of her British contemporaries like Damien Hirst, Tracey Emin, or Rachel Whiteread. "There's less guilt about being a painter over there [in the USA]. "In 2003 Saville was returning to London from a trip to Sicily and stopped off in Palermo, Italy. She fell in love with the city and subsequently moved there. She was drawn to the city's layering of civilizations because it does not belong to any particular moment or individual. She purchased an apartment in a dilapidated 18th-century palazzo that served as a studio and living space. This complexity and layering of history has made its way into her work, particularly in her drawings, where memory, time, and experience overlap and seep into each other. In 2014, Saville moved from Sicily to Oxford, where she currently lives with her partner, Paul McPhail, and their two children have had on her painting. Their uninhibited approach to painting and drawing opened up new possibilities for her, allowing her to be freer in her choice of subjects and methods. Although the interest in the representation of bodies has continued, it has expanded to include new references to motherhood, art history, and ancient myth. While she continued to include new references to motherhood, art history, and ancient myth. oil paint she used in earlier works. In recent years, her work has taken from earlier precedents in new ways, leading to a series of drawings in charcoal that make direct references to art history. She was asked by the Ashmolean Museum at the University of Oxford to contribute a series of drawings in response to their 2015 exhibition Titian to Canaletto: Drawing in Venice, which allowed her to use drawing to convey movement and time (rather than the static poses of her earlier paintings). The same year, 2015, she was asked to curate a room for the Royal Academy's blockbuster exhibition, Rubens and his Legacy: Van Dyck to Cézanne. With works by other British artists, Cecilv Brown and Sarah Lucas, the room also included artists she cites as influences, including Pablo Picasso, Willem de Kooning, and Francis Bacon, along with her monumental work titled Voice of the Shuttle (Philomela). Saville has demonstrated that figure painting continues to have resonance in contemporary art. Drawing on issues around the body and its representation, Saville has shied away from idealized images of the body. Saville's paintings have also left their mark on popular culture. In 1994 and 2009, the Welsh alternative rock band Manic Street Preachers included her 2005 painting Stare, an image of a seemingly beaten and bloody face, on the cover of Journal for Plague Lovers. Upon release, the cover sparked controversy and was deemed "inappropriate" by UK retailers, who refused to display it, opting instead for a plain paper slipcover. Linda Nochlin has called her work "post-painterly", "referring to Clement Greenberg's term. The work pushes painterliness "so far over the top that it signifies a kind of disease of the pictorial, a symptom of some deep disturbance in the relation of pigment to canvas." Saville refers often to the famous quote by Willem de Kooning, "Flesh was the reason oil paint was created." Her visceral approach - using thick paint on large canvasses - comes from her desire to use paint in a sculptural way. Saville can be credited with updating figurative painting for contemporary art and her unidealized paintings of predominately women's bodies can also be related to Feminist art and Performance art by innovators such as Mary Kelly, Ana Mendieta, Cindy Sherman, and Carolee Schneemann. Drawing on the history of art in intriguing ways and making use of photography as source material, but not in the way we have come to understand it (such as in the form of photorealism or portraiture), Saville's painting and what it can and should represent in our contemporary age.websites