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Art & Culture

My dearest dust: Chantal Joffe Returns to NYC

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Arms Upraised in my Bedroom, 2024

[Skarstedt](#) is pleased to announce Chantal Joffe: *My dearest dust*. The show will mark Joffe's inaugural exhibition with the gallery, and her first solo show in New York since 2017.

In *My dearest dust*, Joffe presents a group of large new paintings. Having painted herself and her daughter Esme for much of her career, these are mostly self-portraits. Something has shifted in these new paintings—there is a rawness and urgency, a frenzy of paint in a new palette of yellow and blue.

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As Olivia Laing says in her catalogue essay, *Giallo*: “For two decades, Chantal Joffe has painted herself and her daughter Esme, a dyad of two faces, two bodies in tight domestic proximity. But now a rupture has occurred, the inevitable dislocation that takes place in homes across the world. The child leaves, the mother stays behind. You wouldn’t file a missing person’s report, but there’s an absence all the same.”

In these paintings Joffe is seen in the bath, in the kitchen, in bed, sometimes crumpled asleep or deep in thought. Esme is still present, and Richard, her partner, appears asleep in bed, almost lost in a yellow duvet, one big arm exposed. The homage to Philip Guston is acknowledged by the title, *Richard in Bed (for P.G.)*. The sequence of self-portraits also references Guston’s famous bed paintings, which Joffe was inspired by seeing at Tate Modern last winter.

The title *My dearest dust* was suggested to Joffe by Esme, a reference to all the loss the family have experienced and to the dustiness of their home. The exhibition is accompanied by a publication with a text by Olivia Laing.