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Chantal Joffe presents a group of large new paintings at Skarstedt, New York



Chantal Joffe, *Bedside (Small Version)*, 2024. Oil on canvas, 35 7/8 x 48 inches.

NEW YORK, NY.- [Skarstedt](#) is presenting Chantal Joffe: *My dearest dust*. The show marks 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.

As Olivia Laing says in her catalogue essay, *Giallo*: “For two decades, Chantal Joffe has painted herself and

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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.

Chantal Joffe is a British-American contemporary artist renowned for her distinctive approach to portraiture, which captures the complexities of human emotion through a bold and expressive style. Born in 1969 in St. Albans, Vermont, she relocated to London at thirteen years of age, where she has lived and worked ever since. Joffe received her BA from the Glasgow School of Art in 1991 and her MA from the prestigious Royal College of Art in 1994.

Joffe's artistic journey has been consistently anchored by an exploration of the human form—primarily focusing on the women and children in her life, but extending this interest outwards toward the women who populate advertisements and fashion magazines—and a commitment to an intimate and immediate engagement with her subjects. Her work draws inspiration from a diverse range of sources, including art history, popular culture, and personal experiences. With a keen eye for color and masterful handling of paint, Joffe creates works that are simultaneously bold and tender, capturing an innate sense of vulnerability and strength. Her style is further characterized by loose brushstrokes, an almost crude style of rendering, and an energetic yet fluid mark-making. She often depicts women at various stages of their lives, such as her daughter, Esme, who has grown up on Joffe's canvases.

Her subjects—children, mothers, models, and the like—are often those members of society who are overlooked or unappreciated for one reason or another. By tending to them without hierarchy or judgement, Joffe questions what makes a subject "worthy" of being painted while simultaneously revealing to her viewers the ways in which appearances are constructed and presented, even in the most private of moments. Familiar and heartfelt, her work is likewise psychological and visceral, with an unnerving quality to them that gives her women the multifaceted nature they are due: for as much as femininity should be celebrated, it is not without its dark side. Joffe explores both sides of this coin with deftness and care.

Joffe's work has been exhibited extensively throughout the world, including Victoria Miro, Venice (2023); Kooshouse Museum, Yangpyong, Korea (2022); Lehmann Maupin, Beijing (2021); Arnolfini, Bristol (2020); The Lowry, Salford (2018); Jewish Museum, New York (2015); and the National Portrait Gallery, London (2015). She received the Royal Academy Wollaston Prize in 2006. In 2018, she created a public installation for the Whitechapel stop on the Elizabeth Line in London, titled *A Sunday Afternoon in Whitechapel*. Joffe's

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work can be found in the permanent collections of institutions such as the Buffalo AKG Art Museum; Detroit Institute of Arts; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; High Museum of Art, Atlanta; Musée des Beaux-Arts de Nantes; National Portrait Gallery, London; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; and the Royal College of Art, London.

Chantal Joffe is represented by Victoria Miro, London.