

Lowry as a Collector

‘As a student I admired DG Rossetti, and after him, Madox Brown.
The queer thing is I’ve never wavered, they’re my two favourite artists still.’

LS Lowry interviewed in 1956

Throughout his life Lowry bought work by young artists to show them support and encouragement. He didn’t often display their pictures in his house - they sat stacked against walls or piled under the bed. Many of the artists’ names are little known today but several had successful careers and were longstanding friends including Sheila Fell (1931-79), Pat Cooke (1935-2000), James Fitton (1899-1982) and David Carr (1915-68).

Lowry’s taste in art was varied. By the time he retired from the Pall Mall Property Company in 1952, on a full pension, he was making a profit from the sale of his own work and could afford to buy paintings and drawings by artists he admired. His collection included a drawing by the 18th Century caricaturist Thomas Rowlandson (1756-1827), two bronze busts and two drawings by Jacob Epstein (1880-1959) and *Portrait of a Young Man* 1944 by Lucian Freud (1922-2011).

The Pre-Raphaelites Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-82) and Ford Madox Brown (1821-93) were the two artists Lowry admired most. In 1967 he purchased Brown’s charcoal drawing, *Moses and the Brazen Serpent* 1872, which hung on his living room wall, but as far as he was concerned ‘There’s no one like Rossetti. ...I don’t care much for his subject pictures but his women are very wonderful. I can’t find anything quite like them...[they are]...unreal pictures.’ *Annie Miller* 1860, one of Lowry’s favourite Rossetti drawings, also hung in the living room, but most of Lowry’s Rossettis were on his bedroom walls including his only oil painting by the artist - *Proserpine* 1873/77.



LS Lowry with Pat Cooke. Ford Madox Brown's *Moses and the Brazen Serpent* can be seen in the background.
Photograph by Denis Thorpe



LS Lowry's bedroom with drawings by Rossetti on display including, from left to right above the bed, *Mrs William Morris* c1870, *Aspelta Medusa* 1867 and *Alexa Wilding* 1866. *Reverie* 1868 (the model for which was also Morris's wife Jane) can be seen to the right of the door.

Photograph by Denis Thorpe



LS Lowry in his living room in 1967 with a bronze sculpture by Jacob Epstein on the dresser to the right and Rossetti's *Alexa Wilding* 1873 on the right hand side of the wall behind Lowry. Alexa Wilding modelled frequently for Rossetti in the late 1860s and throughout the 1870s and a second portrait of her can be seen in the photograph of Lowry's bedroom.

Photographer unknown

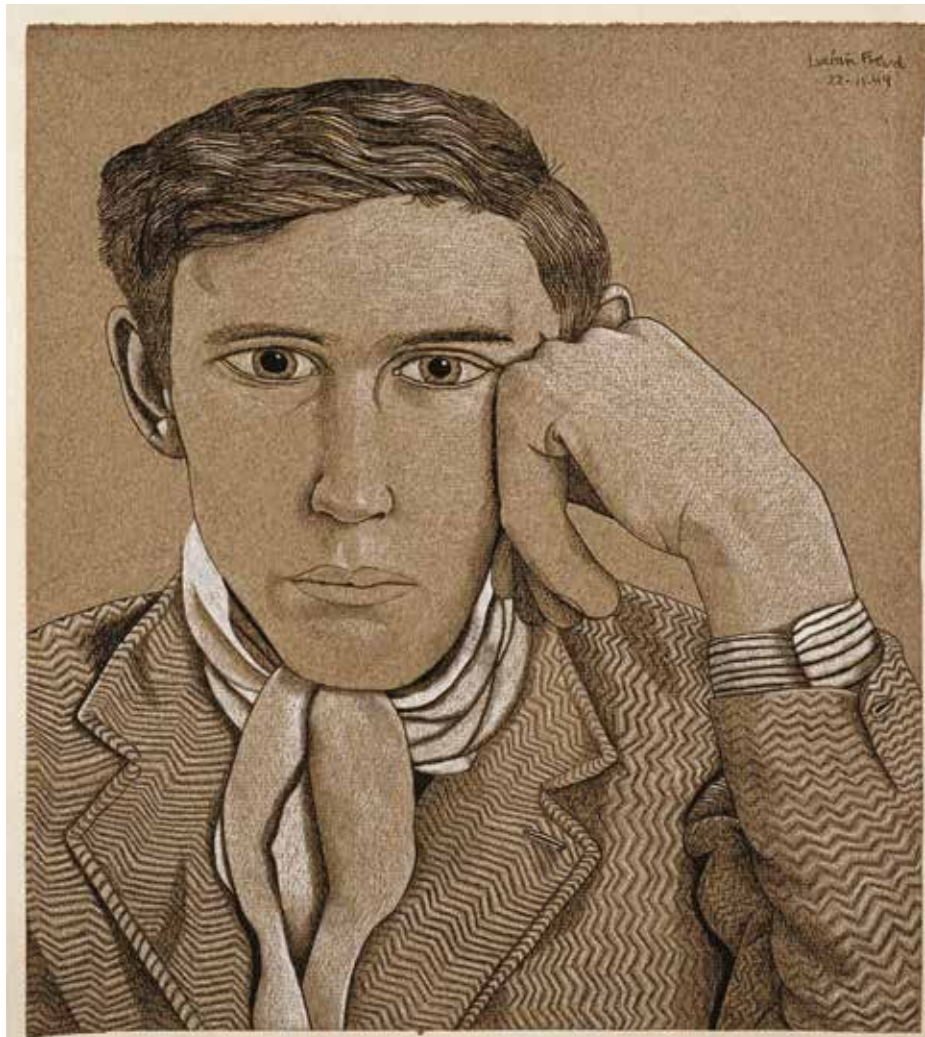


Dante Gabriel Rossetti

Proserpine (detail)
1874

Rossetti painted eight versions of *Proserpine* including this one in the Tate collection, very similar to Lowry's own.

Image © Tate, London 2015



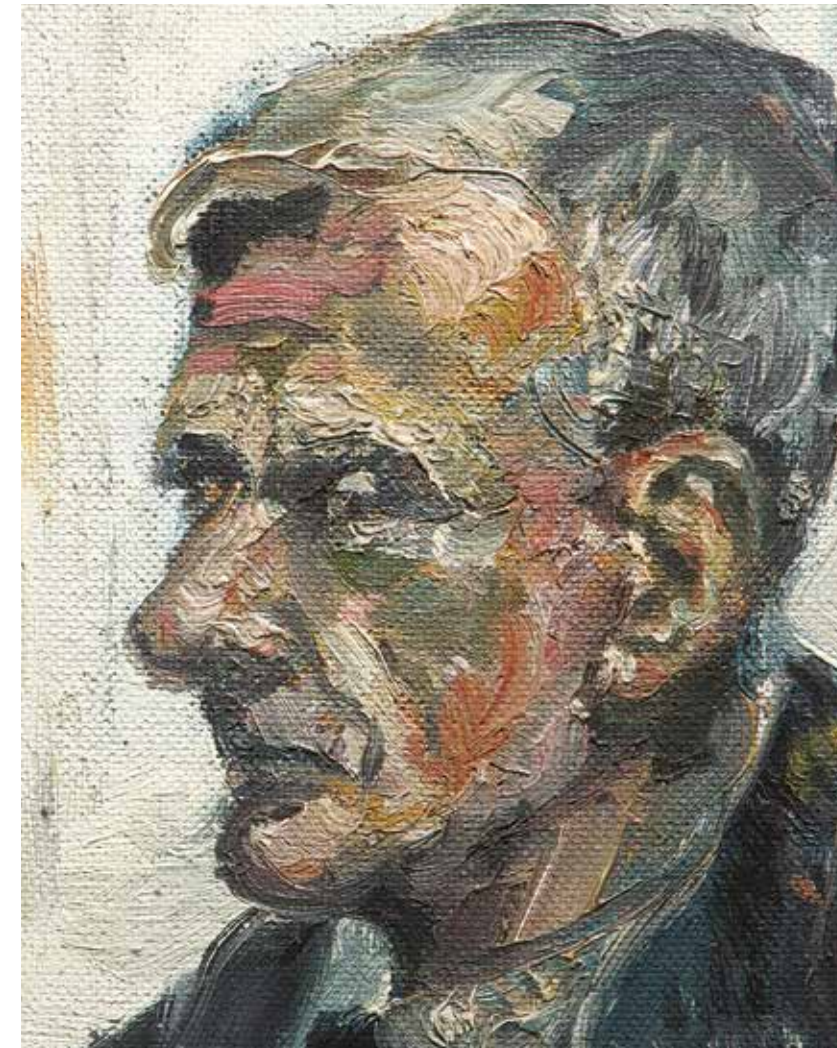
Lucian Freud

Portrait of a Young Man 1944

Private collection

This drawing was described by one visitor to Lowry's home as being 'squeezed between two Tompion clocks in Lowry's living room'. Lowry found the drawing disquieting but told a friend that 'it would not be half the picture' without the subject's exaggerated little finger.

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Patricia Cooke

LS Lowry (detail) undated

Pat Cooke first met Lowry as a child when her father carried out some building work on the artist's house in Mottram-in-Longdendale. Hearing that she was interested in drawing he asked to see her work. Her portrait of Lowry hung on his living room wall for many years.

Salford Museum
& Art Gallery

© Estate of Patricia Cooke
Image © Salford Museum & Art Gallery



James Fitton

Fitton was younger than Lowry but trained with him at Salford School of Art. After the life drawing classes in the evenings, Lowry often walked with him to the docks in Salford where Fitton worked a night shift. Fitton moved to London and became an Associate Member of the Royal Academy in 1944. He and Lowry remained friends and Fitton supported Lowry's own election as an Associate in 1955.

Cafe 1950-57

Herbert Art Gallery & Museum

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Paul Delvaux

Delvaux's paintings often place nudes in incongruous settings such as railway stations or streets full of grand classical buildings. Work by his contemporary, René Magritte (1898-1967), also fascinated Lowry - 'His paintings have an unearthly strangeness. How does he do it?' he asked Pat Cooke.

La Rue du Tramway (Street of the Trams) 1938-9

Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art

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Image © Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art



David Carr

Self Portrait c1947

Ferens Art Gallery

David Carr's friendship with Lowry began after Carr purchased one of Lowry's works and wrote to the older artist. The two men visited each other. Lowry staying with Carr's family in Norfolk, and discussed their work in correspondence over a number of years.

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Image © Ferens Art Gallery
Hull Museums, UK/Bridgeman Images



Sheila Fell

Village beneath Lake District Fells c1960

Private collection, on loan to
Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery Trust

Lowry viewed Sheila Fell's first exhibition at the Beaux Arts Gallery in London in 1955 and asked to meet the artist. With her parents' permission he provided her with a small weekly income to help her while sales of her work were uncertain. He was a regular visitor to the family's home in Aspatria in Cumbria, and accompanied Sheila on sketching trips.

© Anna Fell
Image courtesy of Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery Trust