

OSBORNE SAMUEL

MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY ART

Auerbach, Frank (b. 1931)



Head of JYM III, 1980

Chalk and charcoal on paper
76.2 x 58.4 cm. (30 x 23 in.)
Framed size 97 x 78.5 cm. (38 1/8 x 30 7/8 in.)

OSBORNE SAMUEL LTD

23 DERING STREET • LONDON W1S 1AW

TELEPHONE +44 (0)20 7493 7939 • FACSIMILE +44 (0)20 7493 7798 • EMAIL info@osbornesamuel.com

www.osbornesamuel.com

OSBORNE SAMUEL

MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY ART

Provenance:

The Artist

Marlborough Fine Art, London

Private Collection (purchased from the above)

Exhibited:

Frank Auerbach 'Recent Work' 13 January - 11 February, 1983, Cat No 31, Marlborough Fine Art, London

Literature:

William Feaver, Frank Auerbach, published by Rizzoli, no. 428

Auerbach met Juliet Yardley Mills in 1956, when she was working as a model at Sidcup College of Art. He began to paint her the following year, and continued to do so, at his studio in Camden, every Wednesday and Sunday, until 1997. As with all his repeated sitters, Auerbach developed an acute awareness of posture and mood:

I notice something when people first come and sit and think, they do things with their faces. It's when they've become tired and stoical the essential head becomes clearer. They become more themselves as they become tired. ¹

JYM was an ideal sitter, capable of holding poses for long periods of time. At first Auerbach painted her without identification in his titles, although she is distinguishable from his previous frequent subject, Stella West (EOW). A characteristic pose shows JYM seated, her head against the back of the chair or supported by linked hands. As Robert Hughes notes, she always returns the artist's gaze, and 'there is a look – head cocked back, sometimes seen a little from below, a bit quizzical, sometimes challenging – that makes [her portraits] quite recognizable as a series'. ²

Auerbach's drawings evolve and assume their final form across weeks of sittings. A day's work may be scrubbed back, the following morning, to leave an accumulated deposit of charcoal. In some cases the paper wears perilously thin and needs to be patched. The finished drawing represents the last sitting, the most recent thoughts, yet Auerbach feels compelled to retain the accumulated traces as part of a process of securing the image within its own space and atmosphere. ³

Head of JYM III gazes partially downwards. There is a weight and solidity that derives from the density of charcoal, implying the settled mass of the sitter, at ease, one shoulder higher than the other. The volume of her head is registered through its eye sockets, cheekbones and chin. Through these we gain an intuition of its totality, and how it might feel to follow the head round, past its visible limits.

¹ William Feaver, *Frank Auerbach* (Rizzoli, 2009), p. 20.

² Robert Hughes, *Frank Auerbach* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1990), p. 80.

³ Feaver, *Frank Auerbach*, p. 19.

OSBORNE SAMUEL LTD

23 DERING STREET • LONDON W1S 1AW

TELEPHONE +44 (0)20 7493 7939 • FACSIMILE +44 (0)20 7493 7798 • EMAIL info@osbornesamuel.com

www.osbornesamuel.com

OSBORNE SAMUEL

MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY ART



OSBORNE SAMUEL LTD

23 DERING STREET • LONDON W1S 1AW

TELEPHONE +44 (0)20 7493 7939 • FACSIMILE +44 (0)20 7493 7798 • EMAIL info@osbornesamuel.com

www.osbornesamuel.com