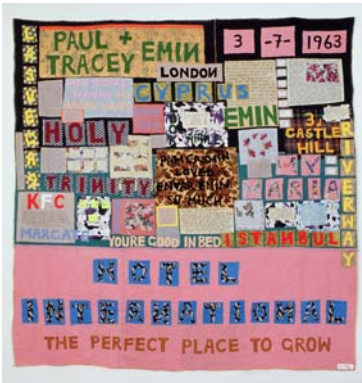


Press View: Friday 1 August 2008, 11.30 am – 1.00 pm



Hotel International, 1993
Collection Rachel and Jean-Pierre Lehmann
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TRACEY EMIN: 20 YEARS

2 August – 9 November 2008

SCOTTISH NATIONAL GALLERY OF MODERN ART, 75 Belford Road, Edinburgh

Admission £6.00 (concessions £4.00)

Supported by The Henry Moore Foundation

The first major UK retrospective exhibition of work by Tracey Emin, one of the most celebrated and influential artists of her generation, will be the highlight of this year's summer exhibition programme at the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art. Coinciding with the Edinburgh International Festival, and part of the Edinburgh Art Festival, *Tracey Emin: 20 Years* will chart the artist's career from the late 1980s to the present day, presenting the full range of her work in an exceptionally wide range of media – from her famous appliquéd blankets to video; from neons and installation to her intensely personal paintings and drawings. The largest, and most significant showing of Emin's work to date, this eagerly anticipated exhibition will offer the first comprehensive overview of her career. *Tracey Emin: 20 Years* will have its only UK showing in Edinburgh, and will take up the entire ground floor of the Gallery, bringing together loans from public and private collections around the world.

Tracey Emin is one of the best-known artists working in Britain today. Born in London in 1963, she is a central figure in the generation of Young British Artists (or YBAs) that emerged in the early 1990s, and has produced some of the most memorable, compelling and iconic works of the last fifteen years. Her autobiographical, confessional art has tapped into the mainstream of public consciousness, and has contributed to an unprecedented surge of interest in contemporary art in Britain. Emin studied at Maidstone College of Art, and the Royal College of Art in London, and has had major exhibitions around the world (including Amsterdam, New York, Sydney, Tokyo, Munich and Istanbul). She became a member of the Royal Academy of Arts in 2007, and in the same year, was selected to represent Britain at the Venice Biennale, the largest and most prestigious event in the art world calendar.

Highlights of the exhibition will include *My Bed*, perhaps the artist's most celebrated work (comprising her unmade bed, surrounded by the debris of her everyday life), which caused a sensation when it was shown at the Tate Gallery in 1999. Other large-scale installations, such as *Exorcism of the Last Painting I Ever Made* (1996), *The Perfect Place to Grow* (2001) and *It's Not the Way I want to Die* (2005) will also be reconstructed for the show.

Famously, Emin's art is intimately bound up in her own biography. Drawing directly upon her personal experiences, it often refers, with disarming and sometimes painful frankness, to traumatic episodes in her life, including her rape at the age of 13, her sexually promiscuous adolescence, and abortion. Emin's great achievement is to have drawn upon her background – the sort of background that a lot of people share, but which is largely uncharted territory in the world of art – and to have done so in a manner that is neither tragic nor sentimental.

Tracey Emin: 20 Years will include a dazzling array of the artist's embroidered blankets, which she covers in bold, autobiographical texts. The earliest of these, *Hotel International*, dates from 1993 and was made for her first solo exhibition, where it was shown alongside a collection of letters, memorabilia, teenage diaries and photographs of paintings that she had destroyed. *Tracey Emin: 20 Years* will feature a number of other works from this remarkable show, which marked her out as a significant, and highly original talent. These will include *Uncle Colin*, a collection of framed memorabilia relating to a favourite uncle, who had been killed in a car crash.

Emin's family relationships are a central, recurring theme in her art, which the artist has explored in a variety of media. The exhibition will feature powerful examples, including a series of raw and deeply personal monoprints from 1994, entitled *Family Suite*; and *There's A Lot of Money in Chairs* (1994), a poignant and affectionate work made from an armchair given to Emin by her grandmother.

If sex and abortion were the main themes and wellsprings of Emin's art in the 1990s, the related subject of pregnancy and children – or rather their absence – has become a dominant theme in the past decade, for example in *Feeling Pregnant II* (1999-2002) and *Feeling Pregnant III* (2005). Motherhood is also the subject of the film *Conversation with my Mum* (2001) which deals with the artist's conflicting desire to have children, and to remain committed to her work and independence.

On leaving the Royal College in 1989, Emin destroyed all of the paintings she had made there, and gave up painting altogether. It was not until 1996, when she staged the exhibition-cum-performance *Exorcism of the Last Painting I Ever Made*, in Stockholm, that she forced her way through her emotional blockage. Among the most recent works in *Tracey Emin: 20 Years* will be a selection of paintings made over the last two years, such as *Cat Watching*, (2006), and *I Told you not to try and find me* (2007), which reflect a more wistful and elegiac mood in her work.

Organised by the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, *Tracey Emin: 20 Years*, will travel to the Centro de Arte Contemporáneo de Málaga, Spain (28 November 2008 – 22 February 2009) and the Kunstmuseum Bern, Switzerland (10 March - 21 June 2009).

The exhibition will be accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue, priced £14.95, which will feature a contribution by the artist and film-maker Julian Schnabel, and an essay by the exhibition curator Patrick Elliott.

**For further information and images, please call the National Galleries Press Office
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**pressoffice@nationalgalleries.org
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