

Twitter Facebook Email Pinterest

BY JENNIFER HIGGIE
05 MAY 2001

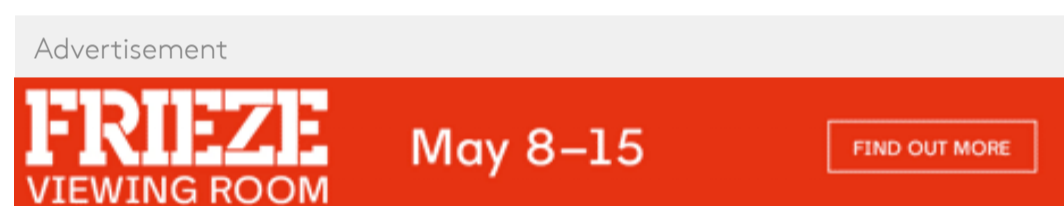
Old Master

The unpublished work of Robert Crumb



In 1963 Robert Crumb made a drawing of *The Crucifixion and Death of Puff the Magic Dragon*. It was intended as a 'sarcastic' gift for a girl who loved the song, but, according to Crumb, 'When she saw it she cried and did not want it.' Previously unpublished, this and other unknown gems by Crumb from the last 40 years or so have been gathered together in the book *Odds & Ends* (2001). The collection includes the artist's commercial work ('There's no place like the Winters Bike Shop!'); birth announcements ('Betsy and Jeff announce the arrival of their first edition!'); invitations ('Who knows? Who cares? We're celebrating anyway ...'); greetings cards ('I love you in spite of all your weird habits'); business cards ('Professor Gizmo One Man Band ...'); some wonderful 'straight' portraits of friends, strangers and musicians; and the commissions he did for small magazines such as *Winds of Change* and *Weirdo* and not-so-small ones such as *Screw* and *The New Yorker*.

Arranged chronologically, *Odds & Ends* is a fascinating study in the development of Crumb's brilliance. As you turn the pages, the years go by, the drawings get better and better, and the humour gets darker and darker. They're by Crumb, so of course practically every drawing - even the early advertisements - is funny, but it's a humour shot through with a kind of bonkers compassion for the plight of his fellow man and large-thighed woman. In his pantheon of human nature life is difficult, love even more so, the modern world abrasive, and then you die. The only things that make life bearable seem to be children, 'big healthy girls' and that 'wonderful drug: old 78 rpm phonograph records'. Flipping through this book is like being given permission to rifle through Crumb's desk and sketchbooks - you feel a little nosy, but you just don't care. It's too interesting.



JENNIFER HIGGIE

Jennifer Higgie is editor-at-large of *frieze*, based in London, UK. She is the host of *frieze*'s first podcast, *Bow Down: Women in Art History*. Her book *The Mirror and the Palette* is forthcoming from Weidenfeld & Nicolson.

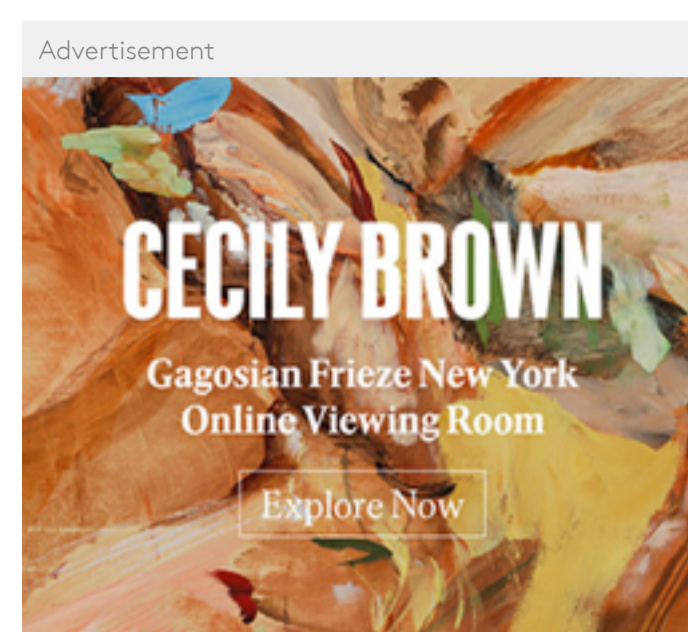
First published in Issue 59
May 2001

Share this: Twitter Facebook Email Pinterest

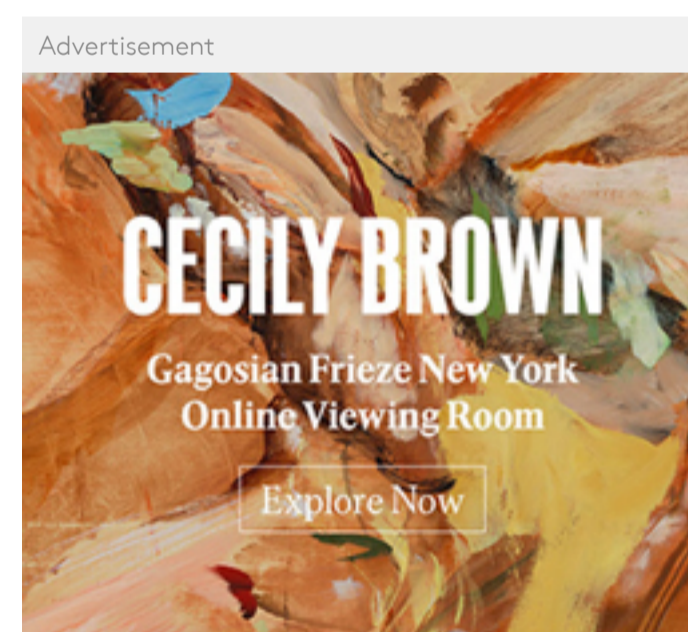
BOOKS

JENNIFER HIGGIE

ROBERT CRUMB



MORE LIKE THIS

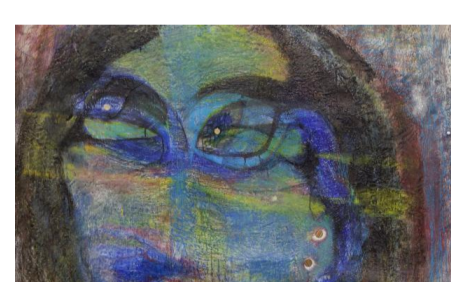


MOST READ

SEE ALL



The Threat to Freedom of Expression in Japan



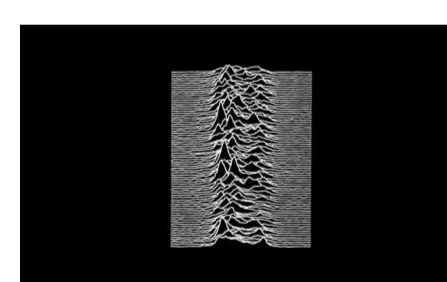
I Learned Enormous Things: Hans Ulrich Obrist Remembers Marisa Merz (1931-2019)



Editors' Picks: Our Favourite Art World Holiday Destinations



An Afrofuturism Show With No Black Artists: What Went Wrong at Berlin's Künstlerhaus Bethanien?



Pop Culture Is the Great Educator: An Interview with Peter Saville



'Learning How to Be Queer Again': Remembering Douglas Crimp (1944-2019)

LATEST MAGAZINES



frieze magazine
Issue 209
March 2020



frieze magazine
Issue 210
April 2020



frieze magazine
Issue 211
May-June 2020

Subscribe now and save up to 40%

SUBSCRIBE