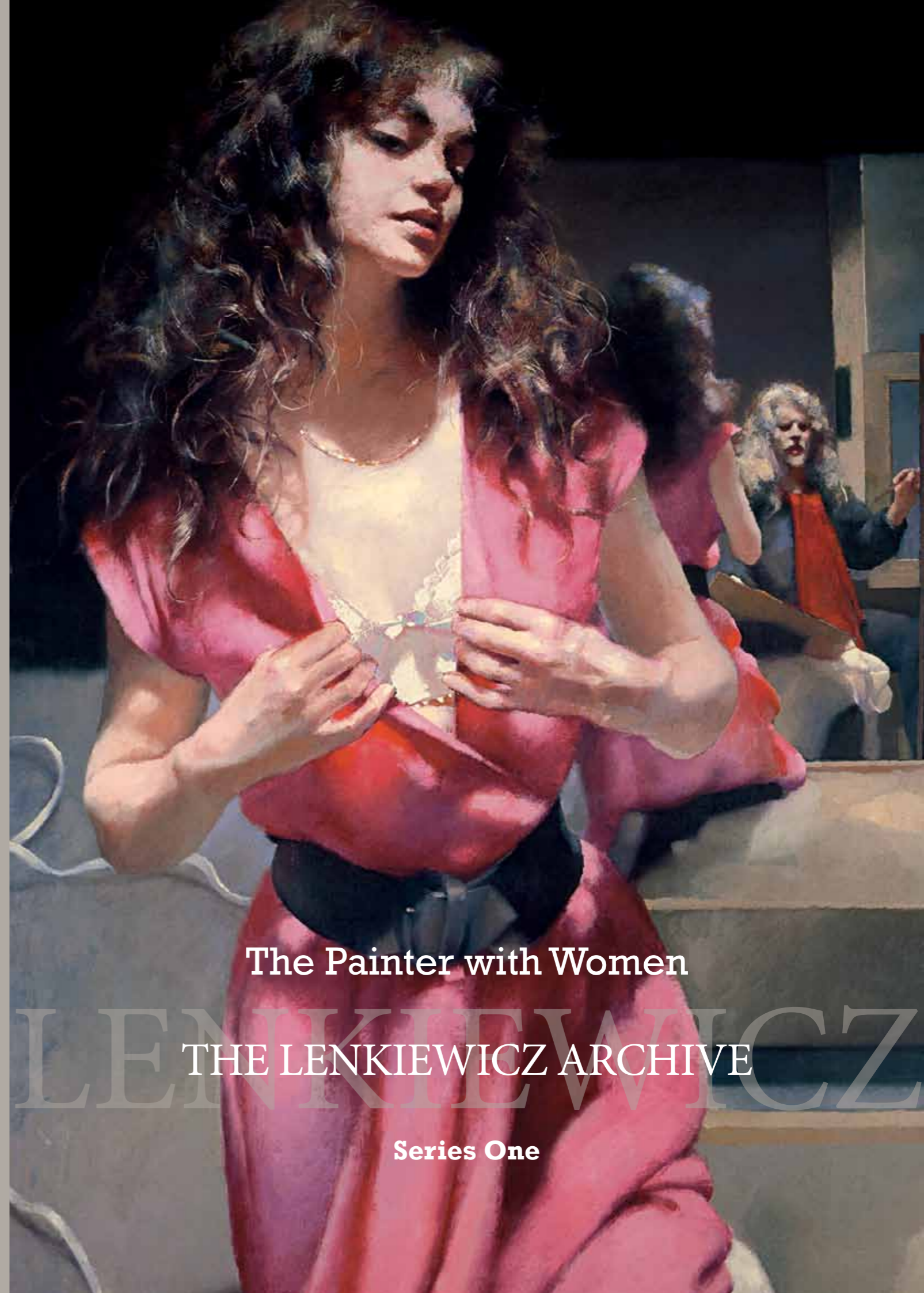




THE LENKIEWICZ ARCHIVE



The Painter with Women

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Series One





## The Painter with Women THE LENKIEWICZ ARCHIVE

### Series One

We are delighted to announce the release of this first series of Limited Editions from The Lenkiewicz Archive: Series One – ‘The Painter with Women’.

This series of Limited Editions demonstrates the artist’s unrivalled skill amongst his contemporaries in painting the human figure from life on a large scale. His trademark ability to capture the drama of light and dark, as well as the subtleties of skin tones and sensuous fabric, is amply illustrated, as is his use of rich and vibrant colour.

The Editions are accompanied by an important new publication from White Lane Press, ‘The Painter with Women – the evolution of a Project’, a book which uses Lenkiewicz’s own diaries and archive material to give a fascinating insight into the ideas behind the Project and the mind of the artist.

His sumptuously-illustrated diaries and notebooks also form the basis of a new series of publications of boxed non-folio editions from The Lenkiewicz Archive. The first volume is from the 1978 ‘The Eliza Notebook’ and is just the beginning of a series which will build into a carefully selected collection of previously unseen work from Lenkiewicz’s private archive.



Lenkiewicz paints in his Barbican studio c.1993. Photo: Derek Harris.



Born in London in 1941, Robert Lenkiewicz was the son of refugees who ran a Jewish hotel in north London. The mostly elderly residents, many of them steeped in the Jewish tradition 'Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image', became the painter's first sitters. In their company the young Lenkiewicz witnessed often harrowing scenes due to the vicissitudes of old age or dementia, but he described the hotel environment as 'salutary and thought provoking.' At sixteen Lenkiewicz attended St Martin's College of Art & Design and later the Royal Academy Schools. He was however, virtually impervious to contemporary art fashions, being more interested in his favourite paintings in the National Gallery by his artistic heroes, Rembrandt, Velázquez and Michelangelo. Inspired by the example of the missionary and philosopher Albert Schweitzer, Lenkiewicz threw open the doors of his Hampstead studios to anyone in need of a roof – down and outs, addicts, criminals and the mentally ill congregated there. These individuals were the subjects of his paintings as a young man.

After moving to Plymouth in 1969, the artist attracted so many vagrants and street alcoholics that he was forced to commandeer derelict warehouses to house them. One of these warehouses also served as a studio and in 1973 became the exhibition space for the *Vagrancy Project*. The *Vagrancy Project* consisted in paintings of the vagrants and a large book of notes written by the down-and-outs themselves and those responsible for their care and control. The format of the 'Project' – combining thematically linked paintings with the publication of research notes and the collected observations of the sitters – was to be used consistently throughout Lenkiewicz's career. Projects such as *Mental Handicap* (1976), *Old Age* (1979), *Suicide* (1980), and *Death* (1982), continued to examine the lives of ostracised, hidden sections of society.

In a parallel line of inquiry, Lenkiewicz often adopted a metaphorical pictorial style to portray human physiology in a state of crisis in Projects such as *Love & Mediocrity* (1976), *Jealousy* (1977), *Orgasm* (1978) and *The Painter with Mary* (1981). These Projects examined 'the falling in love experience' and led the artist to believe that the physiology of desire itself was 'the straight road to fascism' – the tendency to treat another person as property. These ideas were investigated in depth in his eighteenth Project, *The Painter with Women: Observations on the Theme of the Double*. A partial showing on this theme took place at the International Convention Centre in Birmingham in 1994 and attracted over 30,000 people in just over one week.

Robert Lenkiewicz died on 5 August 2002 from a serious heart condition. In his obituary of Lenkiewicz, art critic David Lee observed: '*Robert's greatest gift was to show us that an artist could be genuinely concerned about social and domestic issues and attempt the difficult task of expressing this conscience through the deeply unfashionable medium of figurative painting. In that sense he was one of few serious painters of contemporary history.*'

Since his premature death, Lenkiewicz has gained growing recognition as one of Britain's most individual and significant post-war figurative artists. This has been reinforced by museum exhibitions at the Ben Uri Jewish Museum of Art (2008), Plymouth City Museum (2009), and in 2011 at The Royal West of England Academy and Torre Abbey, the South-west's leading heritage centre.





# Editions

This remarkable exhibition presents the artist's first collection of Limited Edition fine art prints since the copyright passed to The Lenkiewicz Foundation in 2010. The ten individual images are available as an edition of 150 on paper, and an edition of 49 created as oversized Deluxe Editions of paper on board. Each edition is authenticated by The Lenkiewicz Archive and exhibits the artist's signature.