

Odd Nerdrum: Self Portraits

Allis Helleland

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For a painter who took his earliest bearings from Rembrandt, and who has defiantly espoused the values of old master painting, the self-portrait is a natural enough genre to pursue. For Odd Nerdrum, the attractions of self-portraiture run much deeper, however. Nerdum has frequently alluded to the "conflicted preoccupation with origins and personal identity" that his paintings express, and traces this preoccupation to his discovery that his father was not the father he had known growing up, but a previous lover of his mother's. Also abandoned by his mother at an early age, he recollects of his early years: "I was a beggar in a world ruled by others. The person I found in the mirror was myself, I saw myself reflected in my own eyes, not those of others." Nerdrum's difficult childhood and the isolation he has endured as a painter have greatly intensified the relevance of the self-portrait, a genre at which he has excelled, and for which he has become particularly well known. This volume collects Nerdum's self-portraits for the first time, with more than 100 color reproductions.



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