


The Viewing Room: Maria Lassnig

Works on Paper, 1955–2004

February 15–22, 2025

520 West 25th Street

Petzel

An abstract painting featuring a large, dark, textured area on the left side, possibly made of charcoal or dark paint, which contrasts with the lighter, more fluid and layered blue and white areas on the right. The overall composition is dynamic and expressive, with visible brushstrokes and organic, flowing shapes.

1950–60s

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, Maria Lassnig explored her body sensations through densely set, concave and convex rhythmic line structures. These abstractions were activated with an emotive field of pure color play where she mixed primary and complementary colors. Often, Lassnig gravitated to using red, stating that “the body is red when you peel away the skin, red is the color of stability!”



Halbprofil
(Three-Quarter Profile)
1955
Gouache on paper
20 x 26.25 inches
51 x 66.7 cm
(ML 24/001)
\$52,500

Lassnig on her greyscale head profiles:
“When my ‘informal’ period was in danger of degenerating
into a sterile abstraction, I had a great desire to paint juicy
realities, nudes, portraits. But very soon, the juicy flesh
tones were sublimated again into ‘absolute grayness.’”



Maria Lassnig in her studio, Vienna, 1956



Blaue Figur auf Rot
(*Blue Figure on Red*)

1956

Gouache on paper

30.5 x 23.5 inches

77.2 x 59.8 cm

(ML 24/002)

\$52,500



Körperkuppel
(Body Dome)

1961

Watercolor on paper

26 x 32 inches

66 x 81 cm

(ML 24/004)

\$78,500

1970–80s

In the 1970-80s, Lassnig explored forms of self-portrayal that translated her own dynamism of sensations within the picture frame. From the stance of her "bodily island," as Lassnig put it, the body space would be always limited to the canvas, with any space surrounding completed as a void.





Untitled
1970–1979
Pencil on paper
30.5 x 23.5 inches
77.2 x 60 cm
(ML 24/005)
\$26,500



Die Verankerung
(The Anchoring)

1972

Colored pen and pencil on paper

24 x 17.4 inches

61 x 44.1 cm

(ML 15/023)

\$50,000



Selfportrait als Harlekin
(*Self-Portrait as Harlequin*)

1493

Pencil on paper

24.5 x 30 inches

62.6 x 75.8 cm

(ML 24/006)

\$26,500



Untitled
1983
Pencil on paper
24 x 30 inches
60.9 x 76.3 cm
(ML 24/008)
\$26,500



Der Rücken
(The Back)

1987


Watercolor on paper

23.6 x 30.4 inches

60 x 77.2 cm

(ML 24/010)

\$32,000

An abstract watercolor painting on paper. The composition is dominated by large, overlapping washes of color in shades of yellow, orange, red, and blue. Dark, thin lines, possibly made with charcoal or black ink, crisscross the composition, creating a sense of structure and movement. The background is a light, pale yellow-green. The overall effect is one of emotional intensity and complex layering.

1990s

In this set of works on paper from the 1990s, Lassnig's emotive qualities are made tangible through the presence of color and indicate intimacy. As Lassnig's old friend, the Austrian Oswald Wiener described them, "With the new use of colors – [Lassnig paints] 'colors of pain and anguish, nerve cord colors, colors of pressure and fullness, stretching and contracting colors, colors of cavities and curvatures, squeeze and burn colors, colors of death and decay, colors of the fear of cancer' – a new introspective experimentation with synesthesia is initiated."



Prinz Augeen
(Prince Eyegene)
1990

Pencil and watercolor on paper
23.6 x 30.4 inches
60 x 77.2 cm
(ML 24/011)
\$32,000



Kössönöm
(Thank You)
1990

Pencil and watercolor on paper
30.5 x 23.75 inches
77.6 x 60.3 cm
(ML 24/013)
\$32,000



Untitled
1991
Pencil on paper
30.4 x 23.6 inches
77.2 x 60 cm
(ML 24/016)
\$26,500



Nasenlöcher

(Nostrils)

1997

Pencil and acrylic on paper

31.4 x 24.75 inches

80.3 x 62.8 cm

(ML 24/019)

\$32,000



On S'accroche à la Mère
(*We Cling to the Mother*)

1999

Pencil and watercolor on paper

16.5 x 23.4 inches

42 x 59.5 cm

(ML 23/008)

\$50,000

2000s

"I combine memory's realistic associations with freely invented sensations. [...] For example, sitting, leaning on one arm, you feel your shoulder blade. [...] I feel the pressure points of my bottom on the couch, my belly, because it's filled like a sack, my head sunk into the cardboard of the shoulder blades, my brain pan open toward the rear; in my face, I feel only the nostrils, large as a pig's and the burning skin all around, it will be painted red." — Maria Lassnig





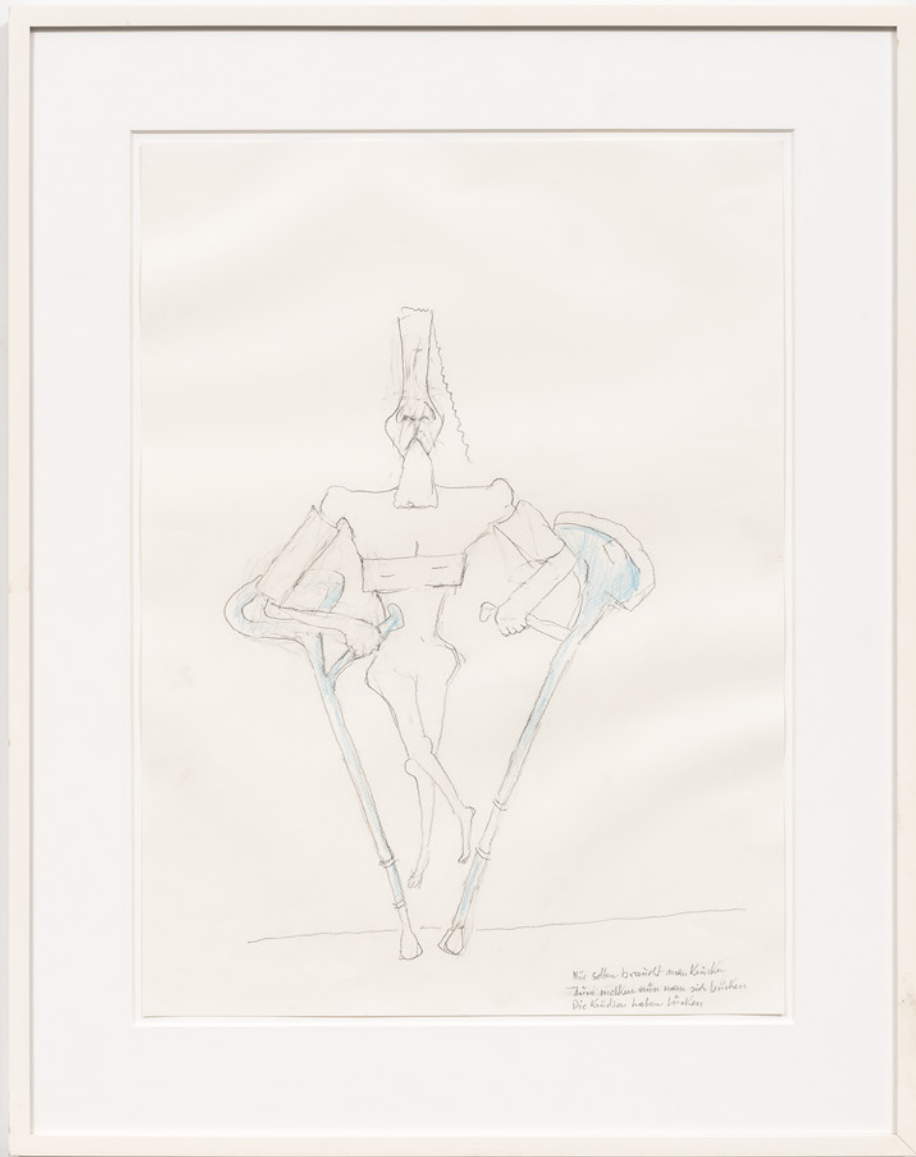
Untitled
2000–2009
Pencil, watercolor, and acrylic on paper
19.7 x 27.6 inches
50 x 70 cm
(ML 23/009)
\$50,000



Untitled
2000–2009
Pencil on paper
29.5 x 23.6 inches
75 x 60 cm
(ML 24/025)
\$26,500



Lassnig painting in her studio in Vienna, 1980s



Untitled

2003

Pencil on paper

23.5 x 17.25 inches

59.7 x 43.8 cm

(ML 05/023)

\$26,500



Mann und Frau
(Man and Woman)
2004
Pencil, colored pencil,
and watercolor on paper
17.5 x 23.6 inches
44.4 x 60 cm
(ML 23/010)
\$50,000



About Maria Lassnig

Maria Lassnig was born in 1919 in Carinthia, Austria and passed away in 2014 in Vienna. Underappreciated for most of her life, Lassnig is now rightfully recognized as one of the most important Post-War painters.

From a young age, Lassnig began to explore the human figure through drawing. She studied painting at the Vienna Fine Arts Academy but found the art scene at that time to be too limiting. She moved to Paris in 1960 and then to New York in 1968, continually exploring how to represent the body as it feels to inhabit rather than how it appears from the outside – a concept which Lassnig named *Körperbewusstseinsmalerei* (“body awareness painting”). On returning to her native Austria in 1980, she became the country’s first female professor of painting. She also taught animation during her time at the Vienna University of Applied Arts.

Her life’s work won her many accolades including the Grand Austrian State Prize in 1988 and the Golden Lion for Lifetime Achievement in 2013 at the 55th Venice Biennale. She has been the subject of one person exhibitions at the Albertina Museum, Vienna; Deichtorhallen Hamburg; Kunsthaus Zurich; MoMA PS1, Long Island City, New York; Museum Ludwig, Cologne; Serpentine Gallery, London; Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam; and Vienna Secession among others. Lassnig represented Austria in the 1980 Venice Biennale alongside Valie Export, and she participated in Documenta in Kassel, Germany in 1982 and 1997.