

# LISA YUSKAVAGE



Lisa Yuskavage has almost never painted anything but young women with outsized breasts, full lips, and domineering derrieres. Volume, one could say, is her business. Meeting its challenge in two dimensions is not all she has in mind, of course, though the female figure, particularly the fulsome female figure, lends itself nicely to the task. The psychological consequences of finding oneself born with—or confronted by—such excessively Rubenesque attributes is her more pointed, and more poignant, subject, which she casts in the steamy shades of a prefeminist boudoir and places in the magical light of epiphany.

This bothers some of her critics, who think it strange that, no matter how beautifully she paints, a modern woman would choose to promote the phallogentric idea of female identity as a toss-up between sullen housewife and happy hooker. Others say Yuskavage effectively ridicules that notion, while still others dismiss her paintings as distasteful expressions of female self-loathing. Her preening nudes may surprise themselves with the splendor, or horror, of their own anatomies, but they also exhibit more than just flesh. By inviting public scrutiny of their complicated psyches, they make a case for female self-regard as firm and certainly colorful ground on which to stake a life. —LY



**UPPER LEFT:** *Harpo* 2002. Oil on linen, 70 x 60 inches. Courtesy greengrassi, London **LOWER LEFT:** *Northview* 2000. Oil on linen, 50 1/2 x 63 1/2 inches. Courtesy Marianne Boesky Gallery **OPPOSITE, UPPER LEFT** (and Detail, page 7): *Day* 1999–2000. Oil on linen, 77 x 62 inches. Courtesy Marianne Boesky Gallery **OPPOSITE, RIGHT** (and Detail, page 17): *Northview* 2000. Oil on linen, 70 x 40 1/2 inches. Courtesy Marianne Boesky Gallery **OPPOSITE, LOWER LEFT:** *Now You Can Dance* 1998. Oil on linen, 64 x 84 inches. Courtesy Marianne Boesky Gallery









# CURVE

THE FEMALE NUDE NOW

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