This week: Edvard Munch, Lucian Freud, Beethoven’s favorite student & more from the world of culture.
So Much Longing in So Little Space: The Art of Edvard Munch, by Karl Ove Knausgaard (translated by Ingvild Burkey) (Penguin): Too many people approach the paintings of Edvard Munch through the stultifying lens of “Edvard Munch.” By this I mean, of course, “that nutty screwball who painted The Scream.” Munch the artist was so much more than this single painting, which is itself representative of only a minor phase within more than six decades of a productive life that was anything but static. Now, one of Munch’s most
prominent supporters, the Norwegian novelist Karl Ove Knausgaard, has penned a rather personal appreciation of his fellow countryman, which combines straight-ahead criticism, memoir, philosophical discursions on aesthetics and artmaking, and talks with contemporary artists. Focusing specifically on Munch’s less widely acclaimed later works, Knausgaard’s volume will send readers interested in this enigmatic painter onto manifold paths. —AS

Art:

Lucian Freud, Benefits Supervisor Sleeping, 1995, Oil on canvas, Private collection.

“Lucian Freud: Monumental,” at Acquavella Galleries (through May 24): Not since Rubens has a painter been so focused on the amplitude of the nude as Lucian Freud. The English grandson of Sigmund, this famous painter, who died in 2011, made a fetish out of flesh, skinning the surfaces of his mottled canvases
with a favorite selection of subjects. Now at Acquavella, a loan exhibition brings together thirteen of Freud’s major paintings, curated by the artist’s studio assistant, David Dawson. —JP

Music:

“Archduke Rudolph: Beethoven’s Patron & Pupil,” at Bohemian National Hall (April 17): Beethoven’s favorite (and only) piano and composition student was also his most loyal patron. The Archduke of Austria treated Beethoven “like a friend, not a servant,” and, in thanks, the composer dedicated many of his works to him, including the Fourth and Fifth Piano Concertos, the Missa solemnis, and the two chamber pieces on Wednesday’s program: the Violin Sonata in G major, Op. 96 and the “Archduke” Piano Trio, Op. 97. The pianist Ignat Solzhenitsyn (Alexandr’s middle son) will perform and give an illustrated talk about the relationship between the two musicians. —HN
Architecture:

“Nature and New York: Victorians ‘Greening’ Their Homes and Cities,” with Barry Lewis, at the New-York Historical Society (April 16): Our image of the Victorian home is more Bleak House than beach house. But as Barry Lewis will tell on April 16 at the New-York Historical Society, the Victorian era was one of great, purposeful “greening”—both inside the house and out. Central and Riverside Parks still stand as monuments to that impulse, as do innovations in fenestration that let light into dingy city blocks. Those interested in New York architecture and urban planning will not want to miss this lecture. —BR

From the archive: “How beautiful upon the mountains,” by David Mason (April 2013). Unravelling the mysteries of the war poet Anthony Hecht through his letters.
From the current issue: “From statues to sculpture,” by Eric Gibson. On “Rethinking the Modern Monument” at the Rodin Museum, Philadelphia.


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