

SKARSTEDT

FAMILY STYLE

# Alone at Last

Chantal Joffe's first solo show in New York since 2017 marks a seismic shift in the renowned British-American artist's oeuvre.

Words by

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Chantal Joffe, *Shadowboxing*, 2024. Photography by Jack Hems. Image courtesy of the artist.

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[Chantal Joffe](#) wallows in a bath, her index finger mysteriously pointing to her right. There is a vigilant look in her eyes in the painting on display at “My dearest dust,” Joffe’s inaugural exhibition at [Skarstedt](#) in New York. The palpable turbulence inside the artist’s mind is mirrored in the bathroom floor’s yellow geometric tiles, some covered in splashes of unruly drops. Aptly entitled *Shadowboxing*, 2024, the self-portrait powerfully frames the contrasting challenges related to self-acceptance and self-love. Evocative of rawness and urgency, shades of yellow and blue are vividly present throughout the selection of large-scale paintings.

Having painted herself and her daughter Esme for much of her career, Joffe’s distinct style of portraiture explores the human form and its physical, emotional, and psychological states. The London-based artist exposes the multifaceted identities of her heroines. “My dearest dust” encapsulates a period of heart-wrenching personal loss for the artist: the deaths of both her parents and brother-in-law as well as her daughter’s departure from their family home.



Chantal Joffe, *Es in the Kitchen*, 2024. Photography by Jack Hems. Image courtesy of the artist.

In *Es in the Kitchen*, 2024, Esme wears her long dark brown hair in a messy bun. Her long airy dress is covered in brightly-colored shapes reminiscent of spring flowers. One arm stretches out while the other is trapped in motion. Her face may be hidden from view, but she is still very much present in her mother’s life.

Ultimately, Joffe’s pain is eclipsed by her perseverance. She finds beating, bubbly strength in the deepest corners of her being. At Skarstedt, Joffe examines her own life with compelling clarity. Led by her boldness of spirit, the artist chooses to engage with life rather than succumb to its inescapable darkness.

“[My dearest dust](#)” is on view at Skarstedt through 15 June 2024 at [20 East 79th Street NY 10075, New York](#).