



Tom Lubbock, critic and illustrator, was the chief art critic of the *Independent* from 1997 until his death in 2011. He wrote widely on art, books and radio and produced major catalogue essays on Goya, Thomas Bewick and Ian Hamilton Finlay. His illustrations, mainly done in collage, appeared every Saturday on the editorial page of the *Independent* between 1999 and 2004. His weekly Great Works column, from which these essays are taken, ran between 2005 and 2010.

FRONT COVER: *The Child in the Meadow*, detail from *Morning*, 1809, by Philipp Otto Runge, Kunsthalle, Hamburg/Bridgeman Art Library  
 BACK COVER: *Study of Clouds*, detail, 1822, by John Constable, Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford/Bridgeman Art Library  
 Author photograph by Marion Coutts

He was one of a really very small body of English art critics – an outspoken and honest writer. He could tackle intelligently both Old Masters and contemporary art. I don't think he cared about offending, or not offending – and that's where his honesty lay.

Brian Sewell

Tom Lubbock was an original thinker who could always be relied upon to come up with a fresh and independent view. He could make plain the meaning behind even the most complicated art.

Sir Nicholas Serota

His writings are a dramatisation of what it is like to think about art. They never say 'look at me'. They say 'Look at these things more carefully'.

Tom Sutcliffe

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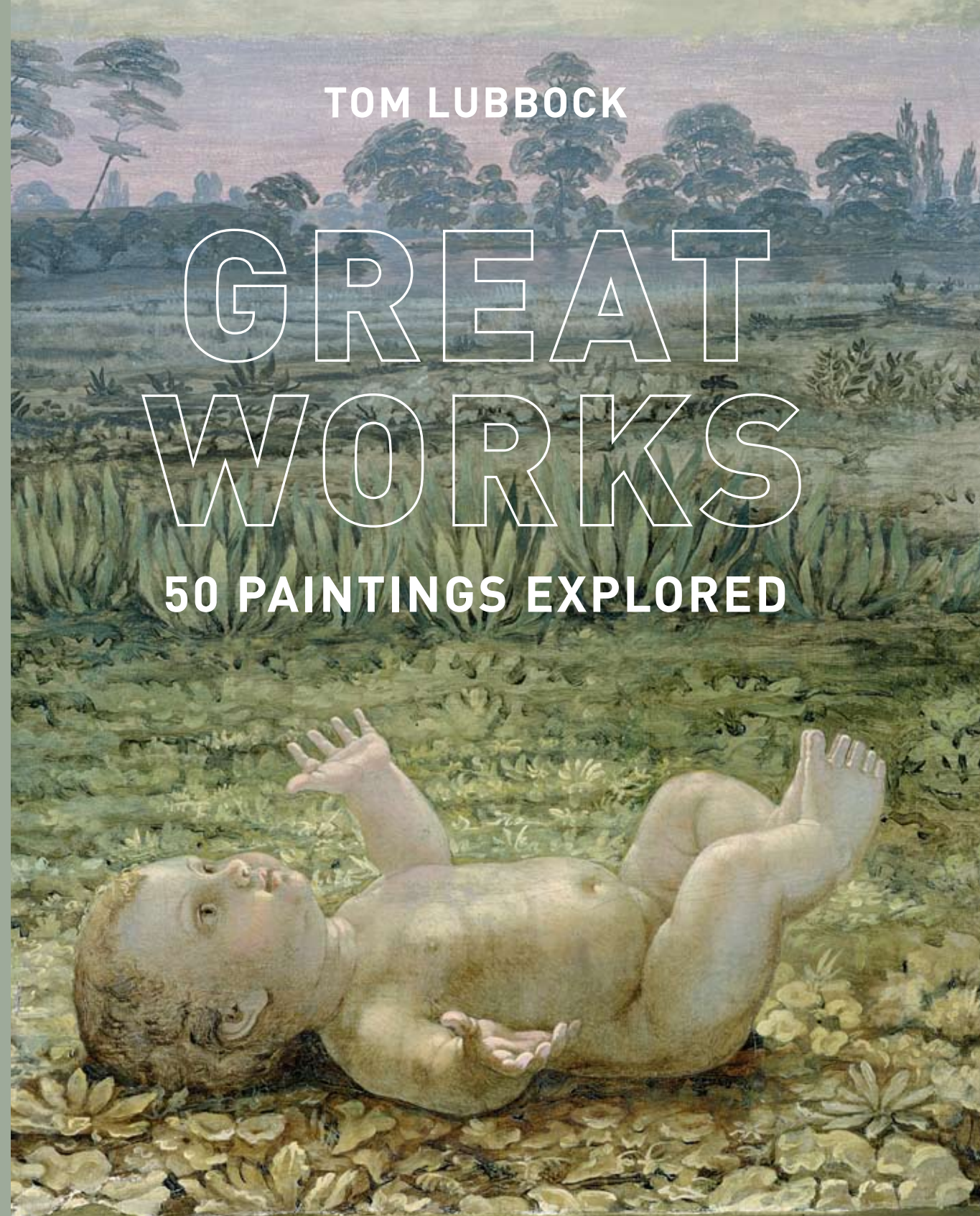
GREAT WORKS | TOM LUBBOCK

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TOM LUBBOCK

# GREAT WORKS

## 50 PAINTINGS EXPLORED



How does the flatness of Mickey Mouse's ears illuminate the 'non-specific bodies' of Klimt's *Water Nymphs*? Why was Vuillard's genius confined to the decade when he worked at home? What was it that made Ingres such an exciting weirdo? Germolene, sticking plaster, marshmallows, prawn cocktail, pork paté and sausage meat: how many other ways could Philip Guston find to paint pink?

Here are 50 great essays on paintings by Tom Lubbock, first published in the passionately argued and much-loved Great Works series he wrote weekly for the *Independent*. Always inventive and authoritative, each piece is devoted to a single painting. This is a book of surprises: Giotto's *Vices* as 'studies in self-destruction'; Hitchcock's lighting tricks on *Suspicion* compared to the luminosity of a Zurbarán still life; how the figure in Gwen John's *Girl in a Blue Dress* 'withdraws from life, fading into its surface, pressed like a flower'; Géricault's *Study of Truncated Limbs*, as 'a good painting, simply, of sex'.

This book collects Tom Lubbock's best writing together for the first time. In it, he explores his thinking about art with great intelligence and humour. Spanning 800 years of western art, this is simply the cleverest, funniest, most moving and most original art book you are likely to see.

With an introduction by Laura Cumming, art critic of the *Observer*.

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