

The Painter with Women

THE LENKIEWICZ ARCHIVE

Series One





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### Series One

We are delighted to announce the release of this first series of Limited Editions from The Lenkiewicz Archive: Series One – ‘The Painter with Women’.

This series of Limited Editions demonstrates the artist’s unrivalled skill amongst his contemporaries in painting the human figure from life on a large scale. His trademark ability to capture the drama of light and dark, as well as the subtleties of skin tones and sensuous fabric, is amply illustrated, as is his use of rich and vibrant colour.

The Editions are accompanied by an important new publication from White Lane Press, ‘The Painter with Women – the evolution of a Project’, a book which uses Lenkiewicz’s own diaries and archive material to give a fascinating insight into the ideas behind the Project and the mind of the artist.

His sumptuously-illustrated diaries and notebooks also form the basis of a new series of publications of boxed non-folio editions from The Lenkiewicz Archive. The first volume is from the 1978 ‘The Eliza Notebook’ and is just the beginning of a series which will build into a carefully selected collection of previously unseen work from Lenkiewicz’s private archive.



Lenkiewicz paints in his Barbican studio c.1993. Photo: Derek Harris.



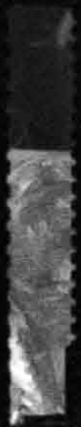
Born in London in 1941, Robert Lenkiewicz was the son of refugees who ran a Jewish hotel in north London. The mostly elderly residents, many of them steeped in the Jewish tradition 'Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image', became the painter's first sitters. In their company the young Lenkiewicz witnessed often harrowing scenes due to the vicissitudes of old age or dementia, but he described the hotel environment as 'salutary and thought provoking.' At sixteen Lenkiewicz attended St Martin's College of Art & Design and later the Royal Academy Schools. He was however, virtually impervious to contemporary art fashions, being more interested in his favourite paintings in the National Gallery by his artistic heroes, Rembrandt, Velázquez and Michelangelo. Inspired by the example of the missionary and philosopher Albert Schweitzer, Lenkiewicz threw open the doors of his Hampstead studios to anyone in need of a roof – down and outs, addicts, criminals and the mentally ill congregated there. These individuals were the subjects of his paintings as a young man.

After moving to Plymouth in 1969, the artist attracted so many vagrants and street alcoholics that he was forced to commandeer derelict warehouses to house them. One of these warehouses also served as a studio and in 1973 became the exhibition space for the *Vagrancy Project*. The *Vagrancy Project* consisted in paintings of the vagrants and a large book of notes written by the down-and-outs themselves and those responsible for their care and control. The format of the 'Project' – combining thematically linked paintings with the publication of research notes and the collected observations of the sitters – was to be used consistently throughout Lenkiewicz's career. Projects such as *Mental Handicap* (1976), *Old Age* (1979), *Suicide* (1980), and *Death* (1982), continued to examine the lives of ostracised, hidden sections of society.

In a parallel line of inquiry, Lenkiewicz often adopted a metaphorical pictorial style to portray human physiology in a state of crisis in Projects such as *Love & Mediocrity* (1976), *Jealousy* (1977), *Orgasm* (1978) and *The Painter with Mary* (1981). These Projects examined 'the falling in love experience' and led the artist to believe that the physiology of desire itself was 'the straight road to fascism' – the tendency to treat another person as property. These ideas were investigated in depth in his eighteenth Project, *The Painter with Women: Observations on the Theme of the Double*. A partial showing on this theme took place at the International Convention Centre in Birmingham in 1994 and attracted over 30,000 people in just over one week.

Robert Lenkiewicz died on 5 August 2002 from a serious heart condition. In his obituary of Lenkiewicz, art critic David Lee observed: '*Robert's greatest gift was to show us that an artist could be genuinely concerned about social and domestic issues and attempt the difficult task of expressing this conscience through the deeply unfashionable medium of figurative painting. In that sense he was one of few serious painters of contemporary history.*'

Since his premature death, Lenkiewicz has gained growing recognition as one of Britain's most individual and significant post-war figurative artists. This has been reinforced by museum exhibitions at the Ben Uri Jewish Museum of Art (2008), Plymouth City Museum (2009), and in 2011 at The Royal West of England Academy and Torre Abbey, the South-west's leading heritage centre.





# Editions

This remarkable exhibition presents the artist's first collection of Limited Edition fine art prints since the copyright passed to The Lenkiewicz Foundation in 2010. The ten individual images are available as an edition of 150 on paper, and an edition of 49 created as oversized Deluxe Editions of paper on board. Each edition is authenticated by The Lenkiewicz Archive and exhibits the artist's signature.

## **The Painter with Janine Pecorini. St. Antony theme.**

The powerful triangular composition is based upon the famous Greek marble, *The Winged Victory*, now in the Louvre in Paris. The model is placed right at the front of the picture plane to create a forward sense of movement. Lenkiewicz used the deep, vivid red as a metaphor for passion and desire, a colour repeated in the red scarf which became a *motif* in the Project.

**Paper Edition of 150 24" x 25" Framed £795**

**Deluxe Edition of 49 33" x 34" Framed £1,250**



Paper Edition *Framed Presentation*



## **The Painter with Benedikte. St. Antony theme.**

This image shows the artist and model in the painter's Barbican studio. The model is wearing a richly decorated shawl with colours that are echoed in the background. Behind the artist is the four-poster Spanish bed which belonged to his long-standing patron, the Earl of St. Germans. Paintings from the artist's earlier Projects are also illustrated, including the abstract '*Lovers' meeting*' from 'The Painter with Mary' Project.

**Paper Edition of 150 20" x 30" Framed £795**

**Deluxe Edition of 49 28" x 41" Framed £1,250**





### **The Painter with Karen in the studio.**

Chairs play an important role in Lenkiewicz's paintings and often seem as important as the figures themselves. The empty chairs create a feeling of absence, emphasising Lenkiewicz's recurrent theme of mortality and the passing of time. The mirror reflection was the dominant feature of the Project, being used ambiguously as a metaphor for thought: to think is to reflect.

Paper Edition of 150 27" x 24" Framed £795

Deluxe Edition of 49 33" x 37" Framed £1,250

## **The Painter with Anna holding a pit-fired bowl.**

Even after the 1994 exhibition, Lenkiewicz continued to work on 'The Painter with Women' theme. This painting was painted at his Lower Compton house just a couple of years before Lenkiewicz's premature death. Major heart surgery had diminished his enormous appetite for work but these later paintings have a powerful sense of poignancy, usually reflected in a more monochromatic palette. Here Lenkiewicz, again in white, is contrasted against the model's greys and striking green coat. As ever, the fragile still-life of the bowl is beautifully captured by the artist.

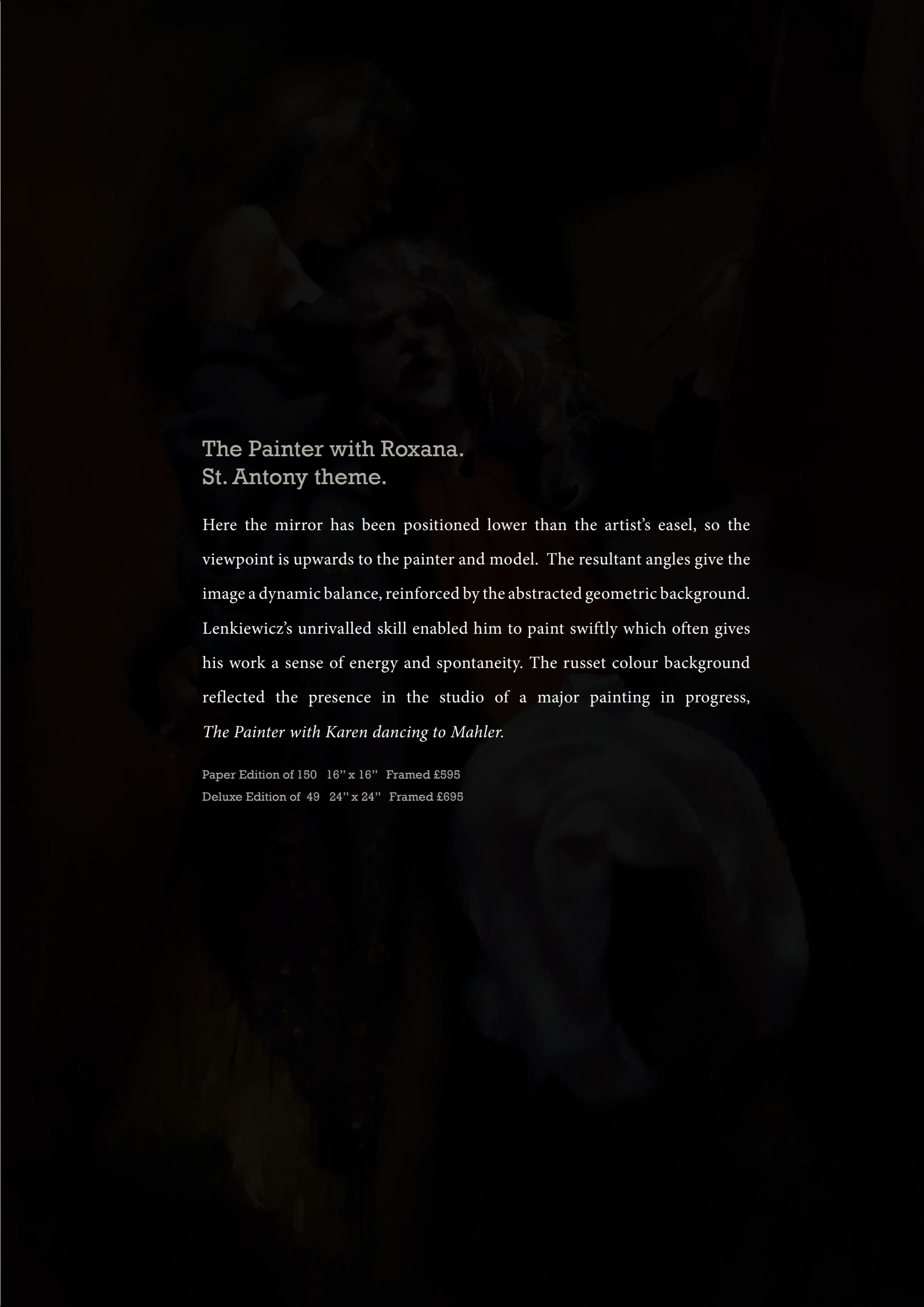
**Paper Edition of 150 20" x 24" Framed £695**

**Paper Board Edition of 49 24" x 30" Framed £995**





Deluxe Edition *Framed Presentation*



**The Painter with Roxana.  
St. Antony theme.**

Here the mirror has been positioned lower than the artist's easel, so the viewpoint is upwards to the painter and model. The resultant angles give the image a dynamic balance, reinforced by the abstracted geometric background. Lenkiewicz's unrivalled skill enabled him to paint swiftly which often gives his work a sense of energy and spontaneity. The russet colour background reflected the presence in the studio of a major painting in progress, *The Painter with Karen dancing to Mahler*.

Paper Edition of 150 16" x 16" Framed £595

Deluxe Edition of 49 24" x 24" Framed £695

## **The Painter with Karen Ciambriello. St. Antony theme.**

Lenkiewicz described the colours he employed during this Project as becoming more intense and more hallucinatory. In a series of paintings of models in pink, he finally achieved the saturation of colour he was seeking. The artist began to take a less prominent part in the paintings, withdrawing to observe from the background or sometimes absent altogether. The serpent-like coiled flex is also used prominently here.

**Paper Edition of 150 20" x 24" Framed £695**

**Deluxe Edition of 49 24" x 30" Framed £995**







## **Self-Portrait as St. Antony, listening.**

This iconic painting was used as the main image for the large 1994 exhibition in Birmingham's International Convention Centre. It portrays the artist as the early Christian saint, Anthony of Egypt, who gave up all material possessions to live as a hermit in the desert where he fought a constant battle against temptations of the flesh in the form of demons. Living a life of solitude in a desert cave, Anthony's demons are often heard but not seen, and he becomes 'the listening man'. Lenkiewicz used this theme, popular in the history of Western art, to ironically suggest that, like Anthony's demons, the 'other' in any relationship is imagined but does not exist. The white indicates Anthony's spiritual asceticism while the vivid red scarf reminds us that we are always at the mercy of our passions.

**Paper Edition of 150 22" x 22" Framed £695**

**Deluxe Edition of 49 30" x 30" Framed £995**

**Anna in yellow kimono at Lower Compton.  
St. Antony theme.**

Lenkiewicz recuperated from illness in 1992 at his Lower Compton home in Plymouth away from the main studio. Here he embarked on a series of paintings of Anna Navas set against the interior of the cottage which continued the theme of the mirror reflection as a metaphor for relationships.

**Paper Edition of 150 14" x 18" Framed £595**

**Deluxe Edition of 49 19" x 24" Framed £695**





R. P. McKeon



## **Anna Navas in front of the Last Judgement mural. St. Antony theme.**

From his youth, inspired by the artists he admired regularly in the National Gallery, Lenkiewicz always enjoyed painting on a large scale. His first mural in Plymouth outside his studio quickly became a Plymouth landmark for locals and tourists. Another Barbican mural some years later dealt with the theme of the Last Judgement and caused something of a scandal when it was revealed that all the sitters were naked. Lenkiewicz also designed a large stained-glass window for the centre of the mural and created a book of notes on the ideas behind it. Here the model is seen in front of the window in Lenkiewicz's studio.

**Paper Edition of 150 25" x 25" Framed £795**

**Deluxe Edition of 49 33" x 33" Framed £1,250**

## **The Painter with Paula. St. Antony theme.**

Lenkiewicz's mastery of subtle skin tones is well illustrated in this image. On the floor beside the artist and model lies a coiled ribbon which becomes a recurrent feature in a new 'daemon' series, representing 'The Temptation of St. Anthony', a subject much covered by artists such as Salvador Dali, Hieronymous Bosch, and, a favourite of Lenkiewicz, German Renaissance painter Matthias Grünewald (c.1470–1528) in his famous *Isenheim Altarpiece*.

**Paper Edition of 150 22" x 28" Framed £795**

**Deluxe Edition of 49 31" x 38" Framed £1,250**





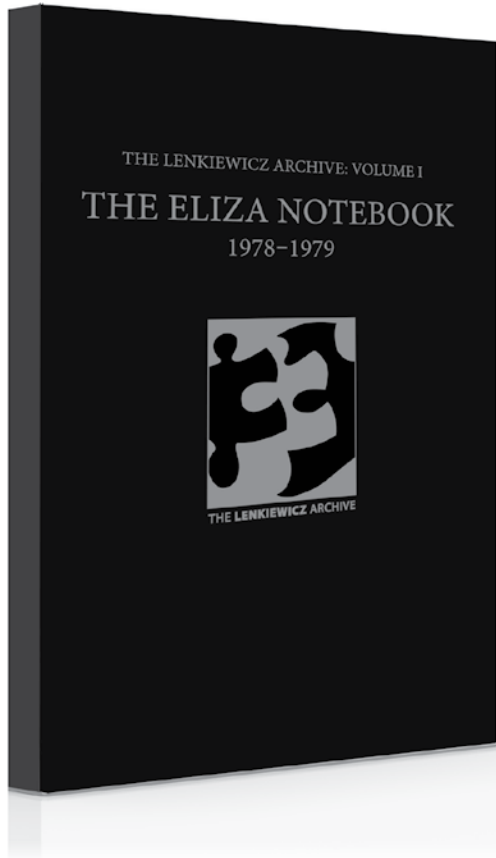


# Book & Box Set

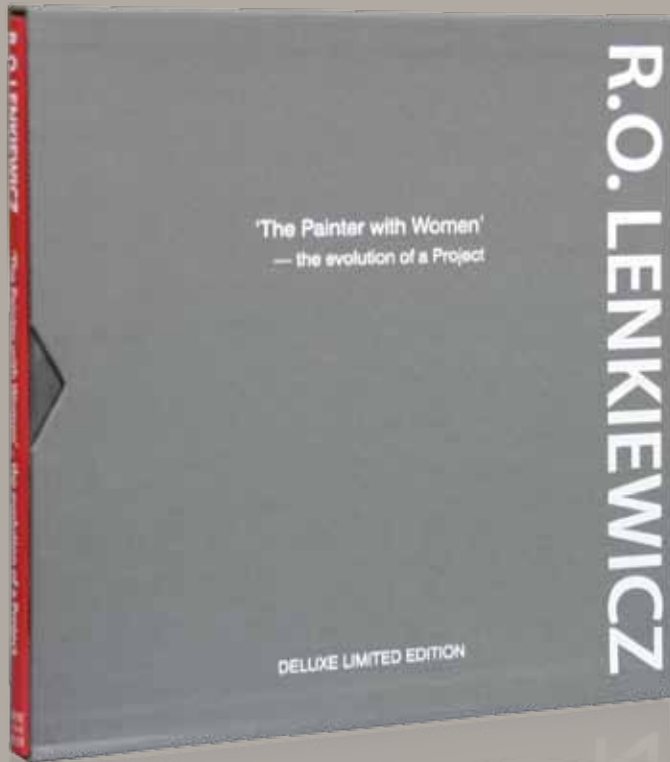
**‘The Painter with Women’ – the evolution of a Project** is a highly illustrated limited edition book which follows the evolution of the artist’s 18th Project, a series of ironic observations of his own relationships. Accompanied by a limited edition print of ‘St Antony’s Cave’ (as seen on the dust jacket) the book is not only a collector’s item but also makes a key contribution to our understanding of Lenkiewicz’s work by using the painter’s personal diaries and notebooks as a primary source.

‘Volume I’ of The Lenkiewicz Archive non-folio editions, ‘The Eliza Notebook’, is taken from one of forty journals is one of 40 journals created by his companions which Lenkiewicz placed in his library. Written in Eliza’s hand the notebook is richly illustrated by the artist, and four of these exquisite studies are presented in this limited edition box set. Notes put the publication into context within the artist’s work, and the box set includes a 24-page illustrated guide to the painter’s life, work and ideas.

# The Eliza Notebook



Limited Edition Box Set of 195 copies  
RRP £450



‘The Painter  
with Women’  
– the evolution of  
a Project

Limited edition book of 995 copies  
including fine art print RRP £65





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