

## LUCY STEIN: WET ROOM

### Glossary of terms

**Psychoanalysis:** A set of theories and therapeutic techniques, established in the early 1890s by Austrian neurologist Sigmund Freud. Psychoanalytical treatment involves sessions during which a patient is encouraged to talk freely about personal experiences especially about early childhood and dreams. The mermaids and water creatures painted onto the tiled walls in *Wet Room* represent the archetypes of the Anima, a term coined by psychoanalyst Carl Jung that refers to the indwelling masculine and feminine energies that we all possess.

**Mythology:** The study and interpretation of often sacred tales or fables of a culture known as myths or the collection of such stories which deal with various aspects of the human condition: good and evil; the meaning of suffering; human origins; the origin of placenames, animals, cultural values, and traditions; the meaning of life and death; the afterlife; and celestial stories of the gods or a god.

**Persephone:** According to Greek Mythology, Persephone, the queen of the underworld, was the daughter of Zeus and Demeter, and life-giving goddess of agriculture, grain and harvest. Brutally abducted by Hades, lord of the underworld, she was persuaded to eat a single pomegranate seed which meant she was tied to the underworld forever and could never be completely set free. Zeus negotiated a compromise where Persephone had to remain one-third of the year with Hades and able to return to earth for the other two-thirds. Her return to earth each year marked the beginning of spring and this was said to be how the seasons were formed.

In Stein's portrayal, Persephone is a powerful figure, 'a sassy kind of young woman'. Stein goes on to explain, 'when you enter the myth of Persephone, it reveals itself to be a story about embracing that which makes us fearful – the unknown – and staying alert to the deeper readings of all situations.'

The work 'Persephone Holding a Pomegranate Seed' was created especially for this show and shines a light on a little-known aspect of DLWP's heritage. The original design of the Pavilion included a 26ft high sculpture of Persephone by artist Frank Dobson that was intended to stand in front of the building with a fold of cloth in her hand, gazing out to the sea. Sadly, the commission never materialised. Stein's depiction also draws upon this

unfulfilled commission, evoking the genius loci or spirit of the Pavilion's meeting point between land and water.

**Demeter:** in Greek mythology, Demeter was daughter of the deities Cronus and Rhea, sister and consort of Zeus. Her legend centres on the story of her daughter Persephone, who is carried off by Hades. Demeter goes in search of Persephone and, during her journey, reveals her secret rites to the people of Eleusis, who had hospitably received her. Her distress at her daughter's disappearance was said to have diverted her attention from the harvest and caused a famine.

**Nefertiti:** The principal wife of the pharaoh Amenhotep IV (later Akhenaten) who lived in the 14th century BC. In the work, *Her Beneficence* (2020), Stein was inspired by the bust of Nefertiti (Egypt, ca. 1351–1334 BC) in the Pergamon museum, Berlin and subsequent interpretations by artists Marlene Dumas and Isa Genzken. Through her research at The Museum of Witchcraft and Magic in Boscastle, Cornwall in 2016, Stein discovered that many of the traditional poppets, as well as cursing and banishment rituals and techniques in South West England, are thought to have descended from ancient Egypt.

**The Eye of Horus:** Horus was an ancient sky god whose eyes were said to be the sun and the moon. According to Egyptian mythology, Horus lost his left eye in a struggle with Seth. The eye was magically restored by Hathor, and this restoration came to symbolise the process of making whole and healing. The Eye of Horus was believed to have healing and protective power, and it was used as a protective amulet. It is also a symbol that comes up often in West Country folklore.

**St Just, Cornwall:** Stein lives in the town of St. Just in Penwith, Cornwall. It lies between Penzance and Lands End and is the most westerly town in Cornwall.

**Fougou:** An underground, dry-stone structure found on Iron Age or Romano-British-defended settlement sites in Cornwall. The word 'fougou' comes from a Celtic word meaning 'cave'. Whether their purpose was practical, protective or spiritual is not known, although many have speculated that they may have been used as refuges from invading hordes, for use in religious activities or rituals or to store food. Stein is inspired by these enchanted, peaceful and comforting spaces. In the film, *Regression* (2016), Stein and Simon Bayliss laid themselves under the powers of hypnotist Robin Smidowicz within two ancient fougous in West Cornwall.

**Holy Wells:** There are eight holy well sites in Penwith, Cornwall. The origins of the wells are unclear, however most are associated with early Celtic saints

and have probably been used for over a thousand years. Many of these wells have been used continuously for healing, divination and for fertility purposes, a testimony to their power, attraction and efficacy.

**Scrying Mirror:** Divination with a mirror or another reflective surface is an ancient practice known as scrying. The term originates from the word 'descry', meaning 'to catch sight of'. Scrying is the practice of looking into a suitable medium like a mirror in the hope of detecting significant messages or visions.

**Marlene Dumas:** Dumas was born in 1953 in Cape Town, South Africa. She is one of the most prominent painters working today. Her intense, psychologically charged works explore themes of sexuality, love, death, and shame, often referencing art history, popular culture and current affairs. She has lived and worked in Amsterdam since 1976 and has exhibited internationally. In 1995 she represented Holland in the Venice Biennale, and in 1996 the Tate Gallery exhibited a selection of her works on paper. Dumas was Stein's tutor at De Ateliers in Amsterdam and remains a strong influence in her work.

**Eileen Agar:** Agar (1 December 1899 – 17 November 1991) was a British-Argentinian painter and photographer associated with the Surrealist movement. Combining order and chaos, Agar's work fuses vivid abstraction with imagery from classical art, the natural world, and sexual pleasure. In Stein's work, *Erotic encounters South West* (2020), recurring motifs from Agar's work, such as the crescent moon and the owl, are depicted.

**Matrilineal.** The Oxford Dictionary definition is 'of or relating to descent, kinship, or inheritance through the female line.' In her work, *Matrilineal: Ghosts of the future past, 2021*, Stein is inspired by John William Waterhouse's (1849-1917) haunting portrayal of Cleopatra, an image of intense power. Stein observes, 'I've always painted women, and to some extent female beauty. Like a lot of female painters I've tried to suggest a female gaze, often by giving agency to the muse.'