

[Leighton at the Tate](#)

[Leighton at the Royal Academy](#)



*Sir Frederic Leighton* by George Frederic Watts, 1881

Take a [virtual tour](#) of Leighton’s work with the Joy of Museums Virtual Tours.

The Frick Collection installed [Leighton’s Flaming June](#) in 2015, an exhibition centered on Leighton’s iconic painting of a woman sleeping in a vivid orange gown. Read a [review](#) of the painting and its exhibition from the Art Students League of New York.

In 2016, [Flaming June: The Making of an Icon](#) was on display at the Leighton House Museum in London. Watch a [video](#) produced by the museum about the exhibition.

[Frederic Leighton and the Eternal Mediterranean](#) was on display at the Museo de Arte de Ponce in Puerto Rico in 2017, which combined its esteemed collection of Leighton’s work with eighteen others on loan from the Leighton House Museum in London.

Read a [short essay](#) by Elizabeth Prettejohn about Leighton’s last Royal Academy show in 1895.

In 2020, Victoria Gallery & Museum curator Amanda Draper wrote a [blog post](#) centered on Leighton’s sculpture *The Sluggard* from the museum’s collection.

From 2022 to 2024, five of Leighton’s masterwork paintings are [on loan](#) from the Museo de Arte de Ponce in Puerto Rico to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. Read a review in the [New York Times](#) of *Flaming June*’s arrival. After its visit to New York, the painting was [loaned](#) to the newly restored museum at the artist’s home, [Leighton House](#), in London.

In an 1879 letter, Leighton wrote: “Sincerity is the well-spring of all lasting achievement, and no good thing ever took root in untruth or self-deception work that does not spring from the heart has no roots, and will of certainty wither and perish....The gathered experience of past ages is a precious heritage and not an irksome load; and nothing will fortify young artists better for the future, and free development, than the reverent and loving study of the past.... We have within us the faculty for a range of emotions of vast compass, of exquisite subtlety, and of irresistible force, to which Art and Art alone amongst human forms of expression has the key.”



Leighton, *Self-portrait*, 1880



Sir Frederic Leighton (British, 1830-1896)

**The Bath of Psyche**, ca. 1887

Oil on canvas

Private Collection; L2023:121.1

In the 1880s, the British artist Lawrence Alma-Tadema asked 45 painters to each produce a 32 x 8-inch panel to decorate the atrium of his house in St. John's Wood. Sir Frederic Leighton reportedly picked up a dessert knife and exclaimed: "My dear Tadema, what sort of subject do you expect me to paint on this?" **The Bath of Psyche** was Leighton's contribution to this project, designed to emphasize the vertical ionic columns of its surrounding architecture. The painting references the legend of Cupid and Psyche, which was a popular story in the 19<sup>th</sup> century classical revival in Victorian art. Psyche was sent to the golden palace of Cupid (the god of love) because her beauty was so great that no man would become her suitor. In Leighton's imagining, Psyche bathes herself before her lover's arrival, narcissistically gazing into her own reflection in the pool. Leighton later produced a wider version of the composition that is now in the collection of the Tate Britain, but this work is the original panel designed for Alma-Tadema's atrium.

*On view December 6, 2023 – March 10, 2024*