



Spirited take on sexuality and gender is far from a drag

Fascinating images include father who loved wife's dresses

There's a touch of irony about what will be happening at the Freud Museum next Thursday, when there's an open day with family workshops to mark its 25th anniversary. Freudian analysis uncovers sexual aspects of the psyche but, on this occasion, some of the more overtly sexual artworks in its current exhibition will be covered or removed, for the welfare of young visitors.

The title of the exhibition *Les Paris Sont Ouverts* can be literally translated as "the bets are open" and loosely as "everything is possible" or "anything can happen". Among the real-life scenarios with which we are presented is a naked woman crouching on all fours, revealing giant eyes tattooed on her buttocks, and with roller-blade boot poised above.

This is one of Eve Fowler's arresting photographic portraits of LA's queer community to which she belongs. They are confrontational images, with the honesty of "insider" art, and are dramatically presented as a slide show – a mode used to great effect for a similar project by

Nan Goldin which was in Tate Modern's exhibition *Exposed* last year.

Fowler's photographs perfectly illustrate curator Caroline May's intention of paying tribute to the French artist, poet and activist Claude Cahun – the title is from an essay of hers published in 1934. Cahun's androgynous self-portraits revealed a radical way of thinking about sexuality and gender. They challenge our understanding of photography as a documentation of reality.

Charmer

Swedish artist Maria Finn's spirited photographs of her late father in drag were staged but reflect in numerous ways what seems to have been his true character – a charmer who had many of the domestic interests traditionally associated with women. She took the photographs in her parents' house outside Gothenburg. "I was interested in gender issues and had used my mother as a fashion model for photographs published in the fringe fashion magazine *Purple* in 1997 – and my father was jealous," she says.



■ Dad by Maria Finn

"I knew he used to try on my mother's dresses. He chose the outfit – a kimono I had bought in a flea-market in Kyoto. He loved walking around with my mother's wig on." His glee and ease in the role is obvious but would he have liked to be seen in drag at the Freud Museum, I ask her. "He'd have loved it!"

Some exhibits by the other five international artists included reveal a more troubled take on the issues explored in this exhibition. Dimitris Dokatzis's photograph of bare male legs shackled with a ball and chain suggested to Vas- silios Doupas, May's galler-

ist, that for some people, their gender orientation can be painful. *Killing Pictures*, May's evocative photographs of scenes of homophobic killings, mostly in south London parks, are hung in Freud's former bedroom in a synchronous exhibition.

■ Until September 4 at 20 Maresfield Gardens, Hampstead. Open Wednesday to Sunday noon to 5pm. Tickets £5, seniors £4.50, concessions £3, under-12s free. The open day on July 28 is free and includes tea in the museum's garden. For more details of anniversary events, visit www.freud.org.uk.

■ In Limbo by Dimitris Dokatzis

