

# Portraits: More than Paint



## 3. Famous for What?

March 5, 2024

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WHAT KINDS OF PEOPLE TYPICALLY GET THEIR PORTRAITS PAINTED? in the first hour, we look at a wall of Georgian portraits in London's National Portrait Gallery to find out. There will be the people you might expect: aristocrats, politicians, military commanders. But there may also be a few who are famous for other reasons, and they are often the most interesting. In the second hour, we cast our net wider in terms of nationality and period, to examine three special topics (with an additional brief glance at portraits of children). First, the implication of action in a portrait. Second, the comparatively rare instances of nude or partially-nude portraiture. Third, as a parting bouquet, a small group of people in the performing arts, each with an appropriate audio clip

For a full list of slides, see the script available after class; the entries below merely indicate the main topics. *rb.*

### A. So Who Gets Painted?

Among the lords and ladies, we have a foreign visitor, a scientist, and an unusually young politician.

**Reynolds:** *Omai* (1776, London NPG)

**Dance-Holland:** *Captain James Cook* (1775, Greenwich)

**Reynolds:** *Sir Joseph Banks* (1773, London NPG)

**Romney:** *William Pitt the Younger* (1783, Tate)

♪ **Film:** *Amazing Grace* (2006, Gruffudd, Gambon, Cumberbatch)

### B. Beyond the Smoke of Battle

Most of this section has to do with portraits of Admiral Horatio Nelson, the hero of Trafalgar, and his affair with Lady Hamilton.

**Beechey:** *Horatio Nelson* (1800, Norwich and NPG)

**Romney:** portraits of *Emma Hart/Hamilton*

♪ **Film:** *A Bequest to the Nation* (1973, Glenda Jackson, Peter Finch)

♪ **Haydn:** *Nelson Mass* (1798; Ingeborg Dalheim, Grete Pedersen)

## C. Into the Action

When does a sitter not merely sit? When he is engaged in war, sport, or the practice of some trade—or when the paint itself implies action.

**Raeburn:** *Rev. Robert Walker Skating* (1890s, Edinburgh NGS)

**Stuart:** *Sir William Grant* (1782, Washington NGA)

**Copley:** *Paul Revere* (1770); **Neagle:** *Pat Lyon at the Forge* (1827)

**Moroni:** *The Tailor* (1565, London NG)

♪ **Film:** *Pollock* (2000, Ed Harris, Marcia Gay Harden)

## D. The Sitter Unclothed

Even partially-nude portraits are quite rare. Often they imply an erotic relationship between artist and sitter, but a few are quite the opposite.

**Bronzino:** *Cosimo de' Medici* (1538, Philadelphia MFA)

**Piero di Cosimo:** *Simonetta Vespucci* (1491, Chantilly)

**Anon:** *Gabrielle d'Estrées and her Sister* (1594, Paris Louvre)

**Raphael:** *La fornarina* (1516, Rome, Palazzo Barberini)

**Rubens:** *Hélène Fourment in a Fur Coat* (1535, Vienna KHM)

**Boucher:** *Reclining Girl* (1752, Munich)

## E. In the Spotlight

Portraits of actors and musicians are another special category—and even more special if we can hear what they sounded like.

♪ **Chopin:** *Ballade #2*, with MS (Paul Barton)

♪ **Niel Gow:** *Lament for his Second Wife*

♪ **Shakespeare:** *Julius Caesar* (Edward Petherbridge)

♪ **Hervé:** *Chilpéric* (1886), *Boléro* (Lina Dachary)

♪ **Film:** *Paganini, the Devil's Violinist* (2013, David Garrett)

Agnolo **Bronzino** (1503–72, *Italian painter*), Lemuel Francis **Abbott** (1760–1803, *English painter*), William **Beechey** (1753–1839, *English painter*), François **Boucher** (1703–70, *French painter*), Mary **Cassatt** (1844–1926, *American painter*), Fryderyk **Chopin** (1810–49, *Polish composer*), John Singleton **Copley** (1738–1815, *American painter*), Nathaniel **Dance-Holland** (1735–1811, *English painter*), Eugène **Delacroix** (1798–1863, *French painter*), John **Donne** (1571–1631, *English poet*), Samuel **Drummond** (1766–1844, *English painter*), William Powell **Frith** (1819–1909, *English painter*), Friedrich Heinrich **Füger** (1751–1818, *German painter*), Niel **Gow** (1727–1807, *Scottish violinist*), Franz Joseph **Haydn** (1732–1809, *Austrian composer*), **Hervé** (Florimond Ronger, 1825–92, *French composer*), Anton **Hickel** (1745–98, *Austrian painter*), William **Hodges** (1744–97, *English painter*), Robert **Howlett** (1831–1858, *English photographer*), Angelica **Kauffmann** (1741–1807, *Swiss painter*), Fernand **Khnopff** (1858–1921, *Belgian painter*), Thomas **Lawrence** (1769–1830, *English painter*), John **Marsh** (1752–1828, *English composer*), Giovanni Battista **Moroni** (1520–78, *Italian painter*), John **Neagle** (1796–1865, *American painter*), James **Northcote** (1746–1931, *English painter*), Niccolò **Paganini** (1782–1840, *Italian violinist*), Thomas **Phillips** (1770–1845, *English painter*), **Piero** di Cosimo (1462–1521, *Italian painter*), Jackson **Pollock** (1912–56, *American painter*), Henry **Raeburn** (1756–1823, *Scottish painter*), **Raphael** (Raffaello Santi, 1483–1520, *Italian painter*), Joshua **Reynolds** (1823–92, *English painter*), John Francis **Rigaud** (1742–1810, *French-Italian painter*), George Romney (1774–1802, *English painter*), Peter Paul **Rubens** (1577–1640, *Flemish painter*), Gilbert **Stuart** (1755–1828, *American painter*), Henri de **Toulouse-Lautrec** (1864–1901, *French painter*), Anthony **Van Dyck** (1599–1641, *Flemish painter*), Elisabeth **Vigée Lebrun** (1755–1842, *French painter*)

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