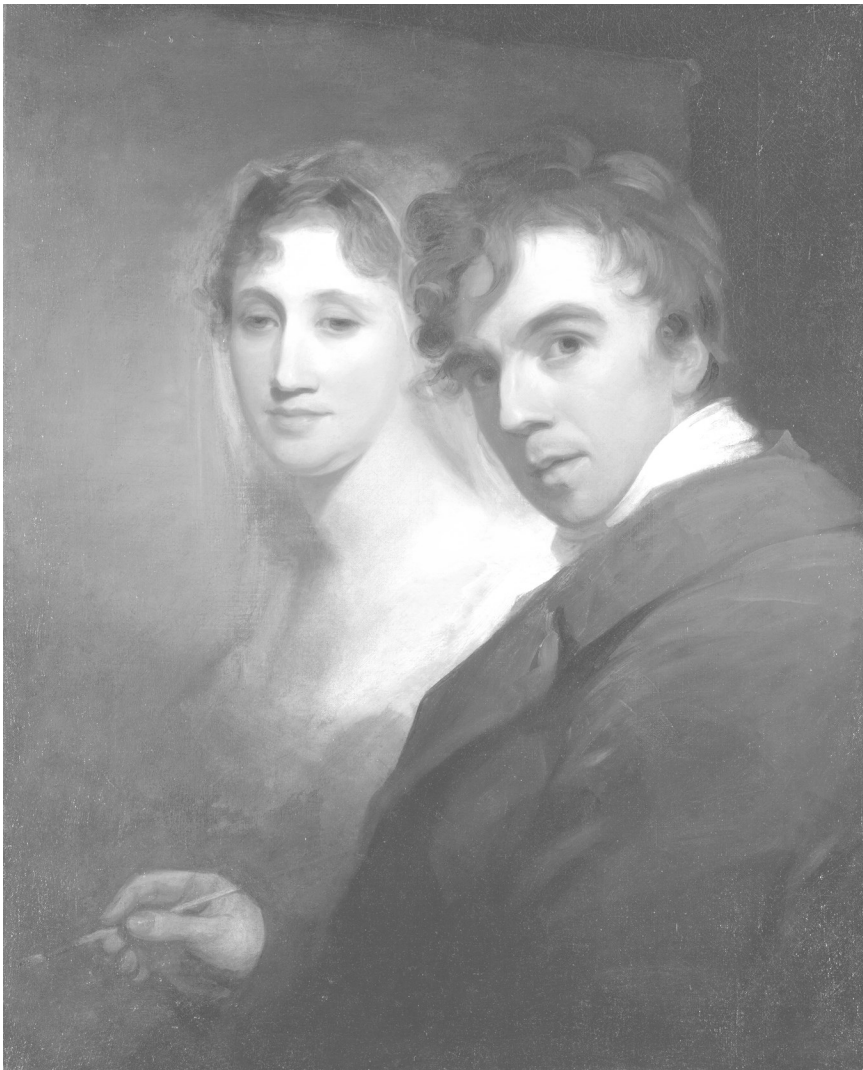


Portraits: More than Paint



Thomas Sully: *The Artist Painting his Wife*

7. We're Not Alone

April 2, 2024

7. We're Not Alone

EXPANDING THE SOLO PORTRAIT to include two or more people alters the dynamic in several respects. It poses the formal challenge of how to arrange the figures in the frame. It raises questions about the relationship between the sitters, and adds issues of precedence. And, in anything but an obviously formal pose, it makes one ask what brought the people together, thus bringing in questions of narrative and time that do not normally apply to single-sitter portraits.

The class divides quite easily into two hours. In the first, we look at sitters whose connection is familial: spouses, children and extended families, and just occasionally lovers. In the first half of the second hour, we consider colleagues who belong to some association that commissions portraits as a group, before turning to people brought together by history, as participants in some great event. Most of the class will be devoted to painting. *rb.*

A. The Significant Other

From the early renaissance through the mid-eighteenth century, husbands and wives were commonly painted as separate companion portraits. But we look at some exceptions where they share the frame—and also at a few where the partners are not husband and wife

Raverat: *John Maynard Keynes* (1906, London NPG)

Roberts: *Baron Keynes and Lydia Lopokova* (1932, London NPG)

Campin: Unknown man and woman (c.1435, London NG)

Piero della Francesca: Sforza/Montefeltro portraits (1474, Uffizi)

Hals: *Pieter Tjarck and Maria Lapp* (1635, Los Angeles and London)

Hals: *Wedding portrait* (1622, Rijksmuseum)

Rubens: *The Honeysuckle Bower* (c.1609, Munich)

Gainsborough: *Mr. and Mrs. Andrews* (1750, London NG)

Gainsborough: *Mr. and Mrs. Hallett* (1785, London NG)

Unknown artist: "The Gotha Lovers" (1480s)

Delacroix: *Chopin and George Sand* (1838)

Green: *Britten and Pears* (1943, London NPG)

♪ **Britten:** *Serenade for Tenor, Horn, and Strings*, mvt. 2 (original)

B. Kids Will Be Kids

From the eighteenth century on, children painted by themselves are usually allowed to show a bit of fun; they can also be included to soften the image of their parents. But the family portrait can also have dynastic implications, or testify to family values.

Heemskerck: *Pieter Jan Popperszoon and Family* (c.1530, Kassel)

Gainsborough: Portraits of his Daughters (1750s and 1760s)

Van Dyck: *Three Eldest Children of Charles I* (1635, Royal Collection)

Van Dyck: *Five Eldest Children of Charles I* (1637, Royal Collection)

Titian: *Ranuccio Farnese* (1542, Washington NGA)

Titian: *Pope Paul III with his grandsons* (1545, Naples)

Degas: *The Bellelli Family* (1858–67, Orsay)

Renoir: *Mme. Charpentier and her Children* (1878, NY Met)

Matisse: *Family Scene, "The Music Lesson"* (1917, Barnes Fndn.)

♪ **Debussy:** *Children's Corner*, mvt. 1 (Alfred Cortot, film, 1936)

C. Colleagues in Conversation

In the civic-minded society of the Dutch Golden Age, many prominent people belonged to professional groups, volunteer militias, or the boards of commercial enterprises or charities. These organizations often commissioned group portraits, and few artists were more skilled in responding to the challenges than Rembrandt and Frans Hals.

Pieterszoon: *Anatomy Lesson of Dr. de Vrij* (1603)

Keijzer: *Anatomy Lesson of Dr. de Vrij* (1619, Amsterdam)

Rembrandt: *Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Tulp* (1632, Mauritshuis)

Eakins: *The Gross Clinic* (1875, Philadelphia)

Hals: *Regents of the St. Elizabeth Hospital* (1641, Haarlem)

Bol: *Governors of the Wine Merchants' Guild* (1663, Munich)

Rembrandt: *Syndics of the Cloth Guild* (1662, Rijksmuseum)

Wright: *Presidents of the British Academy* (2001)

Hals: *Banquet of the St. George Civic Guard* (1616, Haarlem)

Keijzer: *Company of Captain Allaert Cloeck* (1632, Rijksmuseum)

Rembrandt: *The Night Watch* (1643, Rijksmuseum)

D. On the Canvas of History

With the widespread distribution of engravings, a painting of a significant event could become a document in its own right, and such documents required accuracy in the depiction of the people involved—which could be a problem if the person was dead or refused to sit.

Trumbull: *Declaration of Independence* (1819, US Capitol)

Trumbull: *Death of General Mercer* (1815, Boston MFA)

Barker: *Relief of Lucknow* (1859, London NPG)

Barrett: *Nightingale receiving the Wounded at Scutari* (1857, NPG)

♪ **Film clip:** *The Lady with the Lamp* (1951, with Anna Neagle)

Thomas **Barker** (1815–82, *English painter*), Jerry **Barrett** (1824–1906, *English painter*), William **Billings** (1746–1800, *American composer*), Ferdinand **Bol** (1616–80, *Dutch painter*), Benjamin **Britten** (1918–76, *English composer*), Robert **Campin** (1375–1444, *Netherlandish painter*), Lucas **Cranach** the Elder (1472–1553, *German painter*), Claude **Debussy** (1862–1918, *French composer*), Edgar **Degas** (1834–1917, *French painter*), Eugène **Delacroix** (1798–1863, *English painter*), Thomas **Eakins** (1844–1916, *American painter*), Thomas **Gainsborough** (1727–88, *English painter*), Kenneth **Green** (1905–86, *English painter*), Frans **Hals** (1582–1666, *Dutch painter*), Maerten van **Heemskerck** (1498–1574, *Netherlandish painter*), Thomas de **Keijzer** (1596–1667, *Dutch painter*), Henri **Matisse** (1869–1954, *French painter*), **Piero** della Francesca (1415–92, *Italian painter*), Aert **Pieterszoon** (1550–1612, *Dutch painter*), Gwen **Raverat** (1885–1957, *English printmaker and painter*), **Rembrandt** (Rembrandt Harmenzoon van Rijn, 1606–69, *Dutch painter*), Pierre-Auguste **Renoir** (1841–1919, *French painter*), William **Roberts** (1895–1980, *English painter*), Peter Paul **Rubens** (1577–1640), *Flemish painter*), **Titian** (Tiziano Vecellio, 1485–1636, *Italian painter*), John **Trumbull** (1756–1843, *American painter*), Anthony **Van Dyck** (1599–1641, *Flemish painter*), Jan **van Eyck** (–1441, *Netherlandish painter*), Rogier van der **Weyden** (1399–1464, *Netherlandish painter*), Stuart Pearson **Wright** (1975–, *English painter*)