

# Portraits: More than Paint



## 9. DC Connections

April 16, 2024

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THIS CLASS WILL FOCUS ON A NUMBER OF PORTRAITS in the National Gallery of Art in Washington DC. This is a modification of the wider-ranging class I would have offered had I not been sidelined by sickness. Today's works span a similar period (1780–1880) and include several nationalities. I hope that in discussing them we may review some previous questions about the nature and purpose of portraits, and also perhaps see some changes in who commissioned them in the Nineteenth Century.

The second hour will also be something of a review, as we look at substantial clips from two films about people featured in last week's class: Beethoven and Emily Dickinson. *rb.*

### English Girls

Two portraits of children from the golden age of British portraiture, the late Eighteenth Century.

**Reynolds:** *Lady Caroline Howard*, 1778

**Romney:** *Miss Juliana Willoughby*, 1781–83

### Ladies of Means

Four ladies of wealth spanning the entire period under discussion, painted by leading artists in Scotland, France, and the United States.

**Raeburn:** *Miss Eleanor Urquhart*, 1793

**Stuart:** *Catherine Brass Yates*, 1793

**Ingres:** *Madame Moitessier*, 1851

**Sargent:** *Mrs. Adrian Iselin*, 1888

# International Man of Mystery

A striking male portrait in the National collection. We know the sitter's name and who painted him, but have little idea of who he actually was or why he was painted in that way.

**Prud'hon:** *David Johnston*, 1808

# Family Matters

Three French artists (all later connected with the Impressionists) who paint members of their families in ways that they might not have used for commissioned works.

**Cézanne:** *The Artist's Father*, 1866

**Morisot:** *The Artist's Mother and Sister*, 1869

**Degas:** *Madame René de Gas*, 1872

# Women in White

Finally a treasure hunt, as we explore the connection between two standalone works in the gallery, and wonder when the depiction of a known individual is *not* actually a portrait.

**Whistler:** *The White Girl*, 1862

**Monet:** *Bazille and Camille*, 1866

# Emily

Two sequences from *A Quiet Passion*, **Terence Davies'** 2016 film about Emily Dickinson (played by **Cynthia Nixon**). The first shows her with her sister-in-law and next-door neighbor Susan (**Jhodi May**). The second traces the stages of her becoming a recluse: watching her father's funeral from an upstairs window, arguing with an interfering editor from the top of the stairs, and refusing to see an admirer because he is too handsome.

♪ **Film:** *A Quiet Passion* (2016), clips as above

# Eroica

**Simon Clellan Jones'** 2003 film *Eroica*, with screenplay by **Nick Dear**, dramatizes the private reading of Beethoven's Third Symphony (originally called *Buonaparte*, but now *Eroica*) at the Vienna palace of his genial patron Prince Lobkowitz (**Jack Davenport**). There are too many characters to name, but look especially for the conservative Count Dietrichstein (**Tim Pigott-Smith**), Beethoven's pupil Ferdinand Reis (**Leo Bill**), and at the end, his former teacher Haydn (**Frank Finlay**). Beethoven is played by **Ian Hart** and the music is conducted by **Sir John Eliot Gardiner** (unseen).

♪ **Film:** *Eroica* (2003), opening, discussion, and complete finale

Ludwig van **Beethoven** (1770–1827, *German composer*), Paul **Cézanne** (1839–1906, *French painter*), William Merritt **Chase** (1849–1916, *American painter*), Edgar **Degas** (1834–1917, *French painter*), Emily **Dickinson** (1830–86, *American poet*), Jean-Auguste-Dominique **Ingres** (1780–1867, *French painter*), Édouard **Manet** (1832–83, *French painter*), Claude **Monet** (1840–1926, *French painter*), Berthe **Morisot** (1841–95, *French painter*), Pierre-Paul **Prud'hon** (1758–1823, *French painter*), Sir Henry **Raeburn** (1726–1823, *Scottish painter*), Sir Joshua **Reynolds** (1723–92, *English painter*), George **Romney** (1734–1802, *English painter*), John Singer **Sargent** (1856–1925, *American painter*), Gilbert **Stuart** (1755–1828, *American painter*), James Abbott McNeill **Whistler** (1834–1903, *American painter*)

The course website is [www.brunyate.com/portraits](http://www.brunyate.com/portraits)  
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