

NATIONAL
PORTRAIT
GALLERY

FACE TO FACE

Gallery News

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Writing in this issue: Lady Antonia Fraser and Maev Kennedy

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Renewal of the displays of the collection is a regular part of life at the National Portrait Gallery. The return from loan of several paintings of Elizabeth I (part of the National Maritime Museum's exhibition this past summer) gave the cue for a new arrangement for the Tudor Galleries. And subsequently the need for maintenance and improvement has triggered a new hang of the early 20th century portraits in Galleries 30 and 31. These change-overs give an opportunity to think about the choice, arrangements and juxtaposition of the works, offering new insights into the subjects portrayed. And bringing together three of Henry VIII's wives in the Tudor Galleries has also given Lady Antonia Fraser the occasion to comment tellingly here on the way in which they are portrayed.

The renewal of the Gallery's photographic prize, sponsored now by Schweppes but formerly the *John Kobal Photographic Award*, brought a strong international submission of over 3,000 images from 1,212 photographers. Leading the judges to choose 60 photographs for the exhibition, and then four for the shortlist, was not easy but it gave a fascinating insight into the ways in which we photograph ourselves, our friends and family and the different ways of creating haunting or powerful images. Certainly the outstanding image, *2nd Birthday* by Roben Antoniewicz, is a very worthy winner of the Schweppes Prize, controlling colour and composition while capturing the innate poise and charm of his grand-daughter.

In June 2003 the Gallery acquired George Romney's portrait of the celebrated eighteenth-century artist Mary Moser with the generous assistance of the Heritage Lottery Fund and the National Art Collections Fund. This portrait is now on display in Room 12 with an accompanying Gallery trail of 'Creative Women' available from the Information Desk. And finally, preparations are well in hand for our major spring exhibition, *Cecil Beaton: Portraits*, opening on the 5 February–31 May 2004, which will give the opportunity to enjoy some of the greatest photographic portraits of the 20th century.

Sandy Nairne
Sandy Nairne
Director

MY FAVOURITE PORTRAIT



© Myles Kennedy



Ben Jonson by Abraham van Blyenberch

On the walls of the National Portrait Gallery, as in life, poor Shakespeare is constantly measured against rare Ben Jonson. The Chandos portrait of Shakespeare, the first in the Gallery collection, may be the only one claimed from life, but it has a dim half remembered third hand reportage quality, like a key cut from a copy of a copy which looks presentable enough but will no longer turn the lock: the

enigmatic man from Stratford-upon-Avon has escaped again. Beside him Ben Jonson bristles with life, a clever, shrewd, funny man, and a burly one too, who might knock you down and jump on your bones if you said 'But Ben, honestly, isn't Bartholomew Fair a bit of a mess?' Books send me to the Portrait Gallery, and the pictures send me hunting for books: Claire Tomalin's marvellous biography sent me to find pretty kind Dora Jordan, but I left that day compelled to track down *On Horseback through Asia Minor*, after gaping at Tissot's outrageous portrait of Frederick Gustavus Burnaby, 'Soldier, traveller and balloonist', lolling on a sofa clearly about to mount a punitive expedition on some unfortunate female.

Whatever my nominal objective, the Tudor Galleries hauls me back: Richard Crookback, straightbacked but so dangerous; thin lipped Henry VII, the man who killed him, fingers clenched on his implausible lover's posy; jolly Francis Drake clasping the world, a ruddy man you might still meet in a West Country cider house; Sir Henry Lee, the Queen's champion, guarding his secrets and his silk corded gold rings - from whom, for whom? And Ben, in his plain brown jacket, one of the quietest pictures in a rowdy gallery: he will not let you pass.

Maev Kennedy

Arts and Heritage Correspondent, The Guardian

NEW ACQUISITION

Room 12 | Second floor



Mary Moser by George Romney

One of the only two female founding members of the Royal Academy, the flower-painter Mary Moser (1744–1819) was one of the most celebrated women artists in eighteenth-century Britain.

Born in London, Moser trained with her father George Moser (1706–1783). Talented and precocious, she won her first Society of Arts medal at fourteen for her flower drawing. From then on she regularly exhibited flower pieces at the

Society of Artists. Ambitious for professional status, in 1768 she transferred her allegiance to the Royal Academy where, alongside Angelica Kauffmann (1741–1807), she took more of an active role in proceedings than was expected for a woman. After Moser's death in 1819, no women were elected as full members of the Academy until Dame Laura Knight in 1936.

This is one of only two known painted likenesses of Moser who, with Kauffmann, was notoriously marginalized in Zoffany's group portrait, *The Academicians of the Royal Academy* (1771–2). That important painting shows the members of the Academy gathered for a life drawing class with a nude male model. Women were excluded from this training in order to protect their feminine modesty, thus Zoffany relegated Moser and Kauffmann to portraits hanging decorously on the wall.

Mary Moser's portrait, painted by George Romney, is an important representation of a successful woman which captures her artistic ambitions while insisting that a professional career was not at odds with femininity.

The portrait has been purchased for £117,250 and the acquisition was made possible by a Heritage Lottery Fund grant of £63,550 and a National Art Collections Fund grant of £24,388.

Dr Lucy Peltz 18th Century Curator

WE ARE MAKING A NEW WORLD: CHANGE IN A CENTURY OF EXTREMES

THE REDISPLAYS OF THE EARLY 20TH CENTURY GALLERIES 1914–1960

From 12 December | Rooms 30 and 31 | First floor



Dame Anna Neagle (detail) by McClelland Barclay

These Galleries were opened in 1996 to the designs of Piers Gough who has most recently designed the Regency in the Weldon Galleries. Gough's radical approach, here with a steel and glass intervention that conveyed a sense of streamlined modernity, provided an arresting backdrop to the early modern portraits, in all their diversity of approach, style and technique.

After eight years of wear-and-tear these Galleries will be closed for maintenance from Monday 29 September until Thursday 11 December. A thorough autumn-clean will be undertaken, which will include a re-lamping programme to improve light levels, the sanding and polishing of the floors and the cleaning of blinds and glass screens. This provides the opportunity to remove Sir James Guthrie's vast neo-baroque painting *Statesmen of World War I* (1924–30) from its screen and hang it on the north wall of Room 30. Thus the Galleries will be opened up and integrated more immediately into the rest of the building.

Their closure also allows us to rethink displays conceived a decade ago. The first room, previously top-heavy with generals and statesmen, will tell something of the story of social change that had begun before the outbreak of the First World War. People like the suffragist Emmeline Pankhurst and the painter Stanley Spencer are emblematic here. The second room will have a stricter chronological storyline that will take the visitor from 1919, along the left hand wall (there is evidence that most of us move round a gallery keeping to our left), to the Second World War, central to the period at the apex of the Gallery. Then the visitor can go along the right hand wall, where among the chief players will be social reformers, radical churchmen, poets and painters, leaving the Gallery in the late 1950s.

There will be a greater emphasis on the role of women, and events in what was a century of accelerating change. There are tensions to be described, and the portrait of Anna Neagle, Spitfire pin-up whose image here is a proto-Madonna, exemplifies this well.

All hangs are selective: some one hundred images are on the walls at any time, from a pool of a possible five hundred in this period. They are also of their time, and interpretation of the past is affected by current affairs. Thus TE Lawrence and Freya Stark are included for the insights their work in the Middle East and Iraq may give to today's problems. Consultation with colleagues in the Education Department flagged up images that lend themselves to teaching, while Front of House staff, the Gallery's front line, have provided a very clear and immediate perception of who it is our visitors come to see. Visitor comments too alert us to interests that are topical and of the moment.

So, about 50% of the subjects, or as they are known in in-house jargon, 'sitters', will remain the same – it is impossible to tell the story of Britain in the Twentieth Century without Winston Churchill. The other 50% will be sitters not seen in the Galleries for years and many new faces, reflecting the last eight years of collecting, most recently the extraordinary image of the infamous Aleister Crowley. Further, the centenary year of the National Art



Aleister Crowley by Leon Engers Kennedy



Lord Reith (detail) by Sir Oswald Birley

Collection Fund, always generous in support of the Gallery, sees the acquisition with the Fund's help, of David Bomberg's *Self-portrait with Pipe*. This shows British portraiture to be firmly in the European mainstream and is indicative of the artist's influence on Leon Kossoff and Frank Auerbach.

The Gallery has benefited greatly from the Acceptance-in-Lieu scheme whereby HM Government allocates works offered to and accepted by the Treasury in lieu of inheritance tax. Recent examples in this group on display for the first time are portraits of the novelist Anthony Powell by his brother-in-law Henry Lamb, the poet Louis MacNeice by his lover Nancy Sharp, and the Reverend Trevor Huddleston, the cleric who expressed anti-apartheid sentiment in this country and abroad. Some important loans include sitters such as

Lord Reith, the founder of the BBC, Alexander Fleming, discoverer of penicillin, and Ian Fleming painted in a unique portrait by his friend Charles Villiers, the designer of Donald Campbell's Bluebird and of the eponymous car in Fleming's own *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*.

Katharine Eustace *Early 20th Century Curator*

THE SCHWEPPE'S PHOTOGRAPHIC PORTRAIT PRIZE 2003

FACELIFT

5 November 2003 – 15 February 2004 | Porter Gallery

The name might have changed but is the style still the same? Dawn Sumner, Features Editor of the *British Journal of Photography* reports on the judging process for the successor to the *John Kobal Photographic Portrait Award*.

Following the demise of the *John Kobal Photographic Portrait Award* last year there were numerous debates in the photography community over the value of such a competition. The Kobal had built its reputation on a distinctive style of portraiture, which many photographers tried to emulate, but when the competition stopped breaking new ground it began to look tired, and after ten years it was time to bow out. Schweppes stepped in to sponsor its replacement at the National Portrait Gallery. The question is, would the *Schweppes Photographic Portrait Prize* herald a new direction in portraiture?

Entries topped the 3,000 mark, with 1,212 photographers entering, but this number would be reduced by the judging panel to a final 60 for the show and an overall winner would receive £15,000. Also at stake was a £5,000 prize offered by Deloitte for the best portrait taken by a photographer aged 25 or under.

Judging 3,230 entries in two days is a mammoth task, and about 200 reached the final from which the 60 portraits for the exhibition would be selected. So how do you eliminate over 2,500 entries in a day? The process was simple, several of the National Portrait Gallery staff moved past the judges, rather like a human conveyor belt, holding up the entries to be viewed. The process of elimination came down to a yes, no or a maybe. The pictures that fell to the wayside quite quickly were those judged not to be true portraits. But what is a portrait? The dictionary defines it as a life-like description of the person, while the entry form suggested that portraiture is 'photography concerned with portraying people with emphasis on their identity as individuals'. Clearly this definition of a portrait is wide open to interpretation, and many entries pushed the definition to the limit and beyond. There were several prints that were obviously beauty shots, and although the subject looked eye catching the identity of the person was masked by the original purpose of the work to promote a product. Fuzzy, out of focus portraits also made an appearance but were quickly dismissed because no sense of the sitters' personality could be derived.

Subjects varied from pregnant women and babies through to youths and the elderly. Celebrities also featured strongly with Nick Nolte, Jarvis Cocker, Tracey Emin, Nick Cave, and John Malkovich all making an appearance. It was a portrait of Mary Archer that really attracted the judges' attention and opened up a debate about her position within the frame. The waxwork-like figure was so intriguing that the judges wanted it to go through to the second round.

Close-ups of body parts and portraits manipulated in Photoshop were met with only a fleeting glance from the judges, marred by poor technique and naively executed manipulation.

By 2.30pm on the first day of judging more than 1000 photographs had been viewed by the panel. Often the judges asked for the titles of each print to clarify what was happening in the photograph although some photographs needed no explanation. One print titled *Confirmed Bachelor For Sure* pictured a man lying down on his bed and above his head the wall is covered with 'tart cards'. It raised a laugh amongst the judges, who naturally wondered if the man really had slept with so many women.

Because the term portrait can be interpreted in a number of ways there was some debate in my mind as to whether a constructed image was a truthful representation of the sitter. Rick Giles' *Broxville* for example depicted an affluent middle class family



© Victor Albrow

Lachie and Callum by Victor Albrow | SECOND PRIZE



© Alan Powdrill

Gerry by Alan Powdrill | THIRD PRIZE



2nd Birthday by Roben Antoniewicz | FIRST PRIZE

judges were divided for some time over who should receive third place, but after much debate it was awarded to Alan Powdrill for his portrait of *Gerry*. Fourth place went to Nadav Kander for *Interruption* from the series *From Darkness into Light*. The identity of all the photographers remained a secret until the final judging was over when everyone was pleasantly surprised that only one name was familiar to them, that of Nadav Kander.

© Roben Antoniewicz

The judges chose a diverse range of portraiture from editorial, advertising and fine art photographers. The creation of honest portraits, which capture the real person behind the face are the qualities the Schweppes Portrait Prize wants to be associated with, and the winning image sums up this message.

Dawn Sumner

eating dinner. I felt that there was something quite sterile about the image but despite my own reservations the picture made it in to the final round.

The second day of judging was probably the toughest challenge. In order to find 60 prints out of the remaining 128 all of the pictures were laid out for the judges to walk around and ponder over. After separately making notes, Sandy Nairne, Director at the National Portrait Gallery, gathered everyone together to debate the merits of each portrait. Clearly some of the judges had much stronger opinions than others and people were prepared to fight for a picture if they felt strongly that it should go into the final exhibition. Nairne ensured that everyone had the opportunity to have his or her say. In this final round people were far more critical of the print quality and lighting techniques, and on reflection some of the images that had made it through the previous days judging were quickly dropped.

Surprisingly many of the celebrity portraits were eliminated in the last round, with only Tony Blair, Mary Archer, Nick Cave, Maggie Hambling and John Malkovich making the final shortlist. Given that our society is so obsessed with celebrities I had expected more famous faces to stay but it was reassuring to know that good portrait photography was at the top of everyone's agenda, rather than pandering to the public's desire for celebrity images.

There were a large number of pictures of children, which naturally pulled at the heartstrings, and the judges had the difficult task of making a balanced choice. Two pictures that the judges returned to again and again were *Lachie and Callum* by Victor Albrow and *2nd Birthday* by Roben Antoniewicz. The little redheaded girl in a pretty party dress by Antoniewicz seemed to mesmerise everyone and it came as no surprise when the judges voted it the winner.

Using a points system the four finalists were chosen, with *2nd Birthday* coming first, and *Lachie and Callum* a close second. The



© Nadav Kander

Interruption from the series *From Darkness into Light* by Nadav Kander | FOURTH PRIZE



© David Yeo

Brothers and Sisters from the series *Family members* by David Yeo | DELOITTE WINNER

THE JUDGES

Sandy Nairne *Director, National Portrait Gallery*

Terence Pepper *Curator of Photographs, National Portrait Gallery*

Ekow Eshun *Writer and Critic*

Amanda Hopkinson *Writer and Critic*

Alison Jackson *Artist*

Mary McCartney Donald *Photographer*

TUDOR GALLERIES REOPEN

Rooms 1, 2 and 3 | Second Floor

The Tudor Galleries were redesigned in 1999/2000 with the opening of the Ondaatje Wing, but their recent closure for essential maintenance provided an opportunity to reconsider the displays, which attract a large numbers of visitors year round. The galleries have been re-hung with a new display of portraits from this period including several newly conserved paintings. The National Portrait Gallery's Tudor portraits represent the best collection of early English paintings in the world and the impressive extent of the collection has meant that it is not possible to display all the early portraits in London. Since 1975 a partnership with the National Trust at Montacute House, a late Elizabethan country house has provided an impressive venue for the display of early pictures. The Galleries therefore display only some of the most important pictures from this period and closure has allowed us the opportunity to make some important changes.



From left to right: *Philip II* after Titian, 1555
Mary I by Hans Eworth, 1554

The idea behind the redisplay was to introduce some new faces and to explore how we might communicate increased historical and biographical information in accessible and informative ways. Therefore both the content and the display of the rooms have been reviewed and several new paintings have been brought out of storage or undergone conservation work for the occasion. The portrait of William Cecil, Lord Burghley for example has benefited from a careful programme of conservation treatment to remove old retouching, while two important portraits of Mary I and Philip II (shown above) have been cleaned to reveal exquisitely painted miniatures on wood and research on the origins of these smaller and intriguing panels is ongoing.

Those interested in the history of English literature will be pleased to hear that the Gallery's portrait of Geoffrey Chaucer is on show once again and that the portraits of William Shakespeare and Ben Jonson have been re-hung in the main Elizabethan room. We are also very fortunate to have on loan for a period of two years an important and extremely beautiful portrait of *Lady Anne Pope with her children*, an unusual family grouping by Marcus Gheeraerts, allowing us to show more women in the Gallery. Most of the paintings on display are of significant individuals, but a few portraits have been chosen for their ability to highlight an aspect of the history of representation in this period. A portrait of an unknown man dating from the 1590s has come on display after years in storage. The Gallery purchased the picture as image of the Jacobean courtier Sir Thomas Overbury, but it is now considered unlikely to represent him. The portrait provides an interesting



Lady Anne Pope with her children by Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger, 1596

example of the many more modest individuals who commissioned portraits in this period including lawyers, writers and young gentlemen of promise and ambition.

We have also undertaken changes to the appearance of the rooms, not least in improving the lighting. Visitors can now enjoy viewing the paintings in slightly brighter light and while still maintaining conservation standards the extra light makes the impressive level of detail, particularly in costume, jewellery and the backgrounds of pictures far easier to see. More space for both visitors and paintings has also been created.



Unknown man, formerly known as Sir Thomas Overbury by an unknown artist, c.1590–1600

The wonderful anamorphic portrait of Edward VI has been sited on a wall, rather than in the middle of the room, and the eye level reduced to accommodate the viewing needs of children.

Finally visitors can also enjoy new resources for the interpretation of pictures, including larger text panels and labels, which are also available in Braille.

Dr Tarnya Cooper
16th Century Curator

FACE TO FACE WITH THE WIVES OF HENRY VIII

Room 1 | Second Floor



From left to right: *Catherine of Aragon by an unknown artist, c.1530*
Anne Boleyn by an unknown artist, c.1533–36

I was at Hever Castle looking at the Tudor portraits in the course of my researches into the lives of Henry VIII's six wives; I was trailing rather unhappily in the wake of some raucous schoolchildren and trying to ignore them. Suddenly my attention was wrested away from the pictures by a boy's confident shout. 'That's her! The ugly one!'. His companion responded with equal certainty: 'That's right. She's dead ugly'. Obviously these children knew the story of Anne of Cleves and her rejection by Henry VIII for lack of physical attraction. The only trouble was they were looking at a picture of Anne Boleyn, the King's notoriously seductive second wife. The whole experience illustrated to me perfectly the fascinating gap between our modern experience of historical portraiture and the reaction at the time.

This gap is splendidly illuminated by the new display in the Tudor Galleries of three of the six wives; Catherine of Aragon, Anne Boleyn and Catherine Parr (the last wife). Taking them in their chronological order, Catherine of Aragon, the Spanish Habsburg princess, looks plump, stolid and not particularly pleasing; her trace of the projecting Habsburg lower lip hardly adding to her attraction. No wonder the king looked elsewhere!

But the sixteen year-old Catherine was, by all accounts, possessed of 'a sweet face' when she arrived in England. She had two features much prized by sixteenth century standards of beauty – a pink and white complexion and thick fair hair. She also seemed to radiate that health which promised great fertility. And that was the point. Catherine was being married for dynastic reasons, to shore up the dignity of the new Tudor dynasty with a dash of the grandest blood in Europe. What went wrong was not so much her weight problem – six years older than Henry, she inevitably reached middle age long before the King – but her inability to produce a male heir.

Anne Boleyn has a beguiling look to us, an air of exotic gypsy sexuality. Surely then she was rated a great beauty at the time. Far from it, her dark looks were despised by sixteenth century standards when a fair exterior was supposed to denote a fair soul. Anne's olive complexion and thick black hair were thought to denote trouble and there were many suggestions that Anne Boleyn was actually a witch. Her sparkling black eyes may even have squinted a little since there is a rude description of her as 'the goggle-eyed whore' – and as for the mouth, wide mouths were not admired, and to me at least in this picture Anne Boleyn is pursing hers! To Henry, however, she represented a new vivid love life and thus the possibility of a male heir.

As for Henry's last Queen, Catherine Parr, who survived him, here surely in this magnificent picture is a lovely woman in her own

right, with her broad forehead, her short nose, her pleasing, far apart eyes... She undoubtedly gets the beauty prize out of the three. On the contrary, there is an even greater disparity of image and perception with Catherine Parr. Even the rejected, homely Anne of Cleves said angrily of her: 'She is not nearly as beautiful as me!' – and no one contradicted her. The kindest verdict Catherine Parr got was 'lively' followed by 'kind'. But then of course Catherine Parr was old. Old that is by the standards of her time: she was thirty-one and twice widowed without children when Henry married her. And that is the biggest difference of all between our perception and theirs. We see a glorious picture of an extremely attractive young-ish woman. They saw a kindly widow-figure who would nurse the old, increasingly crippled King.

Lady Antonia Fraser



Catherine Parr attributed to Master John, c. 1545

SPECIAL OFFER FOR NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY SUPPORTERS

WINTER OFFER FROM THE GIFT SHOP

BELOW STAIRS: 400 YEARS OF SERVANTS' PORTRAITS

This Christmas the National Portrait Gallery Shop celebrates with an evocative collection of gifts inspired by the exhibition *Below Stairs: 400 Years of Servants' Portraits* (16 October 2003 – 11 January 2004). We invite you to indulge your nostalgia with our beautiful selection of domestic products ranging from beeswax and linen ware to elaborate feather dusters and pewter candlesticks.

Servants and their lives have long been a favourite topic in literature, film and theatre, from the novels of Jane Austen and Charles Dickens and Oscar-winning films *Remains of the Day* and *Gosford Park* to the recent BBC ONE drama series *Servants*. So for those who would rather spend their Christmas in an armchair than an apron we also offer a selection of related books, DVDs and videos.



Publication

A fully illustrated catalogue *Below Stairs: 400 Years of Servants' Portraits* by Giles Waterfield and Anne French accompanies the exhibition, with a foreword by Julian Fellowes and an essay by Matthew Craske. 212 pages, 160 illustrations (130 in colour), price £35 hardback (exclusive to Gallery), £25 paperback.

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FACE TO FACE

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Front cover image taken from forthcoming exhibition Cecil Beaton: Portraits from 5 February–31 May 2004

Marlene Dietrich by Cecil Beaton, 1935 © Courtesy Sotheby's

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