

# Face to Face

SUMMER 2007

National  
Portrait  
Gallery

My Favourite Portrait  
by Jeremy Paxman

BP Portrait Award  
2007

Daily Encounters:  
Photographs from  
Fleet Street

Devotional  
by Sonia Boyce



## From the Director



COVER AND ABOVE

**Joan Armatrading**

by Joel Andersen, 2003

© Joel Andersen

This photograph is part of  
*Devotional* on display in  
Room 37a from 16 June 2007.

This year's *BP Portrait Award* exhibition will be particularly intriguing after the change in the rules which no longer restricts the entrants to artists under forty. This has allowed a much wider range of artists to put themselves forward, and should enable the exhibition to be a fuller test of the *Zeitgeist* of what is happening in contemporary portraiture. A special prize for artists under thirty has been added, so we are still able to continue the tradition of nurturing younger talent. The judges make choices anonymously – having no idea who the artists are as they view each portrait – and as Chair of the judges I am very conscious of wanting to make sure that the very best and most telling portraits are carefully considered. Do come along and see whether you agree with the views of the judges and make up your own mind about what you believe is the best painted portrait this year.

The 'Devotional Series' by Sonia Boyce offers a fascinating view by a prominent British artist of some of the great black women soul singers of the twentieth century. The special installation by Boyce, devised with curator Eddie Otchere, pays homage to the great musical tradition created within the black African diaspora following the period of the transatlantic slave trade. As such this celebration complements the 'Portraits, People and Abolition' trail and display created with other events to mark the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the slave trade.

The newly acquired portrait of Thomas Paine is a reminder of the importance of the Gallery's ability to acquire – in this instance with help from Philip Mould, one of our Patrons – major works that illuminate different periods of British history. Paine is portrayed at the moment when he was at the centre of the complex and shifting politics of post-Revolutionary France.

As you will have seen in the last edition of *Face to Face* the growth of the Portrait Fund is the long-term approach for the Gallery to accumulate the resources to respond when really significant works become available. I make no apology in appealing to everyone who cares about the Gallery to give support to the Fund, whether now or through future provision. Do get in touch if you would like to know more about the Portrait Fund and its work.

*Daily Encounters*, the summer exhibition in the Porter Gallery, takes a journey into the world of Fleet Street and the way in which photographic images within newspapers have created the public face of people in the public eye. These are the portraits of the street, often capturing moments of triumph or despair. Such 'portraits' offer us – as readers – an immediacy to the news and its principal protagonists, but also become images that may last longer in the public imagination than the carefully posed photograph constructed in the studio. The exhibition follows two strands: the photographic images of the public figures and the story of the newspaper photographers, originally treated as the lowest level in the pecking order of the newspaper industry.

*Sandy Nairne*  
Sandy Nairne  
DIRECTOR

I LIKE THE PAINTINGS in Room 17 because the story that unfolds here is so amusing. The full-length portrait of George IV, painted when he was in his fifties but making him look like a man in his thirties, is so completely bogus that I find it very funny indeed. He is depicted as, I suppose, a Marshal of the army, in a red tunic and white breeches, boots, spurs, a marshal's hat, a sash, a sword. He really 'doth bestride the world like a Colossus' – which is what the artist has set out to do, to show him as a towering, imposing, commanding presence. The reality was that he was about twice the size of the figure who appears in that picture; he was disgustingly corpulent. I think *The Times* described him as a man who was always more at home with a girl and a drink than with a sermon and politics. And that was his approach to life. He makes a completely implausible military figure, because right alongside him there is a picture, I think rather a good picture actually, of the Duke of Wellington and another one of Nelson on the other side, and something about these two characters – I can't quite work out what it is – reveals that they are unmistakably military men. Whereas George is just as unmistakably not a military man. His nickname was the 'Prince of Whales' because he was so enormous. And he got so bamboozled by incessantly wearing military uniforms, of much greater grandeur than this one here, that he actually held forth at dinner with the Duke of Wellington and claimed to have taken part in a decisive cavalry charge at the Battle of Waterloo, to which Wellington replied, 'So you've often told me,



Sire'. His whole mind became addled by laudanum and drink, as his body completely went to seed. We get none of that in this picture: we get a portrait of a heroic figure.

**Jeremy Paxman**

EXTRACT FROM THE BBC RADIO FOUR SERIES *PORTRAITS*  
CELEBRATING THE GALLERY'S 150TH ANNIVERSARY

## MY FAVOURITE PORTRAIT

JEREMY PAXMAN



Jeremy Paxman has worked on many programmes from reporting on *Tonight* and *Panorama* to presenting the BBC's *Six O'clock News* and *Breakfast News*. Paxman joined the *Newsnight* team in 1989, and is now chairman of *University Challenge*. He was awarded Bafta's most prestigious award for current affairs in 1996 and 2000 and is currently writing a book on royalty and their complicated marriages.

LEFT  
King George IV (detail)  
after Sir Thomas Lawrence, 1815

ABOVE  
Jeremy Paxman  
by Cinnamon Heathcote-Drury, 2000  
© Cinnamon Heathcote-Drury

**ANTHONY CARO** is widely regarded as Britain's greatest living sculptor. From the early 1960s he has been a major, pioneering figure in the development of abstract sculpture. This is an area in which he continues to innovate, producing sculpture that tests the limits of expression, often using pieces of found scrap steel welded together in arrangements whose appeal is at once cerebral and sensuous.

Since the mid-1980s, Caro's work has proceeded on an ever-broadening front, achieving a remarkable diversity in a range of materials including bronze, lead, ceramic, stainless steel, silver, wood and paper. A little-known aspect of his refusal to be tied to a single way of working has been his occasional return to figurative imagery. Prior to his radical breakthrough to abstraction in 1960, the human figure was a principal preoccupation of Caro's art. During the last twenty years he has returned to this motif, making numerous drawings and sculptures that depict an observed model or sitter. Alongside his purely abstract works, Caro's output has included recognisable subjects such as the nude, as well as occasional portraits. The result has been a remarkable, liberated fertility of invention, of which he commented: 'I was willing to say, come on, let's open this up and use it in every way we can without feeling that we shouldn't do this. I felt much more freedom to experiment, freedom to try anything.'

From June onwards, there will be a unique opportunity to view a selection of Caro's figurative heads at the

National Portrait Gallery. Complementing an exhibition of new abstract work at Annelly Juda Fine Art, the artist has generously agreed to lend an important group of his portrait sculptures for display on the Balcony Gallery. These include two early bronze busts of Sheila, his wife, made in 1955. In their reductive treatment of the sitter's features, and emphasis on purely expressive, abstracted formal qualities, they demonstrate the artist's admiration for Matisse. These early heads of Sheila are complemented by more recent bronzes belonging to the late 1980s. In these extraordinary works, Caro revisited his earlier subject, finding new, radical solutions to the issue of resolving observed appearance with an expressive engagement with form and texture.

As the curator of Tate Britain's Caro retrospective in 2005, for reasons of space and clarity I elected to tell the story of this singular artist's work through a concise selection of his key abstract works. But even then it seemed to me that a fuller understanding of Caro's achievement called for an appreciation of his recent figurative work, much of which has remained unseen. The forthcoming display provides that insight, bringing into view an aspect of Caro's work that to some will appear initially to contradict the very basis on which his reputation rests. At a deeper level, however, Caro's portraits reveal a vital force of imagination – unconstrained by habit and undaunted by expectation.

**Paul Moorhouse**

20TH CENTURY CURATOR

## CARO PORTAITS

From 21 April 2007  
Balcony Gallery



ABOVE  
Portrait of Sheila I  
by Anthony Caro,  
1955  
Photographer: John Riddy  
© Barford Sculptures Ltd

## DAILY ENCOUNTERS

### PHOTOGRAPHS FROM FLEET STREET

5 July–21 October 2007

Porter Gallery  
Admission charge

Supported by the  
Patrons of the National  
Portrait Gallery



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT

**Ronald Kray toasting Reggie Kray and Francis Shae at their wedding**

by Norman Potter, 1965  
© Getty Images

**Margaret Thatcher carrying a portrait of Edward Heath**

by Paul Delma, 21 February 1973  
© Getty Images

**The Sex Pistols, London**

by Peter Vernon,  
2 December 1976  
© Getty Images

**NEWSPAPER PHOTOGRAPHS** can be both profound and profane. While many fail to register beyond the first glance, there are others that shock, surprise and amuse us, lingering in our collective memories long after the editions that first carried them have been separated out and consigned for recycling.

In many ways the newspaper photograph is the very antithesis of the National Portrait Gallery's stock-in-trade, the negotiated magazine studio portrait and the gilded framed canvas. Press photographs, invariably lit up by a sunburst of harsh flash, present an altogether less forgiving gallery of portraits. And yet mention any one of the most celebrated personalities from recent British history and we are as likely to remember a grainy newspaper image as we are a colour-saturated Beatonesque pose from the pages of *Vogue* or *Vanity Fair*. The truth is that public iconography, for over a hundred years the near-exclusive preserve of photography, is a seamless weave of hard news imagery and the softer profile of commissioned magazine portraiture tempered with the flickering memory of television and film clips.

The exhibition *Daily Encounters* sets out to reposition the press photograph within the domain of the Gallery while relating the story of newspaper photography as one very particular strand of Fleet Street journalism. It covers the period from photography's first appearance in newspapers in the early years of the twentieth century through to the demise of Fleet Street in the mid-1980s triggered by festering industrial disputes and News International's overnight decampment to new presses in Wapping. The selected photographs plot the arc of eighty years of history while the narrative is inexorably drawn towards the tussle over the iconography of public figures, both the politically established and the transiently famous. The staple diet of the popular press quickly emerges: royalty, politicians and sports stars, spiced by the added relish of vice girls, acid-bath murderers and big-time pools winners. But lurking in the shadows are the real stars of the exhibition, the press photographers themselves.

Press photography rapidly emerged as a new form of trade following the appearance of the relaunched *Daily Mirror* as the world's first photographically illustrated newspaper in January 1904. Reproducing photographs in newspapers had been made possible



by the invention of the half-tone print process in the late nineteenth century. First attempted by the *New York Daily Graphic* in 1880, it was not widely applied until the 1900s, after which it became an essential ingredient of the popular press. The first incarnation of the *Daily Mirror* had appeared in 1903 as a paper edited by women for women and launched with a free promotional hand mirror. The brainchild of that prototype press baron, Alfred Harmsworth, it crashed spectacularly, nose-diving from a first-day circulation of 276,000 to a low of 24,801. Harmsworth drafted in an army of tried and trusted male newspaper hacks to salvage the title and try out something different. The team was led by the editor Hamilton Fyfe, whose first job was to brush aside the presents and notes left on his desk begging to be retained and sack the women staff who had put them there. Betraying something of the sexual politics of the time, he described the experience with unconcealed relish as 'like drowning kittens in a sack'. Foremost amongst his team was Hannen Swaffer, charged with redesigning

the paper and incorporating photography into the mix. In the introduction to the autobiography of the leading newspaper photographer James Jarché, published in 1934 as *People I Have Shot*, Swaffer, billed as the first art editor on Fleet Street, recalled how 'a new species of being had invaded Fleet Street. In those [early] days, the press photographer was regarded as an animal almost beneath contempt. Where he had come from, nobody knew. Often he had owned a small business as a photographer somewhere in the suburbs, one he had thrown up for the high adventure of Fleet Street.'

With modest wages but generous expense accounts, the possibility of travel and unprecedented access to key public figures and decisive moments of history, press photographers began to style themselves as social chancers driven by competition and fuelled by intrigue. They swapped gossip, moved from agency to agency and alternated between hunting in packs and working alone in search of the ever-elusive scoop.

In the first decade of the twentieth century a mixture of established and new titles adopted photography as their own and crowded into the market. These included the *Daily Mail*, the *Daily Express*, the *Daily Chronicle* and the *Daily Herald* (founded in 1912 by a partnership of trade unionists and socialists and later reborn as the *Sun*). The titles catered for the tastes of a newly literate mass audience. In Britain, the Elementary Education Act of 1870 was the first in a sequence of education reforms that created universal schooling and with it a new generation equipped with the basic skills of literacy. The blend of photographs, headlines and clearly written copy proved a potent mix, and circulation among the broad swathe of wage earners rose steadily. Press images became some of the most socially inclusive forms of photography, counterpointing photographs of celebrities and the ruling aristocracy with those of ordinary people, often made by photographers of their own social class.

Newspaper photography, swelling in frequency and scope and smuggling in occasional gems hidden in the routine luggage, was quickly changing the opinions



LEFT FROM TOP  
**Mandy Rice-Davies and Christine Keeler leaving the Old Bailey, London**  
*Evening Standard*, 22 July 1963  
 © Getty Images



**Lady Diana Spencer and the press**  
 by Ian Tyas, 13 May 1980  
 © Getty Images

and tastes of a mass audience. It is a view endorsed by the historian Eric Hobsbawm, who wrote: 'For the twentieth century, it was increasingly clear, was the century of the common people, and dominated by the arts produced by and for them. And two linked instruments made the world of the common man visible as never before and capable of documentation: reportage and the camera.'

Cecil Beaton, that arch snob of British photography, once sacked by American *Vogue* for making anti-Semitic scribbles in the margins of a commissioned illustration, was forever seeking to distance himself from the rank and file 'pressman'. In his diaries of the Second World War he recounted how, when documenting the impact of the Blitz on London, he had carefully framed St Paul's in the smoke and ruins of a burnt-out shop: 'Through the arch could be seen, rising mysteriously from the splintered masonry and smoke, the twin towers of the cathedral. It was necessary to squat to get the archway framing the picture. I squatted. A press photographer watched me and when I gave a surly look, slunk away.' Added to this imagined insult came professional injury, for when Beaton returned 'from lunch with my publisher, my morning's pictures still undeveloped in my overcoat pocket, I found the press photographer's picture was already on the front page of the *Evening News*'.

Now that Beaton has once again been wrapped away in tissue for another generation, perhaps it's time to welcome from out of the shadows the humble press photographer.



ABOVE  
**Alfred Hitchcock with news of another necktie strangling**  
*Evening Standard*, July 1971  
 © Getty Images

LEFT  
**Winston Churchill and Brendan Bracken surveying bomb damage, London**  
*Keystone Press*, 11 May 1941  
 © Getty Images

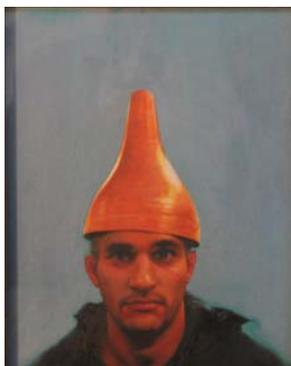
**Roger Hargreaves**  
 EXHIBITION CURATOR

## BP PORTRAIT AWARD 2007

14 June–16 September 2007

Wolfson Gallery  
Admission free

Supported by BP



ABOVE FROM TOP

**Kaveh, age 31**

by Maryam Foroozanfar  
© Maryam Foroozanfar

**Katy Does it While Baking  
A Cake**

by Morgan Penn  
© Morgan Penn

RIGHT

**Untitled**

by Diarmuid Kelley  
© Diarmuid Kelley

PIM BAXTER, COMMUNICATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR, INTERVIEWS DES VIOLARIS, HEAD OF SPONSORSHIP AND CULTURE AT BP

### **PB: What inspired this year's rule change to remove the upper age limit?**

DV: Each year the entry figures have been increasing and the success of the exhibition growing, with 2006 seeing the highest visitor figures ever – 197,687. It was felt that the original purpose of encouraging figurative art in younger artists had been well and truly achieved and that it was time to open up the Award to a wider age range. Many individuals take up painting at a later age and by opening up the rules we would make the BP Portrait Award more accessible.

### **What impact has this had on this year's Award?**

We have already seen increased entry figures. Last year there were 1,113 entries and this year over 1,700. The change has given artists over the age of forty the opportunity to take part and to have their work recognised.

### **What are the benefits for BP of a long relationship with the National Portrait Gallery?**

A sustainable relationship means that both partners have been able to understand and build on each other's objectives, and this has made the *BP Portrait Award* what it is today. Over the years there have been significant changes, such as the introduction of the Travel Award and the increase in the First Prize money from £10,000 to £25,000. BP's arts sponsorship strategy is based on long-term relationships and we particularly focus on four institutions – the National Portrait Gallery being one of them – some of which we have supported since 1980. Our support of the BP Portrait Award began in 1990 and we have just renewed the sponsorship for a further five years, taking it to 2011, which demonstrates our commitment to this excellent Award.

### **How do your employees respond to the Award?**

Our UK-based employees are very enthusiastic. We hold a Private View each year in London and in

Scotland, usually Aberdeen, but the *BP Portrait Award* has also been shown in Edinburgh. When we send out our email with details of the Private View date the response is so immediate that we are oversubscribed within minutes. We get a lot of positive feedback from those employees who have seen the exhibition. There is a general feeling of awareness because of the excellent marketing campaign put in place by the Gallery. We often do features about the Award in our in-house magazine, and are keen to expose it both internally and externally to promote awareness of the partnership.

### **What element does the Travel Award add to the overall package?**

It has been particularly interesting for me to see how the Travel Award has gone from strength to strength. It allows artists chosen for the exhibition to develop an area of their work that they might not otherwise have been able to afford, and in many cases to experience different cultures. The range of ideas submitted is always fascinating.

### **How easy is it working with the other judges?**

I am involved in the judging panel for both Awards, and, like anything you judge, much always depends on the individual characters of the judges and the chemistry that develops when you start the judging process. For the Portrait Award I have been a judge five times and find it very rewarding, particularly hearing the different viewpoints from fellow judges, who nearly always include another artist and often a journalist. There is a lot of debate, which gives the opportunity to understand why someone feels passionately about a certain portrait. I have at times changed my initial selection following the often intense and certainly expert discussion with fellow jurors. It is instructive to see how the judges can influence each other. The one thing we all have in common is a passion for the art form, and that comes through very clearly during the course of the day.

### **What do you look for in the portraits?**

Beautifully painted subject-matter that speaks to me, that I can relate to. I want to feel that I could go away and write a short story about the sitter in the painting, and even possibly their connection to the artist.

### **What have you enjoyed the most?**

Getting to know so many artists and seeing what a difference the *BP Portrait Award* has made to their careers. Last year's winner, for example, Andrew Tift, had entered ten times and been short-listed four times. The work that won him the Award was quite different in approach, and it has been so interesting to see how he has developed over the years. I admire the modesty of the artists – they are not at all big-headed and they continue to be quite grounded, even though many of them go on to a position of being able to command high fees. I feel privileged to have met them, to have developed friendships, and I am particularly delighted with the National Portrait Gallery's role in affording them the opportunities to develop their careers. There is a real feeling, when many of the artists come together for openings or special occasions, of being part of a close-knit group. And one of the things I would like to see for the future is to develop the idea of a proper alumni group.





## ACCOMPANYING AN EXHIBITION WORLD'S MOST PHOTOGRAPHED ON TOUR

LEFT  
Recently rediscovered remnants of the original frame for the picture *The purple noon's transparent might* painted by Arthur Streeton in 1896. To be shown in the exhibition *Australian Impressionism* at the NGV, 31 March to 8 July 2007. John Payne (Acting Chief Conservator) and Holly McGowan-Jackson (Senior Conservator of Frames and Furniture) prepare to make a silicone rubber mould of the ornament.

**DURING DECEMBER 2006** I found myself in the enviable position of acting as courier of the photographic exhibition *The World's Most Photographed* to Bendigo Art Gallery in Victoria, Australia. The exhibition was shown at the National Portrait Gallery during 2005 and subsequently toured to Museum Ludwig, Cologne, from 2 February to 1 May and then to Sunderland Museum and Winter Gardens from 30 September to 19 November 2006. Bendigo Art Gallery was founded in 1887 and is one of Australia's oldest and largest regional art galleries. Its collections include Australian art from the 1850s to the present day, a special collection of art from the Bendigo goldfields, and nineteenth-century European paintings, sculpture and decorative arts. While in Australia the show would move from Bendigo to Newcastle Regional Art Gallery, New South Wales. Although the prime reason for my trip to Australia was to act as courier for the exhibition, I took the opportunity to arrange a visit to the Frames and Furniture Conservation Department at the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne.

In essence, the job of courier involves accompanying the crated works from beginning to end of their journey and generally being on hand with a watchful eye to ensure that they are handled sensitively. On the day of departure I travelled by truck with the works to Heathrow and witnessed the crates being put on to pallets in preparation for air travel. Twenty-three hours and one refuelling stop at Singapore later, I touched down at Melbourne, at 6am local time. By 8am the crates and I were on a truck ready for the two-hour journey to Bendigo.

On arrival the crates were moved into the exhibition space for acclimatisation over the weekend. Under my supervision, they were opened on the Monday morning and I checked the condition of the works alongside a member of the Bendigo Art Gallery curatorial staff. This checking took two days. I then

spent the better part of another two days assisting the Bendigo technicians with the hanging of the works.

With the show up on the wall I headed back to Melbourne for my appointment at the National Gallery of Victoria. NGV International has recently undergone four years of renovations, reopening in December 2003. The majority of the displays focus on the permanent collection, which spans European, Asian, Oceanic and American art. The temporary displays are eclectic and, at the time of my visit, included an exhibition on Tezuka Osamu, artist of the Japanese Manga movement; an exhibition entitled *After Image: Social Documentary Photography in the 20th Century* and another called *Sneakers: Classics to Customs*.

At the NGV I met Holly McGowan-Jackson, Senior Conservator of Frames. Holly showed me around the recently refurbished Frames and Furniture Conservation Studio and ran through some of the treatments that she and her colleagues were currently carrying out. She took me up into the gallery spaces to look at more frames of interest and at particular projects that had passed through the Frame Conservation Studio. Despite being polar opposites in geographical terms the NGV, like the National Portrait Gallery, has an exceptional collection of English frames, and indeed Holly and her colleagues come across exactly the same sort of challenges and problems that we face in Frame Conservation in London. Despite the huge distances involved I was particularly struck by the strong links that she and her colleagues maintain with European-based conservators and suppliers. This collaboration has given me some valuable and interesting insights. Now that we have met, we hope to continue the exchange of ideas and information.

**Stuart Ager**

ASSISTANT HEAD OF FRAME CONSERVATION

## DEVOTIONAL BY SONIA BOYCE

From 16 June 2007

Room 37a

Admission free

Supported by The Esmée  
Fairbairn Foundation

RIGHT  
**Mica Paris**  
by Derrick Santini, 2001

BELOW FROM TOP  
**Floetry**  
by Anthony Mandler, 2005  
© Anthony Mandler

**Janet Kay**  
by Andy Earl, 1997  
© Andy Earl



**THIS SUMMER**, Room 37a will house the most recent incarnation of a body of work conceived and developed by Sonia Boyce – an elaborately hand-drawn installation on the gallery walls: a veritable roll call of some one hundred and eighty names. Using written text as a visual experience as well as alluding to an aural experience, the *Devotional Series* marks the evolution of Boyce's exploration of sound as memory, and as a collective portrait of black women in British music, all brought together within the context of her visual arts practice. For the first time, this particular incarnation of *Devotional* includes nineteen photographic portraits of the sitters in the series, from the National Portrait Gallery's own collection. As a body of work, the *Devotional Series* is a mutable concept, continually re-designing itself to embody aspects of its host, in this case our photographic collection. The names themselves have been acquired through the assistance of members of the general public who have recalled these performers and added them to the *Devotional* list. As the culmination of a decade of gathering, Sonia will tailor this new piece as a unique appraisal of the series so far.

Over the last decade Sonia Boyce's work has expanded to incorporate a new realm beyond the purely visual and the singular pursuit of an artistic practice to one that encourages the involvement of others. Beginning with *Tongues*: four photographic portraits of tongues projected from mouths wide open, here Boyce ventures into the realm of finding a voice, of articulation and the power of speech and its various expressions. She photographed these tongues in intimate detail, their muscular organs captured in that moment of producing a sound. This tentative exploration began as a series of vocal exercises and grew into the symbolic value we place on sound as a container for memory. The experiment that began as a photographic record, led her to consider all aspects of sound, including the music that she grew up with in the late 1970s. More precisely, she explored the 1970s dance hall phenomenon of Lovers' Rock, the 'black British sound of seduction'. Boyce approached this period with all the sentiment of a lovesick schoolgirl – she cites and recited *Hurts So Good* by Susan Cadogan (one of the seminal female figures working in this reggae genre), who poignantly reveals the bittersweet nature of Lovers' Rock as a lush,

soothing and syncopated rhythmic style against the harsher sado-masochistic narrative of this particular torch song. She turned the song into a wallpaper piece: embossing the lyrics onto the paper and pasting it to the gallery walls. It filled six lengths of wallpaper as the lyrics made their way around the room, and as the words became Pavlovian. The idea was to let the words play themselves out in the audience's head, triggering remembered moments, a troubling mood and maybe for those already familiar, the melody itself.

This process of exploring collective memories through words evolved and mutated in 1999, when Sonia pioneered a workshop for the Motherlode project with the Foundation for Art and Creative Technology (FACT) in Liverpool. The intervention began with a group of women from Liverpool, brought together to sing and recall the first record they ever bought. As the group formed a bond they started to research and build a collective map of black women in the British music industry. This allowed Sonia to establish the last aspect of her intervention, which was simply this: recall a black British singer. Unexpectedly, those involved in answering this question grew like a chain-reaction beyond the participants involved in the workshop, as other, unsolicited contributors started to add their favoured artists to the list. And it became clear that this process was becoming a diverse and collaborative act of memory building. The first name to be nominated was Shirley Bassey and from that the *Devotional Series* began.

Today the list contains over 180 names and has been produced twice: both lists (*Devotional* and *Devotional 2*) belong now to the Government Art Collection. The lists have come to represent so much more: at once, recognising the creativity of black women who have contributed their lives to the musical vernacular of Great Britain, while at the same time attacking the process of historical erasure that consumes black contributions to Western society. Each name celebrates an icon; each icon triggers a song; and each song a moment that is as significant to a personal memory as it is to a generation's collective memory. Ranging from the infamous to the unsung, from the early part of the twentieth century to the present, the *Devotional Series* is a group portrait that upholds the existence, the pleasures and the persistence of women who choose to sing.

Sonia Boyce is a British artist of African-Caribbean descent, living and working in London. Her early pastel drawings and photographic collages address issues of race, ethnicity and contemporary urban experience, questioning racial stereotypes in the media and in day-to-day life. Most recently her work has shifted to incorporate a variety of media that combine photographs, collages, films, prints, drawings, installation and sound. Sonia has worked with other people in what she likes to call 'improvised collaborations', bringing the audience into sharper focus as an integral part of the creative process and demonstrating how cultural difference might be articulated, mediated and enjoyed.

**Eddie Otchere**

INSPIRE FELLOW ASSISTANT CONTEMPORARY CURATOR



## SIR LESLIE STEPHEN BY G.F. WATTS

A THREE YEAR  
LOAN TO THE  
GALLERY

Until December 2007

Room 26 showcase

RIGHT

**Sir Leslie Stephen**  
by G.F. Watts, 1878

BELOW FROM TOP

**Sir Leslie Stephen**

by Sir William Rothenstein,  
1903

**Virginia Woolf and Sir Leslie  
Stephen**

by George Charles Beresford,  
1902



ON 16 JANUARY 1878, Leslie Stephen (1832–1904) crossed the Solent to stay at the home of the artist George Frederic Watts in Freshwater on the Isle of Wight. It was no coincidence that Stephen's trip coincided with a visit by the celebrated beauty Julia Duckworth. Barely a week earlier she had accepted Stephen's proposal of marriage, and they were making plans for a spring wedding. The following day, while Julia attended to her ailing uncle, Stephen was painted by Watts. The portrait was reportedly finished in a single sitting and the remarkable speed and fluency of execution are strikingly evident.

The painting was presented to Julia as a wedding gift – the marriage produced four children, including Virginia Woolf and Vanessa Bell. The portrait's introspective tone may not equate with modern ideas of matrimonial gaiety, but it seems characteristic of the sitter's personality. A contemporary critic described Stephen's appearance as painted by Watts: 'critical yet deprecating, sarcastic and mournful, fastidious, thoughtful and Bohemian: not one who ranks either himself or others very high, or expects much from a life that appears to him full of errors of taste, weaknesses of intellect, and futilities of aim'.

The painting remains in the collection of Stephen's descendants but has been lent to the Gallery for, what, we believe to be its first public display. The loan enables us to view Leslie Stephen alongside contemporaries, such as William Morris and John Stuart Mill, who were also portrayed by the artist. Watts believed in the historical importance of his age and set out to produce a 'Hall of Fame' of Britain's most eminent intellectuals. Although Stephen's portrait was not originally painted for the series, its inclusion here is fitting.

As an author and literary critic, Stephen played a major role in late Victorian society. His publications range from biographies of Samuel Johnson and Alexander Pope to philosophical works such as *Social Rights and Duties* (1896). Unusually, his literary distinction was matched by an equally respected status as a mountaineer.

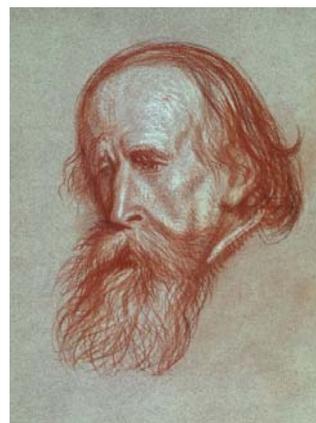
Although illness and overwork made him prematurely frail, his intellectual vitality never diminished.

Stephen wrote prolifically on a breadth of subjects but all his work revealed a strong sense of moral responsibility. He was appalled by slavery and actively supported the North in the American Civil War. He was briefly a priest but renounced his order and, controversially, described his loss of faith in *An Agnostic's Apology* (1893). As editor of the *Cornhill* magazine (1871–82), he cultivated a generation of writers, including Thomas Hardy, Robert Louis Stevenson and Henry James. Perhaps most importantly, he was a biographer of concision and flare, distinct from his often over-reverential contemporaries. His crowning achievement came as the first editor of the *Dictionary of National Biography* (DNB), which, at sixty-three volumes, was a literary project of unprecedented ambition.

Stephen stepped down as editor of the DNB in 1891 after six exhausting years. He called it 'a very laborious and a very worrying piece of work ... a marked success in a literary sense but very much the contrary in a financial point of view'. Honorary degrees, presidency of the London Library and a knighthood followed. In 1896 he was elected to the Board of Trustees of the National Portrait Gallery – an institution that shared the DNB's goal of promoting a collective sense of national culture. The close affinity between the DNB and the Gallery has continued. The revised *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004) was published with 10,000 portrait illustrations, researched and selected in collaboration with the Gallery.

A temporary display, including photographs by Julia Margaret Cameron and George Beresford and a chalk drawing by William Rothenstein (shown below), is mounted alongside the loaned portrait until 9 December.

**Rab MacGibbon**  
ASSISTANT CURATOR



**THOMAS PAINE (1737–1809)** is hailed as one of the fathers of modern democracy. His *The Rights of Man* (1791), published at the start of the French Revolution, was successful but hugely controversial. It promoted the idea of human rights – the right to representative government, freedom of speech and religious belief. This argument has had a profound and enduring influence on generations of political thinkers: the European Convention on Human Rights is just one example of Paine’s lasting impact. At the time, however, the British government and press were scandalised and Paine fled to France, seen off by a hostile mob.

The Gallery has been searching for a contemporary portrait of Thomas Paine since its foundation. It is therefore fitting that during our 150th Anniversary year, we have finally been able to acquire this portrait by Laurent Dabos, a French artist from Toulouse. It was probably painted on one of Paine’s visits to Paris between 1791 and 1792 to supervise the translation of *The Rights of Man*. Paine’s sober costume reflects a style that was popular among the members of the revolutionary French National Assembly. As a keen supporter of the French Revolution and American War

of Independence, he was given the key of the Bastille prison to take to George Washington, a personal friend. His involvement in French politics was given formal recognition in 1792 when he was appointed representative for Calais at the newly formed National Convention.

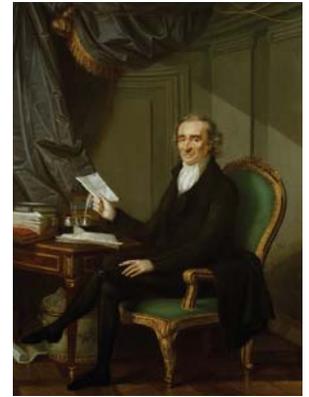
Nineteenth-century correspondence suggests that Dabos may have painted another copy of this portrait which ended up in America as part of a series of twelve portraits of Revolutionary leaders. These have yet to be traced, but their existence reflects Paine’s extraordinary international reputation, which continues in Britain and the United States to this day.

The portrait came up at auction last year and was purchased with kind assistance from Philip Mould Ltd. It has recently been conserved and cleaned and goes on display in Room 18 on 15 June, where Paine will be displayed alongside his radical supporters – Mary Wollstonecraft and William Godwin.

**Lucy Peltz** 18TH CENTURY CURATOR and  
**Clare Barlow** 18TH CENTURY RESEARCH ASSOCIATE

## A RADICAL NEW ACQUISITION THOMAS PAINE

From 15 June 2007  
Room 18



ABOVE  
**Thomas Paine**  
by Laurent Dabos, c.1791–2

**THIS DISPLAY RECAPTURES** the golden age of British television and radio light entertainment. The group of caricatures, a recent acquisition, represents popular comedians and broadcasters of the 1960s and 70s. It also includes politicians and businessmen who, like the entertainers, were becoming ‘media personalities’.

Fantoni’s involvement in the media world of the 1960s gave him a unique perspective when creating these portraits. After studying Fine Art at Camberwell School of Art, Fantoni joined the staff of the magazine *Private Eye* as cartoonist and columnist. He also wrote scripts for the BBC’s groundbreaking satirical show *That Was the Week That Was*. In 1966 he became a television star himself, hosting the fashion and music programme *A Whole Scene Going On*, where Twiggy made her television debut, and for which he was voted Television Personality of the Year.

Fantoni worked as a caricaturist for the *Radio Times* from the mid-1960s. Founded in the 1923 to preview BBC radio programmes, it incorporated television listings in the early 1950s. From its conception, the *Radio Times* was a showcase for the finest contemporary illustrators and Fantoni joined an illustrious pantheon of artists, including William Heath Robinson, Edward Ardizzone and Ronald Searle, who provided drawings for the magazine. Although photographic stills from television programmes were beginning to replace illustration by the time Fantoni was employed, caricatures were considered to be a potent alternative to the obsequious photographic portrait. Fantoni’s style eschews extreme distortion, but subtly exaggerates features whilst adhering closely to the sitter’s literal appearance.

Working from standard black and white publicity shots, Fantoni was required to produce finished artwork in a single day. He often knew very little about the shows or their stars, and there were no preview tapes. Fortunately,



the comedy programme *The Two Ronnies* had been running for four years when he created the double portrait of its stars for the *Radio Times* in 1976, and he was able to provide a witty observation of their relationship. Colour printing, introduced to the *Radio Times* in 1960, was expensive and only used occasionally, and Fantoni’s ‘cut-out-doll’ feature, illustrating the many guises of comedian Dick Emery, was part of an eight-page special promoting the BBC’s new season.

Fantoni worked as cartoonist for the BBC’s other entertainment magazine, *The Listener*, for two decades from 1968. Until 1990 *The Listener* was ‘the BBC’s literary weekly’, and included reviews and arts-related articles. Many of the caricatures in this display were created as part of a series of profiles of the ‘face behind the voice’. The BBC launched the pop music channel Radio One in September 1967, and one of Fantoni’s earliest commissions was a caricature of Tony Blackburn, its first DJ. These caricatures provide a fascinating insight into the importance of illustration during this period in creating and popularising these media personalities.

**Rosie Broadley**  
ASSISTANT CURATOR

## CARICATURES BY BARRY FANTONI

From 23 June 2007  
Room 31 showcase

LEFT  
**The Two Ronnies**  
by Barry Fantoni,  
1976

BELOW  
**Dick Emery**  
by Barry Fantoni



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#### Face to Face Issue 21

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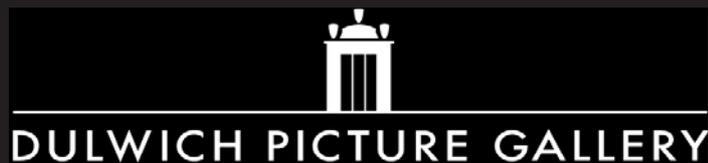
Designer

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