The Queen: Art and Image

BP Portrait Award 2012

My Favourite Portrait by Dr Gus Casely-Hayford
COVER AND BELOW

Queen Elizabeth II
by Dorothy Wilding (hand-coloured by Beatrice Johnson), 1952
© William Hustler and Georgina Hustler/
National Portrait Gallery, London

This portrait will feature in the exhibition The Queen: Art and Image from 17 May until 21 October 2012 in the Porter Gallery
FROM THE DIRECTOR

**THIS SUMMER** the Gallery presents *The Queen: Art and Image*, an exhibition specially created to mark The Queen’s Diamond Jubilee. Bringing together around sixty of the most remarkable images of Elizabeth II made during her sixty-year reign, the exhibition includes formal painted portraits and commissioned photographs, alongside press images and works by celebrated contemporary artists. On pages 7 to 11 exhibition curator Paul Moorhouse explores how *The Queen: Art and Image* charts the evolving representation of one of the most portrayed people of all time.

On display in the Wolfson Gallery this summer is the *BP Portrait Award 2012*. Nicola Kalinsky, one of the judges of this year’s award, takes a behind-the-scenes look at the work involved in judging this annual competition on page 4, and on page 5 we hear from Jo Fraser, winner of the *BP Travel Award 2011*, about her experience of working on new portraits in Peru for this year’s exhibition. Former *BP Portrait Award* winner Jane Allison writes about the Gallery’s ongoing *BP Portrait Award: Next Generation* project on page 6, and considers the importance of this initiative in encouraging young portrait painters.

To complement these two exhibitions, a range of free displays from the Collection is on show throughout the Gallery. On page 3, Curator Charlotte Bolland writes about *Double Take*, part of the Gallery’s ongoing *Making Art in Tudor Britain* research project, which brings together five pairs of near-identical portraits in order to explore how and why multiple versions and copies of portraits were made in the sixteenth century. Jan Marsh, Curator and Researcher, looks back over the life of composer Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, voted among the 100 Great Black Britons and the subject of a new Gallery display, on page 16. On pages 12 and 13 Assistant Curator Inga Fraser describes *Poetry of Motion*, a display of sculpture, new media, painted and photographic works from the Collection which explores the ways in which contemporary artists have sought to represent athletes and those for whom physical movement is paramount.

Lastly, to celebrate the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, the Gallery unveils the final exhibition in the *National Portrait Gallery/BT Road to 2012* project this July. David Mercer, BT Group Head of Design, considers his favourite photograph from this three-year Cultural Olympiad commissioning project on page 14, while on page 15 Photographs Commissions Manager Anne Braybon introduces the works in *Road to 2012: Aiming High*. 

Sandy Nairne  
DIRECTOR
advances were reshaping ideas. And these two friends – painter and subject – dominated their respective disciplines. Their obvious closeness, and their shared understanding of the potential of the moment that they were living through, contribute to making the image particularly special. It is not just a portrait of a single man, but of a period of fundamental change. These are men who are part of a generation prepared to think ambitiously and return the stare of infinity.

But somehow what these dark eyes reflect is not the ambient confidence of the Enlightenment. Johnson’s right hand barely grips the quill, the sinews of his left hand seem to be tautening. He is assured and yet modestly questioning. You can imagine him, brilliant, eloquent and inspirational, but you might also discern a man who has suffered from bouts of crippling depression and self-doubt. This is not a portrait of a blindly driven man. It is the moment of reflective inspiration of the diffident genius. Johnson is, if anything, vulnerable, reflecting falteringly, almost wistfully, on what might be. Reynolds understood that, and saw that fragility as something to respect. The challenges of the age were not to be met with arrogance, but by measured reflection.

There is often a price paid for brilliance, and in this portrait of Dr Samuel Johnson, Joshua Reynolds reflects on what the nature of that price might be. In an age before psychoanalysis, Reynolds deploys painting techniques honed on his travels in Europe to delve into the inner landscape of one of the great minds of mid-eighteenth-century London. It is a carefully crafted examination of how the light from a single window reaches gingerly into Dr Johnson’s study to lift his gaze, but what is revealed is not just a returned stare. Johnson looks back towards the light, out through the window, not at a particular object, but to something beyond the horizon; what is laid bare is the inner man.

The painting was made in the mid-1750s when Reynolds was at his most experimental and Johnson had just completed his Dictionary of the English Language. It was a period when intellectual and technological
**DOUBLE TAKE: VERSIONS AND COPIES OF TUDOR PORTRAITS**

by Charlotte Bolland

Making Art in Tudor Britain Project Curator

ONE OF THE CHARACTERISTICS of sixteenth-century portraiture is that numerous copies and versions of portraits depicting the same sitter in the same position were produced by artists’ studios. These were made, often over a period of many years, in order to supply the market with images of popular sitters, such as monarchs and influential courtiers.

*Double Take* uses research undertaken as part of the *Making Art in Tudor Britain* project to explore the means by which these works were made. Five portraits of prominent Tudor sitters from the Gallery’s Collection, Henry VIII, Anne Boleyn, Archbishop William Warham, the merchant Thomas Gresham and Lord Treasurer Thomas Sackville, are paired with near-identical portraits that have been generously loaned from other collections.

Technical analysis has allowed for close comparison to be made between each of the paired portraits, revealing which of them could be termed contemporary versions, and which are later copies. For example, dendrochronology can be used to date the wood from which paintings on panel are constructed, infrared reflectography can reveal the preparatory stages of drawing and the extent to which a pattern may have been used, while x-ray and photomicroscopy reveal the changes, or *pentimenti*, that occurred during the painting process and also the brushstrokes and technique of the artist. Taken together, the results of this analysis reveal the pragmatism at the heart of the sixteenth-century artist’s workshop, for although access to sitters was often limited, the demand for their portraits remained high.

**BELOW FROM LEFT**

William Warham after Hans Holbein the Younger, early 17th century

William Warham by unknown artist, c.1570s–80s

Lambeth Palace, by kind permission of the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Church Commissioners
THE BP PORTRAIT AWARD attracts thousands of submissions and the judges have the daunting task of choosing no more than sixty works for the exhibition. I’d hung the BP Portrait Award on several occasions and often wondered how this process worked, so I was thrilled to be invited to join the 2012 judging panel.

The first day of judging was spent looking at every single portrait. Each work is subject to brief but intense scrutiny from the panel, which also included sculptor Martin Jennings, cultural historian Dr Gus Casely-Hayford, Gallery Director Sandy Nairne, Sarah Howgate, Contemporary Curator, and Des Violaris, Director, UK Arts & Culture BP.

What made any portrait, among so many, stand out? Sometimes it was complexity and ambition, sometimes it was understatement and reticence, but every portrait that was ‘stopped’ (around 300 out of approximately 3,000) had visual qualities that communicated the specificity of its sitter. It was an intense experience and exceptionally enjoyable. It’s quite rare for a curator to spend all day looking at art – we are usually, much like everyone else, transfixed by computer screens or corralled in meetings. It reminded me just how much pleasure there is in simply looking.

The collaborative nature of judging was stimulating, particularly on the second day as we whittled the selection down to fifty-five portraits. Discussions began, and we argued passionately for those portraits to which we felt particularly drawn and listened to each other’s reactions and reasons. Some portraits seemed even stronger when seen again, while others no longer spoke so convincingly. I was reminded of another underrated pleasure, that of making art the focus of our interaction as sociable human beings. I’m confident that visitors are going to experience these very particular pleasures as they too look at and discuss the painted portrait in the BP Portrait Award 2012.
IN SEPTEMBER 2011 I travelled to the mountains of the Patacancha Valley in Peru to spend some time with the people of an impoverished Quechua weaving community.

It was the geometric aesthetic of Andean hand-weaving that first drew me to communities such as this, and that led to an affection for the weavers, for whom the allegorical symbolism within their designs, and the ritualistic purposes for which they are created, is very important.

I initiated a connection with Awamaki, a small Peruvian non-governmental organisation (NGO) which works directly with two impoverished weaving communities in the Patacancha Valley to protect an endangered textile tradition by providing women with access to market. In discussions with Awamaki it was agreed that, for the purpose of my work, I could stay within the community of Patacancha. Namesake of the valley in which it lies, the village sits at 12,600ft and is the lower of the two communities with which the NGO currently works.

A composition came to me, pain-free and fairly early in my stay. I wanted to work on something huge, and present these characters sitting in an arc. I wanted to propose that the viewer sit in on their weaving practice, and to offer an invitation to transcend the physicality of this daily occasion and tap the weaver’s spirit. At first, I thought that this would be in the village itself, and in the studio I began painting the weavers in the same space as thatched awnings, pigs and sun-parched adobe brick structures. Two months in, I took a dark sepia wash over the entire painting and instead began to paint them into the timeless and epic dynamic of their mountainscape.
an acute awareness of the needs of teenagers like my own son, convinced me of the importance of the project, and the responses of the young people involved soon endorsed this. It was truly extraordinary to watch the speed of their development over the course of a few hours and the leaps in understanding, which resulted in some fantastic work.

For me as well there were additional benefits. Our model for the first day of the Summer School was Paralympic athlete and BP Athlete Ambassador Shelly Woods, whose courage, determination and striking looks made her the perfect subject. Shelly later agreed to sit for me; I am still working on the portrait, which I hope will form part of a series of portraits I’ve been working on surrounding the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

The benefits of the BP Portrait Award: Next Generation project are unique and unquantifiable, but by encouraging young artists I am convinced that, in tandem with the BP Portrait Award, the project will help ensure that British art, and portraiture in particular, will continue to develop and maintain its important position in the world.

The BP Portrait Award: Next Generation project encourages young people to become involved with portraiture through the BP Portrait Award, inspired by the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Past BP Portrait Award winning artists share their experience with young artists through talks, workshops and online materials. For further information about the project, including details of how young people can take part in events, please see: www.npg.org.uk/bpnextgeneration
IN MAY 2012, a major exhibition opens at the National Portrait Gallery to mark the Diamond Jubilee of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, who acceded to the throne on 6 February 1952. Comprising portraits and images of the Queen in all media produced in the last sixty years, *The Queen: Art and Image* presents a multi-faceted survey of a reign that has witnessed radical social and artistic changes.

The exhibition is, however, far from an official or sanctioned view. Instead, it brings together a diverse range of portraits, both formal and unconventional, ranging from commissioned paintings and studio photographs to images reproduced in newspapers and magazines, film footage and – more controversially – works by contemporary artists. Gerhard Richter, Andy Warhol, Gilbert and George and, more recently, Lucian Freud, Annie Leibovitz and Thomas Struth are among the many leading figures represented. The result is a constantly developing panorama in which traditional royal portraiture gives way to sometimes surprising evocations of monarchy that challenge and extend received ideas. In taking this perspective the exhibition provides a lens through which to consider not only the changing face of royalty, but also, at a deeper level, the way representations of the Queen have developed, shaping her public persona and also reflecting deeper progressive currents.

This approach is exemplified by two very dissimilar images of the Queen created at opposite ends of her reign. The first, a photograph taken by Dorothy Wilding in 1952 (shown on cover), is a striking portrait
of the twenty-five-year-old monarch depicted shortly after her accession, one of fifty-nine photographs made by Wilding at this time. Such portraits played an important part in the process of constructing the regal image that immediately commenced in 1952. Used as the basis for stamps and banknotes, reproduced in popular publications and circulated to embassies around the world, Wilding’s likeness of the Queen addressed a huge audience. Though formal, these early portraits were nevertheless a departure from earlier representations of royalty, even those created for Elizabeth’s immediate predecessors. Official photographs of her father George VI and her grandfather George V frequently emphasise the dignity and gravitas of the sitter. In contrast, Wilding focused on the new Queen’s youth, glamour and freshness. Sixty years ago, these qualities – which have since become closely associated with Princess Diana and, currently, with the Duchess of Cambridge – illuminated a nation still overshadowed by the war-time legacy of food rationing.

The second image is an altogether different proposition. Created in 2008 by the Edinburgh-born artist Hew Locke, it depicts the Queen in the form of an assemblage comprising tiny plastic toys, trinkets, beads and other mass-produced ephemera. Brightly coloured spiders, flowers and skulls, among other modelled shapes, are all in evidence. The use of such ordinary, throw-away trivia is at once playful but also, for some, disrespectful, intimating a sense of something gaudy, superficial and disposable. Locke’s depiction of the Queen seems a world away from that created by Wilding at the beginning of Elizabeth’s reign. But this is not simply a matter of two alternative artistic temperaments, nor even the evidence of an ageing monarch. Rather, this visual collision manifests those radical developments which have informed the way the Queen has been represented and perceived. The void that separates Wilding
and Locke forms the territory explored by The Queen: Art and Image. The works selected trace a trajectory from the regal splendour and artistic deference that defined the Queen’s image in the 1950s, through the growing informality of those portraits created during the central part of her reign, to recent works of art that both question and affirm the role of a monarch in the twenty-first century.

How did such sweeping changes occur? Partly, they were the outcome of inexorable social developments. Those portraits belonging to the first decade – by Wilding, Cecil Beaton, and Pietro Annigoni – recall an age defined by hierarchy, class difference, privilege and, in consequence, greater formality. Beaton’s Coronation photograph of 1953, for example, summons the historic precedents of royal portraiture to fabricate the image of a crowned monarch saturated with the symbols of her elevated, historic status. From the orb and sceptre the Queen is holding to the large photographic backdrop depicting the...
Henry VII Chapel at Westminster Abbey, Beaton emphasised history, tradition and rank in ways calculated to impress. Annigoni’s great royal portrait, commissioned by the Fishmongers’ Company in 1954, is no less formal and, indeed, is similarly splendid. But, though idealised, it nevertheless communicates the sense of a living individual – not simply a symbol – and, in that way, it points to the future.

The 1960s ushered in a changed social order, one that was more egalitarian in outlook and intolerant of elevated status. Reflecting such shifts, representations of the Queen began to be made in new ways. Glamour and elevated royal splendour were replaced by images that communicated the impression of an older, more mature and down-to-earth monarch. Photographs by Antony Armstrong-Jones (later Lord Snowdon) and Cecil Beaton presented her more informally with her husband and children, emphasising family and motherhood and suggesting that these were values that she shared with ordinary people. The move towards depicting a more ‘ordinary’ Queen culminated in Eve Arnold’s colour photograph of 1968 in which the Queen is shown holding an umbrella. With all evidence of privileged status eliminated, this could almost be a member of the public.

Such images successfully repositioned the Queen in the life of the nation, making her seem less remote and more in tune with everyday life. The 1969 television
documentary *Royal Family* took this process further, presenting the Queen in off-duty and seemingly private moments. This, too, revived interest in royalty, apparently dissolving the veneer of formality that had seemed increasingly out of step with the times. But the difficulty of maintaining what, in reality, was an impossible balancing act – that of being simultaneously special and apparently ordinary – qualified a position that previously commanded unquestioned respect. This produced unforeseen developments. In 1977, Jamie Read’s poster for the Sex Pistols’ single *God Save The Queen* desecrated the image of a ruling monarch, an act that would previously have been unimaginable. Throughout the 1980s, images of the Queen progressively defied convention, becoming less restrained as they questioned the meaning and relevance of the monarchy. In that respect, the media and the work of contemporary artists were linked. In 1981, for example, a photograph published in *The Times* showed the Queen at the State Opening of Parliament, her facial expression seeming uncharacteristically strained. Andy Warhol’s series of portraits of the Queen produced in the mid-1980s explore this further, using abstraction and exaggerated colour to probe the fracture between the real person and her public ‘face’.

The last decade has seen further developments as photographers, the media and a range of artists have continued to address the question of how to represent the Queen, a figure whose significance connects history with the modern world. Lucian Freud’s controversial portrait of 2001, her crown balanced a little uncertainly, captures something of the awkward tension generated by this chronological mis-match. This is a woman whose age and experience are evident, inhabiting the role she has carried for over half a century. More recently, the leading German photographer Thomas Struth has addressed the same issue in the magisterial double portrait of the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh commissioned by the National Portrait Gallery that concludes the exhibition. Quietly affective, it depicts a woman and her husband, both witnesses to the past and the present – an intimation of stability at the centre of their changing world.
POETRY OF MOTION
by Inga Fraser
Assistant Curator, Contemporary and Later 20th Century Collections

THE SUMMER of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games has provided the Gallery with several opportunities to reflect upon figures from the world of sport in the Collection. The ways in which artists have sought to depict figures who, in their professional lives, are associated with activity and motion are intriguing. Taking the leitmotif of the moving body as its point of departure, Poetry of Motion includes some of the most ambitious works from the Contemporary Collection: of athletes and Olympians, dancers and choreographers, subjects whose dynamism frequently inspires artists to experiment with new forms or new media.

Film or video seems an obvious way to present the body in motion, yet upon closer inspection the sense of movement is often consciously curtailed either by the formal presentation of the sitter or by the technology: a contrast to how we ordinarily perceive these figures. Dryden Goodwin’s 2006 portrait of the rower Sir Steven Redgrave was made following his retirement. A series of twenty-five detailed pencil sketches sit adjacent to a video which animates the drawings. While avoiding the depiction of Redgrave directly as a sportsman, the portrait is nevertheless kinetic, hinting at the nature of Redgrave’s career. Similarly, Sam Taylor-Wood chooses to present David Beckham in a moment of intimate quiet. It is a powerful and appealing contrast to the everyday presentation of an international footballer. The Swimmer, Marty St James and Anne Wilson’s 1990 eleven-channel portrait of Duncan Goodhew, is one of several early
video portraits made by the artists described as 'sculptures in time'. Ostensibly a presentation of motion, each screen presents a fragment: something moving, yet at the same time frozen.

Traditional painted, sculpted and photographic works operate as monuments that testify to the strength and form of these elite bodies. Taking a different approach, other artists have incorporated a lightness of touch or unconventional pose as a way of capturing something of the grace and vigour of their subjects. Philip Harris’s commissioned portrait of Sir Anthony Dowell was completed in 1995. Dowell recalls submitting to the ‘choreographic’ direction of Harris, who stood him in bright sunlight for the photographs upon which this work was based. Instead of a classic dance position, Harris posed Dowell in a gesture that hints at performance rather than directly representing it. Andrew Logan’s striking eight-foot-high sculpture of the dancer Lynn Seymour is a highly imaginative piece. Stating ‘Lynn flies, she doesn’t dance’, in this work Logan attempts to make solid her fluid elegance and agility, avoiding a naturalistic presentation of a body: Seymour is presented as head, hands and feet in resin, joined by a copper sheet. Materially dense and immobile, this work nevertheless conveys brilliantly an incredible vitality and sense of movement.

_Poetry of Motion_ is a timely opportunity to see some complex and unusual works from the National Portrait Gallery’s Collection.
NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY/ BT ROAD TO 2012 PROJECT
by David Mercer
BT Group Head of Design

THE ROAD TO 2012 project has been nothing short of inspiring. With each year of the journey towards London 2012 a new tranche of great portraits is revealed, followed by the promise of more to come. Like all great journeys, there is a sense shared by those who’ve been on it that we don’t quite want it to come to an end.

The Road to 2012 is not simply a photographic record of an extraordinary moment in the life of the United Kingdom and the history of the Olympic and Paralympic Games, but a one-off opportunity for the commissioning of great art. We should remember the arts were very much central to the ethos of the original Olympics in ancient Greece, and so this project sits perfectly with these aspirations and as part of the modern Games and the London 2012 Festival.

These portraits describe human stories of commitment, determination, courage and achievement, though they go far beyond a cataloging of people and events. Great care has been taken and attention to detail paid by each of the artists to convey this sentiment in their own individual way. Together they succeed in drawing us closer to the reality of London 2012.

There are many images I could choose to expand my thoughts, but for me one stands out: Finlay MacKay’s portrait of Louis Smith. At first glance we see a gymnast caught in a fleeting moment – what we assume to be a regular training session. The environment, warehouse-like, is stark and industrial. This is not a choreographed piece for the camera’s eye to romanticise the sporting ideal; this evokes the realism of the day-to-day, the toil, the self-discipline, the dry routine – the reality of a modern Olympian. The suppleness, warmth and beauty of the gymnast’s body contrast abruptly with the cold and hard-edged space around him. This surely describes heroism: the best of humanity set against the rigours of the modern world.

This for me is a truly great picture. The whole portrait is forged together through geometric structure, whether the gymnast’s posture or the equipment, the brackets holding the ventilation outlet, the shadows that fall across the space, or indeed the perspective that defines the entire environment. There are triangles everywhere, hundreds of them! The power and meaning of this symbolism are clear: it underpins the message of the portrait and announces the overarching story of the Road to 2012 – the strength and resilience of humanity, triumphant.
Jones plays with their ‘biggest challenge’ – London’s nineteenth-century transport network. Draped across the car bonnet, she photographed the duo driving at midnight deep in the Blackwall Tunnel.

Nadav Kander’s series of studio portraits brings another mood to the project. He explores the drama of heightened black-and-white tonal interplay to capture four talented young athletes, the rising stars of the future. These photographs, together with a deceptively simple sequence of torch-bearers’ portraits, exemplify the inspirational stories that underpin the project as a whole.

The Road to 2012 project is the largest photographic commission the Gallery has ever undertaken. Over one hundred portraits will act as a record of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games and the extraordinary collective achievement it represents. We are grateful to the photographers, whose creative vision shaped the project, and for the time, patience and collaboration of their subjects. Together they brought this project to life.

Anderson & Low use a formal style, naturalistic palette, and meticulously selected locations to create timeless tableaux depicting top athletes and some of the support staff behind Olympic and Paralympic success.

Jillian Edelstein draws on her passion for film to create cinematic vignettes that depict people working behind the scenes to prepare for ‘Games Time’. Her portrait of Transport for London leaders Peter Hendy and Graham Jones will be accompanied by a series of talks and events. For more details, please see www.npg.org.uk/roadto2012
VOTED AMONG the 100 Great Black Britons, Samuel Coleridge-Taylor was a composer, conductor and choirmaster whose best-known work, the cantata trilogy *The Song of Hiawatha*, was a favourite with choirs up to the 1940s. A prize-winning student at the Royal College of Music, he counted among his contemporaries Gustav Holst and Ralph Vaughan Williams. His first major commission, from the Three Choirs Festival, came on the recommendation of Sir Edward Elgar.

Coleridge-Taylor’s extensive musical output, from 1893 onwards, includes chamber pieces, part-songs and dances, a Symphony in A Minor, a violin concerto and a long-lost opera based on Norse legend, which received its première earlier this year. While much of his work is within the late Romantic tradition, many of his compositions drew on melodies inspired by his ancestry, such as *African Suite*, *A Military March for Ethiopia* and *Twenty-Four Negro Melodies*. Collaboration with the African-American poet Paul Dunbar led to three visits to the United States as visiting conductor; recently an unpublished score for violin and orchestra based on the spiritual ‘Keep Me from Sinking Down’ has been found in Yale University Library. In Britain he taught composition at Trinity and Guildhall Schools of Music and created incidental music for London theatres.

By the mid-twentieth century, Coleridge-Taylor’s works had fallen from fashion, only to experience a revival from 2000 onwards, with performances, recordings and biographies.
‘The National Portrait Gallery is a magical place ... its ability to captivate and enchant is virtually unequalled among museums. It allows the public not only to peer into art and history, but politics, science, culture and much more.’ FINANCIAL TIMES

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Join today and receive a complimentary Lucian Freud Portraits catalogue (RRP £25) and an invitation to join us at the Private View for the major exhibition The Queen: Art and Image on 15 May 2012.

Lucian Freud Portraits by Sarah Howgate. With essay and interviews by Michael Auping and a contribution by John Richardson
Summer Offer
for Gallery Supporters

EXCLUSIVE GALLERY SHOP OFFER

The Queen: Art and Image

To mark Elizabeth II’s Diamond Jubilee in 2012, this landmark exhibition brings together around sixty of the most remarkable and resonant portraits of the Queen made during her sixty-year reign, and features works by Cecil Beaton, Dorothy Wilding, Pietro Annigoni, Andy Warhol, Annie Leibovitz, Lucian Freud, Thomas Struth and Gerhard Richter.

These bone china midi espresso mugs are part of an exclusive Diamond Jubilee range created for The Queen: Art and Image exhibition. Designed for the Gallery by Thomas Manss & Company, the mugs are manufactured in Stone, near Stoke-on-Trent.

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