

News Release

Thursday 16 February 2017

HIDDEN TREASURES FROM LEONARDO TO REMBRANDT: NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY STAGES ITS FIRST EXHIBITION OF EUROPEAN OLD MASTER DRAWINGS

Drawings from Britain's finest collections by artists such as Leonardo da Vinci, Dürer and Rembrandt, and including eight portraits by Holbein from the Royal Collection



(from left): **Study of a Male Nude** by Leonardo da Vinci c.1504-6 Royal Collection Trust © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2017; **Woman Wearing a White Headdress** by Hans Holbein the Younger c.1532-43 Royal Collection Trust © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2017; **Sir John Godsalue** by Hans Holbein the Younger c.1532-4 Royal Collection Trust © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2017; **A sheet of figure studies, with male heads and three sketches of a woman with a child** by Rembrandt von Rijn c.1636 © The Henry Barber Trust, the Barber Institute of Fine Arts, University of Birmingham

The National Portrait Gallery is to stage its first exhibition of old master European portrait drawings this summer, it was announced today, Thursday 16 February 2017.

The Encounter: Drawings from Leonardo to Rembrandt (13 July – 22 October 2017), will include works by some of the outstanding masters of the Renaissance and Baroque, many rarely seen, and some not displayed for decades. The drawings not only serve as extraordinary records of an artist's skill and a sitter's appearance, but have been selected for this exhibition because they appear to capture a moment of connection, an encounter between an artist and a sitter.

Some of the people depicted in these portraits can be identified, such as the emperor's chaplain or the king's clerk, but many are the faces from the street – the nurse, the shoemaker, and the artist's friends and pupils in the studio – whose likenesses were rarely captured in paintings during this period. The exhibition includes some of the hidden treasures of Britain's finest collections, as the drawings' sensitivity to light means they cannot be put on regular display.

Highlights include 15 drawings generously lent by Her Majesty The Queen from the Royal Collection, including eight portraits by Hans Holbein the Younger; a group of drawings produced in the Carracci studio from Chatsworth; and the British Museum's preparatory drawing by Albrecht Dürer for a lost portrait of Henry Parker, Lord Morley, who had been sent to Nuremberg as ambassador to King Henry VIII.



(from left): **Study of a Young Man**, by Annibale Carracci, mid 1580s The Trustees of the Chatsworth Settlement © Devonshire Collection, Chatsworth; **Giulio Pedrizzano, The Lutenist Mascheroni** by Annibale Carracci c.1593-4 Royal Collection Trust © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2017; **Young Woman in a French Hood, possibly Mary Zouch** by Hans Holbein the Younger c.1533 Royal Collection Trust © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2017; **Old Woman Wearing a Ruff and Cap** attributed to Jacob Jordaens c.1625-40 © Scottish National Gallery

The Encounter: Drawings from Leonardo to Rembrandt brings together forty-eight portrait drawings by artists who worked throughout Europe including Gian Lorenzo Bernini, Annibale Carracci, François Clouet, Albrecht Dürer, Anthony Van Dyck, Benozzo Gozzoli, Hans Holbein the Younger, Antonio di Puccio Pisano (Pisanello), Rembrandt van Rijn, Francesco Salviati and Leonardo da Vinci.

Lenders to the exhibition include the Royal Collection Trust, The British Museum, Chatsworth, Senate House Library, Scottish National Gallery, Barber Institute of Fine Arts, Birmingham, Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, UCL Art Museum, V&A, Ashmolean Museum and The Courtauld Gallery.

The exhibition came about as a result of the Gallery’s continuing interest in exploring the practice of making portraits in a variety of media throughout history. By bringing together an important group of drawings, ***The Encounter: Drawings from Leonardo to Rembrandt*** explores what the study of European portrait drawing can tell us about artistic practice and the process of sitting.

By including a display of the types of drawing tools and media used – from metalpoint to coloured chalks – and considering the individuals depicted in these often intimate portraits, many of whom remain unidentified, the exhibition will show how these artists moved away from the use of medieval pattern-books as source materials, to study the figure, and the face, from life.

The exhibition has been supported by a panel of exhibition advisers, who have embraced the exhibition’s challenge to consider the terms of portraiture and the extent to which an encounter between individuals captures a portrait, even if the image was intended as an exercise in drawing with no thought for the identity of the sitter.

Dr Nicholas Cullinan, Director, National Portrait Gallery, London, says: ‘While our Collection includes Holbein’s magnificent and monumental ink and watercolour drawing of Henry VII and Henry VIII from c.1536–7, remarkably, the National Portrait Gallery has never staged an exhibition devoted to the practice of portrait drawing during the European Renaissance. While the sitters’ identities are often unknown, their encounters with the artist are preserved in drawings that vividly demonstrate the creative moment that lies at the heart of many of the greatest portraits. Some of the drawings were perhaps never intended to leave the artists’ studios, but are arguably amongst the most engaging and powerful impressions of personal likeness in the history of art.’

Dr Tarnya Cooper, Curatorial Director, National Portrait Gallery, London, and co-curator of ***The Encounter: Drawings from Leonardo to Rembrandt***, says: ‘Part of the appeal in looking at portrait drawings is that they seem to speak to us directly without embellishment or polish; in contrast to painted portraiture the graphic process appears unmediated by the artfulness of technique. Some of the portrait drawings in this exhibition were executed at speed, capturing a fleeting moment in time, while others were more finished and controlled, yet still appear to have an honesty and integrity that captures a dynamic connection between artist and sitter.’

The Encounter: Drawings from Leonardo to Rembrandt is curated by the National Portrait Gallery's Curatorial Director Dr Tarnya Cooper, and its Collections Curator, 16th Century, Dr Charlotte Bolland.

Dr Tarnya Cooper has curated at the National Portrait Gallery the exhibitions *Elizabeth I and Her People* (2013) and *Searching for Shakespeare* (2006). Her publications include *Citizen Portrait – Portrait Painting and the Urban Elite, 1540–1620* (2012) and *A Guide to Tudor & Jacobean Portraits* (2008). She was Principal Investigator of the Gallery's *Making Art in Tudor Britain* research project and co-curator of *The Real Tudors: Kings and Queens Rediscovered* at the National Portrait Gallery (2014).

Dr Charlotte Bolland is Collections Curator, 16th Century, at the National Portrait Gallery and was co-curator of *The Real Tudors: Kings and Queens Rediscovered* at the National Portrait Gallery (2014) and *Les Tudors* at the Musée du Luxembourg, Paris (2015).

THE ENCOUNTER: DRAWINGS FROM LEONARDO TO REMBRANDT

13 July -22 October 2017, at the National Portrait Gallery, London www.npg.org.uk

Supported by *The Tavolozza Foundation*

Tickets with donation: Full price £10 / Concessions £8.50

Tickets without donation Full price £8 / Concessions £6.50 (Free for Members and Patrons)

www.npg.org.uk/encounter or 020 7321 6600

#TheEncounter

Press View: Wednesday 12 July 2017 10.00-12.00 (with a curators' tour at 10.30).

PUBLICATION

The exhibition is accompanied by a fully-illustrated book by curators Dr Tarnya Cooper and Dr Charlotte Bolland with an essay by Jeremy Wood, Professor Emeritus of Art History, University of Nottingham, and will be available to purchase from the National Portrait Gallery shops priced £24.95 paperback.

For further Press information, please contact: Neil Evans, Media Relations Manager, National Portrait Gallery: Tel. 020 7 312 2452 (not for publication) / Email nevans@npg.org.uk

To download press releases and images, please go to: www.npg.org.uk/press

National Portrait Gallery, St Martin's Place WC2H 0HE, opening hours Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Saturday, Sunday: 10.00 – 18.00 (Gallery closure commences at 17.50) **Late Opening:** Thursday, Friday: 10.00 – 21.00 (Gallery closure commences at 8.50pm) **Nearest Underground:** Leicester Square/Charing Cross **General information:** 0207 306 0055 **Recorded information:** 020 7312 2463 **Website** www.npg.org.uk

NOTES TO EDITORS

Royal Collection Trust, a department of the Royal Household, is responsible for the care of the Royal Collection and manages the public opening of the official residences of The Queen. Income generated from admissions and from associated commercial activities contributes directly to The Royal Collection Trust, a registered charity. The aims of The Trust are the care and conservation of the Royal Collection, and the promotion of access and enjoyment through exhibitions, publications, loans and educational programmes. Royal Collection Trust's work is undertaken without public funding of any kind.

www.royalcollection.org.uk

The Royal Collection is among the largest and most important art collections in the world, and one of the last great European royal collections to remain intact. It comprises almost all aspects of the fine and decorative arts, and is spread among some 13 royal residences and former residences across the UK, most of which are regularly open to the public. The Royal Collection is held in trust by the Sovereign for her successors and the nation, and is not owned by The Queen as a private individual.

At The Queen's Galleries in London and Edinburgh and in the Drawings Gallery at Windsor Castle, aspects of the Collection are displayed in a programme of temporary exhibitions. Many works from the Collection are on long-term loan to institutions throughout the UK, and short-term loans are frequently made to exhibitions around the world as part of a commitment to public access and to show the Collection in new contexts.

Explore the Royal Collection at www.royalcollection.org.uk/collection