

News Release

Wednesday 12 July 2017

NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY SELECTS PORTRAITS FROM LEONARDO TO REMBRANDT THAT SHOW THE MOMENT OF CONNECTION BETWEEN ARTIST AND SITTER

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; **Henry Parker, 10th Baron Morley** by Albrecht Dürer, 1523 © The Trustees of the British Museum; **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 opens its first exhibition of old master European portrait drawings, many rarely seen, and some not displayed for decades, this Thursday 13 July 2017.

But while the works on display are by some of the outstanding masters of the Renaissance and Baroque, the drawings in ***The Encounter: Drawings from Leonardo to Rembrandt*** (13 July – 22 October 2017) have been selected not only because they are extraordinary records of an artist's skill and a sitter's appearance, but 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 by 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; **John Godesalve** by Hans Holbein the Younger c.1532-4 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

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.’

Andrew Marr, broadcaster, writer and artist, says: ‘There is something exciting about seeing the very scratches and smudges made by the fingers and crayons of the finest artists, from Leonardo Da Vinci to Rembrandt. There is a page of Rembrandt drawings, clearly done at breakneck speed, showing male faces, tousled hair and a woman breastfeeding, which bring you immediately into his room in 1636, as if it was here and now. There are Holbein drawings of wary youths from the court of Henry VIII so fresh you could bump into them in half the bars of London tomorrow; this exhibition is like being shoved into a party full of characterful, unforgettable strangers.’ (*Mail on Sunday Event Magazine*, 9 July 2017)

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

Lenders to the exhibition are from Britain’s finest private and public collections, a rich source of European old master drawings. These 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, Victoria and Albert Museum, Ashmolean Museum and The Courtauld Gallery.

Professor Jeremy Wood, contributor of an essay on collectors and the popularity of portrait drawings in Britain in the catalogue for ***The Encounter: Drawings from Leonardo to Rembrandt***, says: ‘Many of the pioneering British collectors of European drawings were artists, and, even more strikingly, often portrait painters. This undoubtedly sharpened their interest in buying the drawings and their understanding of how these vivid likenesses had been captured on paper’.

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.

Accompanying the exhibition will be a rich programme of talks and workshops exploring the artist's techniques and practices with contributions from a range of art historians and contemporary artists.

Jenny Saville, artist, says: 'Drawing is an equation of nature. It's as instinctive as thinking and is the first physical point of contact in the world of imaginative thinking, whether you're drawing a head, a map, designing a chair, a building or an iphone.'

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.

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

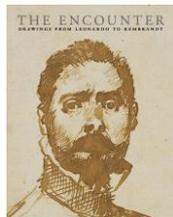
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Tickets with donation: Full price £10 / Concessions £8.50

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

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

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**

images, 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

EVENTS:

Saturday 22–Sunday 23 July, Weekend Workshop: 11.00–17.00

From Silver to Ink and Chalk – drawing tools and techniques from Leonardo to Rembrandt

Join artist Robin-Lee Hall for a weekend workshop exploring the tools and techniques of the Renaissance and Baroque period. Experiment with drawing tools such as silverpoint, ink and wash and chalk. £150/£125

Thursday 27 July, In Conversation: 19.00

The Encounter: an Exhibition in the Making

Co-curators Tarnya Cooper and Charlotte Bolland talk about the process of creating the exhibition. £8/£7

Friday 28 July, Life Drawing: 18.30–20.30

Draw like the Masters – tools and techniques

Join artist Robin-Lee Hall for this session that takes inspiration from masters of observational drawing during the Renaissance and Baroque period. £9/£7

Thursday 10 August, Lecture: 19.00

'Taking of physionamies': the techniques and functions of Holbein's portrait drawings

Dr Susan Foister explores the role that Holbein's portrait drawings play in the process of creating his portraits of the Tudor court. £8/£7

Monday 28 August, Drawing: 13.00–15.00

The Drawing Room: Renaissance and Baroque technique

Take inspiration from the masters of observational drawing during the Renaissance and Baroque period. Free artist-led drawing class for disabled visitors.

Saturday 23–Sunday 24 September, Weekend Workshop: 11.00–17.00

Being there: the artist's response to the figure

Drawing can be a way of thinking, of planning and of communicating what we think and observe.

In this two day session, led by artist Grace Adam, explore the connection between artist and model. £150/£125

Friday 6 October, Study Day: 9.15–16.00

The Encounter: Drawings from Leonardo to Rembrandt

Beginning with an out of hours viewing, hear papers covering such topics as the collecting and commissioning of portrait drawing at the French court and Hans Holbein the Younger's drawing technique. £40/£35

Saturday 14–Sunday 15 October,

Weekend Workshop: 11.00–17.00

Painting in Egg Tempera: An Introduction

Artist Antony Williams, who won third prize in the BP Portrait Award 2017, introduces the traditional painting medium of egg tempera. Covering pigments, methods, surfaces, tools and techniques, you will make your own paint and develop a tempera painting. Suitable for all abilities. £150/£125

YOUNG PEOPLE'S PROGRAMMES (AGES 14–21)

Sunday 3 September,

Drawing: 13.00–16.00 Encountering Drawing

Learn portrait drawing techniques such as silverpoint, pen and ink, and chalk with artist Robin-Lee Hall. Communication support available upon request. FREE, booking essential

Royal Collection Trust

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