

News Release

WEDNESDAY 23 MAY 2018

NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY TO STAGE MAJOR NEW EXHIBITIONS OF MARTIN PARR'S PORTRAITS AND ELIZABETHAN MINIATURE TREASURES IN 2019

New and previously unseen works including Parr's Brexit Britain, and the first major exhibition of Tudor portrait miniatures for over 35 years to go on display in spring 2019

Spring Season 2019 sponsored by Herbert Smith Freehills LLP

Only Human: Photographs by Martin Parr, 7 March – 27 May 2019

Elizabethan Treasures: Miniatures by Hilliard and Oliver, 21 February - 19 May 2019



(from left): St George's Day, Stone Cross Parade, West Bromwich, 2017 and Dame Vivienne Westwood, London, 2012 © Martin Parr / Magnum Photos / Rocket Gallery; **Sir Walter Raleigh (Raleigh)** by Nicholas Hilliard c. 1585 © National Portrait Gallery, London;. **Anne of Denmark** by Isaac Oliver, c. 1612, Purchased with help from the Art Fund, 1957 © National Portrait Gallery, London.

The National Portrait Gallery, London is to stage a major new exhibition of works by Martin Parr, one of Britain's best-known and most widely celebrated photographers, as part of a 2019 Spring Season that also includes the first major exhibition devoted to Tudor and Jacobean portrait miniatures for over 35 years, it was announced today, Wednesday 23 May. Both exhibitions will include new works and discoveries, as well as portraits on public display for the first time.

Only Human: Photographs by Martin Parr, 7 March – 27 May 2019, brings together some of Parr's best known photographs with new work by Parr never exhibited before, to focus on one of his most engaging subjects – people.

Featuring portraits of people from around the world, the exhibition examines national identity today, both in the UK and abroad with a special focus on Parr's wry observations of Britishness. Britain in the time of Brexit will be the focus of one section, featuring new works, which reveal Parr's take on the social climate in the aftermath of the EU referendum. The exhibition will also focus on the British Abroad, including photographs made in British Army camps overseas, and Parr's long term study of the British 'Establishment' including recent photographs taken at Christ's Hospital school in Sussex, Oxford and Cambridge Universities and the City of London, revealing the obscure rituals and ceremonies of British life.



(From left) Sikh wedding at City Hall, Cardiff, Wales, 2008, The Perry Family - Grayson, Philippa and daughter Florence, London, 2012 and Sam Levy Village, Borrowdale, Zimbabwe, 1995 © Martin Parr / Magnum Photos / Rocket Gallery

Although best known for capturing ordinary people, Parr has also photographed celebrities throughout his career. For the first time ***Only Human: Photographs by Martin Parr*** will reveal a selection of portraits of renowned personalities, most of which have never been exhibited before, including British fashion legends Vivienne Westwood and Paul Smith, contemporary artists Tracey Emin and Grayson Perry and world-renowned football player Pelé.

Other new works reveal the quirks of leisure activities today, a subject Parr has explored since the 1980s. Parr photographs trips to the beach, tennis tournaments – from Wimbledon to the US Open – and a day at the races, to reveal the eccentricities of everyday life. These images will take the visitor on a colour-saturated journey through places where public and private worlds intersect. Other photographs capture the infectious joy of dancing, an everyday activity enjoyed by people across the globe.

The exhibition will also feature the unforgettable self-portraits Parr has made throughout his career. For over thirty years, Parr has visited studio photographers, street photographers and photo booths across the globe to have his portrait taken. The resulting *Autoportraits* raise questions about portraiture and the business of portrait photography, showcasing a range of fascinating and often humorous settings employed by professional portraitists. Works on display include his *Photo Escultura*, a group of shrine-like carved photo-sculptures, based on Parr's likeness and commissioned from the last remaining traditional maker in Mexico City, which have never been exhibited in the UK before.

Elizabethan Treasures: Miniatures by Hilliard and Oliver, 21 February - 19 May 2019, is the first major exhibition on Tudor and Jacobean portrait miniatures in the UK for over 35 years. The exhibition will bring together key works from the National Portrait Gallery and major loans from public and private collections, including miniatures that haven't been seen in public in the UK since the early 1980s, to showcase the careers of the most skilled artists of the period, Nicholas Hilliard (1547? – 1619) and French born Isaac Oliver (c.1565 – 1617).

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, miniature painting was regarded as an art form at which the English excelled above all others, and Hilliard and Oliver gained international fame and admiration. The exhibition will

explore what these exquisite images reveal about identity, society and visual culture in Elizabethan and Jacobean England. Termed 'limnings' at the time, with their roots in manuscript illumination, miniatures were prized by monarchs, courtiers and the rising middle classes as a means of demonstrating favour, showing loyalty and expressing close relationships. They could be set into ornate jewelled cases and worn around the neck, pinned to clothing or secretly concealed as part of elaborate processes of friendship, love, patronage and diplomacy.

Described by Hilliard as 'a thing apart from all other painting or drawing', miniature painting was regarded as a particularly refined and expressive art form, capturing, in the words of Hilliard, 'these lovely graces, witty smilings, and these stolen glances which suddenly like lightning pass', as well as the rich and elaborate costumes and jewellery of the time. These tiny portraits, many in exceptional condition, bring their sitters before us, four hundred years after they were painted, with astonishing freshness and vivacity. In the words of a later commentator, 'The art of the master and the imitation of nature are so great ... that the largest magnifying glass only calls out new beauties.'



(from left): **Queen Elizabeth I** by Nicholas Hilliard, 1572, Purchased, 1860 © National Portrait Gallery, London; **Unknown man against a background of flames** by Nicholas Hilliard, c.1600, Purchased with the assistance of the Murray Bequest © Victoria & Albert Museum; **A Party in the Open Air. Allegory on Conjugal Love** by Isaac Oliver, 1590-95 © Statens Museum for Kunst – National Gallery of Denmark

A large section of the exhibition will be devoted to Hilliard and Oliver's portraits of Elizabeth I, as well as images of James I, his wife Anne of Denmark and his three children Henry, Elizabeth and Charles (later Charles I). Miniatures of some of the most famous figures of the day, including Sir Walter Raleigh and Sir Francis Drake, will be displayed along with some of the most evocative and well-known works of the period, including the beautiful *Young Man among Roses* by Hilliard and Hilliard's *Unknown Man against a Background of Flames*, both on loan from the V&A.

Dr Nicholas Cullinan, Director, National Portrait Gallery, London, says: "I am delighted we are able to announce these two major new exhibitions for Spring 2019, which highlight the breadth of the National Portrait Gallery's Collection - from Katherine Parr to Martin Parr. From Hilliard and Oliver's jewel-like sixteenth and seventeenth century portrait miniatures from the courts of Elizabeth I and James I, to Martin Parr's witty, surprising and ingenious photographs which reveal the eccentricities of modern life with affection and insight, these two exhibitions tell us much about this country – then and now."

Martin Parr says: "I am very excited to have the opportunity to show my work at such a prestigious Gallery. One of the main themes will be British identity and given March 2019 is when we are supposedly leaving the European Union, the timing could not be better."

Catharine MacLeod, Senior Curator of Seventeenth-Century Portraits and Curator of *Elizabethan Treasures: Miniatures by Hilliard and Oliver* says: "I am thrilled to be able to bring together the miniature masterpieces of Nicholas Hilliard and Isaac Oliver in this major new exhibition. In addition to exploring the exquisite technique of the

artists, portrait miniatures from this period express in a unique way many of the most distinctive and fascinating aspects of court life in this period: ostentatious secrecy, games of courtly love, arcane symbolism, a love of intricacy and decoration.”

Only Human: Photographs by Martin Parr is curated by Dr. Phillip Prodger, Senior Research Scholar, Yale Center for British Art. ***Elizabethan Treasures: Miniatures by Hilliard and Oliver*** is curated by Catharine MacLeod, Senior Curator, Seventeenth-Century Portraits, National Portrait Gallery, London.

PUBLICATIONS

Phaidon will publish a new book on Martin Parr’s work to accompany the exhibition. The most comprehensive volume on Parr’s work since his 2002 monograph, ***Only Human: Photographs by Martin Parr*** will feature over 200 images by Parr, many featuring in the exhibition, alongside newly commissioned and enlightening essays by exhibition curator, Phillip Prodger, and others contributors to be confirmed.

Elizabethan Treasures: Miniatures by Hilliard and Oliver will be accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue, featuring over 100 beautifully reproduced miniatures. The book, which includes an introductory essay by exhibition curator Catherine MacLeod, will explore what the portrait miniature reveals about identity, society and visual culture in Elizabethan and Jacobean England.

Only Human: Photographs by Martin Parr, 7 March – 27 May 2019 at the National Portrait Gallery, London
www.npg.org.uk

Spring Season 2019 sponsored by Herbert Smith Freehills LLP

Tickets without donation £18

Tickets with donation £20

Free for Members and Patrons

npg.org.uk/martinparr

Elizabethan Treasures: Miniatures by Hilliard and Oliver, 21 February - 19 May 2019 at the National Portrait Gallery, London www.npg.org.uk

Spring Season 2019 sponsored by Herbert Smith Freehills LLP

Tickets without donation £10

Tickets with donation £12

Free for Members and Patrons

npg.org.uk/elizabethantreasures

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Notes to Editors

Martin Parr (b. 1952) has published over one hundred books of his own work, and edited a further thirty. Prolific in his activities, Parr has featured in more than a hundred exhibitions worldwide, including the 2002 retrospective *Martin Parr Photoworks 1971-2000* at the Barbican, London, which toured Europe for the following five years. Recent exhibitions curated by Parr include: *Strange and Familiar* at the Barbican, London (2016); *New Documents* at the Brighton Photo Biennale (2010); and *Parrworld* at Haus de Kunst Munich (2008). In 2004, Parr served as Guest Artistic Director for Recontres D’Arles. Parr’s work has been collected by many of the major museums, including the Tate, the Pompidou and the Museum of Modern Art in New York. In 1994 he became a full

member of Magnum Photographic Cooperative and was elected president of Magnum Photos International (2013-2017). Parr is a Visiting Professor at Ulster University.

Parr studied photography at Manchester Polytechnic in the early 1970s and formed an integral part of a new wave of documentary photographers who revolutionised the genre. He achieved international recognition for photographic projects, such as *The Last Resort* (1983-85) and *The Cost of Living* (1987-89), which take an intimate, satirical and anthropological look at aspects of modern life, in particular, documenting the social classes of England and the increasing consumerism of the Western world. In 2017, Parr opened the Martin Parr Foundation, a new centre for British photography in Bristol, which aims to support and promote photographers who have made, and continue to make, important work focused on the British Isles.

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Nicholas Hilliard (1547-1619) trained as a goldsmith and became an outstanding painter of portrait miniatures, the first notable English-born artist in this medium. He was a key figure in creating the visual imagery of Elizabeth I, producing many miniatures, as well as oil paintings, seal designs and medals. Elizabeth I appointed him her official limner, or miniature painter, a service to the monarch that he continued after the accession of James I in 1603.

Isaac Oliver (c.1565 – 1617) was born in Rouen, France and came to England with his family as a Huguenot refugee. He learnt the art of miniature painting from Nicholas Hilliard but unlike Hilliard, and as a result of his understanding of continental art, he used light and shade (chiaroscuro) to develop a softer, more illusionistic style. Oliver was appointed miniaturist to Anne of Denmark, wife of James I, and later to their eldest son Henry, Prince of Wales.

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:** 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