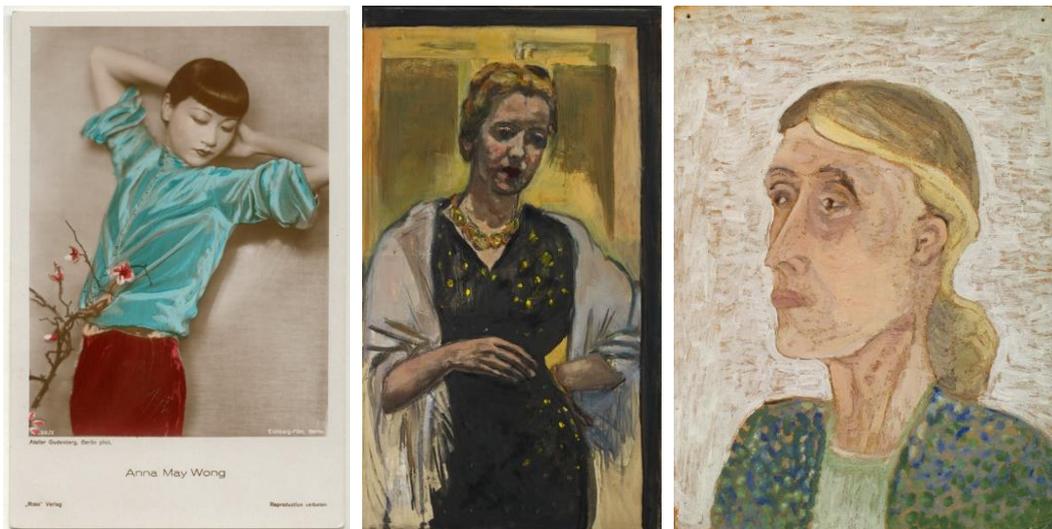


News Release

Wednesday 17 March 2021

National Portrait Gallery Partners with Chanel to Champion the Role of Women in British History and Culture

***New three-year project will enhance the representation of women
in the Gallery's Collection***



L-R - Anna May Wong by Atelier Gudenberg published by Ross-Verlag, 1920s © National Portrait Gallery, London; Marie-Louise von Motesiczky by Marie-Louise von Motesiczky, 1959 © Marie-Louise von Motesiczky Charitable Trust 2021; Virginia Woolf by Ray Strachey, late 1920s, © National Portrait Gallery, London

In partnership with Chanel, the National Portrait Gallery has launched *Reframing Narratives: Women in Portraiture*, a new three year project, which aims to enhance the representation of women in the Gallery's Collection and highlight the often overlooked stories of individual women who have shaped British history and culture. The project is part of the new CHANEL Culture Fund, a global programme of unique initiatives and partnerships that will support innovators across the arts in advancing new ideas and greater representation in culture and society.

Reframing Narratives: Women in Portraiture includes the appointment of a new team led by Chanel Curator for the Collection, Dr Flavia Frigeri, which will focus on researching the Gallery's Collection with the aim of enhancing the visibility of select figures, as well as acquiring portraits of women not yet represented and commissioning new portraits of trailblazing contemporary women. The project

will increase the proportion of women artists and sitters on display at the Gallery in London when it re-opens in 2023, following a major transformation, which includes a complete re-presentation of the entire Collection and a significant refurbishment of the building.

Reframing Narratives: Women in Portraiture will challenge traditional notions of women's careers and how we think about women in relation to their male counterparts. Research will also explore the cultural, institutional, social, and political factors that shape difference, including class, race, gender and sexuality. Amongst the iconic and inspirational women whose portraits and stories will be explored are:

Modern painters such as Marie-Louise von Motesiczky, one of Britain's most important émigré artists; activist, writer and artist, Ray Strachey, and Gluck, who was also a trailblazer in gender fluidity. Significant sculptors, including Anna Mahler and Patience Lovell Wright, a famous 18th century wax sculptor whose portraits preceded Madame Tussaud, will also be reconsidered.



L-R -Dorothy Wilding by Dorothy Wilding, 1930s © William Hustler and Georgina Hustler / National Portrait Gallery, London; Inayat Khan by unknown photographer, 1937 © National Portrait Gallery, London; Georgina Masson by Horace Ové, 2002, © Horace Ové /National Portrait Gallery, London

The role of women photographers in both documenting history and encouraging other women to enter the profession will be explored further, spotlighting Edwardian photographers such as Alice Hughes, who only photographed women and children, and at the peak of her career employed up to sixty female assistants.

Women's contribution to the war effort of both world wars is also a topic of research and includes Georgina Masson, the first black woman Officer in the Auxiliary Territorial Service, Noor Inayat Khan, Special Operations Officer, and Lady Sarah Wilson, the first female war correspondent.

Women from other fields of endeavour include actor Anna May Wong, writer Radclyffe Hall, and pioneering film editor and script writer Alma Reville who, until now, has been overshadowed by her husband Alfred Hitchcock.

To mark Women's History Month and celebrate pioneering women of today, the Gallery is releasing a series of filmed interviews with inspirational women throughout March as part of *Reframing Narratives: Women in Portraiture*. These women include lead scientist on the Oxford AstraZeneca coronavirus vaccine Sarah Gilbert; founder of the MOBO Awards Kanya King; actor Helena Bonham Carter; former Principal of The Royal Ballet Zinaida Yanowsky, and period poverty campaigner Amika

George. The films will be available on the Gallery's website and social media channels. Art Historian and founder of @thegreatwomenartists, Katy Hessel will also discuss the *Reframing Narratives: Women in Portraiture* project with Dr Flavia Frigeri live at 18.00 on Wednesday 17 March on the National Portrait Gallery's [Instagram](#) account.

npg.org.uk/womenshistorymonth

Quotes

Dr Nicholas Cullinan, Director, National Portrait Gallery, London said: "We are delighted to be partnering with Chanel on this important project, which will significantly enhance the representation of women artists and sitters within our Collection. The project will form an integral part of our plans to transform the National Portrait Gallery through our *Inspiring People* re-development, which includes a comprehensive re-display of the entire Collection, allowing us to fully represent all those who have played a significant role in shaping British history and culture."

Dr Flavia Frigeri, Chanel Curator of the Collection, National Portrait Gallery, London said: "Building on the National Portrait Gallery's longstanding commitment to gender equality, I am excited to find further meaningful ways to put women in the spotlight and tell urgent and untold stories that broaden definitions of greatness."

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Notes to Editors

Dr Flavia Frigeri is an art historian and curator, focusing on modern and contemporary art. She is the 'Chanel Curator for the Collection' at the National Portrait Gallery, where she is leading on a three-year project supported by Chanel Culture Fund, aimed at enhancing the representation of female artists and sitters in the collection. Flavia is also a longstanding member of faculty on Sotheby's Institute's MA in Contemporary Art and from 2016 to 2020, she was a Teaching Fellow in the History of Art Department at University College London (UCL). Previously she worked at Tate Modern, where she co-curated *The World Goes Pop* (2015), and was responsible for *Henri Matisse: The Cut-Outs* (2014), *Paul Klee: Making Visible* (2013) and *Ruins in Reverse* (2013). From 2010 to 2011 she was the recipient of the prestigious Hilla Rebay International Fellowship from the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation. Flavia is the author of *Pop Art* and *Women Artists* both in Thames & Hudson's Art Essentials series and co-editor of a forthcoming volume of collected essays *New Histories of Art in the Global Postwar Era: Multiple Modernisms* (Routledge). As an independent writer and curator, she is writing a book on *Transcultural Curating* and curating exhibitions on the feminist avant-garde and transnational postwar art on behalf of museums internationally.

CHANEL Culture Fund

The CHANEL Culture Fund, launched in 2021 is a global programme of initiatives and long-term partnerships that will support innovators across the arts in advancing new ideas and greater representation in culture and society. Expanding upon the House's rich history of cultural patronage, through the Fund, Chanel is committed to championing equality of voice and innovation in creative and cultural thinking. The projects are intended to foster collaboration across disciplines, and help propel transformative ideas.

National Portrait Gallery

The National Portrait Gallery was founded in 1856 to encourage through portraiture the appreciation and understanding of the people who have made and are making British history and culture. Today it promotes engagement with portraiture in all media to a wide-ranging public by conserving, growing and sharing the world's largest collection of portraits.

www.npg.org.uk

Inspiring People

Inspiring People is the National Portrait Gallery's biggest ever development since the building in St Martin's Place opened in 1896. The project, supported by The National Lottery Heritage Fund will see a transformed National Portrait Gallery, including a comprehensive re-display and re-interpretation of the Gallery's Collection from the Tudors to now across 40 refurbished galleries, combined with a complete refurbishment of the building, restoring historic features, creating a new and more welcoming visitor entrance and public forecourt on the building's North Façade, and enhancing the Gallery's accessibility.

The designs by Jamie Fobert Architects, working in partnership with Purcell, will also see the return of the Gallery's East Wing to public use as the new Weston Wing, including restoring the original gallery spaces, the creation of new retail and catering facilities and its own dedicated entrance at street level; and a new Learning Centre for visitors of all ages with studios, breakout spaces and high quality practical facilities. The Gallery's existing entrance will also remain, with new step-free access.

In order to complete the project efficiently and to safeguard visitors, members of staff and the Collection, the Gallery in St Martin's Place has temporarily closed to the public from 29 June 2020 until spring 2023, while essential building works take place. During this time the Gallery will share its unique Collection of portraits with the nation in a major programme of activities across the UK. Beginning in 2020, this ambitious nationwide programme will show hundreds of works from the National Portrait Gallery's Collection, some of which are rarely loaned, through a series of partnerships and collaborations during the period of redevelopment.