

DATS

DRESS AND TEXTILE
SPECIALISTS

Understanding
British Portraits

www.portraits.specialistnetwork.org.uk

Portraits and Textiles Seminar

A collaborative seminar between the Dress & Textile Specialists network,
and the Understanding British Portraits network

Tuesday 17 January 2012, 10.30—16.20

Town Close Auditorium, Norwich Castle Museum & Art Gallery

Programme

10.30—10.50

Registration and refreshments

10.50—11.00

Welcome from chairperson **Professor Marcia Pointon**,
Emeritus Professor of History of Art (Manchester) and
Honorary Research Fellow at the Courtauld Institute of Art

11.00—11.20

Professor Aileen Ribeiro, Emeritus Professor of History of Art,
Courtauld Institute of Art

Keynote presentation

11.20—11.50

Joanna Hashagen, Keeper of Textiles, The Bowes Museum
Portraiture and Dress: an Intimate Relationship

This presentation will investigate the role of portraiture in the
new Fashion and Textile Gallery at The Bowes Museum. Using
portraits themselves, and images on graphic panels, the
Gallery engages with the genre to provide context and
emphasise connections. The use of portraiture as a key
element of costume research and its essential role in the lace
reconstructions in the Gallery will also be examined.

11.50—12.20

Karen Hearn, Curator of sixteenth and seventeenth century
British art, Tate

*"Wrought with Flowers and Leaves...": Embroidery
Depicted in 16th and 17th Century British Portraits*

While surviving embroidered clothing fabrics from the 16th
and early 17th centuries are comparatively few, such
textiles often appear in British portraits of the female elite of
the period. This paper will briefly consider the problems of
using such images as evidence, before examining in
detail a few specific portraits of this type.

12.20—12.50

Dr Francesca Vanke, Acting Keeper of Art & Curator of
Decorative Art, Norwich Castle Museum & Art Gallery

*Portraits, Dress and the Decorative Arts: an
Interdisciplinary Approach to Display*

This paper will explore the multiple intentions governing the
use of portraits in the decorative arts galleries at
Norwich Castle Museum. Portraits, both in actuality and

reproduction, play an important role throughout the *Arts of
Living and the Treasure, Trade & the Exotic* galleries. They
illustrate contemporary fashion and taste, aid interpretation,
and are instrumental in establishing a sense of time and
Individuality, vividly and succinctly. In addition, they
illuminate the intimate connections between objects and the
people who owned them: a key part of the rationale behind
the galleries as a whole.

12.50—14.00

Lunch, and time to visit the galleries

14.00—14.30

Felicite Gillham, freelance wig designer and wig maker
Interpreting wigs in British portraits

An examination of the influence of fashion, politics and war
on the styling of British wigs and hair from the
mid-seventeenth to the early-nineteenth centuries.

14.30—15.00

Emma Slocombe, Curator, Smallhythe Place, National Trust
*Dress in the Limelight: the conservation and display of Ellen
Terry's beetle wing dress*

This presentation focuses on 'Dress in the Limelight', an
exhibition exploring the Shakespearean actress Ellen Terry's
celebrated portrayal of Lady Macbeth in 1888, and her iconic
beetle wing dress. It will explore the role photographic
portraits have played in the conservation of the dress and
how John Singer Sargent's portrait of the sitter *en rôle* was
used to inform interpretative display.

15.00—15.30

Jenny Lister, Curator of Fashion & Textiles at the Victoria &
Albert Museum

*Misrepresentation: displaying dress and image in the new
V&A fashion gallery*

This paper examines the relationship between fashion and
portraiture in the context of the forthcoming redisplay of the
fashion collection at the V&A.

15.30-15.40

Comfort break

15.40-16.20

Panel discussion chaired by Professor Pointon