

Knole Seminar

Monday 17 March 2014, 9.45 — 16.00 Knole, Sevenoaks, Kent

Programme

9.45—10.15 Registration and breakfast refreshments, the Great Hall

10.15—10.20 **Welcome from chairman David Taylor, Curator of Pictures and Sculpture, National Trust**

10.20-10.50 **Emma Slocombe, Curator, Knole, National Trust**

'A Grand Repository'. An introduction to Knole and its collections

Knole is a house with a long history of faded grandeur, celebrated for the scale and significance of its architecture, interiors and collections and famously described as 'A grand repository of whatever has been pleasant at all times' by Edmund Burke in 1791. Created as an archiepiscopal palace in the 15th century, it has been the seat of the Sackville family since its purchase and subsequent transformation by Thomas Sackville, 1st Earl of Dorset in 1603. This paper will provide an overview of the history of the picture collection in the State Rooms at Knole, which includes portraits by Mytens, Van Dyck and Reynolds. It will also look at recent research into the history of portraiture display and its use in the formation of dynastic narratives, together with plans for new presentation as part of a current five-year conservation and engagement project supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

10.50—11.10 **Catherine Daunt, PhD candidate, University of Sussex/National Portrait Gallery, London**

Knole's famous faces: new research on the Brown Gallery portrait set

The origin of a series of portraits now hanging in the Brown Gallery at Knole has hitherto been unclear. New evidence, however, indicates that the majority of the forty-four extant paintings were produced together as a single commission in c1607 for Thomas Sackville, 1st Earl of Dorset. This paper will summarise these findings and suggest how and where the portraits are likely to have been displayed.

11.10—11.30 **Dr Edward Town, Visiting Scholar, Yale Centre for British Art**

The Rake's patronage: Richard Sackville, 3rd Earl of Dorset and portraiture at Knole

Although there has been sustained scholarly interest in the artistic and architectural patronage of Richard Sackville's well-known and long-lived wife Lady Anne Clifford, the 3rd Earl of Dorset's own collecting has been largely neglected. In many ways, Sackville was the paradigm of Jacobean largess; known as the 'Spendthrift Earl', it took only a couple of years for Sackville to lay waste to a fortune that had taken his family the best part of a century to accrue. Yet amidst the financial chaos, Sackville found time to commission works by William Larkin, Isaac Oliver, and Paul van Somer. As such, he was an important patron, not least because some of his pictures today form part of the collection at Knole.

11.30—12.10 **Robert Sackville-West**

The patronage of John Frederick Sackville, 3rd Duke of Dorset

A tour led by Lord Sackville of the 18th century portraits in the private and public apartments at Knole, with a particular focus on Reynolds and Gainsborough.

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12.10—13.00 **Lunch** provided for all delegates

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13.00—13.20 **Jacob Simon, Research Fellow, National Portrait Gallery, London**

Picture framing as a route to understanding British portraits: the Knole collection

This presentation will explore how picture frames can provide a route to understanding portraits and their history by examining half a dozen significant examples in the Knole collection for the meaning that they carry. *A Guide to Picture Frames at Knole* can be found on the National Portrait Gallery's website (www.npg.org.uk/research/programmes/the-art-of-the-picture-frame/guides-knole).

13.20-13.40 **Anne French, independent scholar, co-curator of *Below Stairs* (National Portrait Gallery)**

The household loyalty portrait inverted? Knole's remarkable series of servant portraits by Arnold Almond, 1783

This paper will examine the series of twenty-one surviving servant portraits at Knole (from an original set of forty-six) in relation to other famous serial images of eighteenth-century servants, notably at Erdigg. It will discuss whether these remarkable images were inspired, as with the Yorke family, by an employer's desire to commemorate loyal, long-serving servants, or whether the Duke of Dorset's bohemian household and the presence of his mistress, the Italian dancer Giovanna Baccelli, inspired a very different kind of servant portrait.

13.40—14.00 **Melanie Caldwell, Independent Paintings Conservator for the National Trust**
Past and Future Conservation of Paintings at Knole

A look at existing conservation records from the last 200 years at Knole, and their impact on the conservation of the paintings today.

14.00—14.20 **Discussion session chaired by David Taylor**

14.20—15.40 **Delegates will be divided into two groups for expert-led tours of Knole**

15.40—16.00 **Refreshments** in the Great Hall

16.00 Depart



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