

Understanding British Portraits Annual Seminar

Wednesday 29 November 2017, 10.00 — 16.10 National Portrait Gallery

Co-chaired by Dr Christine Riding, Head of Arts and Curator of the Queen's House, Royal Museums Greenwich, and Professor Ysanne Holt, Professor of Art History and Visual Culture, University of Northumbria

Programme

10.00—10.30 **Registration and refreshments.** Please enter the National Portrait Gallery by the main doors on St Martin's Place. Doors open 10.00.

10.30—10.40 Welcome from **Dr Nicholas Cullinan, Director, National Portrait Gallery**

Morning session, chaired by Dr Christine Riding

10.40—10.45 **Introduction from morning chairperson**

10.45—11.05 **Dr. Juliet Carey, Senior Curator, Waddesdon Manor (The Rothschild Collection)**

Courtiers, Hilliards and Buttons: curating a display of Elizabethan portraits at Waddesdon Manor

This talk will outline the development and some of the challenges of curating *Power and Portraiture: Painting at the Court of Elizabeth I* (Waddesdon Manor, Buckinghamshire, June to October 2017)



Conservator working on Nicholas Hilliard's portraits of Queen Elizabeth I and Sir Amias Paulet

11.05—11.25 **Renée Mussai, Senior Curator, Artistic Programmes and Head of Archive & Research, Autograph ABP, and Helen Whiteoak, Head of Participation, National Portrait Gallery, London**

Black Chronicles: Photographic Portraits 1862 – 1948

A partnership between Autograph ABP and the National Portrait Gallery as part of Autograph ABP's *The Missing Chapter* programme, supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

11.25—11.45 **Alice Cox, Exhibitions and Audience Development Officer, The Russell-Cotes Art Gallery and Museum**

Refracted: Collection Highlights: an exhibition to commemorate the 50th anniversary since the partial decriminalisation of homosexuality

This talk will look at the benefits of working with the local community to curate an exhibition. It will also explore the challenges of arriving at an exhibition to commemorate an LGBT+ anniversary with a collection that is not hugely representative of this community.

11.45—12.10 **Chaired discussion with the morning's speakers**

12.10-13.20 **Lunch** provided for all, and time to visit the galleries



Afternoon session, chaired by Professor Ysanne Holt, University of Northumbria

13.20—13.25 **Introduction from afternoon chairperson**

13.25—13.45 **Dr. Jim Cheshire, Reader in Cultural History, University of Lincoln**

Tennyson, Photography and Portraiture 1857-92

By the 1860s, a photographic portrait could be purchased for sixpence: a symptom of the radical democratisation of portraiture in the Victorian period. This paper will use this context as a starting point for examining how photographic technologies mutated the role of the portrait in the Victorian period, it will explore photography as a mediating agent and examine how photographic technologies allowed portraits to be used in new ways and to appear in new contexts. These issues will be explored through a case study of the poet, Alfred Tennyson.

13.45—14.05 **Paul Holden, FSA, House and Collections Manager, National Trust, Lanhydrock**

Princes to Paupers: portraiture in the Lanhydrock photographic collection

Lanhydrock house, near Bodmin in Cornwall, has in its vast collection some 7,000 family photographs. These images, given as a bequest by the Viscount Clifden to the National Trust, range from formal images of royalty and political luminaries, to candid snapshots of the Victorian family at home, on holiday or at play on the estate, to pictures of staff at work and orphans in the orphanage. This paper will showcase the richness of the collection as well as highlighting issues of collections management and interpretive value.

14.05—14.25 **Dr Jane Hamlett, Dr Lesley Hoskins and Dr Rebecca Preston, Royal Holloway, University of London**

Pets in Victorian Family Photograph Albums (presented by Dr Rebecca Preston)

Recent work on Victorian photograph albums has developed our understanding of albums as material objects which presented complex narratives. But little attention has been paid to the place of pets in these volumes. Drawing on a new survey of albums held in archives in London and the south of England, our paper will explore how visual conventions emerged in portraits of and with pets and how pets figured in the stories that families told about themselves.

14.25—15.00 **Refreshments**

15.00—15.20 **Dr Lucasta Miller, literary biographer**

The protean poetess: portraiture, masquerade, and celebrity in the post-Byronic era

Based on a forthcoming book, this paper will use portraiture to explore the scandalous hidden history of the writer Letitia Landon, who was famous in her lifetime as the "female Byron", but brushed under the carpet by the Victorians after she was found dead in mysterious circumstances in 1838.

15.20—15.40 **Louise Cooling, Curator of Paintings, Royal Collection Trust**

Louie Burrell (1873-1971): Portrait of an Edwardian Miniaturist

Louise 'Louie' Burrell's unconventional career saw her work as portraitist to European royalty and nobility, the wealthy elite of Cape Town and Ottawa and the tycoons and film stars of Hollywood. Despite critical and public acclaim, Burrell's career was marred by discouragement and upheaval, as she struggled to support herself and her young daughter through the tempestuous pre-war years of the early twentieth century. This paper will reconstruct the turbulent career of this fascinating and little-known Edwardian portraitist.

15.40—16.10 **Chaired discussion with the afternoon's speakers, and close**



Supported using public funding by

**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**