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The Human Touch?
What is the value of the artist/sitter relationship to contemporary portrait painting?

An exegesis submitted in partial fulfillment for the degree of
Doctorate of Philosophy
in Fine Arts to The University of Newcastle, N.S.W., Australia.

Date of submission: 25 November 2014

Statement of Originality

This exegesis contains no material that has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in text, i.e. by citation, footnote or acknowledgement. I give consent to this copy of my exegesis, when deposited in the university library, to being made available for loan and photocopying subject to the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968.

Andrew Collis.

Signature....., 2014.

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Andy Collis. January 14, 2013.

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Andy Collis. *Portrait of Charlotte, aged 18,* (2010). 500 cm x 350 cm.

Image 80A
Andy Collis. *Self-Portrait No. 6* (2009) stage1. Oil on canvas. 91.5 cm x 76 cm.

Image 80B
Andy Collis. *Self-Portrait No. 6.* (2009). Oil on canvas. 120 cm x 95 cm.

Image 81
Andy Collis. *Portrait of Kyle*, *Aged 17* (2009). Acrylic on canvas. 91.5 cm x 76 cm.

Image 82
Andy Collis. *Self-Portrait No. 7* (2010 Abandoned). Oil on canvas.170 cm x 145 cm.

Image 83
Andy Collis. *Self-Portrait No. 8: Focus and Periphery* (2010). Oil on canvas. 170 cm x 145 cm.

Image 84
Andy Collis. *Self-Portrait No. 9: A Turn of the Head* (2010). Oil on canvas. 92 cm x 122 cm.

Image 85
Andy Collis. *Self-Portrait No.10* (2010): Acrylic and charcoal. 115 cm x 95 cm.

Image 86
Andy Collis. *Nichol Amy, apparently: 4 Panels* (2010). Overall size 180 cm x 240 cm. (Individual panels 180 cm x varying widths).

Image 87
Andy Collis. *Portrait of My Father, Aged 89: His Battle of Britain* (2010). Oil on Canvas. 180 cm x 240 cm.

Image 88
Andy Collis. *My Father: A portrait of Dementia* (2010). Oil and polythene on canvas. 240 cm x 180 cm.

Image 89
Andy Collis. *Self-Portrait No. 12,* (2010). Oil based Timber-deck varnish and oil paint on canvas. 240 cm x 180 cm.

Image 90
Andy Collis. *Self-Portrait No. 13* (2010). Oil on canvas. 115 cm x 95 cm.

Image 91
Andy Collis. *Self-Portrait No. 14: Imprint* (2010). Oil and timber-deck varnish on canvas. 120 cm x 95 cm.

Image 92
Andy Collis. *Daniel* (2010). Oil on canvas. 180 cm x 240 cm.

Image 93
Andy Collis. *Friends I have never met.* (2010-2011) Acrylic on canvas. 240 cm x 50 cm

Image 94
Andy Collis. *J.P. 1: Top Panel.* (2010). Oil on canvas. 73 cm x 44 cm.

Image 95
Andy Collis. *J.P. Panel 2: Centre Panel.* (2010). Oil on canvas. 73 cm x 44 cm.

Image 96
Andy Collis. *J.P. Panel 3: Bottom panel*. (Triptych. Overall dimensions: Oil on canvas 180 cm x 44 cm.)

Image 97
Andy Collis. *Frank* (2011). Oil on canvas. 240 cm x 180 cm.

Image 98
Andy Collis. *Self-Portrait: Grisaille* (2011). Oil on canvas. 180 cm x 45 cm.

Image 99
Andy Collis. *Dr. Colin Rosewell* (2011). Pencil and gouache on board. 50 cm x 29 cm.

Image 100
Andy Collis. *Kit & Loretta* (2011). Oil on canvas I80 cm x 210 cm.

Image 101
Andy Collis. *Michael* (2011). Oil on canvas. 240 cm x 180 cm.

Image 102A
Andy Collis. *Take Three Girls: Anne, Tegan & Stephanie* (2011-'12). 180 cm x 240 cm.

Image 102B.
The first sitting for *Take Three Girls: Anne, Tegan & Stephanie* (2011-'12).

Image 103
Andy Collis. *A model: A perfect stranger.* (2012). Triptych. Overall size 180 cm x 44 cm.

Image 104
The model for *A model: A perfect stranger.* (2012).

Image 105A
Andy Collis. *Ode to remembrance: Age shall not weary them*. 2012. 11 x television sets of varying dimensions. Acrylic paint. Mounted in wooden wrack, overall dimensions approximately 220 cm x 300 cm.

Image 105B
Andy Collis. *Ode to remembrance: Age shall not weary them*. 2012. details

Image 106A
Andy Collis. *Lindy Chamberlain-Creighton: A Dingo Took My Baby* (2012). Oil on canvas. 180 cm x 150 cm.

Image 106B
Andy Collis painting Lindy Chamberlain-Creighton.

Image 106C
In the studio painting Lindy Chamberlain-Creighton.

Image 106D
Detail: *Lindy Chamberlain-Creighton: A Dingo Took My Baby* (2012). Oil on canvas.

Image 106E
Newspaper articles of Lindy Chamberlain-Creighton is sitting for her portrait.

Image 106F
Artist, sitter and portrait. November 2012.

Image 107
Andy Collis. *Simon,* (2013) Acrylic on Board. 120 cm x 95 cm.

Image 108
Andy Collis. *Thomas* (2013) Graphite and water colour on board. 120 cm x 95 cm.

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Andy Collis. *Sally: Lady Madonna*, (2013) Acrylic, Gold-leaf and polythene on board. 120 cm x 95 cm.

Image 110
Final Exhibition. Newcastle University Gallery. NSW. View 1.

Image 111
Final Exhibition. Newcastle University Gallery. NSW. View 2.

Image 112
Final Exhibition. Newcastle University Gallery. NSW. View 3.

Image 113
Final Exhibition. Newcastle University Gallery. NSW. View 4.

Image 114
Final Exhibition. Newcastle University Gallery. NSW. View 5.

Abstract

'The re-emergence of all figurative art as progressive and groundbreaking'[1] since the last quarter of the twentieth century continues to manifest itself through portraits of individuals external to the artist as well as through the artist's self-scrutiny, self-portraiture. In Western art, a portrait made by an artist of another person, the 'sitter', remains a unique artform in that its production is necessarily dependent on the co-operation and collaboration of both parties, often artist and non-artist; two divergent worlds coming together on which, nevertheless, an artwork relies.

The interest and cultural value afforded portraiture is evidenced through newly established twenty-first century portrait galleries, collections and prestigious portrait prizes, garnering huge public and media interest, impressive monetary awards, sponsorship and submissions from highly reputable and, often, high profile painters. This gives assurance to uncertainties concerning portraiture's valued status as art[2], countering suggestions of marginalization within contemporary painting,[3] and affirming that 'portraiture has held its own' despite the turn away from it, generally, through twentieth century abstraction.[4] However, though 'performance art, body art, video art, photographic manipulation and appropriation, along with other innovations…encouraged the return to figuration',[5] the submission and acquisition protocols of both new and long-established portrait galleries and portrait prizes heavily demand the portrait be in the specific medium of *paint*. Furthermore they more often than not categorically stipulate the physical meeting between artist and sitter as mandatory for purposes of making the

[1] Wendy Wick Reeves, (Ed.) *Reflections/Refractions.* Washington, DC. Smithsonian
[2] Joanna Woodall, ed. *Portraiture: Facing the Subject* .(Manchester, UK and New York, NY: Manchester University Press. 1997. Preface xiii.)
[3] Gabriel Badea-Paun. *The Society Portrait: Painting, Prestige and the Pursuit of Elegance.* Holborn, London, UK: Thames & Hudson, 2007. Richard Ormond, Honorary Director of the National Maritime Museum, London, author of numerous works on Victorian art, and the complete catalogue raisonné of the works of John Singer Sargent, states in the forward to this book, page 11,' Portraiture has been discarded in the story of modern painting. It is viewed as something conservative and old-fashioned, commercially oriented and not truly creative.'
[4] Marcia Pointon. *Portrayal and the search for indentity*. (London. Reaktion Books. 2013) 18.
[5] Reeves (Ed.), 8.

painted portrait. This research investigates the argument that the practice of painting, and that the painting is, at least partially, painted from life, appropriately serves the conveyance of shared experiences and observations made over a period of time shared between two parties; that a physical meeting, which can be described as *human touch*, is of significant value to the expression of the artist's ideas, the practice of painting, and as a unique testimonial of both parties relationship for that period of time.

The Human Touch? What is the value of the artist/sitter relationship to contemporary portrait painting?

Introduction

The Archibald Prize, Australia's longest-standing and 'most prestigious art prize'[6] for portraiture, awarded first place in 1975 to John Bloomfield for his portrait of film director Tim Burstall, (see Chapter 2:1 (iii)). That the artist had never met the sitter but had worked solely from a magazine photograph contravened the rules of the competition, which specifically state that the portrait 'must be painted from life'.[7] The prize was withdrawn from Bloomfield and given to another artist whose submission *was* worked from life. The rules were famously upheld and have not been changed, other than to make the specific requirement of 'painted from life' even more legally binding. Moreover, though twenty-first century portrait competitions have been newly established, some by national portrait galleries, stipulation to *paint* from *life* remains a pre-requisite for submission of work and, in most cases, for the acquisition of portraits for national portrait collections.

In light of the current healthy practice of figurative painting in contemporary art, encompassing diverse approaches to portraiture[8], these findings lead the researcher to consider the reasoning for the insistence on adherence to this particular rule for submission of portraits to national portrait collections or the majority of significant portrait prize competitions. The aim of this research is to

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[6] Art Gallery of New South Wales. *Archibald, Wynne and Sulman Prizes 2012. Retrieved December 6, 2012.*
http://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/exhibitions/archibald-wynne-sulman-prizes-2012/
[7] Art Gallery of New South Wales. *Downloadable PDF of terms and conditions of entry for Archibald Portrait Prize.* Retrieved April 16, 2010.
www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/media/.../files/Archibald_12_form_04.pd
[8] Andrew Graham-Dixon, Sandy Nairne and Sarah Howgate. *21st Century Portraits.* London. National Portrait Gallery Publications. 2013.

explore in depth the assumption underlying many of these prizes and galleries that a portrait 'painted from life' generates a certain desired outcome for the portrait that could not have otherwise been achieved. The pre-requisite working method implies that a perceptible quality is transferred to the portrait by this act of human engagement between artist and sitter, and that work done from mediated imagery – namely photography – does not. However, the 'John Bloomfield Scandal' seemed to challenge the value of painting from life, suggesting that the ruling was becoming anachronistic as early as 1975. While exceptions are occasionally made – such as with London's National Portrait Gallery's acquisition in 2012 of Marlene Dumas's posthumous portrait of Amy Winehouse, painted from a photograph[9] – the Gallery's 'Acquisition and disposal policy' still states 'that portraits acquired should in some way be authentic records of the appearance of the sitter, *ideally done from life*[10] and in any case not a modern copy'.[11]

Since, overwhelmingly, portrait commissions and portrait prizes, (see chapter 2:2 (i)) require working directly from the sitter – some even require counter-signing of a witness to declare as much – the research investigates the aforementioned London's National Portrait Gallery's correlation of this required working method as an ideal to conveyance of authenticity. The researcher defines authenticity here comparably with that of Richard Handler, assistant professor at the department of Sociology and Anthropology, Lake Forest College, Illinois, who writes,

> I take 'authenticity' to be a cultural construct of the modern Western world… authenticity is a cultural construct closely tied to Western notions

[9] Mark Brown. *Amy Winehouse painting acquired for National Portrait Gallery.* The Guardian. November 26, 2012.
Retrieved December 6, 2012.
http://www.guardian.co.uk/music/2012/nov/26/amy-winehouse-painting-national-portrait-gallery.
[10] Emphasis added by researcher.
[11] National Portrait Gallery, London. *Acquisition and disposal policy. 2010.*
Retrieved December 6, 2012.
http://www.npg.org.uk/about/corporate/gallery-policies/acquisition-and-disposal-policy.php

> of the individual…'The individual' has a central place in our understanding of reality.[12]

Acknowledging Alexis De Toqueville[13] and Louis Dumont[14], Handler says it is this individualism that manifests itself in the shaping of a collective culture, stating, 'the bonds uniting authenticity and individualism remain tight in both common sense and anthropological ideas about culture.'[15] Lionel Trilling notes that a concern for a display of sincerity within Western society, to be taken as indicator of one's authenticity, leads to role playing 'with the result that a judgment may be passed upon our sincerity that it is not authentic'.[16] The research therefore investigates and evaluates the extent to which individual authenticity, 'which has to do with our true self, our individual existence, not as we might present it to others, but as it 'really is'[17], apart from any roles we play', is facilitated through the intimacy of the one-to-one artist/sitter relationship, through the process of their painted portrait. The researcher thus investigates the method of painting from life, necessitating considerable direct interaction with the sitter, as revelatory of the authentic identity of the sitter predominantly while acknowledging the ineluctable artist's own personality embedded in the process.

Ultimately, this exegesis contends that a portrait painted from life, in which there is a substantial artist-sitter relationship, maintains a significant intrinsic value and does indeed affect the artistic outcome of the resulting works. Australian painter Wendy Bills[18], calls the quality achieved by portraits painted from life 'the human touch':

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[12] Richard Handler. *Authenticity.* Anthropology Today, Vol. 2, No. 1 (Feb., 1986), 2-4 Published by: Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland.
[13] Alexis De Tocqueville,1835.*Democracy in America*. P. Bradley, ed. 2 vols, New York. 1955.
[14] Louis Dumont 1977. *From Mandeville to Marx: The Genesis and Triumph of Economic Ideology.* Chicago. University of Chicago Press.
[15] Handler, *Authenticity,* 3.
[16] Lionel Trilling. *Sincerity and Authenticity.* Cambridge, Mass. Harvard University Press. 1971. 11.
[17] Handler, *Authenticity,* 3.
[18]Wendy Bills is a full-time professional artist, living and working in N.S.W., Australia. She exhibits through a number of N.S.W. galleries. Wendy was a finalist in The Portia Geach Memorial Award for portraiture by Australian women artists in 2011 and 2013. Wendy Bills, Artist, *Wendybills.com*. www.wendybills.com/index.html

> this 'human touch' cannot be achieved by simply copying a photograph… Photographic portraiture only represents one moment in time… When portraiture is done from life a bond develops between the sitter and artist over a number of sessions. This eventuates because of the intimacy of the occasion where two people spend several hours in the company of each other…The artist attempts to provide an audience with a painting that resembles the subject, as well as revealing characteristics of that person that they have conscientiously observed over a period of time. [19]

Taking from Bills, this exegesis argues for value of 'the human touch' in contemporary portrait painting – the notion of a shared experience in real time, being fixable and translatable beyond that time, through the medium of paint. Furthermore, this research argues that the specificity of paint, as opposed to other mediums – such as photography and film–is apt to convey this intimate experience of time spent between painter and sitter for the purpose of making a portrait; that the time spent between artist and sitter is, in some significant way, conveyed within a *painted* portrait. By comparison, this research also suggests that other artistic media generates different kinds of portraits, with different purposes, not necessarily concerned with conveying something of the shared experience of the artist and the subject – for example, a studio shoot with a photographer and a fashion model creates a qualitatively different outcome than that of the fashion model Kate Moss sitting for many hours with the artist Lucian Freud. The research therefore explores the nature of the relationship developed between the portrait painter and their sitter through the consideration of historical and contemporary discourses on portraiture, analysis of the rules of a range of portrait galleries and prizes, and consideration of interviews with practicing portrait painters. Importantly, this research includes a significant practice-as-research component, investigating the central themes of this exegesis through the researcher's studio practice.

In investigating the rules of portraiture galleries and prizes, this research limits its analysis to western Anglophone nations, England, America, Canada,

[19] Wendy Bills, e-mail message to the researcher, May 20, 2012.

Ireland and New Zealand, because they share a discursive context around the terminologies used within the Australian context of the researcher.

Chapter 1:1 focuses on key artists and works in the historical development of observational portrait painting. It demonstrates the extent to which the concern for mimetic likeness is balanced with idealisation or conveyance of spirituality, often reflecting Western, predominantly Christian, religious beliefs. That chapter examines portraitists' relationships with powerful and/or influential individuals –clergy, royalty, aristocracy, emperors or collectors – reflecting on their negotiations and inventiveness with the form to 'market' their sitters/clients to an audience, aspects of which have shaped a workable template for much portraiture that is commissioned, selected or purchased by todays portrait galleries and prizes. Case studies also suggest developments in paint technology enabling desired mimetic representations in an attempt to offer an authentic record of the time spent between two parties.

Chapter 1: 2 will show, through selected examples, the impact of printed reproduction techniques on the role and purpose of portrait painting, up to and including the beginnings of photography. This suggests that reproduction and publishing of an image affects the relationship between artist and sitter. This chapter takes into account the sociological, conceptual and philosophical shifts affecting the role of the artist in society as forerunners to twentieth century modernism. Case studies suggest the changing purposes of the painted portrait to serve specific aims and objectives of both artist and clientele, who nonetheless see mutual value in the collaboration of the making of the portrait.

Chapter 2:1 considers why paint tends to remain the medium of choice, as stipulated prerequisite medium for portrait submissions to portrait galleries and portrait prizes. This is informed by an investigation of the relationship of painting to photography and their inherent, constituent qualities and uses. This embedding of the mandatory stipulation to work from life and in the

medium of paint, investigated in Chapter 2:2, draws on primary source material – direct consultation, via email and interviews, with practicing painters, their sitters, gallery curators and authors. This material provides personal perspectives on the value of a portrait to be painted from life. Arguing for the value of painting from life, the chapter contrasts this approach with that of certain painters who prefer to work from mediated sources and/or away from the sitter.

Chapter 3 will argue the value of the artist/sitter relationship, by considering the practice of recent and contemporary artists whose works rely on this relationship. Lucian Freud is particularly important here. Freud's methods and techniques, and the importance he places on observation from life, significantly influence the studio practice of the researcher. This section also reflects upon the experience of a portrait sitting, from both the artists' and sitters' perspectives.

The latter half of Chapter 3 will analyse the researcher's studio research through painting, in tandem with the ideas explored in this exegesis. Through examining the processes and outcomes of actual portrait sittings, light is shed on the value of human interaction and a developed relationship with a sitter. Alternatively, self-portraits or portraits constructed from photographic source material, absent of the physical sitter, explore how practical, aesthetic, conceptual, and formal considerations vary to portraits made from life. Through its absence, such works suggest what is afforded by direct observation and experience with a sitter. Within the two main approaches, the studio practice-led research and the written research will be shown to become interdependent.

Exploring these diverse approaches to making a portrait of an individual through practical research methods directly informs the assessment of the central questions underlying this research:

- Considering certain key historical and contemporary painted portrait practices what differences can be discerned between portraits painted from life and those that are not? And in what ways can those differences be characterized?
- What arguments are there for the continuance of the working-from-life clause for submission of painted portraits to portrait galleries and portrait prizes?
- What role might the specific medium of paint have on the artist-sitter relationship, as opposed to the use of other kinds of media?
- What can the researcher's own portrait painting practice contribute to the knowledge and debates surrounding the value of painting from life?
- Through the researcher's studio practice, what can we learn about the ways in which the personal relationship between artist and sitter impacts upon the end work produced? And, conversely, what can this practice tell us about the ways a portrait sitting might impact upon the personal relationship of the artist and sitter?

In light of these questions, this exegesis argues that 'the human touch' – articulated through the continuance of the working-from-life method and using the medium of paint for the making of portraits – remains a relevant and vital practice in contemporary art.

Chapter One

The Evolution of the Artist/Sitter Relationship in Western Painting

This chapter examines certain historical conventions established through the practice of painting and drawing the human figure from life in Western Art. This chapter explores certain elements of the tradition of the painted portrait, leading up to the invention of photography in 1839. It suggests some important prerequisites for then understanding subsequent shifts in the artist-sitter relationship following the advent of photography. This chapter will argue that certain fundamental ingredients in the production and currency of portrait painting remain incontrovertibly linked to the historical conventions of the artist/sitter relationship in Western Art.

1:1 Portrait Painting Before Photography

This chapter argues that, while the concept of what defined a portrait prior to photography necessitated aspects of physical likeness of the sitter, portraits were also expected to convey significant inner traits and characteristics, such as the intangibility of power and emotion or philosophical, political, and spiritual concepts. This chapter explores the relationship between artist and sitter/patron, and the ways in which this relationship enabled the artist to capture more than a simple physical likeness of the sitter. Focusing on certain cases and instances, this chapter argues that direct observation from life conveys further knowledge and perceptions from experience that reveal far more than simply a 'mess of facts'[20] or be subject to 'the burden of

[20] Oscar Wilde. *The Decay of Lying-an observation*. 1889. (Moorhead, MN: Minnesota State University, 2002), http://www.mnstate.edu/gracyk/courses/phil%20of%20art/wildetext.htm. The essay was originally published in January 1889 and a revised version appeared in 1891 in *Intentions.*

representation.'[21] With mechanical reproduction methods portraiture became increasingly available and affordable to the masses, whereas previously ownership and need of a painted portrait was majorly the privileged province of the ranks of authority and wealth–the aristocracy, ruling classes, government or church. The following enquiry suggests that the unseen intrinsic, though non-mimetic, qualities perceived in the painted portrait, are facilitated through time and conversation; through a certain collaborative exercise and relationship between artist and sitter, for the duration of the sitting for the purposes of the painted portrait. It is suggested that the development and technical use of paint is necessarily the medium that best expresses the process of looking and conveying of perceived qualities over the time spent with the sitter.

1:1(i) Working from life: Mimesis and Illusionism.

Joanna Woodall's[22] introduction to *Portraiture: Facing the Subject* provides an excellent overview of the development and major concerns of portraiture from the earliest times to the late-nineteen nineties.[23] Embedded in this development of Western art is the notion of the deep-seated human ability and longing to relate to one another via descriptive and representational imagery, particularly through the depiction of human form. This is therefore key to the value of the painter spending time with the sitter not only for mutual connection and understanding but with the intent that this is conveyed to a third party viewer.

[21] John Tagg, *The Burden of Representation: Essays on Photographies and Histories* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1993)
[22] Professor Joanna Woodall,BA (York), MA, PhD (Courtauld, University of London). Her edited book, *Portraiture: Facing the Subject* (Manchester University Press, 1997), has become a standard work on the subject. http://www.courtauld.ac.uk/people/woodall-joanna.shtml. Joanna Woodall is a primary source for this research via direct emails with the researcher.
[23] Joanna Woodall, ed. *Portraiture: Facing the Subject,* (Manchester, UK and New York, NY: Manchester University Press, 1997),1-25.

The Greek philosopher, Aristotle, felt that 'our pleasure in seeing a portrait consists primarily in recognition, which is a process of identifying a likeness with what it is perceived to be like, of substituting something present for something absent'.[24] This imitative representation of objects and people through close observation from life is defined as mimesis. If the premise that humans are "hardwired" to intrinsically copy the world around them is accepted–Walter Benjamin[25] said, 'Perhaps there is non of his higher functions in which his mimetic faculty does not play a decisive role'[26]– then the propensity for making and appreciating art made in this way is understood, particularly in regard to working from life to make portraits since 'portraits might reasonably be thought to embody accumulated cultural wisdom about what it is to be human'.[27]

Jean-Pierre Durix[28] explains that Aristotle, in his *Poetics,* describes the innate human inclination to imitate as 'inherent in man from his earliest days; he differs from other animals in that he is the most imitative of all creatures, and he learns the earliest lessons by imitation. Inborn in all of us is the instinct to enjoy works of imitation'.[29] Michelle Puetz[30] further adds:

> Aristotle views mimesis and mediation as fundamental expressions of our human experience within the world – as means of learning about nature that, through the perceptual experience, allow us to get closer to the "real".[31]

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[24] Woodall. *Portraiture*, 8.
[25] Walter Bendix Schönflies Benjamin,1892–1940, was a German Jewish literary critic, philosopher, social critic, translator, radio broadcaster and essayist. Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/benjamin/
[26] Walter Benjamin. Translated by Edmund Jephcott and Kingsley Shorter. *One-way Street and Other Writings. II. On The Mimetic Faculty.* NLB. 1979. http://www.scribd.com/doc/66852532/Benjamin-W-One-Way-Street-and-Other-Writings. 160-167.
[27] Freeland. *Portraits,* 1.
[28] Jean-Pierre Durix is Professor of English at the University of Bourgegone at Dijon, France. http://us.macmillan.com/author/jeanpierredurix
[29] Jean-Pierre Durix,. *Mimesis, Genres and Post-Colonial Discourse: Deconstructing Magic Realism* . (New York. Macmillian. 1998) 45.
[30]Michelle Puetz is an instructor in Film, Video and New Media at the School of The Art Institute of Chicago. http://www.saic.edu/profiles/faculty/michellepuetz/
[31] Michelle Puetz. *Mimesis*. The University of Chicago: Theories of Media. Winter 2002. http://csmt.uchicago.edu/glossary2004/mimesis.htm

The eighteenth century writings of Gotthold Ephraim Lessing[32], modulate the Aristotelian definition of mimesis towards the idea that medium specificity and art-form affects mimetic representation, nevertheless initial direct observation of the subject is prerequisite to further development, (see later discussion in Chapter 2:1).

Twentieth-century writers such as Benjamin, Theodor Adorno[33], René Girard[34] and Jacques Derrida[35] 'defined mimetic activity as it relates to social practice and interpersonal relations rather than as just a rational process of making and producing models that emphasize the body, emotions, the senses and temporality'.[36] Nevertheless Benjamin supports the Aristotelian view that the mimetic faculty is a fundamental and vital tendency of the human means of expression:

> The highest capacity for producing similarities, however, is man's. His gift of seeing resemblances is nothing other than rudiment of the powerful compulsion in former times to become and behave like something else.[37]

The anthropologist Michael Taussig[38], concurring with Benjamin's and Adorno's 'biologically determined model',[39] proposes that the propensity for

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[32] Gotthold Ephraim Lessing 1729-1781.German dramatist, critic, and writer on philosophy and aesthetics. Encyclopedia Britannica. http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/78035/Braunschweig

[33] Theodor W. Adorno, 1903-1969, was a German sociologist, philosopher and musicologist, and is regarded as 'one of the most important philosophers and social critics in Germany after World War II.' Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/adorno/

[34] René Girard, b.1923, Professor of comparative literature, born in France but living and working in the United States, is an historian, literary critic and philosopher of social science. Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy. http://www.iep.utm.edu/girard/

[35] Jacques Derrida. 1930-2004, was a French philosopher regarded as the 'founder of "deconstruction," a way of criticizing not only both literary and philosophical texts but also political institutions.' Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/derrida/

[36] Puetz. *Mimesis*

[37] Walter Benjamin. Translated by Edmund Jephcott and Kingsley Shorter. (*One-way Street and Other Writings. II. On The Mimetic Faculty.* NLB.) 1979. http://www.scribd.com/doc/66852532/Benjamin-W-One-Way-Street-and-Other-Writings. 160-167

[38] Michael Taussig, b. 1940, Australia. Professor in Anthropology at The European Graduate School, Switzerland. http://www.egs.edu/faculty/michael-taussig/biography/

[39] Puetz. *Mimesis*. Puetz uses this phrase and references it 'As opposed to the aestheticized version of mimesis found in Aristotle and, more recently, Auerbach (see Erich Auerbach's

humankind to imitate is 'an adaptive behavior (prior to language) that allows humans to make themselves similar to their surrounding environments through assimilation and play'.[40] However, Taussig notes the danger of absorbing through copying for the assimilation of another environment and culture to the extent that the original identity is lost.[41] Here Taussig is building on Roger Caillois[42] writings on mimicry and play–the enjoyment of mimicry not being linked to evolutionary survival.[43] Mimesis therefore should not be dismissed as slavish and disinterested copying of nature; rather, it enables the imitator, in copying seen reality in the world, to absorb and integrate into it, to more fully understand it. In the knowledge that the imitation is not reality, it enjoys the copy in its own right; as Oscar Wilde said, 'the telling of beautiful untrue things is the proper aim of Art'.[44]

Michael Taussig also expounds on this value of working from an original in order to produce a mimetic copy:

> The wonder of mimesis lies in the copy drawing on the character and power of the original, to the point whereby the representation may even assume that character and that power.' [45]

Michael Davis[46], an American translator and commentator of Aristotle, adds, 'the more "real" the imitation the more fraudulent it becomes'.[47] Mimetic

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Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953).

[40] Ibid

[41] Michael T. Taussig. *Mimesis and Alterity: a Particular History of the Senses,*(London, UK: Routledge, Chapman & Hall, Inc. 1993) 47,48.

[42] Roger Caillois 1913-1978. French intellectual, polymath, aesthetic philosopher, historian of science, and social analyst of ritual and belief. http://www.cabinetmagazine.org/issues/29/warner.php

[43]Caillois notes, for instance, that while some box-crabs may resemble rounded pebbles, thus minimizing danger from prey, 'some insects that are inedible, and would thus have nothing to fear, are also mimetic… We are thus dealing with a luxury and even a dangerous luxury, for there are cases in which mimicry causes the creature to go from bad to worse: geometer-moth caterpillars simulate shoots of shrubbery so well that gardeners cut them with their pruning shears' Roger Caillois: *Mimicry and Legendary Psychasthenia*; translated by John Shepley. Published in *October* journal. 1935.http://www.tc.umn.edu/~stou0046/caillois.pdf

[44] Wilde. *The Decay of Lying.*

[45] Taussig. *Mimesis and Alterity*, xiii.

[46] Michael Davis, Doctor in Philosophy, lectures in the department of Philosophy, Sarah Lawrence College, Bronxville, New York. http://www.baylor.edu/content/services/document.php/98353.pdf

description can have a power in and of itself; it is not merely the forerunner of factual photographic documentation or of no conceptual merit.

According to Shearer West, 'it is certainly correct to say that before the fifteenth century, the practice of commissioned portraits of individual sitters was rare.'[48] The demands of courts and ruling families 'saw the adoption of intensely illusionistic, closely observed facial likeness, including idiosyncrasies and imperfections, to represent' them.[49] Prior to photography, mimetic and illusionistic rendering from life presented what was seen as a faithful, trustworthy record of the sitter. Woodall has noted that today the medium of photography 'is universally employed for purposes of identification and arrest'[50] but until the ubiquity of photography, the medium of oil painting greatly facilitated this belief in the subject's authenticity. It was not unusual for works, along with the actual artist's signature, to also carry the Latin phrase 'ad vivum'– from life– and sometimes the sitter's name, to further authenticate the portrait and those associated with it.[51] [52] [53] [54] The fact that it was painted from life therefore cemented the work as an authentic record. This is continued today in the requirement for artists and sitters to sign legally binding documents for submission of portraits to portrait prizes today, as discussed in

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[47] Michael Davis. 1999. *The Poetry of Philosophy: On Aristotle's Poetics*. (South Bend, Indiana: St Augustine's Press). 3.
[48] West. *Portraiture,* 14.
[49] Woodall. *Portraiture,* 1.
[50] Woodall. *Portraiture*, 8.
[51] Netherlands painter, Daniel Mytens (c.1590-1647) Charles I 1628 is signed *anno. 1628./ ad vivum.* The Royal Collection. *Charles I.* The Royal Collection Trust http://www.royalcollection.org.uk/eGallery/object.asp?object=404448&row=1953&detail=about
[52] National Portrait Gallery, London. *Early Georgian Portraits Catalogue: Frederick* cites examples of Georgian Portraits of the 1700s signed with *ad vivum.* http://www.npg.org.uk/collections/explore/by-publication/kerslake/early-georgian-portraits-catalogue-frederick.php
[53] The sculptor Louis François Roubiliac, signed and dated by chisel his sculpture of *Alexander Pope,* 1741, under sitter's shoulder, proper right: "Anno Dom. I MDCCXLI. I L.F. Roubiliac I Scit. Ad vivum" Yale Center For British Art. *Alexander Pope.*1741. Louis François Roubiliac. http://collections.britishart.yale.edu/vufind/Record/1666534
[54] Unlike Van Dyck, who held a virtual monopoly of royal portraiture during Charles I's reign, Sir Peter Lely (1618–1680), was the most prominent and successful of a number of Restoration artists who painted Charles II. Recent research has suggested he had only three sessions of sittings with the king, resulting in three *ad vivum* head studies. Diana Dethloff, 'Lely, Sir Peter (1618–1680)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edition, May 2009 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/16419,

Chapter 2:2, and is therefore pivotal to the value of physical presence of sitter with artist.

This chapter turns now to an individual case study of the Netherlands' painter, Jan van Eyck, as a powerful example of a painter who employed mimetic and illusionistic representational skills for the detailed depiction of his sitters. This case study will also indicate that demand for van Eyck's services was concomitant to his highly developed painting skills and techniques. Oil painting techniques perfected by van Eyck became the standard approach to painting up until the nineteenth century.[55] Contemporary painters such as Jonathan Yeo still employ these techniques, such as underpainting and glazing areas. His study of 'old books about technique' lead him to use clove oil to slow down the drying effect of oil paint, enabling him to work even more into thin layers of wet paint over many days,[56] (see Image 1). The researcher's own studio practice investigated such techniques as employed in works such as van Eyck's *Ghent Altarpiece*.[57]

Image subject to copyright:
to view image please use Internet link
http://jonathanyeo.com/work/grayson-perry-study/

Image 1
Jonathan Yeo. (b. 1970)
Portrait Study Grayson Perry
(2005).

[55] *Oil Painting.* http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/426194/oil-painting
[56] Martin Gayford. *The Many Faces of Jonathan Yeo.* (London. Art/Books. 2013.) 25.
[57] Susan Jones. "The Ghent Altarpiece". In *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000–. http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/ghnt/hd_ghnt.htm (October 2002)

1:1(ii) Case Study: Jan van Eyck (c.1390-c.1441).

Following the death of John of Bavaria, the Count of Holland, to whom he had been court painter, Jan van Eyck 'entered the service of the powerful and influential Valois prince, Duke Philip the Good of Burgundy' in 1425.[58] 'As a painter and "valet de chambre" to the Duke, van Eyck was exceptionally well paid.[59] The generous financial award alone suggests the relationship between van Eyck and the Duke was exceptional. Several documents, including letters from the king, suggest they shared a personal friendship. 'Court painters belonged to the "familia" of the sovereign [and] bonds of reciprocal loyalty tied the duke to members of his court'.[60] Yet, despite other members of his court receiving revocation of pensions, a letter from the Duke to his treasurers in 1435 reveals his anxiety that van Eyck's services may be lost. The Duke insists that his payment be increased with specific commands that it be paid speedily and without question so as to 'insure retaining Jan's services… fear[ing] he would not be able to replace Jan with anyone so gifted in art and science.'[61] Burgundian records further show that the Duke made a personal visit to van Eyck's studio at the Coudenberg Palace to view artworks. He had also become godfather to van Eyck's child, and had six gold cups made for the baptism by a local goldsmith and delivered by his representative, the Lord of Chargny.[62] Furthermore, following van Eyck's death in 1441, 'the Duke paid [his widow] Margaret van Eyck a gratuity of 360 pounds… [the equivalent of] a year's salary'. Since non of the portraits made directly for Duke Philip the Good are known to survive, the significant impact of his contribution to portrait painting is drawn from the works done for the higher nobility associated with the court and, more abundantly, for the 'bourgeois functionaries attached to the Burgundian court.'[63]

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[58] The Complete Works. *Jan van Eyck Biography*. http://www.jan-van-eyck.org/biography.html
[59] Ibid.,
[60] *Jan van Eyck as Court Artist*. Art Department, State University of New York. Oneonta. NY. USA. http://employees.oneonta.edu/farberas/arth/arth214_folder/van_eyck/court_painter.html
[61] Ibid.,
[62] Ibid.,
[63] Ibid.,

'Oil as a paint medium…had been developing in Northern Europe…since at least the thirteenth century.'[64] The heightened illusionism attainable through this medium, in preference to the less manipulable, quicker-drying egg-tempera,[65] established van Eyck's commercial success, such that 'from the fifteenth century onward, commentators have expressed their awe and astonishment at his ability to mimic reality.'[66] Such ability was clearly an asset in securing employ to sitters demanding a portrait as witness of real events. Further, by contrast to the established fresco techniques ,[67] van Eyck's works, such as *Madonna of Chancellor Rolin*, c.1435, or the double portrait of *Giovanni Arnolfini and his wife Giovanna Cenami,* 1434, maintain highly illusionistic modeling even at close inspection (see Images 2 and 3).



Image 2
Jan van Eyck (c.1390-c.1441).
Madonna of Chancellor Rolin (c.1435).



Image 3
Jan van Eyck (c.1390-c.1441).
Giovanni Arnolfini and his wife Giovanna Cenami (1434).

[64] David Wise. *Panel To Canvas: Technical transition in early Italian Renaissance painting.* (Renaissance Exhibition Catalogue. National Gallery of Australia Publications. 2011.) 68.
[65] Ibid. 67.
[66] Susan Jones. "Jan van Eyck (ca. 1390–1441)". In *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000. http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/eyck/hd_eyck.htm (October 2002).
[67] Reed Kay. *The Painters Guide to Studio Methods and Materials.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1983. 169-171.

The much slower drying time of the oil medium allows extensive building up of layers, traditionally over monochromatic under-painting– as in a grisaille – up until the final stages of transparent layers of 'pure colour, called glazes, used to impart luminosity, depth, and brilliance to the forms'.[68] This allowed van Eyck to portray exquisite works whose illusionism was convincing on a small scale and at close quarters. The success of the oil-painting techniques advanced by van Eyck became widespread throughout Europe and the Italian ducal collections of the sixteenth century boasted significant pieces to the extent that Giorgio Vasari, writing in 1550, 'mistakenly identified…Jan van Eyck as the sole inventor of oil painting'.[69]

In his votive portraits depicting the donor, such as Chancellor Rolin, or of Canon Georg van der Paele, 1436, van Eyck depicts earthly figures sharing the same space as celestial beings. There is a shift away from medieval subordination and separation from the divine 'to increasing respect for purely human existence' believable through 'unmitigated realism.'[70] This concern for realistic depiction was likewise demanded by wealthy secular patronage. Supported by a comprehensive understanding of perspective, the importance of consistency of light source and richness of shadows, van Eyck exploits the medium's capacity to convey the rich textures and colours of the natural world, conveying the enviable wealth and position of the sitter. According to Woodall, this gave him a wide clientele of 'clerics, sovereigns and great nobles, statesmen, native citizens and foreign merchants, his wife and probably himself.'[71]

Van Eyck's verisimilitude, through sophisticated oil painting techniques, meant that the portrait was readily accepted as a faithful likeness, sometimes to the point of acting as a legal witness. While arguments persist about the actual

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[68] *Oil Painting*. Encyclopedia Britannica. http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/426194/oil-painting.
[69] David Wise. *Panel To Canvas,* 67.
[70] Paul Zucker. *Styles in Painting: a comparative study.* NewYork. Dover Publications. 1963. 134, 135.
[71] *Woodall. Portraiture*, 2.

ceremony that is being depicted in van Eyck's *Giovanni Arnolfini and Giovanna Cenami* portrait, Roland Kanz notes:

> What does seem clear…is that van Eyck is depicting an authentic moment: on the rear wall is written "Johannes De Eyck fuit hic/1434"(Jan van Eyck was here /1434), and in the round convex mirror we can see two figures present in the room as witnesses…the picture has the character of a document, a legal act is being certified.[72]

Van Eyck's signature is thus an 'ad vivum' substitute; a value of the trusted and recognised artist here being authentication of the events depicted. (See Image 4).



Image 4

Jan van Eyck (c.1390-c.1441).
Giovanni Arnolfini and his wife Giovanna Cenami, detail (1434).

1:1(iii) Working from life; as 'Type' and 'Allegory'.

The intellectual movement of humanism during the Italian Renaissance returned to a celebration of human intellect and enterprise modeled on classical Greek and Roman scholarship.[73] By the time of the High Renaissance, 'humanists [had] also convinced most of the popes that the papacy needed their skills.'[74] Raphael's *School of Athens,* 1510-1511,

[72] Kanz. *Portraits*, 30.
[73] *Humanism: Seeking the wisdom of the Ancients.* http://www.ibiblio.org/expo/vatican.exhibit/exhibit/c-humanism/Humanism.html
[74] Ibid.,

commissioned by Pope Julius II,[75] is therefore able to depict the most famous philosophers of ancient times.[76] (See Image 5).



Image 5
Raffaello Sanzio da Urbino, known as Raphael. (1483 –1520), *School of Athens* (1510-1511).

Painted as it is and where it is, on the walls of the papal rooms annexing the Sistine Chapel in the Vatican, the heart of Catholic Christendom, it demonstrates the value at that time for learning and intellectual thought. Though the work imagines both male and female philosophers from antiquity, Raphael modeled them from observation of individuals known and living around him. Most notably of these are Raphael's artistic contemporaries and 'heroes', Bramante, Leonardo and Michelangelo. Furthermore, he includes his own self-portrait amongst the group of scholars learning from the Master, Bramante, in the guise of Euclid.[77] [78] [79] Nigel Spivey[80] stresses that from the

[75] Daniel A. Dombrowski. *Demonstrating Philosophy: Raphael's School of Athens in a Philosophy Classroom.* St. Joseph's University, Philadelphia. 1988. http://www.pdcnet.org/demphil/content/demphil_1988_0065_0070

[76] Vatican Museums. *Raphael: School of Athens.* http://mv.vatican.va/3_EN/pages/x-Schede/SDRs/SDRs_03_02_020.html

[77] *The School of Athens* contains portraits such as Hypatia of Alexandria, a female Neo-Platonist philosopher, mathematician and astronomer who taught Plato's philosophy in Alexandria, and who was ultimately executed by the Christians. It is thought that Raphael used the nobleman, Francesco Maria della Rovere I, whom he had previously painted c.1503, as the model for this female philosopher.[77] Similarly, Donato Bramante (1444-1514), a heroic architectural creative genius figure to the young Raphael, is used as the model to take on the role of the Greek mathematician Euclid, depicted with his dividers surrounded by admiring students towards the bottom right corner. Leonardo Da Vinci's features, recognizable from his own self-portrait of 1512, is here depicted by Raphael as his own hero, Plato. Likewise the fresco pays homage to the senior artistic genius of the city at that time, Michelangelo Buonarotti. Although he was working on the painting of the Sistine Chapel at the same time that Raphael was painting this work, he saw himself as primarily a sculptor. Raphael's full-

Renaissance onwards artists have privileged the value of life study.[81] However, as Raphael's *School Of Athens* and it's 'sister' fresco, *The Disputa*–which, contrastingly, explores wholly Christian themes–demonstrate here, direct study of the figure was principally for the personification of legendary or mythical figures, essential to representation of the embodiment of their philosophical and spiritual beliefs. (See Image 6). Renaissance paintings therefore give material form to articles of Christian religious faith much in the same way as the Greeks and Romans were able to meet face to face with their gods through their perceived authenticity represented in statues placed around their earthly temples.[82]



Image 6
Raffaello Sanzio da Urbino, known as Raphael. (1483 –1520), *The Disputa* (1509-1512).

The centralization of the human figure, fortifying the Catholic Christian perspective of humankind as the pinnacle of God's creation, is evident throughout Italian Renaissance Christian art. Though donors and leaders of the papal church were sometimes depicted, the skill of the artist was often to

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length portrait of Michelangelo, in the left foreground, shows him leaning on a block of marble, referencing his preferred artistic discipline, but in keeping with the narrative of the piece, he assumes the role of the Greek philosopher, Heracleitus.[77]

[78] Daniel Orth Bell. *New identifications in Raphael's School of Athens*. Art Bulletin, 1995. http://www.suite101.com/content/raphael--the-symbolism-of-the-school-of-athens-a188908#ixzz1OYabIDdR

[79] "Heracleitus." *Encyclopædia Britannica. Encyclopædia Britannica Online*. Encyclopædia Britannica, 2011. http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/262438/Heracleitus.

[80] Nigel Spivey is Senior Lecturer in Classics, Fellow and Director of Studies in Classics at Emmanuel College, Cambridge. UK. http://www.classics.cam.ac.uk/directory/nigel-spivey

[81] Nigel Spivey *How Art Made the World* (London, UK: BBC Books and BBC Television series.2005), 57.

[82] Spivey. *How Art Made The World,* 76.

produce what have become accepted archetypical portraits of characters from literary sources such as the Bible, Virgil's *Aeneid* or Dante's *Inferno.* In depictions of real historical figures for whom there is neither little factual account of their appearance – as even with the depictions of Christ Himself – 'portraits' become a standard type. While there is friendship and influence between those living contemporaries whom the artist selects to paint for such purposes,[83] the individual sitter is not acknowledged to the audience but serves rather as symbolic types to convey a message, be they moral or political, in line with the demands of a commission from the representative of a powerful conglomerate, notably the church. The relationship between artist and sitter serves only the artist's goal of creating a believable type, either as allegory or as the depiction of a historical or mythical person.

This chapter will now look at the relationships between the artist and their sitters–who are frequently also their client–through the case studies of two major artists from the fifteenth to eighteenth centuries: Hans Holbein the Younger, and Thomas Gainsborough. As Shearer West[84] notes, 'the fifteenth century was a significant turning point in the history of portraiture as it represented the beginning of a professionalization of European portrait painting'.[85] These two artists pass on a significant legacy to contemporary portrait painting in two regards: their shifts towards a more recognisable contemporary artist-sitter relationship; and innovations in painting techniques that effectively express this relationship.

1:1(iv) Case Study: Hans Holbein the Younger (1497/8-1543).

The German painter, Hans Holbein the Younger was, at the relatively young age of 26, of such high artistic standing that he painted Desiderius Erasmus,

[83] Giorgio Vasari. *Lives of the Artists.* Translated by George Bull. *(*Middlesex, England: Penguin, 1974.
[84] Shearer West is Professor of History of Art at Oxford University, UK. http://www.hoa.ox.ac.uk/staff/research-associates/professor-shearer-west.html
[85] Shearer West. *Portraiture*, 14.

the Dutch humanist and scholar from Rotterdam and one of the most influential Renaissance figures. (See Image 7.)

Holbein not only admired Erasmus for his great intellect but, importantly, he also became a personal friend. In his portraits of him there is a sense of intimacy between artist and sitter. In his 1523 portrait for example, Holbein, having established the physical likeness, also infers what is not physically visible–that by which the person of Erasmus becomes defined–the thinking mind. Richard Brilliant describes Holbein's 'imaginative portrayal' as a 'powerful synthetic image [which] stands for ever for the person "Erasmus".' [86] Brilliant also notes that this portrait, along with an engraving of Erasmus by Albrecht Durer from three years later, became the 'composite portrait [that] lived on through history as the likeness of this great man, as if these artists had no role in its creation.'[87]



Image 7
Hans Holbein the Younger (1497/8–1543)
Erasmus (1523).

Brilliant is noting the ability of such portraitists to produce such an authentic likeness of a sitter, seemingly with no telltale trace of the artists' involvement, such that the spectator believes they are experiencing the presence of Erasmus from life themself.

Such was the strength of the friendship between Erasmus and Holbein that the former furnished the latter with a letter of recommendation to other would-be patrons. In 1526 this letter was given to another of Erasmus' friends, Sir Thomas More, Lord Chancellor and advisor to the Tudor Court and of King Henry VIII himself. More 'became a close friend with Desiderius Erasmus during the latter's first visit to England in 1499. It was the beginning of a

[86] Brilliant, *Portraiture*, 74.
[87] Ibid., 74.

lifelong friendship and correspondence'.[88] Sir Thomas More became a sitter himself for Holbein in 1527. More's role in introducing Holbein to the Tudor court, through his acquaintance with Erasmus, ultimately lead to Holbein being given the official title of Court Painter. One of his sketchbooks in the Royal Collection, London, has eighty-five portraits of the royalty and courtiers.[89]

The relationship between Holbein and King Henry VIII is of particular note since Holbein's painting of the King Henry VIII, in 1537, (see Image 8), has become an icon for the man himself–'Holbein's Henry VIII remains posterity's image of the king.'[90]

'All other representations have been shouldered aside' states historian Derek Wilson.[91] Holbein's value to the sixteenth century Tudor court equates with that of the of a present-day 'spin-doctor' publicist to celebrity or politician for Wilson points out that this image of Henry VIII was painted 'following the worst year of his reign'[92] but that Holbein's portrait belies such a fact:

> Here was a victorious warrior king who had triumphed over his enemies and stood defiant in the face of all opposition. It proclaimed Henry's virility–the very centre of the composition is that thrusting codpiece. This device asserted that the future of the dynasty was secure because Henry was a veritable sexual athlete in full possession of all his faculties.[93]

Holbein's value to the King is to present him in the best possible light–in control, defiant, powerful, still at the helm.

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[88] Ian Ousby, Ed. "The Life of Sir Thomas More" *The Cambridge Guide to Literature*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998.
[89] Royal Collection. Department of the Royal Household. London, UK http://www.royalcollection.org.uk/eGallery/,aker.asp?maker+12102&row+20
[90] Erika Langmuir. *The National Gallery Companion Guide.* London. Yale University Press/National Gallery Publications. 1994. 123.
[91] Derek Wilson, "Was Hans Holbein's Henry VIII the Best Piece of Propaganda Ever? *The Telegraph*. April 23, 2009. http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/5206727/Was-Hans-Holbeins-Henry-VIII-the-best-piece-of-propaganda-ever.html
[92] Ibid.,
[93] Ibid.,



Image 8
Hans Holbein The Younger
King Henry VIII (1536/7).



Image 9
After Hans Holbein the Younger.
King Henry VIII (1536).

The innovative way in which Holbein depicted Henry was so impressive that other artists seem to have taken Holbein's almost as a veritable template. (See Image 9). Notably distinctive is the choice of the angle of the face of the monarch that may not have been entirely Holbein's decision; suggesting interplay of ideas shared between artist and sitter to attain desired goals. In earlier portraits of the King he is always painted in three-quarter profile, befitting traditions of depicting royalty in at least slightly three-quarter facial view and usually with eyes averted from the spectator; the life size cartoon study by Holbein reveals such was the original intention. Wilson suggests, 'The deliberate change must have been at the king's instigation.'[94] Holbein's huge mural depicting this life-size figure of Henry and his dynasty was placed in the most commanding of positions in his Palace at Whitehall.[95] (See Image 10). The visitor would thus meets their governmental leader, and–as newly self-appointed head of the Church of England[96]–spiritual leader, not as distant and disconnected but head on, face-to-face, eye-to-eye.

[94] Ibid.,
[95] The National Portrait Gallery, London. http://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/portrait/mw03080/King-Henry-VIII-King-Henry-VII?search=sp&sText=Holbein+Henry+VIII&firstRun=true&rNo=0
[96] Having passed the Act of Supremacy in 1534, Henry made himself equivalent to the head of the Church of Rome, the Pope. Like the Pope, the head of this new order, the King, also assumed God-given rights to change established law.



Image 10
George Vertue, after Remigius van Leemput, after Hans Holbein the Younger. *King Henry VIII; King Henry VII; Elizabeth of York; Jane Seymour* (1737).

Holbein's painted portraits of the sixteen-year-old Christina of Denmark and that of Anne of Cleves highlight his great value to the King, illustrating the King's faith in Holbein's skills. (See Image 11). Holbein was commissioned to present their portraits in their stead to Henry for his evaluation of them as possible future brides. Again the artist is required to adhere to certain requirements from the client, the King, which influences artistic compositional decisions. Christina 'agreed to sit for Holbein for three hours, and the English envoy judged the resulting drawing or drawings to be "very perfect"…the king was said to be "in love" with Christina, whom…he had never met except through Holbein's art. It has been suggested that the full-face pose…was chosen on instructions from the king, who may have felt that any other view might allow blemishes to be concealed from him.'[97] In the non-eventuation of Henry's marriage to Christina, Holbein was sent to paint Anne of Cleves. A similar brief would seem apparent since, as 'with other portraits of Henry's prospective brides,'[98] the resultant pose is head-on. This gives support to the claim for the pose being a directive from the King since, as Shearer West notes:

> Anne's frontal pose and direct gaze are unusual in the portrait tradition that placed women in part profile and looking off into the distance.[99]

[97] Erika Langmuir. *The National Gallery Companion Guide.* London. Yale University Press/National Gallery Publications. 1994, 126.
[98] Ibid., 126.
[99] West. *Portraiture*, 62.



Image 11.
Hans Holbein the Younger
(1497/8–1543).
The *Betrothal* portrait of Anne of Cleves
(1538).

Henry had 'felt he had to see an image of his wife-to-be before committing himself.'[100] He saw the *Betrothal* portrait of Anne some two months before her arrival in England, when he would only then see her in person for the first time. Despite his weighty responsibility to act as Henry's eyes, in that Anne purportedly had pox scars, Holbein seems to have been artistically selective, choosing not to emphasise such physical blemishes, but rather to 'reflect her sweet nature.'[101] On seeing her in person, Henry famously said 'I like her not',[102] referring to her disparagingly as the 'Flanders Mare', never consummating the marriage, which was quickly annulled. It is difficult to believe that Holbein would not have recognized the historical significance of his role in this enterprise. In light of the King's disappointment of comparing reality to painted image one would expect this particular artist/sitter relationship to be severely tested, yet 'even Henry himself did not make much of the supposed difference between the painted and real Anne, aside from a

[100] Ibid., 62.
[101] "Anne of Cleves", *Elizabethan Era.org.*
http://www.elizabethan-era.org.uk/anne-of-cleves.htm
[102] Beth Arnold, *Anne of Cleves: The Luckiest Wife of Henry VIII.*
http://www.suite101.com/content/anne-of-cleves-a77923#ixzz1WenhQXOG

comment to Cromwell that she was “nothing so fair as she had been reported”.'[103]

Through his paintings for the King, Holbein reveals sensitivity to the King’s personal emotional dilemmas and upsets, incumbent in his role as husband, father and head of a nation in turmoil. As a New Year’s Day gift in 1539, for example, Holbein presented Henry with a painting of the King’s son and much-desired heir, Edward VI.[104] Portraits of Henry himself as sitter to Holbein a year later in 1540 and again in 1542, and other paintings of the Tudor court and aristocracy up until the artist’s death in 1543, allay assumptions of an irate monarch/patron terminating an artist’s services: ‘Eminent sitters flocked to him.’ [105]

This case study of Holbein demonstrates the value of the relationship of artist with sitter being built on mutual trust and respect. The highly skilled artist is shown here to satisfy the needs of the sitter/client to present a certain desired image for himself and the contemporary audience and to stand as historical record. Though the business relationship places demands on the artist to satisfy the sitter/client demands, the evidence of the artist making a personal gift of the portrait of the King’s son, Edward, infers an emotional connection between Holbein and Henry. Described as never physically robust,[106] Edward was to die at only fifteen and it would seem probable that both parties would have known the child’s unlikely growth to maturity. Such a gesture from artist to father of the sitter was thus a supportive and sympathetic one. With the gift of this painting, it can be postulated that Holbein demonstrates either empathy with the concerned father for the welfare of his much-loved son whose

[103] Marilee Hanson. *Anne of Cleves.* http://englishhistory.net/tudor/monarchs/cleves.html.
[104] National Gallery of Art, London. http://www.nga.gov/collection/gallery/gg35/gg35-71-prov.html
[105] Langmuir. *National Gallery,* 123.
[106] *The British Monarchy*. Written and managed by the Royal Household at Buckingham Palace. http://www.royal.gov.uk/HistoryoftheMonarchy/KingsandQueensofEngland/TheTudors/EdwardVI.aspx

prospects are worrying, or the more pragmatic reason of the needs of a nation to see an inspiring image of the future king worthy of replacing Henry.

1:1(v) Case Study: Thomas Gainsborough (1727-1788).

This example of Thomas Gainsborough's relationships with his sitters demonstrates the dilemmas of compromising artistic integrity and artistic goals for the sake of maintaining professional relationships with client/sitters recognising such commissions as being the livelihood on which he depends. His treatment and portrayal of certain sitters reveal his personal feelings for them as individuals are sometimes kept in check by the demands of the professional relationship.

Gainsborough became one of the most popular and successful British painters of the late eighteenth century.[107] Though Joshua Reynolds was appointed the court painter to King George III in 1784, and was knighted for his services, it was to his contemporary, Thomas Gainsborough that moneyed society turned when they wanted an image reflecting their wealth, gaiety and *joie de vivre.*

'Gainsborough knew only too well, the one secure means for a painter to earn a living was through commissions for portraits.'[108] However, Gainsborough's letters, such as those to his intimate friend, the conductor, composer and amateur painter William Jackson, reveal from his own personal artistic viewpoint, that he feels he would have found landscape painting more fulfilling. [109] Though he needs to negotiate the artist/sitter relationship as a business one to satisfy all parties, he senses that, as a painter, he is treated disparagingly, as of a different social class to his clients, perceiving himself

[107] *Thomas Gainsborough.* BBC. 'Your Paintings'. http://www.bbc.co.uk/arts/yourpaintings/artists/thomas-gainsborough-658
[108] Harrison, Wood and Gaiger. Eds. *Art In Theory: Volume 1*. (Blackwell. MA.USA. Oxford, England, and Victoria, Australia. 2000.) 741.
[109] Robert Goldwater and Marco Treves, Eds. *Artists on Art: Thomas Gainsborough.* (New York Pantheon Books. 1972).189.

very much as a worker enslaved to a master who, though as his client they may have money and position, he intimates they do not have the monopoly on culture. He states,

> I hate a dust, and kicking up a dust, and being confined in harness while others ride in a waggon [sic], under cover, stretching their legs…gazing at green trees and blue skies without half my taste. That's d–d hard.[110]

He comforts himself from the financial reward of these business relationships since the considerable money he earns allows him to indulge in buying material things in excess, implying he has bettered his patrons.[111]

Gainsborough's paintings often depict his lady sitters, reflective of their privileged position in life, generally by virtue of their marriage, and often commissioned by their husbands. *Mrs. Thomas Graham*, 1777, (see Image 12), depicts a woman of flawless beauty, subsumed as a praiseworthy possession of the man by whose own name we only know her. Gainsborough is mindful of where the best source of his income lies but recoils from clients in search of sycophantic flattery.



Image 12
Thomas Gainsborough (1727–1788).
Mrs. Thomas Graham (1777).

Gainsborough was commissioned by the future King George IV, then Prince of Wales, to paint the portrait of the actress and poet Mary Robinson, mistress to the Prince. The portrait is referred to as *Perdita,* (see Image 13), Mary's

[110] Ibid., 189.
[111] Goldwater and Treves, *Artists on Art*, 190.

nickname after her performance of the character in *The Winter's Tale*.[112] The commission came from the Prince and sittings continued after the affair had ended, Mary having received a financial settlement from the Prince. Gainsborough was simultaneously commissioned by the Prince to paint a portrait of Mary's rival, the Scottish socialite and courtesan Grace Elliot, known as Dally the Tall.[113] Despite this *Perdita* was to hang prominently in the Prince's Carlton House. Paula Byrne[114] suggests that, although the Prince is the client, Gainsborough is sympathetic to the plight of Mary's ruined career having been misused by Royalty. She notes that Gainsborough paints Mary 'as a clear evocation of [her] abandonment: she is Perdita the lost one.'[115]



Image 13.
Thomas Gainsborough
(1727–1788).
Perdita (1781).

Though Gainsborough's client is here the future King of England no less, here he holds fast to his own agenda and artistic integrity. There is a suggestion that Gainsborough was 'half in love with her himself.'[116] This could have influenced his sympathetic and sensitive painting of her–'painted dreamily and almost impressionistically'[117]–as criticism of the King's womanizing ways. 'Gainsborough… is clearly taking Mary's side' and presents her beauty and sexuality as if to taunt the Prince who 'would never again have so beautiful a mistress'.[118] It is not known if the prince took this criticism personally. The fact

[112] Betsy Bolton. *Romancing the Stone: "Perdita" Robinson in Wordsworth's London.* ELH. Volume 64, no. 3. Fall 1997.The Johns Hopkins University Press.1997. 727-959.
[113] Paula Byrne*. Perdita: The Life of Mary Robinson*. Harper Collins UK. Random House USA. 2005. 168.
[114] Paula Byrne is a 'best selling biographer' and a Fellow of Oxford University's Harris Manchester College. http://www.paulabyrne.com/Biography.php
[115] Ibid., 169.
[116] Ibid., 168.
[117] Ibid., 169.
[118] Ibid., 168.

that he hung the painting prominently would suggest that he prized the painting, perhaps as a souvenir of his conquest, a symbol of his own virility, but although Gainsborough billed him for 105 guineas (approximately AU$20,000 today) the King did not make even a first payment until after Gainsborough's death, to his widow.[119]

The artist/ client and oft-time sitter relationship between Gainsborough and the Prince was evidently a symbiotic business relationship. The value of the artist to the Prince was his ability to provide him with assuring images of himself with which he was evidently pleased. As Prince, and later as King, George would 'let Gainsborough frame some of the portraits he sent out as gifts' himself [120], clearly entrusting the artist to present his image to his friends in the best possible light. As in the cases of the portrait of Mary Robinson and Grace Elliot, the artist facilitates souvenir evocations of George's sexual conquests, reassuring him of his success as a lover even if his 'profligacy and marriage difficulties meant that he never regained much popularity.'[121] His dis-honouring of payment for Gainsborough's services however displays a disregard for any deeper personal relationship.

For Gainsborough, the value of Royal approval and association established professional kudos, which would transpire into well-paying commissioned work from the higher social circles. However, the relationship between artist and Mary Robinson as sitter, even though commissioned by the Prince, demonstrates an emotional connection brought about through the duration of the sittings. As has been demonstrated, this emotional attachment transforms the technical and conceptual approach to the portrait enabling the artist to convey something of his own assessment of the sitter's personal situation,

[119] Ibid., 169.
[120] Jacob Simon. *Thomas Gainsborough and picture framing.* The National Portrait Gallery, London. http://www.npg.org.uk/research/programmes/the-art-of-the-picture-frame/artist-gainsborough.php
[121] *George IV (r.1820-1830)*. The British Monarchy; the official website. http://www.royal.gov.uk/historyofthemonarchy/kingsandqueensoftheunitedkingdom/thehanoverians/georgeiv.aspx

their disposition and character. The decorative qualities, with which Gainsborough enhances the portraits of his female sitters in particular, is aided by a flamboyancy and experimentation of painterly techniques. Gainsborough's 'combination of different media…makes many of them a species of free painting.'[122] Contrastingly, unlike his portrait of Perdita for the future King George, Gainsborough's letters indicate he is not always averse to sacrificing artistic principles, repainting parts of a portrait to satisfy the paying 'customer'. They reveal hard fought negotiations with clients that often required compromise on his part. They vividly represent the portrait painter as a singular combination of sought-after purveyor of a scarce commodity and a virtual servant required to adhere to his master's dictates.[123]

The demands of Gainsborough's sitters and the negotiations of portraiture as business resonate with present day accounts of portrait commissions. Pertinent to the issue here is the conversation between Sarah Howgate, of London's National Portrait Gallery, and painter Jonathan Yeo. She asks, 'Does it matter… what the subject thinks about the portrait? David Hockney and Lucian Freud used to say that they didn't care – that its' irrelevant to them what the sitter thinks.' Yeo's response is: 'I think artists feel they have to say that. The honest answer is that it depends who it is.'[124] He proceeds to explain that, for instance, in the case of his sitter Dennis Hopper–the acclaimed actor, film director, photographer, artist and collector–his approval of the work does matter since, as Yeo says, 'I respected him as an artist and viewer.'[125] However it is precisely through artists such as Gainsborough that 'the relative independence of artistic value,'[126] through his technical bravura, is advanced. A 'clear sequence of developments connecting late eighteenth-century

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[122] *Thomas Gainsborough, a biography of the painter.* English for Art Historians. http://arthistoryinenglish.edublogs.org/painting/xviiith-century-art/thomas-gainsborough-a-biography-of-the-painter/

[123] Charles Harrison, Paul J. Wood and Jason Gaiger, eds, *Art in Theory, Vol 1, 1648 – 1815.* (Oxford, UK & Cambridge, MA: Blackwell,1996), 742.

[124] Sarah Howgate interview with Jonathan Yeo. *The Many Faces of Jonathan Yeo.* (London. Art/Books.) 250.

[125] Ibid., 250.

[126] Charles Harrison, Paul J. Wood and Jason Gaiger, eds, *Art in Theory, Vol 1, 1648 – 1815.* 741.

debates over the picturesque to the theoretical justifications of abstract art, and to the formal tendencies of twentieth-century art criticism'[127] is thus ascribed to concerns of eighteenth century painters as exampled in Gainsborough's portraiture.

1:2 The Impact Of Societal and Technological change.

With the development of powered automation, the limits of physical exhaustion and human capability were overridden, the parameters of what could be achieved in 'real' time vastly extended. Singular activities and direct interactions became necessarily separated and distanced from the individual – 'artificial' to the extent that the activity is not natural or bound by the forces of nature. Through the Industrial Revolution, humankind sought to dominate nature. Mechanical interactions become, by definition, devoid of reciprocal human emotions.

In tandem with technological change brought about by the Industrial Revolution, beginning in England and typically defined as spanning 1760 to 1850,[128] was radical societal change, born of eighteenth century Enlightenment thinking, and most dramatically expedited by the events of the French Revolution. The new societal structures considered and reflected what it was to be human under new conditions.[129] As we have seen in the portraits of Gainsborough, such as *Perdita,* from the eighteenth century, individual freedoms in respect of authority, social and sexual freedoms, are implicit and

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[127] Ibid., 741.

[128] Vaclav Smil, "Industrial Revolution*", in The Encyclopedia of Earth*, 2007. http://www.eoearth.org/article/Industrial_Revolution

[129] New statutes and declarations, while moving forward to be inclusive of a broader human demographic, reveal Christian perspectives and a male-centric worldview, exemplified in America's *July Fourth Declaration of Independence,* 1776. These Western views of what it is to be 'human' would also influence the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* by The United Nations General Assembly in Paris in 1948 in response to the atrocities of the Second World War. This relatively modern legislation still reveals male-centric Western morés of the time, admonishing all humans to 'act towards one another in a spirit of *brotherhood*.'–*"The Universal Declaration of Human Rights",* United Nations Organisation 1948. http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/

flourished in the nineteenth century in the wake of the radical transformation of the social orders. The profound and sweeping changes in living and working conditions, in political and religious thinking, and philosophical shifts in understandings of what it is to be human, re-purpose the painted portrait in relation to those who might require or commission them and the needs and social standing of the independent artist.

1:2(i) The impact of pictorial printing techniques.

Before fully powered mechanised methods and chemical processes of reproduction were invented, the making of print copies of artworks was limited to hand-printed methods, notably engraving or etching. Nevertheless this gave a much wider audience the ability to see and own a version of an original work - be it in reverse, in black and white, at a different scale and in a different medium.

William Hogarth was a painter who enjoyed huge popularity and commercial success through the selling and distribution of multiple prints of his paintings. In 1732 Hogarth engraved copies of his very popular painting series *A Harlot's Progress,* having taken subscription orders before the prints had even been made. This guaranteed him at least £1200 directly to his independent studio. However, as soon as their popularity had been realised unauthorized copies began to appear being sold at cheaper prices. In February 1735 Hogarth led a small group of artists and engravers to lobby parliament, which eventuated in the passing of the Copyright Act of 1735 protecting further copying of artist's work by others for fourteen years after publication date and 'making it punishable ... for any one to copy the Designs of Another.'[130] The affordability and convenience of access to the print established an ongoing familiarisation for a much wider demographic than the usually moneyed individual

[130] R. Deazley, 'Commentary on the Engravers' Act (1735)', in *Primary Sources on Copyright (1450-1900)*, eds L. Bently & M. Kretschmer, (2008) www.copyrighthistory.org

commissioner or collector of an individual one-off piece. Once familiar with the format and characters that peopled his original works, Hogarth kept his 'market audience' waiting with baited breath, and open purses, for the latest installment in something of a forerunner of daily newspaper comic-strips. In this way he was not compromised or answerable to the whims of an individual patron or client.

Even in portraiture, Hogarth was mindful of commercial spin-offs through printing. His painting of the Shakespearean stage actor David Garrick in 1745, (see Image 14), celebrated Garrick's first London debut of 1741. Garrick was to become the most famous actor of his time, his popularity assisted by Hogarth's prints based on his own painting. Garrick did not commission Hogarth 'but Hogarth knew the power of the theatre, as well as the fascination it held for the literate public. Among the relatively small percentage of the population who actually attended the theatre in the eighteenth century, the personal and professional qualities of actors were well known.'[131]



Image14
William Hogarth (1697–1764).
David Garrick as Richard III (1745).

Hogarth is here cognisant of the commercial marketing power of a popular celebrity. The commercial distribution of multiple images of the portrait promotes the skills and reputations of artist and sitter resulting in beneficial financial returns to both parties. Hogarth therefore suited an image to feed and cement public perceptions, based on his astute awareness of their interest in, and literary reportage of, the characteristics of Garrick. Both artist and sitter became firm friends–the latter providing his gravestone epitaph,

[131] Shearer West . *The image of the actor: verbal and visual representation in the age of Garrick and Kemble*. New York. St. Martin's Press. 1991. 3.

which enunciates Hogarth's genius.[132] Here the artist requires the presence of the sitter to enable the creation of an original image for purposes of mass production, the image traveling outwards to a wide viewing audience, in order to shape perceptions solely on the image that the artist has chosen to present of them. This viewing of the image by a mass public, at a distance and on their own terms, is a new and different phenomenon than that of the viewing of a unique painting by, often, the sitter and their immediate circle of associates.

This example of the relationship between Hogarth and Garrick, demonstrates the enterprise of constructing and marketing of a public image of a person, to the personal monetary and career advantages of both parties. This is facilitated not only by the development of technologies of reproduction but also the opportunities provided by societal/political changes; that is, the allowance of working parties to negotiate an act through Parliament to benefit payment and working conditions for the individual artist and associated working-class printmakers, the demands of burgeoning city populations and the recognition of such as a market audience quite separate to the ruling or governing classes. Such factors provide new opportunities of prospective sitters for the artist and changes in the purpose of such portraiture. This propulsion of the idea of the human as equal individual develops as a result of Humanist and Enlightenment thinking.

According to Woodall, after its invention in 1839, photography 'soon admitted an unprecedentedly wide clientele to portraiture, enabling people who previously could not afford, or were not considered worthy of, painted immortality to have their features recorded for posterity.'[133] However the daguerreotype 'posed little threat to the painted portrait because of its reduced dimensions and its tendency to lack clarity. Gradually the technique gained ground as new and more sensitive surfaces were developed, using albumen

[132] George Smith. *The Dictionary of National Biography Founded in 1882 by George Smith: The Concise Dictionary.* UK. Oxford University Press. 1982. 628.
[133] Woodall, *Portraiture,* 7.

in 1847 and collodion in 1851.'[134] Photolithography was invented in 1855, the first half-tone photographs were printed in the 1870s and the use of half-tone blocks for the printing of gradated black and white tonal ranges in photographic images in popular journals was commonplace by the late 1880s.[135]

> However, the photographic portrait did not lead to the demise of portrait painting or its material enslavement…rather it incited artists to explore painterly, "antiphotographic" directions. Moreover, portrait photographers faced many of the same challenges as portrait painters in attempting to record the character and social status of the sitter in a single, condensed image. [136]

Still in the '1880's a photographic portrait could not boast the prestige of a painted portrait, which could be shown at The Salon and hung imposingly on the sitter's walls.'[137] Bourgeoisie clients saw the painted portrait as more prestigious, reflecting traditional associations with a supposed cultured upper class. 'The bourgeois liked amusing genre-pictures or touching sentimental scenes…and above all [they] wanted portraits … portraiture was the artist's bread and butter.'[138] The painted portrait, apart from its obvious advantages of colour and size over early photography, was still perceived as of higher artistic value that the photographic print – that the portrait seen through the personal vision and executed by the hand of the artist offers something more unique than the mechanical reproduction.

Through this unsettling period, the noncommissioned portrait painting sought to express the social relationships between artist and sitter, investigating that with which painting might be better suited to express than photography. American-born British art historian Aaron Scharf notes,

> Painters for whom the accurate imitation of external realities had lost both

[134] Badea-Paun. *The Society Portrait,* 104.
[135] Philip B. Meggs, *A History of Graphic Design*. (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.,1998). 141.
[136] McPherson, *The Modern Portrait*, 26.
[137] Badea-Paun. *The Society Portrait.* 181.
[138] Ibid.,141.

> its moral and its artistic force sought new images commensurate with their belief that art involved a more creative process. They considered it the artist's right, if not his mission, to convey the essential reality, the intrinsic character of his subject, to emphasize at will for the sake of poetry and expression.[139]

Here Scharf importantly identifies a viable avenue of enquiry for painting generally, and for portraiture in particular, beyond the invention of photography, considered in the next chapter. It suggests differing values, objectives and intrinsic qualities of both mediums. The ability of painting therefore to convey the experience of time spent between the artist and sitter is a key differentiation.

1:2(ii) Humanism and Enlightenment.

This exegesis argues for the value of 'the human touch' in portrait painting. The particular notion of 'human' here is closely associated with Enlightenment notions of 'humanism'; that is, ideas of the 'human' historically situated in the late-eighteenth century, and, interestingly, emerging at the time of mechanization of labour during the Industrial Revolution and, importantly, just prior to the invention of photography.

Growing from Enlightenment ideas of the eighteenth century, radical social and political changes manifested themselves in forms of democracy that adopted principles of natural freedom and equality. According to Harrison and Wood, Immanuel Kant, 1724-1804, a central figure of Enlightenment thinking, asserted 'the independence of the individual from external authority and on the irreducibility of human freedom [has] been connected with ideas that sparked and drove the American and French Revolutions.'[140] This idea that the human species has inordinate qualities and rights by virtue of its unique genus can be traced back through the seventeenth-century French

[139] Aaron Scharf. *Art and Photography*. New York, USA. Penguin Books. 1986. 15.
[140] Harrison, Wood & Gaiger, *Art in Theory,* 771.

philosopher René Descartes to the fourteenth and fifteenth-century Italian humanists, through Dante, to classical Greek philosophy:[141] 'The historical importance of the Middle Ages and its influence in the subsequent history of western thought is difficult to overestimate.'[142] Kant's 'ideal of an autonomous reason [was] very much directed against the authority of religion… His call for enlightenment is in this sense an invocation for Human Rights by means of secularisation. The implications of Enlightenment … go further than the freedom of religion. At root is a sanctification of individual liberty, a recognition of the inalienable Rights of Man, of human rights (as formalised in the aftermath of the French Revolution). The Enlightenment is in this sense the progenitor of Humanism as a fully integrated world-view.[143]

The subsequent developments of Humanism through into the nineteenth century, regards the uniqueness of the human species as elevated for their ability to reason and have individual, independent thought. Renewed thinking on traditional hierarchical relationships led to tumultuous breakaways from established traditional authority, not just that of the church but that of government, as witnessed by the American and French Revolutions.

The question of whether human subjectivity can be captured in a portrait becomes, according to Carl Cederberg, 'a contentious issue from the late eighteenth century.'[144] Is physical appearance a window to the sitter's inner identity, variously defined as 'soul, virtue, genius, character, personality [or] subjectivity'?[145] Humanistic ideas, that the 'notion of self is capable of existence after physical death,' flourished during the early nineteenth century and are 'crucial to the efficacy of portraiture as representation', according to Cederberg.[146] Many recent thinkers have questioned the characterizing of humanist ideas as 'natural.' Cederberg cites Michel Foucault as an

[141] Michael Rohlf. *Immanuel Kant.* May 20, 2010. http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/kant/
[142] William Bechtel and George Graham (eds.) *Companion to Philosophy in the Middle Ages*. (Malden, MA. Oxford, UK. Melbourne, Australia. Blackwell. 2002). Preface: XV.
[143] Carl Cederberg. *Resaying the Human*. (Stockholm. Södertörns högskola. 2010.) 11.
[144] Ibid., 10.
[145] Ibid., 10.
[146] Ibid., 11.

example.[147] Woodall likewise argues, 'Recent critical analysis rejects Descartes's conception of the mind as the thing we have in common with God, and the body as the thing we have in common with animals.'[148] Post-structuralist theory 'replaces the unitary concept of 'Man' with that of the 'subject', which is gendered, 'de‐centred', and no longer self no longer self-determining.[149] Nevertheless, Enlightenment and Humanist ideas incontrovertibly shaped Western views of what it is to be essentially 'human', as unique to the genus.[150] They still predominate how we understand our subjectivity, regardless of having been questioned in philosophy. British historian Faramerz Dabhoiwala explains that

> The Enlightenment is the moment in Western history where attitudes towards what's right and wrong shift from this essentially fundamentalist idea, which has governed moral thinking until then… towards the views which we still uphold and develop: that right and wrong are based on personal interpretation, on personal reason, on personal conscience… the great Modern criterion becomes, "What is natural?" [151]

This perspective establishes the ideological and philosophical context of the time, providing the backdrop for the following discussion of artists pursuing portraiture as both a means of career and monetary reward, while negotiating and re-defining their role under the demands of such a changing society from which they draw their clientele. The changing public functions of portraiture

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[147] Stephen Best & Douglas Kellner, "Foucault and the Critique of Modernity", chapter 2 in *Postmodern Theory: Critical Applications*, *(New York, NY: Guildford Press,*1991), 34–75. http://www.uta.edu/huma/pomo_theory/ch2.html.

[148] Woodall. Portraiture, 12.

[149] Graham Good. *Northrop Frye and Liberal Humanism*. (canlit.ca. Canadian Literature, 8 Dec. 2011.Originally appeared in _Canadian Literature_ #148, Spring 1996. 75 - 91.

[150] Early humanism adapted and drew upon principles of Christian faith. Paul Brians states: 'Almost all of [early humanists] were practicing Catholics'- Brians, Paul. "The Enlightenment." *Washington State University.* Accessed November 11, 2011. http://public.wsu.edu/~brians/hum_303/enlightenment.html
A Christian perspective created a climate that underpinned the Bill of Human Rights in England in 1689-(see *English Bill of Rights*, Net Industries. http://law.jrank.org.pages/11659/English-Bill-Of-Rights.html.)In Science and Mathematics, radical new thought was rationalised through the filter of traditional Christian views.

[151] Faramerz Dabhoiwala. *Conversations: Thursday 13 June, 2013.* ABC Sydney Radio Podcast. Dr Faramerz Dabhoiwala is a Fellow, Tutor and University Lecturer in Modern History at Exeter College, Oxford University, UK. This quotation is from a radio conversation relating to his 2012 book, *The Origins of Sex: A History of the First Sexual Revolution*. London, Penguin Books.

therefore in turn affect the relationship between artist and sitter. The following two case studies of the British painter, Sir Joshua Reynolds and French painter, Jacques Louis David demonstrate how the artist/relationship is impacted by changing functions of the portrait adapting to demands of changing social structures and the consideration of concurrent technologies as appropriate to modify the intent of the painted portrait.

1:2(iii) Case Study: Sir Joshua Reynolds, (1723-1792).

According to the National Gallery, London, Sir Joshua Reynolds was 'the leading English portraitist of the eighteenth century. Through study of 'ancient and Italian Renaissance art and of the work of Rembrandt, Rubens and Van Dyck, he brought great variety and dignity to British portraiture.'[152] The artist/sitter relationship between Reynolds and Catherine Fisher, known as 'Kitty', developed over the sittings for several portrait paintings that he made of her. (See Image 15).



Image15
Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723-1792).
Kitty Fisher as Cleopatra Dissolving the Pearl. (1759).

Similarly to Hogarth and Garrick's experience, both Reynolds and Fisher recognised the potential of engraved prints made subsequently of the painted portraits, to serve to control and shape wider public perceptions of Kitty and

[152] *Sir Joshua Reynolds.* The National Gallery, London. http://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/artists/sir-joshua-reynolds

the artist's career profile as well as being a lucrative source of income for both parties. Though Reynolds had a successful career producing academically-sound portraits of gentry, the privileged or military elites–*Colonel Tarleton*, 1782, *Lady Cockburn and her Three Eldest Sons,* 1773, *Lord Heathfield of Gibraltar*, 1787, for example– he

> made a calculated decision to associate his art with…the demi-monde: women who moved amongst the social elite but whose sex lives flouted polite codes of behaviour. Reynolds cultivated their friendship and painted their portraits, promoting their celebrity while also making his studio the place where images of the country's most beautiful women could be seen. Once again, he was making sure he remained the most sought-after portraitist of the age.[153]

Reynolds is here acutely aware that his sources of income, his interest as practicing portraitist, personal enjoyment and lifestyle, is benefitted from addressing the demands of a wider spectrum of clientele drawn from wider social circles.

Kitty Fisher was known as 'a high-class prostitute,'[154] described by Faramerz Dabhoiwala as 'a woman whose every move is chronicled by the newspapers… she is exploited by the mass media of the day… people rush out to buy prints of her falling off her horse.'[155] Dabhoiwala says that the prints of this incident exploited the opportunity to titillate by showing her dress riding up and exposing her.
(See Image 16A).



Image16A
The Merry Accident.
Created/Published between 1756 and 1767.

[153] The Tate Gallery, London. *Joshua Reynolds: The creation of celebrity: Painted Women..* http://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-britain/exhibition/joshua-reynolds/joshua-reynolds-creation-celebrity-room-guide-7
[154] Ibid.,
[155] Dabhoiwala, *Conversations.*

Nevertheless, historian Stella Tillyard notes that while Kitty Fisher ultimately regretted the lowbrow salacious publicity that her actions brought about, she had in fact actually 'staged [the] accident in Hyde Park where she tumbled off her horse in front of the assembled crowd, and exposed her pretty legs to the watching public.'[156] Here, then, the easy availability of engraved images of her exploits made her an object of mockery and innuendo for the wider general public, fascinated with the scandals of the social elite. Dabhoiwala describes how she sets about to counteract this negative public image of her.

> This is the moment where she says "enough is enough"… she takes control of her own message…[goes] to the studio of the most famous image maker of the eighteenth century, Joshua Reynolds…they sit down together, as all the other courtesans after her do too, they start to craft images of her that are much more appealing and which they have control over… He paints her…that itself attracts fashionable interest…but more importantly they engrave each portrait in thousands of copies so that anyone who wants to buy a 'pin-up' of Kitty Fisher can buy the authorized 'pin-up', bringing her profit, controlling her message and her image.' [157]

Reynolds therefore, in collaboration and at the instigation of Kitty Fisher, utilised his skills to re-shape her public persona. Though it may have 'alienated him from more conservative quarters, [it] gave him tremendous publicity in fashionable male circles.'[158] Reynolds painted 'seven portraits of Kitty Fisher, a testimony to her continuing status as an object of fascination.' These were released as prints with resulting financial rewards for artist and sitter. [159] Both parties recognise and exploit the value of their relationship to one another.

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[156] Stella Tillyard. *Painted Women*. The Tate Gallery, London. http://www.tate.org.uk/download/file/fid/17491

[157] Dabhoiwala, *Conversations*.

[158] The Tate Gallery, London*. Joshua Reynolds: The creation of celebrity.,*

[159]Marcia Pointon. "The Lives of Kitty Fisher." *British Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* 27 (2004), p.77-97. http://www.marciapointon.org/Fisher.pdf.
In his second portrait of her, Kitty Fisher is painted as *Cleopatra Dissolving the Pearl.* Reynolds contrives to associate her with the legendary Egyptian queen, Cleopatra, whose 'exotic beauty and powers of seduction, earned her an enduring place in history and popular myth.' Pointon notes that Sarah Fielding had recently published a popular book about Cleopatra. A popular story that circulated about Fisher was that she had swallowed a bank-note for £100 on a slice of buttered-bread. In that bank-notes at this time were either cheques or I.O.U.s, not useable cash, this act of 'extraordinary profligacy' symbolised her greed for

Evidently the relationship between Reynolds and Fisher was perceived by the public to be more than just a professional one; 'At the time it was rumoured that she was Reynolds' mistress, although this has never been proved.'[160] His relationship with her 'exposed him to criticism…[it] feminis[ed] the portrait painter, drawing attention to their shared dependency on the patronage of the aristocracy and their own acts of ostentation and self-display.'[161] Nevertheless, she is described as Reynolds' 'close friend [whom] he painted many times'.[162] One such portrait of her remains unfinished, 'presumably painted for the artist's pleasure rather than a specific commission.'[163] It shows her playing with Reynolds' pet parrot, and 'her lips are slightly parted as if she is sweet-talking to the bird, revealing the tender side to her nature,'[164] thus indicating that a genuine bond between artist and sitter had been established. (See Image 16B).



Image16B
Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723-1792).
Kitty Fisher and parrot, (c.1763-4).

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recognised money in terms of gold or jewelry and a distain for the 'nations most venerable institution, The Bank of England.' However in representing her about to consume the largest pearl ever known as part of a wager Cleopatra had with Antony, Reynolds not only indulges his own propensity for learned allusions to history and history painting but also connects a courtesan reputed to have swallowed a bank-note to a quintessential moment of luxurious consumption…The Cleopatra story was a sure fire way of communicating to a very wide public the construction of Kitty Fisher as an alluring and dangerous consumer of men's wealth. Pointon also notes that Kitty kept the actual painting herself but when the print version became available it was very popular with the public and both artist and sitter profited from its sale, which tapped into the 'contemporary interest in the character of the Egyptian queen.' Pointon, *The Lives of Kitty Fisher*, 78- 82.

[160] *Joshua Reynolds: The creation of celebrity,*

[161] Alison Margaret Conway. *Private Interests: Women, Portraiture and the Visual Culture of the English Novel, 1709-1791.* (Toronto, Buffalo and London. University of Toronto Press. 2001). 39.

[162] *Joshua Reynolds: The creation of celebrity,.*

[163] Ibid.,

[164] Ibid.,

This study of Reynolds' relationship to Kitty as sitter, the methods and purpose of the dissemination of her portraiture to the public, by contrast to that of many of his other clientele, demonstrates the collaboration of both parties to use the enterprise and available technologies to their own mutually beneficial ends. In this example we see acknowledgement of the beginnings of a more coherent notion of a 'public'. This will be shown to be demonstrably more significant, thanks to social forces like the popular press and the growing middle class, as a ramification of the ensuing of modernity. It is an important consideration of the climate in which portraiture of leaders elected by a public go on to be made, and for what purpose such portraits are made. The discussion therefore now turns to an investigation of the portraits of the French painters Jacques-Louis David and Gustave Courbet.

1:2 (iv) Case Study: Jacques-Louis David (1748-1825).

Jacques-Louis David reflected societal and political changes wrought by the French Revolution in France of the early 1800s. Due to his close allegiances with the leaders of the French Revolution, David was brought into contact with the First Consul, General Napoleon Bonaparte. David saw Napoleon as a hero and saviour of the people, promoting this view through his portrait of him crossing the Alps.[165] Like Reynolds in England, David's passion for, and understanding of, the works of antiquity would manifest itself in presenting his own selective view of the Napoleon that the General wished people to encounter. In *The First Consul crossing the Alps at the Grand-Saint-Bernard pass*. (See image 17). David prescribes and generates an 'image type' to promote the idea of Napoleon as a legend of mythical proportions. The artist, David, panders to the egotism of his sitter, Napoleon, by allying him with his– Napoleon's– own inspirational military heroes and forebears. David paints the names of Charlemagne (c.742 -814), the 'Father of Europe',

[165] Harrison, Wood & Gaiger. Art In Theory. Vol.1, 47.

and Hannibal (247-182 BC), as if inscribed in the rocks, pointedly beneath the rearing stallion on which Napoleon is astride. Thus David suggests parallels of Napoleon with great achievements in military history to esteem regard for him in the same light. David employs his skills to present an image of physical strength stemming any misgivings that Napoleon's diminutive stature might suggest.[166]



Image17
Jacques Louis David (1748–1825). *The First Consul crossing the Alps at the Grand-Saint-Bernard pass* (1800).

While this may pander to the sitter's ego, David is here mindful of a broader 'public', the French people, whom Napoleon represents and with whom David wishes to perpetuate an image of leader as fitting and deserving of their support. In the wake of the bloody Revolution, and still very much in unsettled times, such is the considerable and urgent value here of the artist to the sitter. David's paintings of Napoleon and Napoleonic events become less about simply providing society portraits for the Emperor, and more about aggrandizing him and his achievements to the broader audience. This accounts for a total of five almost identical versions of the painting made by David and his assistants, enabling the perpetuation of this view of Napoleon to other

[166] Kranz. *Portraits,* 20.

powerful leaders and countries–the original painting having been commissioned for the French Ambassador to Spain.

Napoleon offered David the appointment of 'Government Painter' but David turned down the post as 'insufficiently grand.'[167] However, on Napoleon's coronation in 1804, he did accept the commission for four paintings 'of immense proportions: *The Coronation of Napoleon, The Enthronement* (not painted), *The Distribution of the Eagles on the Champs De Mars* and *The Arrival of the Emperor at the Hotel de Ville* (not painted). He was also asked to paint new official portraits of the emperor and became painter to the imperial court.'[168] Clearly Napoleon recognized the power and value of his artist's ability to shape not only his subjugates view of him–he would believe in the works as an investment for his legacy beyond his death. Such an artist/sitter relationship highlights how portraiture "challenges the transiency or irrelevancy of human existence and [that] the portrait artist must respond to the demands formulated by the individual's wish to endure"[169]

The coronation of Napoleon as Emperor of the new Republic, in 1804, was the climax of his rise to power. It needed therefore to be celebrated in a fitting multiple-portrait by David, not only recording the momentous event for posterity but also attempting to placate any misgivings about Napoleon's right to such a position of power. (See Image 18). Fitting of the magnitude of the ceremony at a turning point in Europe's history, the resultant grandiose painting contained over one hundred and fifty portraits, painted from sketches and studies made from life, on a colossal canvas measuring 6.096 metres by 9.144 metres. The central figures are life-size. David accomplished for Napoleon what Ingres had sought to do, engage a concerned and doubting populace with a version of events with which they could identify and hopefully

[167] Badea-Paun. *The Society Portrait,* 47.
[168] Ibid., 47.
[169] Brilliant., 46/47.

approve, justified by historical precedent from pre-monarchal times. The Louvre Museum, which houses the painting, states:

> David was the precursor of modern-day photographers who immortalize celebrity events in magazines where luxury is supposed to feed the dreams of the public.[170]

Napoleon clearly recognised David's ability to create portraits that promoted a charismatic 'otherness' but that also conveyed a sense of humanity and connectedness to the viewer.



Image 18
Jacques Louis David (1748–1825).
The Coronation of the Emperor Napoleon I and the Crowning of the Empress Joséphine in Notre-Dame Cathedral on December 2, 1804 (1806).

Napoleon, notoriously impatient and an understandably busy general, granted David a personal sitting so that he could observe him from life.[171] While Napoleon was never to pose for his portrait again, his personal admiration and liking for David is evidenced from his invititation to accompany him

[170] "French Painting", *Musée du Louvre, Internet Department,*
Paris France. http://www.louvre.fr/en/oeuvre-notices/consecration-emperor-napoleon-and-coronation-empress-josephine-december-2-1804.
[171] Jacques-Louis David, www.jacqueslouisdavid.org/biography.html

personally on his Egyptian campaign in 1798. David excused himself as 'too old for adventuring.'[172]

David would alter certain depictions in the canvas in consultation with, or to satisfy the demands of, Napoleon. The most notable and politically loaded change that David made to the final painting was to the hand of Pope Pius VII. A drawing made from life by David, from 1805, shows the seated Pope in the nude on a thrown in which his right hand rests on his right thigh, but in visit to David's studio, Napoleon requested that 'the pope be represented in an action more direct, that he appear to be giving a benediction.'[173] The painted version of the clothed Pope with resting hand remained so until mid-January 1808 'before David, or Napoleon, raised it in benediction'.[174] This subtle change infers that there was papal approval of the whole ceremony, which was not the case. In such instances, David's function, ability and value to Napoleon is that of a propagandist – the image he creates in this case is contrary to the recorded fact. It is a selected retelling of an event for the purposes of providing an idealized rendition of that event for political purposes.
It is impossible to tell if the artist/sitter/client relationship was such that this was a willing accommodation by the artist, but another drawing by an unknown artist of 1808 entitled *The Emperor in David's Studio,* (see Image 19), seems to be the visual depiction of Napoleon's 'I salute you' proclamation to David. David is shown 'palette in hand, lower[ing] his gaze, and Napoleon, in a gesture of courtly recognition, doffs his hat.'[175]

Image 19
Unknown artist of 1808.
Lithographic copy by Emile Lassalle (1813–71).
The Emperor Napoleon visiting the studio of David (1808).



[172] Ibid.,
[173] Todd Porterfield and Susan L Siegfried, *Staging Empire: Napoleon, Ingres, and David,* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006). 149.
[174] Ibid.,149.
[175] Ibid.,143.

The value of this artist/sitter relationship is even more clearly highlighted in contrast with the General's portrait, commissioned not by Napoleon himself but rather by the city of Liege.[176] The artist, Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, (1780-1867), painted *Napoleon I on his Imperial Throne,* (see Image 20), in the same year as David's painting of the coronation, 1806. However, the public and artists alike derided the painting by Ingres. David himself found Ingres' portrait incomprehensible.[177] Critics baulked that "Napoleon's face appears oddly disconnected from his body."[178]

Ingres did not have the same personal artist/sitter relationship with Napoleon that benefited David's portraits of him. This prevented Ingres from painting Napoleon from life. The likeness was studied from second hand images, from representations by other artists.[179] Such a practice could also have contributed to 'the distant, detached demeanor and otherworldly aura of [the] subject'[180] Susan Sidlauskas[181] concludes that:

> Ingres had depicted Napoleon as the embodiment of timeless authority, when what the French wanted was a man of the people.[182]



Image 20
Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres (1780–1867). *Napoleon I on his Imperial Throne* (1806).

[176] Harrison, Wood & Gaiger, *Art in Theory*, 1169.
[177] West, *Portraiture*, 71.
[178] Susan Sidlauskas, "Napoleon I on His Imperial Throne", *Art Through Time: a Global View*. http://www.learner.org/courses/globalart/work/7/index.html
[179] Ibid.,
[180] Ibid.,
[181] Susan Sidlauskas is Professor & Graduate Program Director for19th Century Art History at Rutgers-–the State University of New Jersey–in the School of Arts and Sciences. She has been at Rutgers since 2005, after teaching at the University of Pennsylvania for twelve years.
[182] Sidlauskas, "Napoleon I on His Imperial Throne".

Ingres concentration on the conveyance of Napoleon's supremacy overrode any perception of connectedness between artist and sitter. This created a lack of warmth as someone that represented them, a dis-connect with the consequent viewer. The contrast of the personal relationships between Bonaparte and the two painters, David and Ingres, is a clear demonstration of what can be seen as a consequence of having direct access or not to the sitter in order to build up a personal understanding of the character being depicted.

1:2(v) Case Study: Gustave Courbet (1819-1877).

Having come from the rural town of his birth, Ornans, in the Franche-Comté, a traditional region of Eastern France, Gustave Courbet went to the ever-burgeoning metropolis of Paris at the age of twenty.[183] Aspiring painters of these radical times desired, sought and acquired formal skills from established ateliers which could have facilitated their pursuance of a lucrative art career from commissioned portraiture and patronage of the newly established middle-class, the Parisian bourgeoisie, though for other artists, such as Courbet, this was an undesirable route. Gustave Courbet 'complained about…the degradation of bourgeois taste (sounding like Baudelaire), and the compromising demands of portrait painting.'[184] Indeed, the practicalities of survival for the artist in this post-Revolution, industrialised and democratised 'modern' world became increasingly dependent on the demands and tastes of the middle class, the bourgeoisie.

> The bourgeoisie was getting richer and this class had their own special requirements: their homes were small. So they needed small-scale works of art; art was a luxury and they did not want to pay too much.[185]

[183] *Gustave Courbet (1819-1877): A Biography*. Musee d'Orsay. http://www.musee-orsay.fr/en/collections/courbet-dossier/biography.html
[184] Heather McPherson, *The Modern Portrait in Nineteenth-Century France*, New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 15.
[185] Jacques Letheve. *Daily Life of French Artists in the Nineteenth Century,* translated by Hilary E. Paddon (London. UK Allen & Unwin, 1972), 140.

It was therefore to this growing bourgeoisie, that the rising artists from the populace plied their skills.

Courbet's keen awareness of the struggles and differing social aspirations of the Parisian working classes and the ever upwardly-aspiring bourgeoisie, acutely addressed through such paintings as *The Burial at Ornans* (1849-1850, see Image 21) and *The Painter's Studio: A Real Allegory* (1855, see Image 22), actually found a viewing audience, even if many found them 'ugly.'[186]



Image 21
Gustave Courbet (1819–1877).
A Painting of Human Figures: the History of a Burial at Ornans (1849-1850).



Image 22
Gustave Courbet (1819–1877).
The Painter's Studio: A Real Allegory (Also referred to as *The Artist's Studio*)(1854–1855).

[186] McPherson, *Modern Portrait,* 328.

These 'massive canvasses…transformed the power of balance of the Salon.'[187] Both epic works were the product of direct observation of numerous sitters from life. Its alternative and fuller title, *A Painting of Human Figures, the History of a Burial at Ornans,* suggests Courbet's concern to celebrate contemporary humanity and reveal what he saw as unifying human qualities through his depiction of 'real' people from a 'real' community. From portraiture's then-considered low order of painting—'unless they were official portraits'[188] –Courbet submits life-size portraits to challenge the 'academic tradition [that] required that large paintings should only have historic, biblical, mythological or allegorical subjects.'[189] The nineteenth-century writer and life-long friend of Courbet, Max Buchon,[190] who was to be depicted by Courbet in *The Studio* five years later, reveals that the mimetic fidelity of *A Burial At Ornans* is accurate:

> all those people whom you have just greeted on the road…are assembled there by the master's brush in such a natural, intelligent and simple manner.[191]

In *The Painter's Studio*, Courbet chose people with whom he had an even more personal relationship than his own towns-folk of Ornans. The right hand side of the painting is made up of portraits of 'favourable' characters–Courbet describing them as 'shareholders…friends, fellow-workers and art-lovers'.[192] Many of these characters have been identified, some by Courbet's own letters.[193,194]

Significantly though, the portrait of Baudelaire in *The Studio* appears not to have been done from a specific sitting for this work but rather to be based on

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[187] McPherson, *Modern Portrait*., 328.
[188] Letheve, *Daily Life*, 64.
[189] "Gustave Courbet: A Biography: 'as realism exists…'", *Musee D'Orsay*. http://www.musee-orsay.fr/en/collections/courbet-dossier/biography.html.
[190] Steven Knudsen, "Gustave Courbet"' *The Art Story.org.* http://www.theartstory.org/artist-courbet-gustave.htm.
[191] Charles Harrison and Paul J Wood, eds, *Art in Theory, Vol 1, 1815–1900,* (Oxford, UK & Cambridge, MA:. Blackwell,1996), 364.
[192] Harrison & Wood, *Art in Theory: 1815*–1900, 370.
[193] Ibid., 371.
[194] Phil Norfleet, "Baudelaire and the Impressionist Revolution", *The Impressionist*, USA. http://impressionist1877.tripod.com/baudelaire.htm

a previous portrait that Courbet had already made of him in 1848. (See Image 23). Heather McPherson notes:

> Although money was the primary incentive for most artists who produced portraits, Courbet painted numerous uncommissioned, informal portraits of friends (such as that of Baudelaire) that were not economically motivated.[195]

It is believed that Baudelaire actually took refuge in Courbet's studio, perhaps on one of his many flights from creditors, when, some have even suggested, the small painting that Courbet made of Baudelaire was made.[196] The intimate painting attests to their personal friendship.



Image 23
Gustave Courbet (1819–1877).
Portrait of Baudelaire (1848).

Courbet's ambivalence about the necessity of always working from life is further substantiated by the critical assertion that 'the famous figure of a nude woman… in Courbet's picture of an artist's studio was painted from a photograph.'[197] Joanna Woodall notes that by:

> the late nineteenth century, avant-garde portraiture was markedly confined to uncommissioned images of these categories of sitter. This enhanced the authority of the artist by making worthiness to be portrayed dependent upon one's relationship to him or her. It implied a lived intimacy between painter and sitter, imaginatively reproduced in the viewer's relationship to the painting. The distinction between portrait sitter and artist's model became less clear, challenging the normal politics of the portrait transaction.[198]

Woodall notes something profoundly significant here that marks a paradigm shift in the role of the artists, which in turn changes the relationship of the

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[195] McPherson, *The Modern Portrait*, 15.
[196] Ibid., 18.
[197] Letheve, *Daily Life*, 73.
[198] Woodall, *Portraiture*, 7.

portraitist to the sitter: for the artist, the sitter becomes an avenue of expression related more to the artist's identity and concerns rather than the sitter's, to the extent that, as painter Lucian Freud would claim, 'Everything is autobiographical and everything is a portrait.'[199] Courbet's work signals the rise of notions of the avant-garde and modernism in art, where the "content" of the work becomes much more about the artist, and less about the sitter.

The fact that Courbet had a strong professional relationship with Alfred Bruyas, the dedicated art collector and banking fortune heir, whose support of his work was unwavering,[200] meant that he could pursue more independent self-expression of ideas, using the human figure and portraiture as a vehicle. Even though his *Artist's Studio,* which incorporates a portrait of Bruyas*,* and *Burial at Ornans* were rejected from their intended official exhibition at the 1855 World's Fair in Paris, Courbet remarked, even before his *Studio* painting was finished, that:

> Bruyas has just bought this from me for 2,000 francs, and he has also bought *The Spinner* for 2,500. I'm in luck. I am able to pay my debts and cope with the exhibition as well. I don't know how I could have done it otherwise.[201]

The value of their relationship is even more specifically addressed in the painting '*The Meeting*, or *Bonjour Monsieur Courbet*, (1854), [where] Courbet represents what likely is an imagined exchange between the noted collector of 19th-century art… and the artist, who had come to visit him in Montpellier.'[202] (See image 24). In depicting the moneyed patron, Bruyas, and his valet, Calas, as doffing their hats to him, Courbet states that traditional roles are changed– the artist is able to dictate to the bourgeois/upper class client. It has 'justifiably

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[199] Lucian Freud, quoted in Judith James, "David Hockney: A Lifetime in Portrait", March 15, 2007*, The Independent*, http://fineartforum.ncl.ac.uk/arthistory/judithjames/JudithJamesDec06.pdf. 1.

[200] "Alfred Bruyas", *Encyclopedia.com* http://www.encyclopedia.com/searchresults.aspx?q=alfred+Bruyas

[201] Harrison & Wood, *Art in Theory*, 371.

[202] "Gustave Courbet: France's fearless provocateur", *USA Today Magazine* 136 (2756). http://www.questia.com/read/1G1-179424264/gustave-courbet-france-s-fearless-provocateur-the

been seen as an unequivocal statement on the position of the nineteenth century artist in society.'[203] Some of 'the painter's contemporaries parodied [*Bonjour, Monsieur Courbet*] by calling it *La Fortune saluant le genie* (Fortune Saluting the Genius).'[204] Bruyas, elsewhere recorded as 'his admirer and friend,'[205] initially seemed to take umbrage, 'abstain[ing] entirely from the exhibitions in Paris and retreat[ing] to the countryside near Montpellier.'[206] Yet eventually Bruyas responded, acknowledging he understood that Courbet had needed to 'sacrifice' him as a symbol of the establishment for the sake of his and art's freedom. He tells Courbet, that in spite of the critics, he can always rely on his 'burning and sincere support' and that no one should doubt that they have 'returned to the spirit of equality'.[207] [208]



Image 24
Gustave Courbet (1819–1877). *The Meeting*, or *Bonjour Monsieur Courbet*, (1854).

This example of Courbet's relationship to his patron, and oft-time sitter, is significant then, since, not only do his

[203] Ting Chang. ,"'The Meeting': Gustave Courbet and Alfred Bruyas", *The Burlington Magazine*, 138 (1122), September 1996, 586-591. http://www.jstor.org/stable/887242.
[204] Michael Krebber, "What is Courbet?" *Arts Forum*, 2008, 348–355. http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0268/is_9_46/ai_n31609069/
[205] Ting Chang. ,"'The Meeting': Gustave Courbet and Alfred Bruyas", *The Burlington Magazine*, 138 (1122), September 1996, 586-591. http://www.jstor.org/stable/887242.
[206] Ibid.,
[207] Ibid.,
[208] The Fabre Museum in Montpellier today boasts the considerable art collection bequeathed it by Bruyas. Courbet's *Bonjour Monsieur Courbet* hangs in the same room as *The Studio of The Painter,* 1853, by Octave Tassaert; a painting that shows Bruyas, also his patron, visiting his studio. By comparison to Courbet's work, the representation of the artist/sitter relationship could not be more marked. Tassaert's portrait implies that it is Bruyas who is in charge of the situation, dictating what *he* wants from a painting. He is shown as having taken over the artist's seat in front of the painting that is currently in progress on the artist's easel. The Fabre Museum explanatory caption says that the collector is advising the artist about the composition as the artist is scrambling to prepare the palette of colours. The sartorially elegant Bruyas, centre-staged, is illuminated with a shaft of sunlight on his full face, while the artist, face turned into the shadow, gazes up at his benefactor who appears to be in advisory flow, gesturing and pontificating. The decidedly tired and bored-looking third gentleman, depicted on the lounge in the background, suggests the intensity, exclusivity and length of the conversation between artist and sitter.

painting illustrate their artist/sitter-patron relationship, they also denote an alternative practice for artists of the new social order for whom a more traditional career as academic or history portrait painter to aristocracy or royalty, which itself was narrow, became anathema to avant-garde ideals. The value of independence of attitude and autonomy of vision that Bruyas affords Courbet, his desire to see himself though the artist's eyes, as it were, can be seen as an early precedent to later nineteenth and twentieth century practice that is still important to contemporary portraiture, shown later in the examples of, for instance, Lucian Freud, Jonathan Yeo and Ben Quilty.

This chapter has argued that the interpersonal relationship between artist and sitter can have a significant qualitative impact on the painted portraits that are produced as a result. Many of the humanist ideas that contextualise portraiture at this time continue to impact upon contemporary painted portraiture. The medium of oil paint, with its work-intensive and often necessary lengthy working and drying time, necessitates the artist spending significant durations of time with the sitter. The historical shift from emphasis on factual recording of physical likeness to a more personalised subjective interpretation, which this chapter has discussed, forms the basis of the next chapter, which now focuses this exegesis on contemporary portrait practice.

Chapter Two

The importance of the Artist/Sitter Relationship to the current practice of portrait painting

2:1 The relationship between photography and the practice of painting.

As well as archiving and displaying historically noteworthy portrait photographs retrospectively, since at least the 1960s contemporary photographic portraits have been exhibited and commissioned by some national portrait galleries, some with their own dedicated photographic annexed galleries.[209] Nevertheless public interest, if assessed on attendance figures and monetary prize awards alone, expresses favour for painting.[210] Likewise there are significant photographic portrait prizes, such as Australia's annual National Photographic Portrait Prize, which offers $25,000 for first prize,[211] while contemporary portraiture in the paint medium endures and is most publicly celebrated through portrait competitions such as the *BP* prize in London, and *The Archibald* and *The Doug Moran* in Sydney, the latter awarding $150,000 as first prize. The first half of this chapter therefore investigates the impact of photography on portraiture since 'following the appearance of the daguerreotype and calotype, portrait painting was the first art directly affected.'[212] It further examines Walter Benjamin's arguments regarding mechanical reproduction and how this is understood in terms of any unique qualities of painting. Subsequent commentaries on Benjamin's

[209] National Portrait Gallery. *Gallery History.* The National Portrait Gallery, London, opened a new department of film and photography in 1968. http://www.npg.org.uk/about/history.php
[210] Ibid. Described as a 'great and memorable event', the first display of Cecil Beaton's photograph's at the NPG, London, in 1968 attracted 75,000 visitors, whereas in 1970 nearly 250,000 visitors went to see the newly commissioned portrait of Queen Elizabeth II by Annigoni within the first two months of it being on display.
[211] National Portrait Gallery, Australia. *The National Photographic Portrait Prize*. http://www.portrait.gov.au/site/nppp-callforentries.php
[212] Ibid., 16.

observations are then presented to further identify that which remains specific to photography and that which is harnessed by painters as constructive and informative to their portrait practice.

In light of the continued use and relevance of the medium of paint for portraiture and its use as pre-requisite medium for submission to highly prestigious prizes and galleries, the discussion moves onto the specificity of paint and how its materialistic qualities can be seen to best convey the experience shared between artist and sitter.

Having established the impact of photography and the qualities of the paint medium in relation to conveying 'human touch' born of the artist/sitter relationship, examples of twentieth century and contemporary portraits are investigated, suggesting an ongoing value for the maintenance of direct observation from the sitter by comparison to the making of portrait paintings that refer to other media sources as impetus.

2:1(i) The impact of photography on painting.

The imminence of colour photography in the 1860s signaled a warning to painters that photography, already being regarded as 'art's mortal enemy…would soon take possession of all pictorial representation.'[213] By the 1870s, photography could capture subjects at 1/1000th of a second, revealing things that 'could never be comprehended by the human eye.'[214] The painted portrait needed therefore to offer, or be understood to represent, something different to that of the photographic image. Particularly for the considered avant-garde artists' groups, such as the Impressionists of the second half of the nineteenth century and the twentieth century modernists, photography

[213] Scharf. *Art and Photography,* 14.
[214] Ibid.,

challenged their reasoning for working from the figure and what exactly they could express by its continued practice.

In his seminal writing of 1935, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, Walter Benjamin noted that 'what makes the first photographs so incomparable is perhaps this: that they represent the first image of the encounter of machine and human being.'[215] Unlike the engraving or lithographic drawing prints, still essentially the transference of an originally hand-made image, 'photography freed the hand of the most important artistic functions which henceforth devolved only upon the eye looking into a lens.'[216] Benjamin himself referenced Paul Valery's assessment of the implications of mechanical reproduction on art:

> We must expect great innovations to transform the entire technique of the arts, thereby affecting artistic invention itself and perhaps even bringing about an amazing change in our very notion of art.[217]

Benjamin describes how mechanical ways of reproduction affect human perception and experience of the seen world. 'Influenced by Marxism's materialist conception of history,'[218] he sees these new methods of mass production as democratic and liberating, breaking with early traditional social structures that imbued artworks with a special, spiritual and sacred status and thus highly valued by virtue of their existence as unique objects. He writes, 'Artistic production begins with ceremonial objects destined to serve in a cult. One may assume that what mattered was their existence, not their being on view.'[219] Benjamin argues that as a result of unique works of art being associated with religious cults and ceremonies pertaining to a particular space

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[215] Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction", in *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections,* ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (London: Fontana), 1936.
[216] Ibid., 2
[217] Paul Valery, *Pieces sur L'art, Le Conquete de l'ubiquite; Aesthetics, The Conquest of Ubiquity. 1934. (*Paul Valery. Translated by Ralph Manheim. 1935 Wisconsin – Madison. Pantheon Books. 1964) 1
[218] Cynthia Freeland. *Portraits & Persons.* (New York & London: Oxford University Press, 2010.) 179
[219] Benjamin. *The Work of Art*…,5

and time, they become instilled with, and emanate out, a specific 'aura.'[220] It is this aura and their only possible existence in one place in space and time that, Benjamin maintains, gave hand-made artworks their uniqueness and 'cult value'. Consequently, 'that which withers in the age of mechanical reproduction is the aura of the work of art.'[221]

The other major impact of mechanical reproduction on the original work of art, Benjamin postulates, is that its 'most sensitive nucleus—namely, its authenticity—is interfered with, whereas no natural object is vulnerable on that score.'[222] Since 'the presence of the original is the prerequisite to the concept of authenticity', the viewing of multiple copies of an original, Benjamin felt, challenged the original's authenticity as cult value simultaneously transmuting it into 'exhibition value'.[223]

John Berger, building on Benjamin's observations, argues that it is the overriding reference to the original contained therein that informs the experience of viewing the copy. This fundamentally alters the assessment of the original. He writes,

> The bogus religiosity which now surrounds original works of art, and which is ultimately dependent on the market value, has become the substitute for what paintings lost when the camera made them reproducible. Its function is nostalgic…If the image is no longer unique and exclusive, the art object the thing, must be made mysteriously so.[224]

This 'bogus religiosity' and rarity value attributed to original artworks impacts the experience of viewing–and reason for owning–the original by comparison to ownership and viewing of a copy. Benjamin noted that the authenticity that only original works of art can have, since they can only exist in one place at one time–'The presence of the original is the prerequisite to the concept of

[220] Ibid., 3.
[221] Ibid., 3.
[222] Ibid., 3.
[223] Ibid., 6.
[224] John Berger. *Ways of seeing.* 22.

authenticity,'–[225] is affected by their reproduction as copies. This interference with an art object's 'most sensitive nucleus—namely, its authenticity' affords value to the uniqueness of the original by virtue of it being the source from which multiples derive their existence. While 'technical reproduction can put the copy of the original into situations which would be out of reach for the original itself,'[226] to experience the original in life, in real space and time, affords the connection to the authenticity that the reproduction usurps. John Berger suggests that 'before the Virgin of the Rocks the visitor to the National Gallery would be encouraged….to feel something like this :'I am in front of it. I can see it…The National Gallery has the real one. If I look at this painting hard enough, I should somehow be able to feel its authenticity. The Virgin of the Rocks by Leonardo Da Vinci: it is authentic and therefore it is beautiful.' In the wake of photography and its instantaneous nature, it is this sort of sentiment that often attaches itself to ownership of original art and, by extension, to see oneself depicted as a handmade painted image.

In the face of mechanical reproduction creating exhibition value from original artworks, Benjamin proposed that

> cult value…retires into an ultimate retrenchment: the human countenance. It is no accident that the portrait was the focal point of early photography. The cult of remembrance of loved ones, absent or dead, offers a last refuse for the cult value of the picture. For the last time the aura emanates from the early photographs in the fleeting expression of a human face.[227]

Benjamin argues here that even in photographic portraits, the image of the human face maintains relevance to their original context, since it prioritises cult value over exhibition value. The photographic portrait of the human face, Benjamin claims, is still dependent on acknowledging a place and time, the transient nature of human existence, as *memento mori*, traditional qualities ascribed as intrinsic to painting. Benjamin says this gives way only when

[225] Benjamin. *The Work of Art*, 3.
[226] Ibid., 3.
[227] Ibid., 6.

photography moves away from human photographic portraiture. He cites the example of Atget's photographs of 'deserted Paris streets,' which then become dependent on captions as directives of interpretation.[228]

Aaron Scharf[229] notes that by the late 1800s most artists made some use of the convenience of photography. The few that spurned it, he says, did so 'because they were placed in an awkward position by the highly photographic character of their work; others, because they believed there was something noble in industry and sacrifice, that a painter taking short-cuts damaged his integrity.'[230] As with the use made by artists of optical devices to make projections to aid in the making of their paintings even before the advent of photography, to be seen to be reliant on such assistance challenged the persona of the genius, skillful and gifted artist.[231] When challenged about his findings about these practices, David Hockney says that artists would keep the knowledge secret to themselves not only to maintain their mysterious guise as genius but also to give them a technical advantage that would reap financial reward from their clients.[232] Ingres, for instance, 'may have been among one of the very first artists to employ the daguerreotype in the execution of portrait commissions.'[233] Scharf further notes that 'generally attributed to [Ingres] is a statement in which he proposed that portrait painters should emulate the accuracy of the daguerreotype but they must not say they were doing so.'[234]

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[228] Ibid., 6.
[229] Aaron Scharf (1922 – 1993) was an American-born British art historian. He was one of the most important and influential names in photography during the 1960s and 1970s. When his highly acclaimed and influential book, *Art and Photography* was published in 1968, Scharf was head of the History of Art and Complementary Studies Department at St. Martin's School of Art, London. (Billy Jay, *Aaron Scharf,* http://www.billjayonphotography.com/Aaron%20Scharf.pdf)
[230] Scharf. *Art and Photography*, 14.
[231] David Hockney. *Secret Knowledge: Rediscovering the lost techniques of the Old Masters.* (London, UK: Thames & Hudson, 2009.)
[232] David Hockney. *The Lost Secrets of Old Masters.* Ancient Optics. http://AncientMagicArtTools.com http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LdisyiLOtmM
[233] Scharf. *Art and Photography*, 49.
[234] Ibid., 52.

Scharf notes that 'portrait painters found that by employing photographs the interminable sittings traditionally required could be reduced considerably and in some cases eliminated entirely.'[235] In the latter scenario, clearly the artist would develop no personal relationship with the sitter but still be able to confer cultural kudos on them by virtue of the unique idiosyncrasies of the hand painted work revealed through the physicality of paint on canvas. Ingres was a highly successful painter but 'aspired to more elevated positions, like that of the history painter' rather than being dependent on portraiture for his living. His wife is recorded as saying that after completing a portrait the artist vowed he would do no more.[236]

The Pre-Raphaelite painters, although praised by John Ruskin for their fastidious adherence to faithful rendering from nature, may have also used photography due to the intransigency of either artist or sitter, or the confines of time. One of their group, John Brett, for instance, said, 'The most frequent instances in which photographs have been copied by painters occur in the practice of portraiture, where the sitter's time is precious.'[237] Other mechanical reproduction technologies combined to free both sitter and artist from a commitment to lengthy sittings yet still purport to produce an image consilient with an authentic work of art produced by the hand of the individual artist. Printing of photographs on canvas over which the artist painted, for instance, were available as early as 1863, while photo-sciagraphy, which enabled a portrait to be projected to variable sizes on a canvas or paper while the artist worked on it, was devised in 1868.[238]

These affects of mechanical reproduction serve to convenience both artist and sitter/client, liberating them from the need to be physically bound to the same place for the production of the portrait. This advantage is highlighted by the comparison with the mammoth exercise of creating David's *Coronation of*

[235] Scharf. *Art and Photography*, 49.
[236] Geraldine Pelles. *Art, Artists and Society.* USA. Prentice Hall. 1963. 31.
[237] John Brett. *British Journal of Photography.* (London. 1889), 236.
[238] Scharf. *Art and Photography,* 57.

Napoleon and William Powell Frith's *Derby Day,* 1858. Frith consulted a photograph of the crowd in the grandstand at Epsom to enable him to paint the crowds in 'his elaborate documentary painting."[239] (See Image 25). However, in consulting only a photograph, the observation of line, tone and colour are compromised to the limitations of the quality of the camera lens and the available printing standards. For an artist working from photography as an aid to naturalistic representation, the most severe limitation is the photograph's inability to give information about the experience of three-dimensional space. It is significant then that the technical impact on painting of photography–and film–pertains more to how these mediums of reproduction flatten out space, distribute simplified tone and, eventually, approximate colour according to the limitations of the available technology.



Image 25
William Powell Frith (1819–1909).
The Derby Day. (1856-1858).

For the artist wishing to convey the experience of shared time within real space, the reliance on photography for seen information can be counter-productive. For instance, in criticism of John Singer Sargent's painting *Entrance to Santa Maria della Salute,* 1904, R.H. Wilenski reprimanded the 'drawing by the shadows method.'[240] Scharf notes that 'Wilenski was appalled not only by the way…a painting derived from…a photograph would flatten, in uniformly tonal shapes, the three-dimensional forms of the object represented,

[239] Ibid., 54.
[240] R.H. Wilenski. 'Camera and Canvas', *Art in America, No.3.* (New York. 1961), 73.

but he also resented the manner in which it incorporated more than one form in a single tonal patch with no apparent distinction made between them.'[241]

As now, photography often employed artificial lighting, particularly for studio work. The invention of the 'electric battery or pyrotechnic systems such as magnesium wire'[242] facilitated artificial interior lighting but results were so tonally extreme that mid-tones were often eradicated. 'To artists who were looking for new and unconventional means of representation, this photographic idiosyncrasy must have had a special pertinence. It is probable that Daumier, Fantin-Latour and Manet derived some benefit from photographs of this kind…One of Manet's etched portraits of Baudelaire was made from a Nadar photograph of the writer taken by artificial light.'[243] Similarly photography in bright sunlight also had the result of eliminating subtleties of tone. In his painting *On the Balcony,* 1868, Manet reflects modernity of life in the depiction of fashionably dressed occupants emerging from the shadows of a dark interior onto a narrow Haussmann-type balcony but the reduction of the features on faces stepping into the sunlight to simplified flat tones suggests his awareness of photography's limited tonal effects. The closeness of the composition infers that Manet would have needed to consult photography, since to paint such a group from life from outside a balcony, which by definition would be high above street level, would have been technically and physically inhibitive. (See Image 26). It is known that Manet was not afraid to use



Image 26
Edouard Manet (1832–1883).
On the Balcony, (1865).

[241] Scharf. *Art and Photography,* 60, 61.
[242] Ibid., 61.
[243] Ibid., 61, 64.

photographs as reference. For example, he requested that Isabelle Lemonnier, of whom he made watercolour portraits, supply him with photographs so that 'I can catch you more surely when I want to do a sketch.'[244] Further his large documentary oil painting *The Execution of Maximilian*, 1867, depicts an event that had happened several weeks before in another country. He therefore 'used several photographs, in addition to relying on news dispatches from Mexico, to authenticate these paintings.'[245] Manet's *Bar at the Folies*-Bergere, 1881-1882, also demonstrates the awareness of the photographic way of seeing by conversely celebrating what is unique to painting–the unusual shifted reflected images in the mirror, the dexterous speed of handling of paint particularly in the bar-top still-life groups. (See Image 27). Arguments about the ambiguity of what initially appears as realistic representation strengthen Manet's insight that the painted image is capable of expressing different realities and truths than those afforded by mechanical lenses and mirrors.



Image 27
Edouard Manet (1832–1883). *Bar at the Folies-Bergère* (1881–2).

A characteristic effect of photography to record image as tonal and colour blur, dependent on the movement of the subject related to the exposure time of the taking of the photograph, remains a constant even today. While the effect was considered undesirable for early portraits, painters such as the Impressionists

[244] Kurt Martin. *Edouard Manet:* Catalogue. No. 23. London. 1959.
[245] Scharf. *Art and Photography,* 66.

were influenced by the phenomena to move away from clearly delineated forms in landscape and portraiture. The photographic work of French physician Etienne-Jules Marey and Englishman Eadweard Muybridge, is therefore notable in the pioneering analysis of movement through photography.

The publication in 1887 of Muybridge's *Animal Locomotion,* showing sequential still photographs of animals in motion was particularly influential. Degas, for instance, referred to them to aid his paintings. 'After Muybridge's photographs became available in France, figures of the horse in the conventional gallop no longer appear in the work of Degas.'[246] John Brett articulated that "the chief use of the camera lies in its power of securing images of rapidly moving animals', but 'photographers, no less than painters and sculptors, objected to instantaneous photographs. Some thought them false because they often contradicted what would be seen by the naked eye. Others because *artistically* true images could be created which were superior either to the photograph or to optical logic.' While the photograph could therefore freeze an object in movement to reveal the actuality of how it would look, this did not necessarily coincide with human perception, nor, therefore, artistic conveyance of lived experience as witnessed by the naked eye. As Roland Barthes observes, 'Photography is pure contingency and can be nothing else (it is always something that is represented).'[247] Photography can document exactly how things looked at the instant of photographing–'how long were nails in a certain period? Photography can tell me this much better than painted portraits'[248]–It records, through a singular lens, 'only and for certain what has been.'[249] Barthes notes that the photographic print responds chemically to the film negative as a result of whatever the camera has been indiscriminately photographing, the 'referent…the necessarily real thing which has been placed before the lens, without which there would be no

[246] Scharf. *Art and Photography*. 206.
[247] Roland Barthes. *Camera Lucida. Vintage Barthes.*(Translated by Richard Howard. London. Vintage Books. Originally published 1980. This publication 2000.) 28.
[248] Ibid., 34.
[249]Ibid., 85.

photograph.'[250] The image *must* bear the trace of whatever was before it. In this sense, with regard to the fact that some real thing, the referent, was placed before it, 'photography never lies…every photograph is a certificate of presence.'[251] Therefore, for the painter working from direct observation, the photograph challenged any objective notion of presenting 'truth to nature'. The photograph proved that 'what was true could not always be seen, and what was seen was not always true…the photograph demonstrated that for many artists *truth* had really been another word for *convention.*'[252] Yet for the painter this became a liberation of sorts. Barthes states, 'painting can feign reality without having seen it'[253] or, as Oscar Wilde more poetically imputes:

> Art finds her own perfection within, and not outside of, herself. She is not to be judged by any external standard of resemblance…She can bid the almond tree blossom in winter, and send the snow upon the ripe cornfield.[254]

Since 'a painted portrait, however close the resemblance, is not a photograph', the artist's more subjective, perceptive vision of subject matter became valued as a priority above any concern to compel [the viewer] to believe its referent had really existed.'[255]

Acknowledging Maurice Blanchot,[256] Barthes notes that mediated images, because of the ubiquitous multiplicity and 'flatness', become 'platitudinous…without intimacy.'[257] In the wake of photography's invention, two strands of expression–that pertaining to the artist's reflection on real-time–human-touch experience–or that informed through mediated reality, become major avenues of concern for painters in the twentieth century and beyond. Inferring the importance of human emotional subjectivity, Emile Zola,

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[250] Ibid., 76.
[251] Ibid., 87.
[252] Scharf. *Art and Photography,* 211.
[253] Barthes. *Camera Lucida,* 76.
[254] Wilde. *Decay of Lying.* 10.
[255] Barthes. *Camera Lucida.* 177.
[256] Maurice Blanchot. *The Space of Literature*. (Lincoln, London, University of Nebraska Press. 1982.http://research.uvu.edu/albrecht-crane/486RKafka/BlanchotEssentialSolitude.pdf)
[257] Barthes. *Camera Lucida.* 106.

writing in 1866, insisted that 'Art is a human product… if temperament had not existed, all paintings would have of necessity to be simple photographs.'[258] Lawrence Weschler notes that it was through the 'post-1839 assault on the optical…Manet, Van Gogh, Cezanne and Picasso [were] artists who…threw off the cyclopean way of seeing and began looking at the world with two eyes, from a more realistically moving and lively vantage.'[259]

2:1(ii) Why and how do some painters choose to work from mediated sources to make portraits?

> The modernity represented by photography, as a mechanical technique of imitation and as a picture of modern life, was likened to the modernity of Manet and the Impressionists. Visually too it signaled modernity.[260]

As the previous section illuminated, late nineteenth century artists wrestled with the impact and implications of photography. For Post-Impressionist artists there 'was the concerted and active rejection of the material world as seen by the camera.'[261] In reaction against the photograph as a depersonalized, non-intimate, mechanized record of reality, 'the human touch, the intuition and a more abstract conception of reality were now considered fundamental to art.'[262]

Many artists also recognised the social and political significance of democratic access to imagery, whether it be as reproductions of famous artworks or as portraits of loved ones or themselves. The personal use of, and familiarity with, photography and its subsequent progressions in various formats of film and television–the *media*–has radically affected how humans interact with one

[258] Emile Zola. *Salons.* F. W. S. Hemmings; Robert J. Niess (eds.) (John C. Lapp *Modern Language Notes.* Vol. 75, No. 8 The Johns Hopkins University Press. 1960), 727.
[259] Weschler. *True to Life*, 184.
[260] Anthea Callen, *The Art of Impressionism: Painting Technique & the Making of Modernity,* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press), 90.
[261] Scharf. *Art and Photography.* 249.
[262] Ibid., 249.

another, with artists contextualising human existence in relation to it. Recognizing the ubiquitous nature of communication technology, Marshall McLuhan[263] coined the phrase 'global village' in 1962.[264] His seminal writing *The Medium is the Message*, 1964,[265] proffers his belief 'that new technologies promote democracy and enhance human perception.'[266] Citing the impact of other mechanical and technological inventions, McLuhan states, 'it is the medium that shapes and controls the scale and form of human association and action.'[267] He views the artist as able to investigate and offer unbiased insight into the impact of such human life-style changing technologies: 'The serious artist is the only person able to encounter technology with impunity, just because he is an expert aware of the changes in sense perception.'[268]

Philosopher and post-modernist critic, Jean Baudrillard has extended McLuhan's observations pre-digitalization to analyse 'the impact of new media, information, and cybernetic technologies in the creation of a qualitatively different social order, providing fundamental mutations of human and social life.'[269] Freeland refers to him as 'the theorist of the new screen, the computer monitor.'[270] In *Simulacra and Simulation* he states:

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[263] Marshall McLuhan, 1911-1980, was a Canadian philosopher of communication theory and public intellectual. (http://www.marshallmcluhan.com/biography/)
[264] Marshall McLuhan. *The Guttenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man*. (First Edition. Canada. University of Toronto Press. 1962. Reprinted 1966,1967,1968, 1980, 1986, 1988, 1992, 1995, 1997, 2000, 2002, 2006, 2008, 2010. This edition: Toronto, Buffalo, London. University of Toronto Press. 2011.)
[265] Marshall. McLuhan. "The Medium is the Message", from *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (New York, NY: Signet, 1964).
.http://www.bard.edu/graduate/mfa/summer/readings/documents/McLuhanMedium.pdf
[266] Freeland. *But is it art?* 187.
[267] McLuhan, Marshall. *The Medium is the Message*,
[268] Ibid.,
[269] Kellner, Douglas, "Jean Baudrillard", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2013 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.),
http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2013/entries/baudrillard/
[270] Freeland. *But is it art?* 193.

> Simulation is no longer that of a territory, a referential being, or a substance. It is the generation by models of a real without origin or reality: a hyperreal.[271]

Here *hyperreal* is understood as 'something fake and artificial that comes to be more definitive of the real than reality itself…and *simulation* is a copy or imitation that substitutes for reality.'[272] For some artists then, particularly since the development of widespread news and advertising media through print, film and television in the latter half of the twentieth century, painting has reflected, from various perspectives, how media impacts and informs the way we perceive reality, reflecting its omnipresence in human exchanges and thus modulating the definition of what is accepted as commonplace human contact and interaction. What is defined as human encounter on a daily basis is today generally a seamless mix of face-to-face and digital communication, whereby it is quite feasible that the balance of real to virtual could lean towards the latter. This has been a continuing observation of much art since the mid 1950s,[273] though Baudrillard's once widely-embraced view 'that artists are marginal to other forces tending towards general social vacuity and despair, so that ideals of individual creativity and self-expression are no longer viable'[274] has, since the 1990s, given way to 'artists from various minority groups [who have] appeared to regain faith in the power of art to express feelings or to convey a "message".'[275]

As with McLuhan's through writing, in 1962, Andy Warhol had been amongst the first to highlight the willingness of a public to believe as much in public personae generated in the media as knowing any *real* person. Significant

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[271] Jean Baudrillard. *Simulacra and simulation.* (Originally published in French by Editions Galilee 1981. http://fields.ace.ed.ac.uk/disruptivetechnologies/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/Baudrillard-Jean-Simulacra-And-Simulation2.pdf)1.
[272] Freeland. *But is it art?* 194.
[273] Richard Hamilton, "Letter to Peter and Alison Smithson*",* 16th January 1957. *Warholstars.org.* www.warholstars.org/warhol/warhol1/andy/warhol/articles/popart/hamilton.html
[274] Freeland. *But is it art?* 198.
[275] Ibid., 198.

among his silkscreen portraits of popular icons were his series based on Marilyn Monroe, 'began a month after her death'.[276] Roland Kanz states,

> What was produced now were memorial pictures with iconic status, a transfiguration of the star into a transcendent sphere through the power of the picture. And in doing so, he put his finger on the nerve of popular culture.[277]

The trace photographic image suggests approachability to the person 'yet a nearness…created by the photo always remains stylized, being condensed from one's own desires and fantasies.'[278] The mass replication of one certain view becomes iconic, as paragon of the person symbolised, the accepted defining image in the public's collective conscience. Warhol said, in 1963, 'It's all fantasy… The reason I'm painting this way is that I want to be a machine, and I feel that whatever I do and do machine-like is what I want to do.'[279] As if to abide by Richard Hamilton's list of the criteria for Pop Art,[280] Warhol remained indifferent and noncommittal to weightier meanings afforded his work with regard to any principled comment through the work. Underscoring separation of artist from sitter through interjection of machine processes, he said, 'no one would know whether my picture was mine or somebody else's.'[281]

Having 'experiment[ed] in portrait making with public photo booth machines,'[282]–something to which both Picasso previously and Richter themselves refer–and acting on his belief that 'everybody looks alike and acts alike, and we're getting more and more that way,'[283] Warhol made 'films known as "stillies" around the Factory. He referred to them as *Living Portrait*

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[276] Andy Warhol, "STILLIES" *MuseumofModernArt.org* (New York*:* Museum of Modern Art). http://www.moma.org/interactives/exhibitions/2010/warhol/#5631286414
[277] Ibid., 88.
[278] Kanz. *Portraits*, 88.
[279] "Andy Warhol: Interview with Gene Swenson", *Art News* (1963) http://www.mariabuszek.com/kcai/PoMoSeminar/Readings/WarholIntrvu.pdf.
[280] Hamilton*, Letter.*
[281] Ibid.,
[282] Warhol, STILLIES.
[283] "Andy Warhol: Interview with Gene Swenson", Ibid.

Boxes, and, later, as *Screen Tests*.' [284] Warhol's title of *Living Portrait Boxes* implies some affiliation of image to a living person. The latter title of *Screen Test* suggests that some people *work* when seen through a lens while others, apparently, do not; there is some desired transformation by which they are seen quite differently, as a filmic image, than as they are in person, with the naked eye. In this sense they anticipate Baudrillard's definition of the hyperreal–there is a higher value of the copy as real in preference to the 'original'. Warhol's portraits therefore demonstrate that print, photography and film technology can create a sense of passive, desirable but imagined intimacy.

Chuck Close uses the photograph as the sole source of reference. Like Warhol and Gerhard Richter, he capitalises on the photograph's flatness, which gives an overall evenness of attention to surface in his paintings. He observes:

> The British painters, like Bacon and Freud, don't have the same commitment to the whole rectangle in the way that American painters do. We have a tradition of all-overness and not making any area more important than another area.[285]

Freud would counter Close's observation, as he also maintained that he treated the head as no more or less important than any other part of the human body. 'The head must be just another limb,' he said.[286]

Gerhard Richter uses the paint medium to explore what he sees as true realism derived from photographic images that 'depict scenes from sensationalistic stories covered by mass media.'[287] His choice of using the photograph as the basis of his imagery is that it immediately gives a distance to the subject. Again, the purpose is to avoid the intimacy of knowing the sitter

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[284] Ibid.,
[285] Sandy Nairne, "Interview with Chuck Close, 6, July 2005", in Anthony Bond and Joanna Woodall, *Self-Portrait: Renaissance to Contemporary* (London: National Portrait Gallery Publications), 207.
[286] Freeland, *Portraits & Persons*, 201.
[287] Freeland, *Portraits & Persons*, 255.

that the working from life method affords. Richter says, 'I blur things in order to make everything equally important and equally unimportant.'[288] Nevertheless, as Paul Moorhouse, the curator of Richter's 2009 exhibition at London's National Portrait Gallery, observes, 'He's not creating a photograph, he's creating a painting, but the blurring is almost a metaphorical expression for imprecision. He's telling us that you can't capture reality precisely.'[289] This paradox of the painting appearing to be a blurred photograph is reiterated through painterly techniques, 'the paint, when still wet, being dragged by a dry brush.'[290]

The *Gerhard Richter: Portraits* exhibition presented an introductory wall displaying the 'diverse range of photographic source material, including images and advertisements from magazines and newspapers, amateur family snapshots, as well as his own photographs,'[291] on which many of the portraits were based. The first painting of the show was *President Johnson consoles Mrs. Kennedy,* 1963, oil on paper. (See Image 28). This is a pivotal piece for Richter in that it bears the hallmarks of much of his later pieces, most notably it's adherence to the black and white photographic source, the uncertainty of understanding what is being represented– considering the weighty emotions that one might attach to an interpretation of the newspaper image– and, in this case, 'it's diminutive size,' which is a direct transcription of the photographs original dimensions.

Image subject to copyright:
to view image please use Internet link:
www.gerhard-richter.com/en/art/paintings/photo-paintings/death-9/president-johnson-

Image 28
Gerhard Richter (b. 1932). *President Johnson Consoles Mrs. Kennedy,* (1963).

[288] Ibid.,256, quoting Gerhard Richter in Daniel Baird, "Gerhard Richter: Forty Years of Painting", *The Brooklyn Rail* (March–April 2002).
[289] Paul Moorhouse: Curator of NPG London talks about the exhibition *Gerhard Richter: Portraits.* National Portrait Gallery, London, UKFebruary 26, 2009 - May 31, 2009 http://www.gerhard-richter.com/exhibi...Für deutsche Untertitel bitte cc anklicken. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VeEf_gj36gQ. Published on Jun 29, 2012.
[290] Ibid.,
[291] Paul Moorhouse, *Gerhard Richter Portraits* London, UK: National Portrait Gallery Publications, 2009), 15.

Moorhouse argues that Richter's portraits, because of their inscrutability, 'confound understanding according to conventional ideas surrounding portraiture'[292] where whether working from life or from a photograph, the identification of the sitter is usually intended to some end. Richter's own response to this is:

> I don't think the painter need either see or know the sitter. A portrait must not express anything of the sitter's 'soul', essence or character. Nor must a painter 'see' a sitter in any specific, personal way; because a portrait can never come closer to the sitter than when it is a very good likeness. For this reason, among others, it is very important to paint a portrait from a photograph, because no one can ever paint a specific person–only a painting that has nothing whatsoever in common with the sitter. In a painted portrait by me, the likeness is apparent, unintentional and also entirely useless.[293]

Richter's rejection of any essential humanism at the core of portraiture reflects a broader shift in artistic practice that in turn articulated a paradigmatic shift in philosophical thinking from the 1960s, when poststructuralist thinkers, such as Michel Foucault, proposed that the self is a social construct, rather than founded on any essential humanity or spirit .[294] Richter, on these post-humanist terms, accepts the photograph at the very most as an adequate documenter of the human trace to which the artist can respond to make portraits from this philosophical perspective. For Richter 'The most perfect picture is a photograph,'[295]–a statement that titled one of the gallery rooms at his 2009 exhibition. Moorhouse explains that Richter believes that a portrait can only be 'at most, a likeness: a record of an external appearance'[296]and,

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[292] Freeland, *Portraits & Persons* 16.
[293] Ibid.,19.
[294] Michel Foucault. Discipline and Punish. PDF. http://www.soc.iastate.edu/Sapp/soc506Foucoult.pdf
[295] Moorhouse: Curator of NPG London talks about the exhibition *Gerhard Richter: Portraits.* http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VeEf_gj36gQ.
[296] Moorhouse, *Gerhard Richter,* 19.

contrary to traditional views on portraiture, cannot capture anything suggested as beneath surface, external appearance.

Richter's approach is in stark contrast to the premise of works by humanistic sculptural artist Antony Gormley. Gormley's series of etchings, *Body and Soul,* 1990, for example, 'as exemplified in the title, [indicates] the idea of the soul has not been abandoned by current artistic activity…this view of the soul attempts a corporeal vision of the way the self might continue past the transitory moment.'[297] Similarly contemporary video/installation artist, Bill Viola, of his *Ocean Without a Shore* installation*,* 2007, states that the work is 'about the presence of the dead in our lives.'[298] Viola himself was inspired by the poem by Birago Diop that states,

> The dead are never gone:
> they are in the shadows.
> The dead are not in earth:
> they're in the rustling tree,
> the groaning wood,
> …the dead are not dead. [299]

Richter, on the other hand, believes 'It's impossible to make a portrait, because you can never know anything about the life or internal experience of the person depicted.'[300] Therefore a photograph is a perfectly adequate reference, whether it be of someone known intimately to him or not, since there can be no attempt to capture 'soul'.

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[297] Gaston. *The Naked Face,* 98.
[298] Bill Viola quoted in Claire Walsh, "Press Release: Bill Viola, *Ocean Without A Shore*, 2007," (Haunch of Venison, May 2007 [accessed 29 July 2009]), http://www.haunchofvenison.com/media/4897/hov%20- %20viola exhibition venice%20-%20press release%20-%20final.pdf.
[299] 1 Excerpt of poem by Birago Diop in David Melzter (ed), *Death - An Anthology of Ancient Texts, Songs, Prayers and Stories* (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1984), 190.
[300] Moorhouse: Curator of NPG London talks about the exhibition *Gerhard Richter: Portraits.* http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VeEf_gj36gQ.

Like Richter, American painter Elizabeth Peyton also paints portraits derived from photographic sources, but she differs from him in that she needs to sense strong personal identification with the persona emitted by the photograph. Not meeting the people depicted–primarily people of fame and celebrity–is important. She tends to choose 'attractive, sexually androgynous men of recent pop culture, particularly from the world of rock n' roll like Kurt Cobain, Elvis Presley, Liam Gallagher of Oasis, and more.'[301]

Image subject to copyright: to view image please use Internet link: http://www.walkerart.org/press/browse/press-releases/2009/live-forever-elizabeth-peyton-offers-snapshot

Image 29
Elizabeth Peyton (b. 1965). *David Hockney, Powis Terrace Bedroom* (1998).

Peyton adapts the source images so that they do not reveal the idiosyncrasies of blurs and shifts associated with photographic printing methods. Instead, Peyton paints them as small, intimate, selective visions. They are essentially personal romantic homages to her heroes, perceived through the transformative nature of personal photography, (see Image 29). Cynthia Freeland writes:

> Peyton likes to depict the people she shows at a point just at the cusp of fame, often as a sort of late adolescent, not-quite-finished version of who they will become… The effect is to lend more substance to a vision of these so-often visible and heavily scrutinized figures. This leads to an intimate, one-on-one engagement, as with a personal snap-shot of someone you were once close to.[302]

Peyton imbues these images not with cloying nostalgic sentimentality but, through the vignette of an aware and selective devotee, celebrating her one-sided sense of connection that the media of music and photography have created in her so intensely. She has no wish to know the individuals personally, though she would like to dispel the 'girl-fan' tag with which it is

[301] Freeland, *Portraits & Persons,* 261.
[302] Ibid., 262.

tempting, superficially, to pigeonhole her, for 'while her images may be mediated by a photographic or fictional distance, her love is real.'[303] She enjoys what the camera does to the seen world, commenting:

> I can't seem to make a self-portrait from a picture I take myself. It seems too contrived.[304]

However, she reveals that even for self-portraits she works from photographs of herself that someone close to her emotionally, such as her boyfriend, Tony, has taken. [305]

Despite Peyton's main catalogue of work reflecting her perceptions of people based on their photographic personae, in more recent years she has also become interested in making portraiture from life. Having met British artist/film-maker Nick Relph, she said:

> Nick sat in the garden… while I made an etching of him. I think he inspired me to work from life because I had never met anyone who could sit so still. He was very respectful and "posed" in a very traditional way. He understood that it was something that took time and didn't treat it casually.[306]

It is noteworthy here that when Peyton works from life she recognises the impact and value of time, that it necessarily and naturally initiates a more considered, personal involvement with the sitter. Of spending time to paint from life, Saville says:

> I really enjoyed the challenge of working fast and having them in the same room. I guess I liked the difference in the pictures too; they seemed more subtle. Not so much copying effects from photography, but felt even more like the person.[307]

As can be seen from further statements by portrait artists in this research, such as Freud, Hockney, Yeo and Wood, *time* is mentioned as the key factor

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[303] Jerry Saltz, "*Getting Real",* in Elizabeth Peyton, *Elizabeth Peyton* (New York: Rizzoli. 2005), 141. Originally published in *The Village Voice* (New York), April 20th, 1999.
[304]Elizabeth Peyton quoted in *Whitney Biennial 2004*, exhibition catalogue (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art), 253.
[305] Ibid., 253.
[306] Ibid., 253.
[307] Ibid., 253.

in the enterprise of portrait painting; it is crucial to the building of the artist/sitter relationship, and the time spent sitting causes the choice of paint to best express the looking and thoughtful decision-making over time.

In their use of photography as referent, these notable examples of contemporary artists, challenge humanistic notions of portraiture. Their use of photography seems largely to reinforce the idea that photography degrades the "portrait" to more of a photographic likeness; that it somehow "filters" out some of the humanistic aspects of portraiture as such. These artists appropriate the portrait format to explore themes to do with mass culture, questioning notions of the "authentic" self that can be captured in portraiture by the very act of using photographically mediated images. Richter's painting from a photograph of the turned head of his daughter *Betty*, 1988, (see Image 30), Charlotte Mullins[308] points out, 'has more to say on the status of photography and on our reading of images than on its given subject matter. Betty, the woman, functions as a vehicle through which we approach the larger debate on issues of representation, both photographic and painterly.'[309]

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Internet link:
www.gerhard-richter.com/art/paintings/photo_paintings/detail.php?paintid=7668

Image 30
Gerhard Richter (b. 1932).
Betty (1988).

[308] Charlotte Mullins is a British art historian, critic and broadcaster. She is editor of *Art Quarterly* Journal. (http://uk.linkedin.com/in/charlottemullins).
[309] Charlotte Mullins, *Painting People: The State of the Art* (London, UK: Thames & Hudson, 2006), 8.

Late twentieth century and contemporary painters such as Martin Kippenberger, Enoc Perez, Luc Tuymans, John Currin, Yi Chen, Lisa Yuskavage, Eric Fischl, Norbert Bisky, Jorg Lozek, Michael Borremans, Eberhard Havekost, Anna Bjerger, The Singh Twins: Amrit and Rabindra, Atul Dodiya, Vik Muniz and Glenn Brown – all make use of the photographic source material as a means of recycling and reprocessing the idea of an encounter. Tuymans, who works in a very reductive form from magazines and newspapers echoes Baudrillard's sentiments when he says, 'everything has already been painted so reproduction is the only way forward.'[310] Works such as Tuymans' *Portrait,* 2000, (see Image 31), suggest these artists are not concerned with 'striving for a realist representation of the world as we see it, or remember it [but rather] with the act of representation itself; specifically, with the disconnection between image and representation.'[311] Therefore the use of photographically related sources remains pertinent for the artist who wishes to address shared human experiences of a global nature, particularly relating to cultural or sociopolitical issues. However, Mullins makes the point that with artists like Freud, issues with which they are concerned

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http://www.saatchigallery.com/artists/artpages/tuymans_Portrait.htm

Image 31
Luc Tuymans (b. 1958).
Portrait (2000).

> crossover from the particular to the universal. Freud may use live models to paint from, many of whom are well-known, but through painting them he creates a figure to whom we can all relate, one which has been pushed beyond an individual representation through his combative handling of paint, as he constantly reworks the theme of what it is to paint flesh and bone.[312]

[310] Nairne Howgate, *The Portrait Now,* 24.
[311] Ibid., 24.
[312] Ibid., 8.

With regard to portraits created more for individualistic purposes between artist and sitter, Mullins says she does not seek 'to undermine the skill and technical ability of [such] portrait painting, or its continued relevance' but explains that, in such portraits 'the focus remains squarely on the named individuals who are represented.'[313]

2:1(iii) The impact of digitalization and globalism.

Humans now inhabit a world where diverse visual and literary information about all aspects of universal human activity and beliefs are introduced, exposed and explained through both the interactivity of technologies and/or the relative ease of travel to witness and evaluate at first hand for oneself. Nicholas Bourriaud coined the portmanteau word *altermodernism* at the staging of the exhibition *Alter-Modern* at the Tate Modern in London, 2009, to define such work made by present day artists mindful of their world context:

> Artists are responding to a new globalised perception…A new modernity is emerging, reconfigured to an age of globalisation understood in its economic, political and cultural aspects: an alter-modern culture… Artists are now starting from a globalised state of culture.[314]

The global stage modulates norms of behaviour, as previous boundaries and obstacles of language, culture and geography become amalgamated into global human interaction and exchange. 'Cultural material can move across national boundaries and, like capital, become part of a global super-dentity'.[315]

[313] Ibid., 9.
[314] Nicholas Bourriaud, *Tate Triennial 2009: Introduction* (London: The Tate Gallery, 2009). http://www.tate.org.uk/context-comment/video/tate-triennial-2009-altermodern-introduction
[315] Gen Doy, *Picturing the Self: Changing Views of the Subject in Visual Culture* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2005), 188.

Contemporary Internet digital technologies, such as the social network sites *Facebook* and *Twitter*, cause a blurring of traditional boundaries between a public audience and that of the perceived distant world of those once deemed special, other, or different due to their media-generated fame, or infamousness. Nevertheless, in this century Warhol's observations still echo in works such as the hour-long video portrait of footballer David Beckham by Sam Taylor-Wood. Commissioned by the National Portrait Gallery, London, in 2003/4 and simply called *David,* this digital display on a plasma screen shows Beckham not 'on the pitch or posing glamorously, but asleep.'[316] (See Image 32). Such a portrait attempts to break down the distancing often felt in images made via a mechanical filmic device–the lack of intimacy that Barthes describes.[317] This work accentuates the sense of voyeuristic intimacy that the medium of film can engender: 'Taylor-Wood implies that the viewer is lying next to him, able to reach out and touch him, like a lover.'[318] At the same time, though a moving film, it displays stillness and silence, the ingredients that Benjamin, and Berger, maintained invoked the such-valued aura so special to original artworks. In selecting David Beckham as subject, Taylor-Wood also references the power of media to create a view of celebrity that in-turn feeds back into real-life as an ideal of beauty; life-imitating-art as a particular type becomes stereo-type and

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http://portraitpainting2012.blogspot.com.au/2012/11/sam-taylor-wood_6.html

Image 32
Sam Taylor-Wood (b. 1967).
David (2003/4).

[316] Sandy Nairne and Sarah Howgate, *The Portrait Now* (London, UK: National Portrait Gallery Publications; New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006), 7.
[317] Barthes. *Camera Lucida*, 106.
[318] Richard Dorment, "Beckham, the Sleeping Beauty". The Daily Telegraph *Online.* April 28, 2004.
http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/art/3616013/Beckham-the-sleeping-beauty.html

accepted norm, yet, in a sense, a hybridization of fantasy; a media construct with only minimal links to Beckham the person.

Viewing an exhibition such as *Present Tense: An Imagined Grammar of Portraiture in the Digital Age,* (2010, Australian National Portrait Gallery), raises questions about the need for a gallery environment for the viewing of digital images if a home computer might afford the same experience. In digitalization the 'original' becomes a *multiple*-original. It appears to be, but is not, a copy as such; its digital 'DNA' can be sent and reassembled wherever necessary, in this sense countering Benjamin's differentiation between an original's unique qualities and that of a reproduction. Indeed Freeland highlights the shift of new millennium art 'away from high art–away from the London or New York City gallery and museum art scene' due to either the making of web-based art, or the use of the Internet to market and show artist's work.[324] If contemporary art galleries are to represent and reflect these newer developments of making and presenting works then, as David Joselit[325] iterates, the gallery as exhibition space and the works therein need to be considered as belonging to an inter-related 'network' of 'texts, props and performances.' [326]

Nevertheless, for the researcher to personally visit the *Present Tense* digital portraiture exhibition was an experience of personal engagement, as intense and meaningful as any non-digital exhibition. The experience supports the curator, Michael Desmond's view that the medium of digital technology is just that–a medium, another tool in the artist's armory:

> At one time, oil on canvas or bronze was the medium for portraits. The medium now is technology…digital technology allows function to follow form; the function of the portrait– to illustrate an individual's character and

[324] Freeland. *But is it art?* 200.
[325] David Joselit is currently editor of October journal. He is Carnegie Professor, History of ArtModern art and culture at Yale University, USA. (http://arthistory.yale.edu/faculty/faculty/faculty_joselit.html)
[326] David Joselit. "Painting beside itself". *OCTOBER 130, Fall 2009*, 2009 October Magazine, Ltd. and Massachusetts Institute of Technology. 125.

> physiognomy– is established by the stamp of the technology that created it.[327]

Painter Tom Wood is positive about the possibilities of using technology but only if the artist is in command of what is being said through those media about the person in the portrait. In response to Desmond's statement, Wood says:

> In which case let's start exhibiting C.A.T. scans; by this definition they are the ultimate portrait. I think [Desmond] misses the point of the unique relationship between artist and sitter, which is then expressed in whatever medium is chosen. The medium clearly carries the baggage of history and in time so will the digital medium. I don't think it's either/or. I think it's everything. We just add, never subtract.[328]

Wood is cognisant that novelty of technology, of itself, does not justify its use in art, rather its appropriateness to answer the artist's enquiry volunteers it as most appropriate from the arsenal of tools at the artist's disposal.

The rapidity of technological advances means that a person's age and familiarity with the technology may expose or determine generational attitudes, self-imposed limits and boundaries such that definitions of what constitutes a 'human' relationship becomes a matter of personal opinion. Freeland says that whether one is cynical, like Baudrillard, about the extent of human immersion and engagement into the computerized world of non-reality– avatars and alter egos in cyberspace–depends on 'who is in control of the illusions or seductions of the Internet or the mass media', but suggests that 'artists and Web surfers alike' will need to discriminate and determine if such technologies lead to depersonalization, a total loss of human touch, 'an immersion into absence, a flattening of the full-bodied self into the screen' or 'whether, instead, it is a place for creative, intelligent, and beneficial sensory

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[327] "Present Tense", *Media Release,* April 21, 2010, The National Portrait Gallery, Canberra, Australia.
http://www.portrait.gov.au/UserFiles/media/document/Present%20Tense%20Media%20Release_final.pdf

[328] Tom Wood, e-mail message to researcher, November 20, 2010.

exploration and communal connection.'[329]

Desmond writes:

> Traditional portraiture is responding to the application of new technologies and this imaging process is reshaping our interpretation and reading of the face.[330]

inferring that, by his assessment, it is difficult not to be affected by the medium. It still, at least, *informs* the message, even if it is only an essential part of the equation.

2:1(iv) The specificity of the paint medium.

It is apposite to consider here the value of the paint medium to portraiture today since not only does its use by artists continue undeterred but, significantly, submissions to many high-profile portrait prizes, through their insistence on its use, infer a correlatation between the paint medium and the production of a portrait denoting human encounter; the portrait made from *life*, must be a *painting.* This was underlined when the 2004 winner of The Archibald Prize, Craig Ruddy's portrait of *David Gulpilil,* was challenged as ineligible since it was in charcoal and graphite, and therefore 'it was not a painting, end of story,'[331] even though in this case the award was not withdrawn. There is an implicit acceptance in such portrait prize criteria that the one–*working from life*–requires the other–*paint*; that they are mutually dependent on one another. Inherent in this is an understanding that through the paint medium the artist is involved in expressing personal vision and perception directly, intuitively and immediately expressed through the hand over the period of the encounter, bypassing any intermediary mechanical device. A viewing audience may thus identify and understand a painter like Matisse, who, when asked in 1942, 'why do you paint?', replied, 'To translate

[329] Freeland. *But is it art?* 205.
[330] Desmond. *Present Tense,* 12.
[331] Peter Ross, *Let's Face It: The History of The Archibald Prize* (Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia, revised edition, 2009) 127.

my emotions, my feelings and the reactions of my sensibility into colour and design, something that neither the most perfect camera, even in colours, nor the cinema can do.'[332]

The impact of photography in the nineteenth century, discussed earlier, had signaled to artists 'the untenable relation between naturalistic art and photography…The awareness of the need for personal expression in art increased in proportion to the growth of photography.'[333] Since photography took good care of, and shaped the public's thirst and demand for, an image documenting accurate physical *likeness* of both people and objects, the Impressionist painters, as discussed, had became concerned with 'no longer aiming to represent objects as such, but rather to respond to a temporary pattern of stimuli to the retina. If there were no objects, there were no lines, and in effect no drawing: everything existed in colour, embodied in fluid paint.'[334] Aided by readily available and purchasable art materials, and an awareness of early colour photography and scientific colour theory, the paintings of the Impressionists became interested in the direct expression through the medium of paint of the world experienced by the eye in real-time, as a world in flux, not only of landscape but also in portraiture.

> In their desire to portray immediacy and modernity, Impressionist artists…emphasised the primacy of perception and the pivotal role of character and personality, thus undeniably lending these attributes a new significance in portraiture. If today we feel that a portrait should reveal the sitter's character first and foremost, before so much as hinting at their rank and status, we should recognize that it is to the Impressionists that we owe this concept of what a portrait should be.[335]

In being 'defined as it was by the play of light, atmospheric effects, complementary colours, and broken brush strokes,'[336] conceptual objectives relating to observation and perception become expressed through materiality

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[332] Henri Matisse. Interviewed by Alfred J. Barr. *Matisse.* (Appendix I. New York. 1951.) 562
[333] Scharf. *Art and Photography*, 179.
[334] Bell. *Mirror of the World,* 341.
[335] Ibid., 128.
[336] Badea-Paun. *Society Portraits*, 128.

of paint on canvas.

By the early twentieth century 'the market for portraits was plunged into crisis…new artistic movements and vogues came to the fore which for the first time subordinated their sitters' desires for their own.'[337] 'Artists after Impressionism found it expedient to take the calculated step away from representation, to the interpretation of visual experiences.'[338] As the nineteenth century clicked over into the twentieth, Robert Hughes asks, 'how, by shoving sticky stuff like paint around on the surface of a canvas, could you produce a convincing record of process and transformation?'[339] The traditional mainstay and touchstone of Western academic art thus far, the human figure as subject matter needed re-examination, interrogation and testing to see if and how it could offer more mileage by which contemporary painters might express current concerns and issues.

Pablo Picasso, in what 'Andre Breton would later characterise as "the first great event of the twentieth century,"'[340] painted *Les Demoiselles D'Avignon* in 1907, addressing 'what no eighteenth century artist would have imagined suggesting: that the tradition of the human figure, which had been the very spine of Western art for two and a half millennia, had at last run out.'[341] (See Image 34). Cognisant of what could be left to photography's aptitude for factual description, from the ashes of conventional physiognomic representation in painting rose the phoenix of the modernist concern to deal with

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Image 34
Pablo Picasso (1881–1973).
Les Demoiselles D'Avignon (1907).

[337] Ibid., 181.
[338] Scharf. *Art and Photography*, 76
[339] McPherson. *The Modern Portrait*, 16.
[340] John Richardson, Diana Widmaier-Picasso and Elizabeth Rowling, *Picasso and Marie-Therese: L'Amour Fou,* (New York: Rizolli, 2011).
[341] Ibid., 21.

psychic reality requiring appropriately new forms of representation, as displayed by Picasso and the cubists.

Much influenced by Cezanne, who, as Clement Greenberg would reflect, 'sacrificed verisimilitude, or correctness, in order to fit his drawing and design more explicitly into the rectangular shape of the canvas,'[342] the Modernists moved away from any consideration of the canvas as surface containing an illusion of the world as if a window on a wall. As twentieth century Modernists gave autonomy to the picture surface many saw a logical progression away from the distortions of representation, as in Picasso's *Demoiselles D'Avignon,* and more to a consideration of the specific qualities and effects specific to the medium of paint itself. Picasso and Braque's Synthetic Cubist works had introduced external materials into the mix of paint textures drawing attention to the non-illusory surface on which the materials were adhered.[343] Any figurative representation became more and more negated, subject to surface and paint becoming self-referential or expressing the artist's overriding philosophical and conceptual goal. By 1914 Kandinsky would say,

> I saw with displeasure in other people's pictures elongations that contradicted the structure of the body, or anatomical distortions, and knew well that this would not and could not be for me the solution to the question of representation. Thus objects began gradually to dissolve more and more in my pictures.[344]

The ultimate consequence of this painterly aesthetic for many artists was total abstraction; at it's most unmistakable in the post-second world war American abstract expressionist paintings, corroborating Greenburg's maxim that painting should only be about paint.[345]

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[342] Clement Greenburg. "Modernist Painting." *Art & Literature no. 4*, (Spring 1965, 193-201, reprinted in *Modern Art And Modernism: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Francis Frascina and Charles Harrison. UK: Harper & Row, 1982). 194.
[343] Pablo Picasso's *Still Life with Chair Caning,* 1912 is cited as the first major work that utilises collage in fine art.
[344] Wassily Kandinsky. *The Cologne Lecture, 1914.* Transcription of the original manuscript published in J. Eichner, Kandinsky und Gabrielle Munter, Von Ursprugen Moderner Kunst, Munich, 1957. This version taken from the translation in Lindsay and Vergo, op. cit., pp. 394–400. Reprinted in Art in Theory, 1900-1999. Harrison and Wood. 94.
[345] Greenburg, *Modernist Painting*,

As early as 1836 Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, in *Laocoon*, had articulated what were, for him, the specific differences between poetic production (art in words) and the plastic arts, such as painting, identifying the physical qualities of making art as crucial to the understanding of what could be done and expressed by this art form. Prior thinking tended to judge the two artforms on what might be similar intellectual goals, but Lessing argues that painting depicts what poetry cannot and vice versa.[346] 'Lessing felt that the proper subject matter of each medium could be extrapolated from the physical properties of its constituent signs: …Paint is the major ingredient of painting. Therefore, painting should exemplify flatness (or, at least, be constrained to exemplify only effects that are consistent with flatness).'[347] Clement Greenberg, influential art critic for *The Nation,* reinvigorates Lessing's consideration of the impact of the medium to be able to say certain things well by virtue of its specific qualities. He therefore championed abstract expressionism as the ultimate goal of Modernist art, since, in his opinion, it stripped painting back to what it could essentially say best; marks in paint in relation to one another and not dependent on representation of any recognisable external form. In 1948, he declared a highly abstract work by Pollock, *Cathedral,* 1947, to be 'one of the best paintings produced by this country.'[348] In his seminal writing of 1965, *Modernist Painting,* he advances that it is the specificity of paint that painters should only concern themselves with in their art practice.[349] Painting as paint, non-representational in form, became a lynchpin of twentieth century Modernism. Figuration generally, and portraiture in particular, had no relevance, running contrary to this philosophy, in that it necessarily would destroy the autonomy of the picture surface and

[346] Gotthold Ephraim Lessing. *Laocoon: Or The Limits of Poetry and Painting.* Translated from the German by William Ross. London. J. Ridgway and Sons. 1836. Kessinger Publishing Facsimile Edition 2008.
[347] Noel Carroll: *Theorizing The Moving Image. Part I:II The Specificity of Media in the Arts.* p 25-37. New York, USA & Melbourne, Australia. Cambridge University Press. 1996. 26
[348] Evelyn Toynton. *Jackson Pollock.* Yale books. 2012. Introduction. http://yalebooksblog.co.uk/2012/01/20/the-discovery-of-an-american-icon-extract-from-jackson-pollock-by-evelyn-toynton/
[349] Greenberg, *Modernist Painting*, 2.

not prioritize the materiality of paint simply as paint.

With paintings such as Barnett Newman's *Vir Heroicus Sublimus (Man: Heroic Sublime),* 1951, through its huge scale, total immersion in colour-fields and the pretentious suggestions of the over-stated title, an ultimate end goal of painting seemed to be approached.

'One of the first missives aimed squarely at painting …was *The End of Painting* written by Douglas Crimp and published in the American art journal *October* in the spring of 1981.'[350] *October* continued in this vein in the '80s, postulating that painting, if not already dead, was certainly in its dying days. In 1986, for instance, Yve-Alain Bois,[351] co-editor of *October*, writing in *Painting: The Task of Mourning*,[352] proposed that abstract artists–though he adds it applies to 'any other kind of painting'– through their criteria of Modernist objectives, must, by their own definition, accept paintings ultimate end when those objectives have been met. He cites early Modernist painters whose work already acknowledged the 'feeling of the end'[353], continues through the mid-century '*Last Paintings'* of Ad Reinhardt and closes with the work of Robert Ryman. Ryman is cited 'because in his art the feeling of an end is worked through in the most resolved way.'[354]

Bois denies Ryman's own assertion that he is a post-modernist, insisting that 'he is more accurately the guardian of the tomb of modernist painting, at once knowing of the end and also knowing the impossibility of arriving at it without working it through.'[355] However, Ryman's more recent work continues still to 'focus on the materials, on how to paint, on the brushwork, the surfaces, the

[350] Craig Staff. *After Modernist Painting: A History of Contemporary Practice*. London, New York. I.B.Tauris. 2013. 94.
[351] Yve-Alain Bois is Professor of Modern Art and Chair of the History of Art and Architecture at Harvard University. Founder of French journal *Macula* and co-editor of *October.*
[352] Yve-Alain Bois. *Painting: The Task of Mourning*. 1986. Exhibition catalogue *Endgame: Reference and Simulation in Recent Painting and Sculpture.* Massachusetts Institute of Technology and The Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston. (Reprinted by MIT Press). 30,31.
[353] Ibid., 30.
[354] Ibid., 30.
[355] Ibid., 31.

textures.'[356] They therefore can still be said to maintain the trace of the artist's authenticity through the medium of paint, evidently still of significant value to the artist's process and concepts. His works do, however, also consider 'all the subtle nuances of the structure of the painting (the ground, the screws, fastening systems and so forth).' This aligns with David Joselit's concerns regarding the viability of painting as a relevant medium for visual expression in the twenty-first century – he asks 'How can the status of painting as matter be made explicit?'[357] Writing for *October* in 2009, he concludes that painting does not disappear but 'instead, there are shifts in emphasis in which earlier questions are reformulated through newer ones.'[358] Joselit notes that the German painter, Martin Kippenberger, through his work in the nineteen-nineties, demonstrated that 'individual painting should explicitly visualize such networks'[359] within which it is exhibited and considered.

Ryman's paintings confirm Joselit's support for the ongoing practice of painting as viable contemporary art practice and concur with the observations of Raoul Eshelman who, in 2008, reflected on the prior ten years of developments in the international art scene, and noted, 'these include…a renascence of painting (as opposed to performance art and installations) as well as a tendency towards projecting unity and totality in works of art.'[360]

Image subject to copyright: to view image please use Internet link: http://www.lost-painters.nl/wp-content/uploads/2011/04/Jutta-Koether-Hot-Rod-After-Poussin-80x104inch-Acrylverf-pastel-en-mixed-media-op-canvas.jpg

Image 35
Jutta Koether (b. 1958).
Hot Rod (After Poussin) (2009).

Joselit expresses this in his analysis of Jutta Koether's 2009 exhibition

[356] Xavier Hufkens Contemporary Gallery, Brussels. *Robert Ryman: Biography*. http://www.xavierhufkens.com/artists/robert-ryman
[357] David Joselit. *Painting beside itself.* OCTOBER 130, Fall 20092009 October Magazine, Ltd. and Massachusetts Institute of Technology. 125.
[358] Ibid.,
[359] Xavier Hufkens. *Robert Ryman: Biography*..,
[360] Raoul Eshelman. "Performatism in Art." *Anthropoetics 13, no. 3* (Fall 2007 / Winter 2008) http://www.anthropoetics.ucla.edu/ap1303/1303eshelman.htm

Lux Interior where, specifically in the piece entitled *Hot Rod (after Poussin),* 'painting functioned as a cynosure of performance, installation, and painted canvas.'[361] (See Image 35.) The painted canvas becomes the central focus but its purpose is informed by its relationship to, and networking with, all the surrounding structures and elements of presentation as opposed to presenting its own singular, unique importance.

The Swedish painter, Jan Rydén, however challenges Joselit's 2009 assertion that Kippenburger's 1990s question is, in Joselit's words, '*the* most important question to be addressed on canvas since Warhol.'[362] He argues that Joselit's stance infers 'other modes of painting are less important.' Joselit selects Koether and Stephen Prina as artists who accentuate the conceptual aspects of the overall work by relating or integrating painting to what Joselit's 'network' of 'texts, props and performances.' Rydén proposes that Joselit's insistence that painting is only relevant today if it aids the 'visualizing' of a wider 'network' is using already outmoded 1990s art terminology that merely refers in other words to the accepted 'game of references and contexts'[363] with which painting has long expressed itself conceptually. Rydén proposes that Joselit's standpoint is something of a smokescreen for painters who enjoy painting to carry on painting; mindful of the so-called 'death of painting in the last decades, [they have] found an acceptable way to keep painting.'[364]

In later presentations (April 2013) Joselit states that 'Abstract Expressionism linked personal touch to aesthetic intelligence;'[365] the artist, through the specific use of the paint medium, was able to convey very personal ideas and emotions, 'even capable of capturing the unconscious.'[366] Joselit wrestles with

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[361] Joselit. 126.
[362] Jan Rydén, *A comment on David Joselit's Painting Beside Itself*. August, 2011. http://janryden.wordpress.com/2011/08/19/a-comment-on-david-joselits-painting-beside-itself/
[363] Ibid.
[364] Rydén
[365] David Joselit. *Intelligent Touch: Painting as Subject: Conference Abstract.* April 2013 http://paintingbeyonditself.fas.harvard.edu/icb/icb.do?keyword=k94134&pageid=icb.page581399
[366] Ibid

the notion of painting still being capable of invoking directly personal, human emotions, while at the same time, because of the multifarious ways that art can be seen, accessed and experienced by today's audience–he gives the examples of accessing collections and exhibitions on-line, or going around galleries taking snaps on iPhones to view at a later time– then the painting becomes depersonalized, mechanical information to be viewed at a different time, in a different context and via a different format. In this sense, though the criteria for Portrait Prizes enshrines the former value of working directly with paint, to maintain and presumably signify the human touch and shared authentic experience of artist with sitter, it mainly organises and exhibits the resultant portraits more inline with Joselit's aforementioned paradox. For example, submissions of the paintings are, more and more, submitted digitally, usually via online Internet sites, before the actual physical painting is viewed (see requirements of *Doug Moran Prize* and *The Kingston Prize*) and all semi-finalist and finalists' works become available to view online, usually before, during and after the actual exhibition of works. Such images can usually be downloaded for individual use, again for reviewing later at an individual's discretion or even for re-posting on individual social media sites such as *Facebook* or *Pinterest.* Increasingly it is uncommon that there are any restrictions on the taking of digital photographs in the galleries of artworks. Since photography hinders greatly the perception of actual scale, texture and colour of original artworks, the general acceptance of its ubiquity throughout the process, even by the very spectators that attend the actual exhibition, can be seen to undermine the importance still placed upon the physicality of paint and painting as a unique object, as implied by the very criteria that the same portrait galleries requiring a submission of an initial digital image still uphold. In acceptance of these procedural requirements, where, as in these or the case of London's *BP Portrait Prize*, where works are entered internationally, the painter is forced to consider the initially submitted reproduced image of the portrait in a digital format before it will ever be seen physically–substantiating the very paradox that Joselit articulates.

2:1(v) The continued value of the paint medium to portraiture.

This subsection investigates notable artists that persisted in figurative painting, including portraiture, through the previously discussed period when such practice it was being challenged as outmoded, through to contemporary practitioners. This offers substantiation to the value of the sitter to the contemporary portrait who still chooses this methodology and informs the reasoning for maintaining the working from life clause by portrait galleries and prizes today.

Significant, elite painters, such as Francis Bacon, Brett Whiteley, Avigdor Arikha, Balthus and Lucian Freud, ignored the 'endless diagnoses of [the] death'[367] of painting and, more specifically, the death of painting that referred to the human figure. Bacon 'with a tone of contempt…repeatedly distanced himself from abstract expressionism'[368] but neither was he interested in mimesis or narrative painting through figurative work. He said, 'the moment the story is elaborated, the boredom sets in: the story talks louder than the paint.'[369] Writing for the catalogue for the 2013 extensive survey exhibition of Bacon's work in Sydney, *Five Decades,* Ernst Van Alphen argues that the artist, as opposed to the philosopher, 'works with affects and percepts…[which] are part of the concrete matter of painting…Bacon's paintings exemplify this aesthetic theory perfectly. Viewers are touched directly and almost violently by the material presence of his paintings.'[370] As with Lucian Freud's work, there is a correlation between the material aesthetic of paint and the expression of human emotion as it equates to human flesh.

Although Bacon preferred to work indirectly from photographs of friends and

[367] Craig Staff. *After Modernist Painting,* 94.
[368] Ernst Van Alphen. "Making Sense of Affect." *Francis Bacon: Five Decades.* Exhibition Catalogue. Sydney. At Gallery of New South Wales Publications. 2012. 65.
[369] David Sylvester. *Brutality of Fact: interviews with Francis Bacon.* (London. Thames and Hudson. 1987.) 22.
[370] Van Alphen. *Making Sense*, 66.

lovers, Lucian Freud, a personal friend of Bacon's, worked exclusively from life, nevertheless the specificity of the paint medium was essential to the conveyance of his relationship to the sitters whom he wished to paint, and the expression of his observations over a period of time. He said,

> I would wish my portraits to be *of* people, not *like* them. Not having a look of the sitter, *being* them. I didn't want to get just a likeness like a mimic, but to *portray* them, like an actor… As far as I am concerned the paint *is* the person. I want it to work for me just as flesh does.[371]

Freud was categorical in his fervour for the paint medium as opposed to using any other medium. He writes, 'Now I know that the main point about painting is paint: that it's all about paint.'[372] Freud famously used the heavily textural cremnitz white oil paint, 'the modern equivalent of the traditional white used by the Old Masters',[373] which, coupled with his consistency of subtle colour choices, he equated with flesh.[374] The very process of painting facilitates enjoyment of the paint medium. 'The deliciousness of it, the thing that makes you love the painting, is a physical thing, the building up of layers. You want to eat it as if it were ice-cream or something,' is how Damien Hirst has described the medium of paint.[375] Michael Auping explains:

> the attentive, subtle energy that is reflected in Freud's brushstrokes is analogous to the pulsating liquidity of the breathing body that was in front of him. This certainly is part of the reason why we feel a living presence in Freud's portraits, not just an image likeness.[376]

For Freud, paint makes sense as the perfect material to translate directly what he sees and perceives directly before him.

In conversation with Michael Auping, Freud reveals the connection between what is happening through the process of working directly from the sitter and

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[371] Lawrence Gowing. *Lucian Freud,* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1882),191.
[372] Gayford, *Man with a Blue Scarf,* 54.
[373] Winsor and Newton. Resource Centre. http://www.winsornewton.com/resource-centre/product-articles/choosing-the-white-thats-right
[374] Gayford, *Man with a Blue Scarf,* 111.
[375] Martin Gayford, "Damien Hirst: A Brush with Mr. Hirst", *The Independent,* March 11, 2005. http://www.independent.co.uk/news/people/profiles/damien-hirst-a-brush-with-mr-hirst-6150596.html
[376] Howgate *et al.*, *Lucian Freud: Portraits,* 47.

feeding those thoughts, observations and sensations through the brush and paint onto the canvas. He asked Freud, 'Do you think that the relationship between a painter and a model can ever be passive, a simple matter of posing and painting?' Freud replied, 'Actually, no… there's too much going on that is being communicated in subtle ways for it to be a passive situation.'[377] Only by thoroughly immersing themselves together into the enterprise of making the portrait can the artist and sitter share the felt nuances of that experience. Freud states:

> I never put anything into a painting that I don't actually see when I'm painting the subject. However, I'm not trying to make a copy of the person. I'm trying to relay something of who they are as a physical and emotional presence. I want the paint to work as flesh does.[378]

Freud is stressing the absolute necessity of paint over any other medium, for him, to capture the elusive qualities of life, which he is only able to perceive before the living person and then render, not as mimicry, but as equivalence.

Often seen as working in the same vein as Freud and Bacon,[379] is the contemporary painter Jenny Saville who came to the fore with the *Young British Artists* of the late 1980s. We consider her here since, like Freud but of a much younger generation, she maintains the vital correlation of paint to human flesh, stating that 'my language is painting…There's something primal about it. It's innate, the need to make marks. That's why, when you're a child, you scribble.'[380]

Saville paints large figurative works that reveal a 'dedication to a truthful portrayal of the human condition'.[381] She uses paint viscerally as an equivalent to the physicality, texture and colour of flesh. The liberated use of

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[377] Ibid., 212.
[378] Ibid., 208.
[379] Mark Stevens. *Fresh Meat.* New York Art Review. http://nymag.com/nymetro/arts/art/reviews/1655/
[380] Jenny Saville, in conversation with Rachel Cooke of The Observer magazine. The Guardian. http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2012/jun/09/jenny-saville-painter-modern-bodies
[381] Sandy Nairne and Sarah Howgate, *The Portrait Now*, 65.

paint negates comparison to static photography from which it is therefore surprising to learn they derive:

> Saville works from photographs, not life, often taking images from medical textbooks as her starting point, transforming them…into paintings that make us feel before we even fully grasp what we are looking at.[382]

Titles, such as *Reflective Flesh* (2002-03, see Image 36), allude to the conceptual connotation of why the figure is being depicted so, as realities of human existence and engagement as opposed to figures of idealized beauty. While in other respects the association has been made with Freud as precedent, in this regard, as with her choice of medical journals for photographic source material, she is more akin to Francis Bacon who 'never, ever made a painting of a nude from life... and, indeed, didn't produce a lot of paintings or drawings of any kind from life.'[383]

Saville's own statement, that '(Flesh) is all things. Ugly, beautiful, repulsive, compelling, anxious, neurotic, dead, alive,'[384] bears the impress of Bacon's beliefs. Bacon 'thought [photographs] brought moments of the real to life in an extraordinary way,'[385] in that they could be seen as bearing the trace of the sitter, underscoring Barthes assessment of photography, since, in Bacon's case they were largely black and white 'analogue' prints. Similarly to Bacon, who would fold, rip and rearrange parts of the photographic

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to view image please use Internet link:
https://www.artsy.net/artist/jenny-saville/works?search_term=reflective+flesh

Image 36
Jenny Saville (b. 1970).
Reflective Flesh, (2002-03).

[382] Nairne and Howgate, *Portrait Now*, 33.
[383] David Sylvester, "David Sylvester On Francis Bacon", *The Website: the Official Francis Bacon Website*. http://www.francis-bacon.com/world/?c=David-Sylvester
[384] "Jenny Saville: Continuum", press release, Gagosian Gallery, New York, August 10, 2011. http://gagosian.vaesite.net/data/f2f92e49b5ad769c418be72466c47487.pdf
[385] Anthony Bond. "Bacon the Chronicler of an age": *Francis Bacon: Five Decades.* Exhibition Catalogue. Sydney. At Gallery of New South Wales Publications. 2012. 25.

image creating extreme distortions that served as a reference to create emotionally charged forms in his paintings, Saville, unlike Richter, does not draw our attention to the mechanics of projection of photography at all.

The examples of Bacon and Saville, somewhat exceptional as they are, could be used as an argument for artists working solely from second-hand imagery to counter the 'working from life' approach. Certainly Saville's large scale workings, both 'bold and meticulous,'[386] of the colours and qualities equating with that of human form derived from photographic sources, demonstrate that it is possible to transcend the usual limitations associated with photography.

However, perhaps it is this lack of first hand encounter with the real human form that has prompted others to be critical of Saville. Of comparisons with Freud, critic David Cohen says of Saville that 'there is no awkwardness'.[387] Many twentieth-century modernist artists have particularly valued this quality of 'awkwardness'. The painter William Scott talked about 'The beauty of the thing badly done.'[388] Cohen seems to be lamenting Saville's apparent lack of hard looking from life at the subject. He suggests this may be the underlying factor causing unwarranted repetition. He also observes:

> Saville merely deploys a battery of special effects to achieve an appropriated *look* of painterliness. That's why she is impeccably slick where Freud is self-questioning to the point of being cack-handed.[389]

Cohen seems to be intimating that it is this 'relationship to the discovery of form', a logic of looking, that time spent observing the sitter better enables and that the visual scanning and/or mechanical projecting of an already flattened photographic image only gives the work a sense of monotony and slickness of mark making.

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[386] Ibid.,
[387] David Cohen, "The Dutchmen's Heir: Jenny Saville at Gagosian"*, Artcritical*, October 6, 2011. http://artcritical.com/2011/10/06/jenny-saville/
[388] "This is Modern Art, 3: Lovely, Lovely", directed by Matthew Collings (London, BBC (DVD); London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson,1999). Book and BBC Television series. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jS9ku07gFbA&feature=fvwrel.
[389] Cohen, The Dutchmen's Heir…,

Some contemporary painters, by alluding to what critics such as Cohen see as drawbacks to photographic dependency, actually harness the ubiquitous nature of photography and digital manipulation, remediating photographic sources and their peculiar qualities through paint and thereby returning value back to the value of the paint medium. The British painter, Philip Gurrey, for example, references our blasé acceptance of *Photoshopped* assembled conglomerate people. (See Image 37). Some make the analogy to the contemporary trend for sampling in music–a comparison which Gurrey himself particularly dislikes.[390] His paintings at once suggest the convention of portrait composition and painterliness of the seventeenth-century Dutch Masters, while also declaring the modernist notion of the autonomy of the picture surface. Acknowledging his interest in contemporary Dutch painter, Philip Akkerman, 'who has painted only self-portraits since 1981',[391] Gurrey says:

> A Rembrandt and an Akkerman are both enquiries into the sitter and, in broader terms, the human condition... I was commenting on how we live now and the birth of modern culture.[392]

Like Rembrandt and Akkerman, Gurrey's works are unashamedly skillful in his mastery of the oil painting medium, and he is likewise unapologetic about not only being a painter, but also one who investigates the surviving nature of painted portraiture to 'visually explore certain facets of the human condition through the physicality of paint, working intently between image

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http://www.philipgurrey.com/Philip_Gurrey/Press_Release_page_files/%27Viscount%20Castlereagh%27%202008%20Oil%20on%20Board%2031x31cms.jpg

Image 37
Philip Gurrey (b.1984).
Viscount Castlereagh (2008).

[390] Vici MacDonald, "Philip Gurrey", *ArtWorld* Aug/Sept. 2008. Retrieved October 20, 2012. http://www.philipgurrey.com/Philip_Gurrey/Interviews_files/Art%20world%20new%20work%20interview%20August%2008.pdf
[391] Ibid.,
[392] Ibid.,

and oil paint's own unique visceral language'[393]. Gurrey himself says,

> A lot of the meaning of the work is intrinsic to the paint, it's not a reference to something… A lot of what people consider boring about portraits, I find completely fascinating. A lot of contemporary art is shocking; we went through that ten years ago, so a sensible portrait will always be underplayed.[394]

Here Gurrey echoes Donald Kuspit's sentiments, who sees hope after 'the end of art' through painters such as Gurrey, whom Kuspit calls the *New Old Masters.*[395]

Glenn Brown's work, in acknowledging and celebrating the re-birth of painting, takes works by other artists noted for their painterly qualities–such as Frank Auerbach or Rembrandt–but slows down the immediacy of their techniques through *tromp l'oeil*-like painting of the flattening or distorting effects of photography, (see Image 38). It is 'as if to say that when we look at reproductions of paintings we are not seeing the real thing, only a poor substitute'.[396] Such approaches resurrect diverse purposes for an ongoing use of the paint medium. Contemporary uses of it 'now engage in the same hybridization and "morphing" that confronts the human, adopting technologies and prostheses that were, in the days of high modernism's "purity" and "truth to medium," considered anathema.'[397]Reflecting these concerns, the 2002 *Painting on the Move': An exhibition in three parts* was staged at three Basel galleries. Tracing the development of

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http://art.sy/artwork/glenn-brown-death-disco

Image 38
Glenn Brown (b. 1966).
Death Disco (2004).

[393] "Philip Gurrey: About the Artist", *Opus Fine Art.* http://www.opus-art.com/the-artists/artist/philip-gurrey
[394] MacDonald, *Philip Gurrey.*
[395] Donald Kuspit. *The End of Art.* (Cambridge, U.K. Cambridge University Press.) 2004. 183
[396] Mullins, *Painting People*, 164.
[397] Staff, *After Modernist Painting,* 164.

the use of paint since 1900 to 2000, 'the three Basel exhibitions reveal that painting has remained relevant and alive whatever ideological stance it chooses to take.'[398] Such shows reiterate that 'despite its multiple death certificates then, painting refuses to stay buried.'[399]

David Hockney notes, 'The revival of the figure with many of the young painters today testifies to the enduring longing for depiction.'[400] The views of one such younger figurative artist, Australian Ben Quilty, suggest that the medium of paint remains essential to the process.

> I was always obsessed with the medium of paint- with the materiality of actually making an image and the pace at which always what you needed was the pigment and an implement and a surface and that was it. Often it feels very childlike and often I know that I'm not riding any 'new waves', so to speak, but I'm happy doing that. I guess most artists feel deep down that they have something they want to get out, something that they want to say to the world about their experience of being alive. I remember making a painting of my mates… I felt that it was a very true representation about how I felt about them and how I felt about my interaction with them, and in a broader sense, how I felt about being alive.[401]

Clearly Quilty, a painter a generation after Richter, sees no prohibition on the medium of paint nor on the genre of the painted portrait. He is articulating his belief still in the essential aptitude of the paint medium to express best his feelings about his relationship to his friends, who are also his sitters.

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[398] Carlotta Graedel Matthäi *Painting on the move: An Exhibition in Three Parts.* Basel, Switzerland. 2002. http://www.swissart.ch/en/news_archive_article.php?myeditid=203&langindex=en
[399] Staff, *After Modernist Painting,* 164.
[400] Weschler. *True to life,* 50.
[401] Ben Quilty.Artscareer.com.au. Podcast.http://www.artscareer.com.au/vodcast/visual-artist profile-ben-quilty

2:2 The ‘Working From Life’ Clause

This section explores the relevance of maintaining what the researcher has called a ‘working from life’ clause by the rules and regulations of prestigious portrait prizes and national portrait gallery collections, effectively warranting an in-person artist/sitter relationship. Through direct interview and correspondence with gallery directors and curators, the rules of entry are examined to determine correlation between physical meeting of artist and sitter, the correlation to the medium of paint and the expectation of what is being expressed through portraiture made with requisitions. Insight into the value of the artist/sitter relationship as suggested by the working-from-life practice, is then also gained through an examination of comments by practicing artists.

The research investigates where and how the criteria stipulated by galleries and portrait prizes for the submission of portraits originated. It looks within that criteria to whether the usual prerequisite for artists to have physically met with the sitter for purposes of making the portrait in its entirety or for generating resources, whether extensive or minimal, is included, to what extent the clause is applied and with what effect on the resultant portraits.

2:2 (i) Understanding the ‘Working from Life’ clause and its implications.

It is important to consider the ‘working from life’ clause that exists in so many portrait prizes and portrait galleries today since it is a formalised, consistent requirement embodying a certain methodology of artistic practice as preferential to visually express a human touch encounter between artist and sitter. This method categorically excludes portraits where a physical meeting has not taken place or portraits not executed in a paint medium. In that this methodology stresses the necessity of the physical meeting of artist and sitter,

there is an inference that some kind of direct relationship, however minimal but still born of the human touch, is of value to the individuals in facilitating the fashioning of a portrait. Furthermore the 'working from life' clause, which necessitates a period of time shared between two individuals, may be regarded as an essential structure where the process of painting becomes the best medium to represent and convey that experience of extended thought and observations through marks and layers on a surface, made over time, in the presence of the sitter.

The twelve portrait prizes and competition guidelines researched were:

- *The Outwin Boochever Portrait Competition:* The National Portrait Gallery of America's annual competition. First prize of $25,000 (A$24,794). Established 2008
- *The Kingston Prize for Canadian Portraiture:* The biennial National Portrait Prize of Canada. First prize of CA$20.000. (A$19,798). Established 2005.
- *The BP Portrait Award.* Britain's premier portrait award at The National Portrait Gallery, London. First Prize of £25,000. Sponsored by British Petroleum since 1989, previously having been sponsored since 1980 by the Imperial Tobacco group, it was therefore called *The John Player Award.*
- *The Archibald Prize:* With a first prize of A$75,000, it is 'one of Australia's oldest and most prestigious art prizes'. Held annually at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney. Established 1921.
- *The Doug Moran National Portrait Prize.* With a $150,000 first prize, this annual Sydney-based competition is 'the richest portrait prize in the world'. Established it in 1988 by the Nursing Home tycoon Doug Moran and his family.
- *The Xstrata Percival Portrait Award.* Queensland's biennial award for portraiture, held at Townsville. First prize of A$40,000. Established in 2007.

- *The Black Swan Prize for Portraiture.* Western Australia's city of Perth's annual prize for portraiture, with prizes of A$40,000 (Lester Prize) Established 2009
- *'The Great Southern Portrait Prize'.* From the Gippsland area of Victoria, Australia. Held at the Latrobe Regional Gallery: International Power Hazelwood Community Access Gallery, with a $1000 first prize. Established in 2006.
- *The Davy Portrait Award:* the leading annual award for portraiture in Ireland – open to artists based in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. First Prize of £10,000 or €11,750 (A$16,000). Established in 2008
- *Adam Portraiture Award and Exhibition.* The Portrait Gallery of New Zealand's biennial prize for portraiture. First prize NZ$15,000(A$11,669). Established 1990.
- *The Portia Geach Memorial Award*. The Australian National Art Award for Portraiture by Australian women artists. The final exhibition is held at The S.H. Ervin Gallery in Sydney. Prize of $18,000.[402]
- *Shirley Hannan Portrait Award.* A National Portrait Award, held annually at the Bega Valley Regional Gallery, NSW, Australia. First prize of $50,000. The judge for the 2012 prize was Michael Desmond, senior curator from the Australian National Portrait Gallery.[403]

The relevant sections from the guidelines for submission to these prizes and competitions, which mention the need for the artist to have physically met with the sitter for purposes of the portrait, are:

- *The Outwin Boochever Portrait Competition.* (Washington, USA.) 'The work entered should be understood as a portrait in the broadest

[402] "Philanthropy", *The Trust Company.* http://www.trust.com.au/philanthropy/awards/portia_geach/default.asp
[403] "The Shirley Hannan National Portrait Award, 2012", *Bega Valley Shire Council*, NSW, Australia. http://www.begavalley.nsw.gov.au/cp_themes/default/page.asp?p=DOC-DTW-20-14-85

sense. It may be a traditional, representational work or it may be a more experimental portrait, but it must be based on the artist's direct contact with any living individual(s).'[404]

- *The Kingston Prize for Canadian Portraiture*. (Ottawa, Canada)
  'The portrait must be based upon a meeting in person between the artist and subject, and the subject must sign a statement on the entry form to confirm that this has happened… The artist must meet with subject for the purpose of making the portrait.'[405]
- *The BP Portrait Award.* (London, UK)
  'The work entered should be a painting based on a sitting or study from life and the human figure must predominate.'[406]
- *The Archibald Prize*. (Sydney, Australia)

As a consequence of 'The Bloomfield Scandal' of 1975, discussed in the next section, the Archibald Prize rules attempted to tighten any loop-holes, stating:

> 'Portraits submitted for the Archibald Prize must be painted from life. The competitor must complete and sign the entry form and the subject/sitter must also provide a written statement that he/she sat for the portrait.'[407]

The detailed witnessed declaration on the entry form that the artist must sign, states,

> I certify that I have read the conditions set out on this form and agree to be bound by them… the subject of my portrait had at least one sitting with me.[408]

In 2013, application to *The Archibald Prize* moved to on-line electronic submission of forms. Once the form is submitted, the applicant receives a further emailed confirmation form containing a 'Declaration by the artist'

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[404] "The Outwin Boochever Portrait Competition 2013", *National Portrait Gallery*, The Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C. http://www.portraitcompetition.si.edu/about/about.html
[405] "The Kingston Prize." http://www.portraitscanada.ca/exhibitions.htm
[406] "BP Portrait Award 2010", *National Portrait Gallery*, London. http://www.npg.org.uk/index.php?id=4711
[407] "Archibald Portrait Prize, 2010, terms and conditions of entry," *Art Gallery of New South Wales*. www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/media/.../files/Archibald_12_form_04.pdf
[408] Ibid.,

section and 'Statement by the subject' section. These sections *must* be printed out in hard copy, signed accordingly by artist and sitter and then submitted alongside the painting when physically delivered to the gallery. The artist signs and dates the form to declare 'that the subject had at least one sitting with me', while the sitter signs and dates, declaring 'I confirm that I, the subject, had at least one sitting for the portrait with the artist.'[409]

- *The Doug Moran National Portrait Prize.* (Sydney, Australia)
  'Portraits that reveal a deep connection between the artist and their subject will be well received by the judges.'[410] The portrait should be 'of the head and all or part of the subject; painted from life, partly in front of the sitter.'[411]
- *The Xstrata Percival Portrait Award. (*Townsville, Queensland, Australia.) (The use of bold type emphasis is as it appears in this quotation from the award's 'Conditions of Entry, 2010'.)
  'The portrait is to be of a **'REAL' PERSON**. It is expected that the subject of the work has **SAT FOR THE ARTIST** at least once.'[412]
- *The Black Swan Prize for Portraiture*. (Perth, Western Australia.)
  'the subject of my portrait had at least one sitting with me
  This declaration is made under the *Oaths, Affidavits and Statutory Declarations Act 2005.*[413]

By 2012, the first prize money for *The Black Swan Prize* had been raised by $10,000 and the terms and conditions then also stated:

> 'The portrait must be the result of the Artist's direct ("in person") meeting with the Subject, and the Subject must agree to be painted by the Artist by completing the Section B Part 2 Declaration of Subject

[409]"Enter The Archibald Prize 2013". Art Gallery of New South Wales. https://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/prizes/archibald/enter/
[410] "The Doug Moran National Portrait Prize 2012." *Moran Prizes*. http://www.moranprizes.com.au/ContentFiles/MoranPrizes/Documents/DMNPP%202012%20Terms%20and%20Conditions.pdf
[411] Ibid.,
[412] Townsville, Queensland Portraiture award. Downloadable pdf from website. Retrieved April 17, 2010. http://www.townsville.qld.gov.au/resources/5876.pdf
[413] "Black Swan Prize Terms & Conditions 2010." *ARTrinsic Inc.*, Perth, WA. http:www.blackswanprizw.com.au

form. Failure to provide a completed Section B Part 2 Declaration of Subject form is grounds for exclusion from the judging of the Prize.'[414]

- *'The Great Southern Portrait Prize'.* (Gippsland, Victoria, Australia) 'The portrait must be based on a live sitting.'[415]
- *The Portia Geach Memorial Award*. 'It is awarded each year to the best portrait painted **from life** of some man or woman distinguished in Art, Letters or the Sciences.' The on-line entry form requires the ticking of a box affirming that the portrait has been executed from life.[416]
- *Shirley Hannan Portrait Award.* 'Best Portrait painting in any medium including pastel (but excluding sculpture, photography, digital media or base relief) being a realistic depiction of a particular living person.'[417] This does not clearly state that the portrait must be done from life.

Of the twelve portrait prizes previously listed, only two*, The Davy Portrait Award* [418]from Ireland and the *Adam Portraiture Award* [419] from New Zealand, while having clear criteria for a painted portrait entry, do not specify that the artist had to meet the subject of the portrait in person for the purposes of making the portrait to be submitted.

As these seemed exceptions to the rule, the researcher contacted the curators of these portrait awards to ask if it was a conscious decision not to include a 'working from life' clause in their criteria. Hugh Mulholland was the curator of The Davy Prize in 2010. His response was:

I did not even think of adding that condition at the time of drawing

[414] "Black Swan Prize Terms & Conditions 2012". http://www.blackswanprize.com.au/portraiture_adults_terms.html
[415] "The Great Southern Portrait Prize", *Latrobe Regional Gallery*, Morwell, Victoria, Australia. http://www.latroberegionalgallery.com/exhibitions-great-southern-portrait.php
[416] "Portia Geach Memorial Award", *The Trust Company*. http://www.trust.com.au/philanthropy/awards_and_scholarships/portia_geach/
[417] "The Shirley Hannan National Portrait Award 2012",Ibid.
[418] "Davy Portrait Awards", Ibid. http://www.davyportraitawards.com/content/EntryForm-2010.pdf
[419] "Adam Portraiture Award", *The New Zealand Portrait Gallery*, Wellington, NZ. http://www.portraitgallery.nzl.org/archive/adapplication2012.html

> up the conditions of entry. I guess I assumed that most work would be done from sittings; however, we have shortlisted work which was not produced from an actual sitting. At some level the relationship between the artist and the sitter was something we were interested in exploring but as you most likely know, it is possible even with a sitting that no relationship is developed. So the over riding criteria is the quality of the work.[420]

Indeed, the inaugural *Davy* prize awarded second prize to Martin Wedge 'for his striking oil on canvas portrait entitled 'Figure C3.10' (see Image 39). The title refers to the anonymous subject of the portrait that was taken from a medical reference book. Wedge describes his portrait as 'a universal face that is strangely recognisable to many'.[421] The artist has taken the opportunity to explore wider issues of representation and identity that the 'working from life' clause may have hindered. While Mulholland's remark suggests that, as in the previously discussed cases of artists such as Gainsborough and Ingres, time spent in the process of painting a portrait may not result in the establishment of any intimate or ongoing relationship, nevertheless any time spent in such an enterprise necessitates close interaction in the participant's personal space. This alone affords personal insight and perceptions as well as binocular observation of the sitter in three-dimensional space. The relationship may remain only a professional one, for needs of completing the portrait to the satisfaction of all parties. Still, even this limited and unemotional relationship distinctly heightens an awareness of a person's living presence than that of consultation with a photograph only.



Image 39
Martin Wedge (b. 1958).
Image C3.10 (2008).

[420] Hugh Mulholland, e-mail message to researcher, April 15, 2010.
[421] "Davy Portrait Awards"

In 2010, Ian Cumberland's self-portrait took out first place in *The Davy Prize.* (See Image 40). Hugh Mulholland remarked that 'although he admires the technique displayed in Cumberland's self-portrait he admits his personal preference is for something looser', citing the example of Neil Shawcross' portrait of a woman in a red skirt (see Image 41). He states, 'I think it captures a little of the personality of the person. For me that relationship between the artist and the sitter has to be made visible as well.'[422] While Mulholland does not prescribe a forced artist/sitter relationship in his rules for entry to *The Davy* he clearly acknowledges and enjoys the results of such a practice when it is employed so sensitively to explore and reveal the interaction uniquely between two people as shown here.

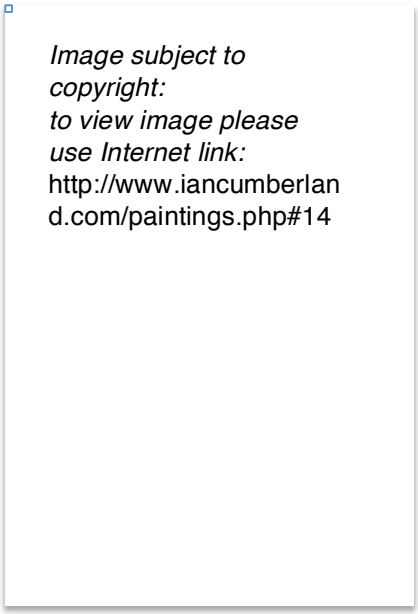


Image 40
Ian Cumberland (b. 1983).
Self-portrait, (2010).

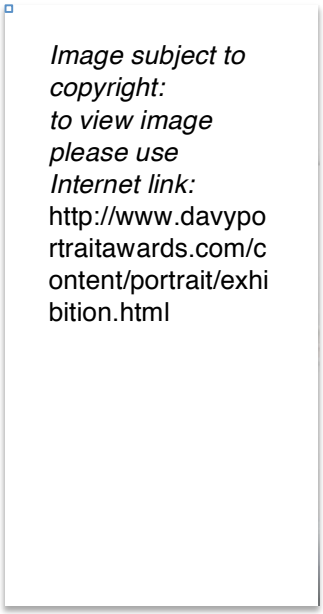


Image 41
Neil Shawcross (b. 1940).
Portrait of a woman in a red skirt, (2010).

Photorealism and hyper-realism have a marked presence both in *The Davy* and, it would appear, in all the recent portrait shows under consideration in this research. Regarding *The Davy* exhibition 2010, *Culture: Northern Ireland* notes, 'Others are so perfectly life-like that they look digital, in a few cases so

[422] Ibid.,

much so that they risk falling into the Uncanny Valley[423].' Putting to one side the question of whether 'perfectly life-like' equates with meaning 'more like a digital photograph', Hugh Mulholland defends their inclusion in the same article, invoking the entry requirements:

> That's one of the criteria. They have to create in a traditional medium: painting, graphite, drawing, print. The intention is that this is a period in art history when a lot of attention is given to new media and mixed media and we were looking very particularly at the history of painting and the representation of the figure within that.

The article's author concludes:

> But maybe we're missing out. A photograph can capture an image, but what about that 'relationship' between sitter and artist that Mulholland talks about? There is a distinct life, a depth beyond the thickness of paint, to the paintings on display at this exhibit. It's something a camera can only rarely capture.
>
> As Mulholland points out: 'When you visit a gallery you spend so much more time looking at paintings that are pictures of people. People are interested in people. That's why this is relevant.'[424]

These comments allude to the clearly perceptible, though elusive, difference between the information distilled from a photograph and that of a painted portrait of an individual.

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[423] Robotics specialist, and founder of *Robocon*, Dr. Masahiro Mori, coined the term, *Uncanny Valley* as the title of his hypothesis, published in 1970. He proposed that 'with robots… as their design gets closer and closer to looking like humans, most people begin to feel more and more scared of them. To a certain degree, we feel empathy and attraction to a humanlike object; but one tiny design change, and suddenly we are full of fear and revulsion. That area is what I call the "uncanny valley."' Judit Kawaguchi, *Words to live by: Robocon Founder Dr. Masahiro Mori,*
http://web.archive.org/web/20110313073609/http://search.japantimes.co.jp/cgi-bin/fl20110310jk.html

[424] "The Davy Portraits", *Culture Northern Ireland.org*, last updated March 3, 2010. http://www.culturenorthernireland.org/article/3148/davy-portrait-awards

The only other major portrait prize from the aforementioned list of twelve that does not stipulate the 'working from life' clause is New Zealand's *Adam Portraiture Award*. The 2008 winner, *The Blue Girl* by Irene Ferguson, was an image of a young woman, wearing sunglasses, sun-peak shade and casual attire, watering a rather arid looking back-yard lawn. (See Image 42). It appears to be based largely from a single photograph, though in references to other works the artist's approach is spoken of as – 'Working from life, painting from observation, she strives to invest her portraits with a power beyond the merely descriptive'.[425] While the figure is a close friend of Ferguson's, she stands symbolic of life in New Zealand in the twenty-first century, with undertone references to the role of women and wider issues of conservation and climate change. As such, she is antithetic of the life in Gainsborough's privileged rural England at the start of colonisation, to which the painting's title alludes. This concept seems the overriding import of the painting that *The Adam* prize has recognised. Any portrayal of the artist/sitter relationship would seem secondary.



Image 42
Irene Ferguson (b.1970). *The Blue Girl*, *Johanna Sanders in her Back Yard* (2008).

The researcher asked Avenal McKinnon, the director of the New Zealand National Portrait Gallery and curator of its *Adam Prize*, firstly, what were the reasons for not having the 'working from life' clause requirement in *The Adam Prize*, and what did she think might be the reasoning for its inclusion by the majority of other institutions? She replied:

> The Portrait Gallery considered this issue and decided that demanding the artist produce a portrait from a live sitting excluded imaginative work of people known by artists but sometimes painted long afterwards – the

[425] "Winner Adam Award 2008". *The New Zealand Portrait Gallery*. Wellington, NZ http://www.portraitgallery.nzl.org/gallerypages/bg.html

retrospective portrait.[426]

The researcher asked if McKinnon regarded paintings that depict individuals long deceased or where reference material is another portrait image or photograph, as a clearly different practice from what she would expect to be submitted to *The Adam Prize*, or was this more the sort of work of which she was accepting? She responded:

> In fact while we could receive more of these "second-hand" images, we do find that there is a power emanating from portraits done from the life, and what happens is that during the first cull process, most second-hand imaged portraits are not accepted as being of the required standard…[However] we do think that it is a pity to make the field too narrow and indeed think that the wider criteria for *The Adam Award* does allow for a great variety'. [427]

This suggests that the majority of artists, even when the option is given, generally choose to rely on observations made before the sitter, or at least that those selected for exhibition are known or perceived to have been painted in this way.

The researcher asked if she thought there was a perception by many galleries of what audiences perceived a portrait prize to be, and that that is a sitter before an artist aiming to capture some kind of 'likeness'. Was this a perception that *The Adam* seeks to address and broaden?' She replied:

> Yes, there is often a stereotypical view of what portraiture should be as opposed to what it might be. *The Adam* does have a strict limitation though, in that it is for painted portraiture… portrait prizes can invite some brilliant experimentation and *The Adam Award* throws up portraits which are far from conservative.[428]

While not discarding other possibilities, McKinnon infers painting from the sitter is not prohibitive of innovation and experimentation within the form:

> I am finding that during my involvement with *The Adam Award* I have been able to shape it towards what my ideal would be: an open ended

[426] Avenal McKinnon, e-mail correspondence to researcher, July 5, 2010.
[427] Ibid.,
[428] Ibid.,

> award available to any age group or gender, with any person as subject (not necessarily the rich and famous). The aim is to uncover who is painting the most powerful and compelling portraits at this point in time.[429]

McKinnon does not feel encumbered by the criteria of what has become firmly established as New Zealand's national portrait prize and that such awards can be wholly relevant to contemporary painting practice.

Clearly the comments of both Mulholland and McKinnon indicate their belief that portrait prizes and awards need not be seen as isolated from or irrelevant to broader contemporary art practices. Personal choice, not stipulation, of personal interaction and the development of some kind of relationship with the subject of the portrait through working directly from life, if only partially, therefore remains a common, though not exclusive, working method.

2:2 (ii) The arguments for and against keeping the 'Working from Life' clause.

It is pertinent to consider what would be the consequence of an artist submitting a portrait for a portrait prize that had only been worked from second-hand imagery – the artist having never met the 'sitter' of the portrait in person – but had nonetheless signed the official statement falsely declaring adherence to the stipulation that it had been painted from life. What is often referred to as 'The John Bloomfield Scandal' is a case in point.

Image subject to copyright:
to view image please use Internet link:
http://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/collection/works/186.1976/

Image 43
John Bloomfield (b. 1950).
Tim Burstall (1975).

[429] Ibid.,

John Bloomfield became the youngest recipient of the then $3000 first prize for his portrait entry into The Archibald Prize in 1975.[430] (See Image 43).

> Bloomfield painted a portrait of a man he had briefly seen once but never met. He admired his unwitting subject, the film director Tim Burstall, from a distance… The picture he painted in a photo-realist style was almost two meters square. Bloomfield registered his portrait at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, signing the statutory declaration confirming that the portrait did not breach any of the conditions of entry for *the Archibald prize*, including the stipulation that the portrait should be 'painted from life'… Tim Burstall did not even know the portrait had been painted… Bloomfield claimed to have carefully considered the clause that the work should be 'painted from life', which he took to mean 'that the subject should be a real person and not someone of the imagination…The copied image was found to have come from a full-page photograph of Burstall published in *Cleo* magazine… in the light of legal advice received from Queen's Council, the entry did not comply with the terms of the will or the conditions of the prize…The trustees then rejudged the entries minus the Bloomfield portrait and awarded the prize to Kevin Conner for his portrait of his father-in-law, Sir Frank Kitto… John Bloomfield never saw the *Archibald* purse of $3170, which would have approached a year's income for him. Tim Burstall said…'If the judges were not able to tell whether an artist's work was painted from life or not, they were not judging it as a work of art'.[431]

Burstall suggests here that the specific methodology should not be the considered issue in deciding whether a painting is valid as art or not. He implies that his work was recognised as a good portrait, as art, and therefore awarded the prize regardless of the methodology. In withdrawing the prize, in adherence to the letter of the 'working from life' criteria, he suggests that the judges, presumably wrongfully in his opinion, identify the 'life' pre-requisite as equating with a desired type of portrait defined only then as 'art.'

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[430] Peter Ross, *Let's Face It: The History of The Archibald Prize* (Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia, revised edition, 2009), 71.

[431] Ibid., 71.

The Australian newspaper agreed with the subject of the painting, Tim Burstall, when he stated:

> that the trustees should now review the 'painted from life' rule, declaring 'If painting a portrait from a photograph instead of from life does not detract from any artistic merit of the work, why have the rule in the first place?'[432]

As can be seen from the previously stated later and present-day criteria, the trustees did indeed 'review the painted from life rule', deciding if anything to enshrine and embrace it even more wholeheartedly.

While some artists felt, since the painting had been judged the winner, the prize should still go to Bloomfield, others, such as Clifton Pugh, identified the purpose for keeping the 'working from life' stipulation when he stated, 'I'm not just interested in reproducing an outside likeness, I'm also interested in the character of the person I'm painting.'[433] Similarly the critic Maggie Gilchrist of the *National Times* wrote that she had 'some doubts about portraitists relying entirely on photographs… Being artifacts themselves, photos are already removed from the flesh-and-blood world of real contact between people of certain psychological insights.'[434] Meanwhile Eric Smith – 'perennial *Archibald* entrant'[435] and winner of the 1970 Archibald Prize – expressed sympathy for Bloomfield stating, 'These days many good portraits are painted from photographs. It is a modern trend in painting and I think the rules should keep up with the trends.'[436]

Peter Ross states 'The 'working from life' clause in the rules of The Archibald is now rarely invoked and probably honoured more in the breach than in the observance. Painters routinely use photographs; if not exclusively, then as an aide-memoire.' He then conversely acknowledges the value of human interaction by stating, 'However, it must be recognised that most artists who

[432] Ibid., 72.
[433] Ibid., 72.
[434] Ibid., 72.
[435] Ibid., 72.
[436] Ibid., 72.

use photographs know their subjects personally, and they make their own photographic studies rather than relying, as Bloomfield did, entirely on an image from a magazine.'[437] This tends to be the differentiation that most artists and curators adopt about the practice of referencing photography.

Even before The Bloomfield Scandal, some artists and critics had voiced their concern that, in their opinion, The Archibald Prize was too limiting and out of step with contemporary attitudes towards art.[438] As art critic for *The Sydney Morning Herald* in the early 1970s, painter James Gleeson argued that 'the categories of portraiture, genre, history and landscape painting were outmoded… old divisions are meaningless in the fluid conditions of the 20th century'. The then current trend towards photorealism, of which Bloomfield's portrait of Burstall is an example and to which Gleeson supposedly alludes, plays on the somewhat impersonal, distancing and disinterested effect that photography can have on and for its subject. American photorealist artist Richard Estes says:

> I think that for figures it would be better not to use photographs. There's far more information if you have the person sitting there. You really don't know what a person looks like from a photograph.[439]

Estes is an artist perhaps most categorically identified as 'photorealist' but irrefutably notes the drawback of the technique where the purpose is to convey human qualities such as warmth, personality and intimacy.

While The Archibald is the world's oldest established portrait prize (1921) and The John Player (now BP) and The Doug Moran Portrait awards were established in the late twentieth century, over fifty per cent of the group surveyed were established in the twenty-first century, all within the last seven

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[437] Ibid., 72.
[438] Craig Dunning. "Surrealist James Gleeson dies aged 92", *The Daily Telegraph*, October 20, 2008. http://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/entertainment/whats-on/surrealist-james-gleeson-dies/story-e6frexmi-1111117806545
[439] John Arthur and Richard Estes, "A Conversation*", Museum of Fine Arts, Boston and the New York Graphic Society, 1978.*
www.artnet.com/usernet/awc/awc_historyview_details.asp?aid=139829&awc_id=1508&info_type_id=7

years, and only two, as has been discussed, have chosen to dispense with the 'working from life' clause altogether. However, if one is dismissive of the clause as being antiquated or an irrelevant remnant of outmoded thinking, then what is to be made of the inclusion of this clause from the perspective of the curators and founders of these very recently established portrait awards and portrait collections?

The sense of a sharing of time and space with someone otherwise distant, and usually of public note, through the viewing of a portrait leant weight and authenticity through the knowledge that the artist has met with the sitter, is a perceived, long established phenomenon of such portraiture, witnessed and celebrated through the collections of national portrait galleries. The oldest existing established of these, the National Portrait, London, which eventuated in 1856, came about at the instigation of the influential philosopher and historian, Thomas Carlyle.[440] Having heard a speech by Prince Albert 'suggesting a portrait gallery to commemorate scientists and technologists whose innovations brought about the modern age,'[441] Carlyle proposed a 'Pantheon, or home of all the National Divinities, for these our historical Heroes are.'[442]

> The new gallery was to be devoted to portraits of "eminent persons in British history"… Prince Albert's original proposal was an attempt to

[440] Portrait galleries could be said to go back even to antiquity, some with the intention of more public viewing. Sheila Dillon says, for instance, 'The modest Greek portrait galleries found in two Pompeian houses, suggest the non-aristocratic viewing'-(*Ancient Greek Portrait Sculpture*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006, page 55.) In Renaissance times, this antique precedent of displaying portraits in a group setting was mirrored again. Christiane L. Joost-Gaugier, (*Poggio and Visual Tradition*. Artibus et Historiae. Vol.6.No.12.1985, page 58.) notes that Poggio Bracciollini, the Italian Renaissance humanist, believed, 'images of the men who had excelled in the pursuit of glory and wisdom, if placed before the eyes, would help ennoble and stir up the soul.' The Renaissance humanist, historian and biographer Paolo Giovio, expressly set out to house a collection of 484 portraits, commissioned by him from various artists, which, alongside his own written biographies of the sitters, were displayed primarily for the edification of the public. Giovio prefers that portraits are not idealized and that the artist paints them from life. (T.C. Price Zimmermann, *Paolo Giovio: The Historian and the Crisis of Sixteenth-Century Italy*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995, pages160-165.)

[441] Woodall, *Portraiture*, 221.

[442] Thomas Carlyle. *Lectures on heroes. Lecture 1. The Hero as divinity. Odin. Paganism. Scandinavian Mythology.* May 5th, 1840. http://www.gutenberg.org/files/1091/1091-h/1091-h.htm.

> humanise modernity: to see the new machine age in terms of people… A portrait gallery of great technologists would paradoxically celebrate and counteract this process… the makers of modern production would become recognisable as people; a modernity with a human face.[443]

In this sense, the portrait gallery valued images that both reflected, celebrated and sustained human touch, in defense of the onslaught of the machine. The portrait was seen as a means of sharing direct human connection through the vision of artists who spent time with their sitters.

The National Gallery's own 'criteria [stated] that the Gallery was to be about history, not about art, and about the status of the sitter, rather than the quality or character of a particular image considered as a work of art.'[444] Perhaps even more pointed is the Trustees original ruling that 'No portrait of any person still living, or deceased less that 10 years, shall be admitted by purchase, donation, or bequest, except only in the case of the reigning Sovereign, and of his or her Consort'. This meant the researching, authenticating and purchasing of older paintings–presumably that had been painted from life– since the Trustees ruling would mean that any contemporary works at the time would have to rely on second hand images, which was not desirable.

The National Portrait Gallery website states that the rule pertaining to only having portraits of those that had been deceased for at least ten years, was changed in 1969 'in order to encourage a policy of admitting living sitters.'[445] Therefore the 'working from life' clause maintained in the criteria of present-day portrait competitions, while often assumed to be following a long established tradition encouraging a certain type of portrait, was only closely stipulated after 1969. This followed the National Portrait Gallery's establishment of it's own independent premises for photographic portraits with an inaugural, and highly successful, show by Cecil Beaton in the previous

[443] Woodall, *Portraiture*, 221.
[444] "Gallery History", *The National Portrait Gallery*, London. http://www.npg.org.uk/about/history.php
[445] Ibid.,

year. It is noted in the Gallery's history page that this was a very conscious move by its then director, Roy Strong (later Sir), who steered the Gallery through the innovative years of 1967 to 1973.

> Although already over a hundred years old, photography had made little progress by the 1960s in making a name for itself as an art form. So far, photographic exhibitions in Britain were primarily for documentation rather than artistic merit…Roy Strong wished to push forward with photography as a modern, dynamic medium that he felt needed to be represented for its significance to portraiture. For the first photographic exhibition at the Gallery, Strong enlisted…a personal friend of his, Cecil Beaton…The inclusion of Beaton's Royal portraits was likely key to driving the exhibition into reality, as it still appealed to the then majority of the Gallery's trustees and visitors alike.[446]

The very success of the Beaton exhibition was also attributed to his featured photographic portraits of popular living celebrities, such as Twiggy and Mick Jagger. This was a response to 'the rise of television, pop music and celebrity culture in the 1960s [that] meant there were considerably more personalities available that were considered iconic in British history, and the rules of acquisitions soon changed to reflect this. Following the success of the Beaton exhibition, it was apparent that living sitters drew in the crowds…this paved the way for living sitters to be accepted into the Gallery's permanent collection.'[447]

Nevertheless, in its original incarnation of 1856, to a public 'in an increasingly complex and impersonal society… [portraiture offered] the prospect of a direct and intimate relationship between one individual and another. It links us to the value of humanity itself while affirming the irreducible complexity of individuality.'[448] In gathering a collection of portraits together under such

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[446]National Portrait Gallery, London. *Digital 60s.* http://www.npg.org.uk/research/archive/archive-journeys/digital-60s-digitising-a-decade-of-defining-history-at-the-national-portrait-gallery/photography.php?searched=photography+portraits&advsearch=allwords&highlight=ajaxSearch_highlight+ajaxSearch_highlight1+ajaxSearch_highlight2

[447] Ibid.,

[448] Woodall, *Portraiture,* 226.

criteria Carlyle believed that 'the modern citizen of an alienated and mechanical society would be revitalized by contact with images of those whose lives had contributed to the development of national culture…Carlyle visualises a portrait gallery as a place in which a kind of innocence is restored and modernity put to one side.'[449]

Throughout the twentieth century Australia had garnered a collection of what could be termed 'National Portraits', but it was not until 2008 that the collection received its purpose built space as The National Portrait Gallery of Australia, in Canberra, ACT. The main visionaries for this enterprise were the Melbourne-born philanthropists, Gordon and Marilyn Darling, who were 'inspired by visits to the portrait galleries in Washington DC and London.' [450] The guidelines for what determines acceptance into the National portrait collection adhered to Britain and America's precedent. Their companion book states:

> First, its subject should be significant in his or her field of endeavor, or a known and named person whose life sets him or her apart as an individual of long-term public interest. Second, its subject must be Australian, either by birth or by association [451]

These leading criteria therefore make no reference to the quality or particular value of the portrait as a work of art per se.

Michael Desmond, Senior Curator of Australia's National Portrait Gallery, granted the researcher an interview at the Gallery, where he spoke about the Gallery's ongoing criteria for exhibiting works. At the time, the show in the changing exhibition space was *Present Tense: An imagined Grammar of Portraiture in the digital age*. In relation to what the Portrait Gallery enshrines as its permanent national collection, such work would find no home because of the Gallery's criteria and, as Desmond added, such works would need to be ideally painted from life.

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[449] Ibid., 227.
[450] Sarah Engeldow and Andrew Sayers, *The Companion: The National Portrait Gallery and its Collection* (Canberra, Australia: National Portrait Gallery, 2008), 2.
[451] Ibid.,

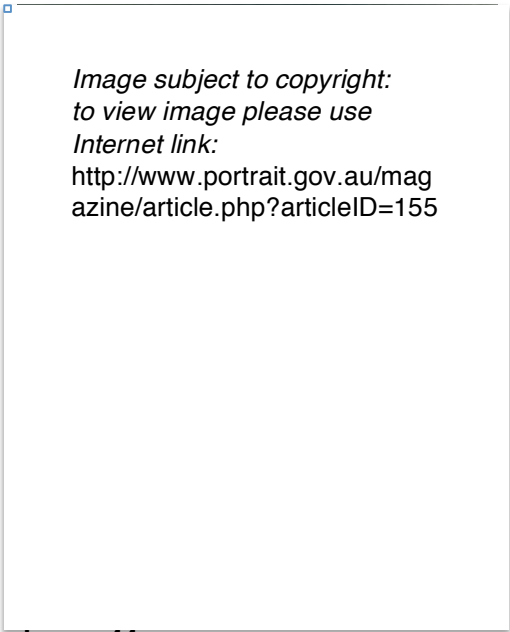


Image 44
John Webber (c.1752–1793).
Captain James Cook (1782).

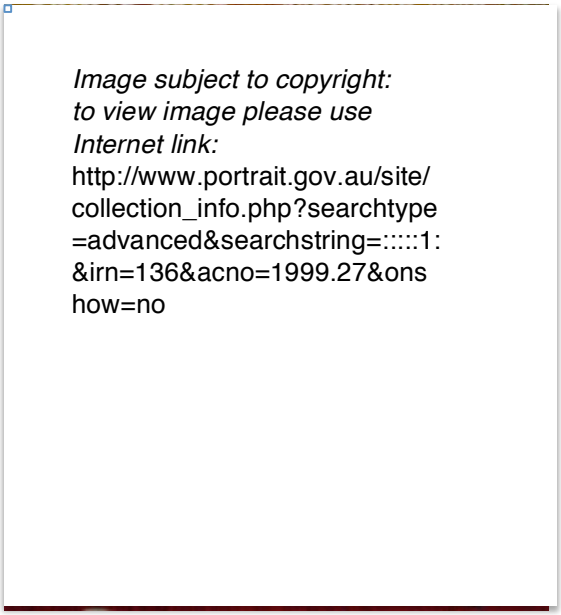


Image 45
Gordon Bennett (b. 1955).
Eddie Mabo (1996).

The researcher indicated the Gallery's portrait of *Captain James Cook*, 1782, (see Image 44), by John Webber, painted after Cook's death, and also the portrait of *Eddie Mabo*, 1996, (see Image 45), by Gordon Bennett, also made after the subject's death and without the artist having ever met the subject. Bennett himself said that when he thought of Eddie Mabo he 'could not think of him as a real person… I only knew the Eddie Mabo of the "mainstream" news media, a very two-dimensional "copy" of the man himself".[452] In relation to these two works not being painted from life, Desmond said:

> There are hardly any exceptions to that rule. That [*Eddie Mabo* portrait] is one of them. The portrait of Captain Cook is posthumous, but the artist knew Cook, was with him for several years on the boat and he did work from sketches he made…in that sense the lineage is direct… For our permanent collection the 'working from life' clause is an important consideration, for a temporary display it is not…The permanent collection is specific portraits whereas this [*The Present Tense* exhibition] is about portraiture.[453]

The Gallery thus adheres to its mandate to prioritize a collection of images of notable Australians painted from life rather than of particularly notable

[452]Michael Desmond, transcript of recorded interview with researcher, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra. July, 2010.
[453] Ibid.,

paintings of Australians, whether from life or not. Though a quality portrait is desirable, the relationship that enables at least some direct sittings of sitter with artist is seen as essential in the first instance. Implicit in the act of painting from life is the sense of authenticity of the image, the artist as witness to the sitter through time spent in their physical presence.

Canada has a portrait gallery that was established in 2001 in Ottawa, Ontario[454] but Canada had no national portrait prize. However Julian Brown, born and having grown up in Sydney, Australia, was well aware of The Archibald prize and its cultural significance. Having moved to Canada for career purposes, he and his wife, Kaaren, decided that Canada would benefit from a regular portrait prize similar to The Archibald in Australia and The BP in London. They themselves established The Kingston Prize as a biennial event in 2005. The event has grown, with a major exhibition at the Royal Ontario Museum in 2011, and a long running outdoor exhibition of portraits on the streets of Ottawa in 2012. However, Brown indicates, 'Canada has no other national prizes in the visual arts that are focused on a particular genre (portraits in our case).'[455]

Seeking to address what they saw as a significant gap in the Canadian cultural landscape, Julian and Kaaren Brown persevere to maintain the profile of the portrait prize as a significant biennial event. The researcher asked Brown his reasons for deciding to stipulate the 'working from life' clause in their application rules:

> We modeled The Kingston Prize rules closely on The Archibald rules…The Archibald rules for 1998…specify that a portrait is regarded as "a picture of a person painted from life." The 2009 rules make this explicit in Rule 3: "…must be painted from life."… The Archibald had nearly eighty years of experience, and we respected their judgment. We wanted to avoid portraits of long-dead politicians, inaccessible rock stars and film stars, and portraits based solely on photographs of people of

[454] The Portrait Gallery of Canada. http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/portraits/
[455] Julian Brown, e-mail message to the researcher, July 5, 2010.

whom the artist has no knowledge.[456]

He explains that they settled on the requirement that 'artist and subject meet "for the purpose of making the portrait."… this rule is enforceable by requiring that the subject sign a statement on the entry form that the meeting took place,'[457] further adding:

> We do not require that the artist do the painting or drawing in the presence of the subject. This would be far too restrictive, and no artist would agree to it… We do not exclude the use of photographs taken by the artist to be used as reference material. This is common practice, and must be almost universal with the advent of digital cameras with instantaneous display. [458]

In consideration of modern digital technologies such as *Skype* and other such readily available web-based video-conferencing techniques, the researcher further asked Brown would he revisit the rules to be able to embrace such works. He replied:

> We alter our rules and procedures according to experience, so have this "chance" every two years. We "rethink" *The Kingston Prize* all the time…[but] we feel that painting "from life" (as we specify it) is an essential part of having a lively and interesting portrait competition. [459]

This suggests that the working from life method is not maintained in association with perceived academic painting traditions nor from the implacability of the competition founders, but rather from a carefully considered analysis of its contribution to the making of vital, contemporary portraits. This is further borne out by Brown in his response to the example of Australia's National Portrait Gallery accepting the portrait by Gordon Bennett of Eddie Mabo, and other artists that produce work totally from mediated sources. The researcher asked him if he regarded them as a clearly different practice from what he would expect to be submitted to The Kingston Prize, to which he replied:

> Portraits such as… Mabo ones… are clearly portraits, but your

[456] Ibid.,
[457] Ibid.,
[458] Ibid.,
[459] Ibid.,

> description of them as “a clearly different practice” is well stated… The Mabo work is quite different from the 1975 Tim Burstall portrait, which won and then quite rightly lost *The Archibald.*
> …We do require that the subject and artist meet, but that does not make the portrait “traditional.”… a portrait made by an artist who has not met the subject must be based upon either (a) photographs -usually press photos in the case of public figures. (b) written stories (c) oral accounts by other people who have met the subject (d) videos from sources such as Facebook (e) rumour. We are not interested in any of these second hand accounts… we want the subject to meet the artist and come to know a bit about the person who is making the portrait. This is particularly true for distinguished subjects. A well-known person whose portrait appears in The Kingston Prize will usually come to see the show. We want that, and we want and need their support.[460]

Here Brown notes the benefit of the artist working directly from a ‘newsworthy’ sitter; the relationship between artist and sitter may garner further personal involvement in the artist’s exhibition having a flow-on to publicity for the gallery and for the prize itself. This engages the portrait with a wider audience as it is reported through the media. In the researcher’s portrait of Lindy Chamberlain-Creighton, (see chapter three), this was indeed the case. There were several newspaper articles, including one full-front page colour feature, with two six o’clock television evening news accounts of the portrait, sitter and artist, and an attendance at the final exhibition of the portrait by Lindy herself, which in turn attracted more publicity reportage.

With no apology for including some works that some might see as traditional academic portraiture, a survey of finalist works reveal that Brown is honouring the criteria that he and his wife set in founding what is still the only ‘national competition with a cash prize, dealing with a specified genre (portraiture)’ in Canada. [461] He states:

> We try to write the rules so as not to favour either conservative (traditional) portraits or contemporary approaches. The preamble to the

[460] Ibid.,
[461] Ibid.,

rules states “There is no limitation of style, and contemporary and experimental styles are welcome.”[462]

Supports Brown’s claims for the efficacy of the rules is the example of Andrew Valko’s acrylic painting, *Personal Surveillance,* which was the winner of the 2009 Kingston Prize (see Image 46). By virtue of its subject matter, it registers as contemporary. The painting reflects on the way digital media records and represents us to others and ourselves instantaneously. Valko has appropriately used a photo-realist technique to render an image of a young man turning a video camera on himself, apparently in a darkened room. [463] *Personal Surveillance* therefore met The Kingston Prize requirements of the ‘working from life’ clause, but even so explored current themes of alienation and loss of ‘human touch’ with which technology is frequently associated. While undoubtedly the artist would have an intimate understanding of the subject of the portrait, his own son, the image explores the estrangement that technological devices can engender. The term *surveillance* infers detached inspection possibly by a hidden non-human eye, as opposed to affectionate informal familial interaction. Brown writes:

Image subject to copyright:
to view image please use
Internet link:
http://www.andrewvalko.com/paintings/?piece=200&s=0

Image 46
Andrew Valko (b. 1957).
Personal Surveillance, (2009).

> Is there anything more contemporary, more post-modern and self-referential, more adventurous in exploring the life of a teenager in the twenty-first century? That painting could not have been made even a few years ago… So what are the new ideas in portraiture that need

[462] ibid.,
[463] “Winnipeg Artist Wins Prize for Portraiture”, *CBC News:Arts & Entertainment*, Friday, October 9, 2009. http://www.cbc.ca/news/arts/artdesign/story/2009/10/09/kingston-prize.html

> expression? Are they really just new media that are "non-plastic" in nature? I think many of our requirements would apply just as well.[464]

The contemporaneous nature of the work is totally appropriate to the concept of the portrait that Valko has chosen to paint. This still does not negate the works examination of the relationship between the artist and sitter.

Joanna Woodall also recognises the benefit of maintaining the 'working from life' clause in giving spectators the ability to judge for themselves how well the artist has 'captured' the sitter, especially if the sitter is known to them, usually through the media. This is good promotion for the artist, heightening their profile and may provide the artist with a new client. She writes:

> Portrait prizes generally rely on a very traditional conception of what a portrait is – in part because of their function to bring portrait painters to the attention of potential patrons.[465]

She also agreed with the researcher's suggestion that such shows are one of the very few direct ways for contemporary artists to have work exhibited at these prestigious state or national establishments – as opposed to commercial galleries – despite the rules appearing to be a constriction. Woodall states,

> In principle, I don't think conventions and criteria necessarily lead to conservatism – creativity often takes place in response to boundaries and rules. But the expectations of the judges, the audiences, the kinds of artists who enter these things, and the purpose of the shows – to maintain the traditional activity of portrayal – all encourage conservatism.[466]

This may seem to conflict with Brown's opinion that such prizes are not the bastion of conservative portraiture, however Brown does concur with Woodall that a significant number of the general public enjoy and expect what might be called 'conservative' work. This notwithstanding, he sees the purpose and value of such prizes as being to offer a balance that is capable of addressing broader ideas, interests and responses in and through portraiture. He states:

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[464] Julian Brown, e-mail message to researcher, July 5, 2010.
[465] Joanna Woodall, e-mail message to researcher, July 14, 2010.
[466] Ibid.,

> If Canadian artists presently use mainly traditional styles in their work, who are we to try to influence them? The market for portraiture has a large effect on what artists do, and reflects largely the expectations of the pubic. [467]

Brown is referring to the collaborative nature of portrait painting between artist and sitter, particularly in the case of contracted commissions and submissions to prizes where monetary reward signifies 'success'.

Avenal McKinnon, noting the popularity of portrait shows, suggests that portraiture engages with an audience if there is some semblance of felt persona emanating from the image. She writes:

> Generally it seems that portraiture is popular because it relates directly to the human side of art and instantly has a connection with the audience through this.[468]

Whereas Lucian Freud expresses doubt that a portrait can catch the character of someone at all, even less so something that we might call 'spirit', or whether that is even the point of the exercise of painting a portrait of someone. He says:

> Many people are inclined to look at portraits not for the art in them but to see how they resemble people. This seems to me a profound misunderstanding… If you think of Rembrandt, the people who sat for him were all bankers and merchants and probably really unremarkable people, but we'd have to believe they were all absolutely filled with spiritual grandeur. I don't think they were. Rembrandt may have been.[469]

This 'profound misunderstanding' perhaps springs from the propensity of photography to accentuate the initial surface appearance of things and it is this kind of image with which we become most familiar and most prepared to believe in as an authentic witness to a person's presence, as previously discussed in Roland Barthes understanding of the 'trace' of the person in a photograph convincing of its authenticity. Having been shown a photograph of

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[467] Julian Brown, e-mail message to researcher, July 5, 2010.
[468] Avenal McKinnon, e-mail message to researcher, July 7, 2010.
[469] Bruce Bernard and David Dawson. *Freud at Work: Lucian Freud in Conversation with Sebastian Smee (* London, UK: Jonathan Cape, 2006), 32-33.

himself, for instance, Barthes notes that he had no recollection of it being taken, 'yet, *because it was a photograph* I could not deny that I had been *there (*even if I did not know *where*).' [470] This is not the strength or purpose of painting, which is a much more subjective amalgamation of considered and interpreted looks by the artist. In relation to Freud's observation, Avenal McKinnon states:

> The ideal, of course, is to have both a great likeness and a marvelous work of art.[471]

Communicating directly with the researcher, in relation to this same point, Tony Bond, Art Gallery of NSW assistant director and head of international art, says,

> If you're Velasquez you're required to deliver a pretty solid representation of King Philip so you go to town on the bottom of the dress, and that's where you do your real painting... But my inclination would be to agree with Freud, that in the end any painting is primarily about that – it's about paint…I think that tradition of the painting being about a trace of the artist as much as it is a trace of the sitter, is true.[472]

Bond here echoes the contemporary artist Luc Tuymans, who states that in the painting '*Las Meninas*, Velasquez got a kick out of painting the clothes instead of the infantas' faces, as if the faces had been added later.'[473]

Also with regard to Freud's observation, Woodall writes:

> Yes, this is a good point. Again the discourse of portraiture gets entangled here with the traditional discourse around photography as a kind of 'trace' of the subject (equally open to question). The discourse of portraiture doesn't allow for the operation of the artist's invention because this would undermine portraiture's claim to truth.[474]

Freud, however, would reconcile the problem of artistic invention by maintaining to have only painted what he saw but nonetheless being selective in what he chose to see.

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[470] Barthes. *Camera Lucida*, 85.
[471] Avenal McKinnon, e-mail message to researcher, July 5, 2010.
[472] Tony Bond, transcript of interview with researcher, June 17, 2010.
[473] Juan Vicente Aliaga, "Interview: Juan Vicente Aliaga in Conversation with Luc Tuymans", in *Luc Tuymans,* Ulrich Loock, Juan Vicente Aliaga and Nancy Spector *(*London & New York: Phaidon, 2003 reprinted 2009),16.
[474] Joanna Woodall, e-mail message to researcher, July 14, 2010.

Sarah Howgate, author and contemporary curator at London's National Portrait Gallery, organizes, hangs and advises the panel of judges of what is 'largely regarded as the world's most prestigious portrait competition'[475], the annual BP Prize for Portraiture. With regard to selecting the portraits, she says:

> What's really important is that the portrait has to speak to you–you have to sort of feel that you're coming face to face with a person and that's a really important criterion for the exhibition.[476]

Clearly, while avoiding the vagaries that words such as 'spirit' and 'soul' evoke, Howgate is nonetheless acknowledging that something encapsulating of a real-life connection is desirous from a portrait and this would seem to be far more difficult if the source is second-generation – not itself 'alive' as such.

One wonders if prerequisites that suggest favouring 'conventional' portrait submissions are linked to financial considerations – that by keeping to a fairly well tried and tested formula the gallery ensures a popular yearly 'blockbuster' that help to support more 'difficult' shows. McKinnon's refutes this entirely:

> We would be horrified to think that financial considerations ruled the submissions in any way. The truth is that while portraiture is deemed to be conventional it can at the same time be challenging and push at boundaries in the way art of any kind does.[477]

Such prizes as Sydney's Archibald do however generate significant income for the gallery through submission charges to the artists, sponsorship advertising and entrance fees. Woodall maintains that:

> In my experience (at London's National Portrait Gallery), *The BP Portrait Award* exhibition is free, so the support for more difficult shows is not financial.[478]

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[475] "Wim Heldens Wins the BP Portrait Award", *Channel 4 News*, June 14, 2011. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B9qTYPfx7JU

[476] Sarah Howgate, "Judging the BP Portrait Award 2012: Sarah Howgate", *National Portrait Gallery*, London, 2012. Video. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7ck30jbaHbw

[477] Avenal McKinnon, e-mail message to researcher, July 5, 2010.

[478] Joanna Woodall, e-mail message to researcher, July 14, 2010.

Nevertheless, Australia's Archibald 2012 show attracted 96,000 paying viewers to Sydney, going on to tour the country's regional galleries as a fee-charging exhibition, including *Torchlight Portraiture Tour* for children, generating further revenue from the paintings.[479]

Brown suggests that there would seem to be some financial benefit in promoters stirring the pot of conservatism in order to draw in a wider audience to witness any controversy for themselves. While he notes 'Nearly always high realism is beautifully done, and is easily understood by the public*',* he does not consider the accepted approach of working from life mutually conflicting with innovative portraiture.

> The more outrageous portraits are the ones driving the controversy. On the other hand, artists who do portraits on commission have to respond to the demands of the buying public, and this tends to maintain interest in traditional portraits… Traditional portraits need not be dull, of course, and the best way to avoid dullness, is to work "from life" and not just from photographs.[480]

Perhaps, the author ventured, the more conventional show of portraiture, painted from life, might expose and introduce the gallery environs and encourage exploration of perhaps more challenging exhibitions? Woodall responded:

> This is a positive way of looking at it. But I have my doubts about whether the audiences will go on to engage with contemporary art more broadly if the portrait awards themselves aren't self-conscious and critical about their own assumptions and practices… museums also have a responsibility to educate. [481]

Perhaps the public feels that if they know the artist has met the sitter in person, to paint from life, then by proxy, they, the public, feel they have met with the person too. This gives them a literal brush with fame, which would otherwise diminish the experience. Addressing this consideration, Brown wrote:

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[479] Elizabeth Fortescue.*The Daily Telegraph,* Sydney, Australia, July 17, 2012. 42.
[480] Julian Brown, e-mail message to researcher, July 5, 2010.
[481] Ibid.

> This feeling of coming closer to the sitter is probably very real to the average viewer, particularly for very public subjects like politicians and rock stars, who live behind security barriers at all times… The success of the prizes in Sydney, London and Washington suggest that the "general public" are fascinated by portraits, regardless of details of the rules that seem to fascinate curators and critics… We feel that painting "from life" (as we specify it) is an essential part of having a lively and interesting portrait competition.[482]

As with Howgate, Brown encircles the elusive but essential qualities of sensing the specific lived person that a painting done from life hopes to capture, resonating with a viewing audience as authentic. However, to the suggestion that the direct relationship of artist and sitter is essential to an authentic representation of the sitter, even if it only comes down to that of the one-on-one painting sessions for purposes of a portrait, Tony Bond is a little more skeptical, saying:

> There is this idea – which is problematic – the idea that you can, sort of, see inside a person and that you could ever actually ever represent that… but, I do think we do expect to learn something, not about the essence of a person – that's ridiculous – I mean, who knows what that is? But we do expect to learn something more about the person than what they look like… wax-works don't do it, actually…You *can* do it in a photograph or a painting, but you're unlikely to be able to do it if you haven't met the person.[483]

The art critic, columnist and author, Martin Gayford, states that 'a commonplace about portraiture is that the artist sees beyond the external appearance of the sitter, sees into their mind and–if there is such a thing–their soul.'[484] Freud is typically less ambiguous in his statement:

> I react to what is there. I don't make anything up… What I choose to select of all these qualities could be considered an exaggeration, but it

[482] Julian Brown, e-mail message to researcher, July 5, 2010.
[483] Tony Bond, transcript of interview with researcher, recorded June 17, 2010.
[484] Martin Gayford, *Man with a Blue Scarf. On Sitting for a Portrait by Lucian Freud (*London, UK: Thames & Hudson, 2010), 116.

isn't. It's my selection of qualities that I see.[485]

Freud's assertions align with Tony Bond's sentiments.

This survey of portrait prizes entry criteria and portrait gallery mandates, demonstrates that their curators and founders facilitate a forum to display current ideas and concerns in portraiture, encourage public participation where able, but leave final assessment of any awards to those afforded the role. Brown writes:

> Our job is organisational only… Our only influence at the artistic level is to set the rules of the competition, and to select the jury. In writing the rules, we do not specify the style of the artwork, or the type of subject favoured. We do not select the entries, nor the style of the entries.[486]

In the vast majority of these prizes and permanent portrait collections, the value of the 'working from life' clause is that it works as a common-ground, a linchpin, a reference point back to which the extrapolated considerations and observations of the artist might be traced. This chapter has thus established the reasoning for the maintenance of the working-from-life clause, as in the majority of portrait prize mandates, and related the propensity of the paint medium to satisfy the experience of time spent before the sitter for the purpose of the portrait.

[485] Sarah Howgate. Michael Auping and John Richardson, *Lucian Freud: Portraits*. (Melbourne and London: Hardie Grant Books, 2012), 210.
[486] Julian Brown, e-mail message to researcher, July 5, 2010.

Chapter Three: The Value of Presence

Sarah Saunders, curator of The Scottish National Portrait Gallery, says:

> To me a portrait is a creative collaboration between an artist and a sitter, and it's unique in that sense as an artform. That's what makes it really different from other artforms.[487]

The artist/sitter relationship is essential to the expression and experience of human touch defined as looking and talking directly with one another. Painting practice is otherwise generally singular, solitary and autocratic. The first half of this chapter then argues the value of the 'working from life' clause from the artist and sitter's perspective, what it is that the parties gain from the enterprise, how the process takes place and how relationships develop.

The second half of this chapter chronicles and analyses the researcher's own practice-led research, informed by this written research. It indicates the value of the human touch to portraits made from establishing a relationship with the sitter and working directly with and from them towards the exhibited work. Contrastingly, the experience of working concurrently from either mediated sources or from the researcher as sitter (self-portraiture), is analysed so that, by virtue of its absence, by comparison, the value of intimacy derived from the physical presence of another sitter, from painting them directly over a period of time, is better understood and defined.

3:1 The practice and value of 'working from life' to the current practice of portrait painting?

From primary sources – direct interviews and personal communications

[487] Sarah Saunders. "What is a portrait?" *Scottish National Portrait Gallery*, Video. http://www.nationalgalleries.org/visit/298-introduction

with professional portrait painters – the process and value of working directly from the sitter is investigated. These are further supported by reference to the experiences of selected contemporary portrait painters.

3:1(i) Why and how do some painters work directly from the sitter?

As well as investigating the working-from-life preference of high profile, celebrated painters, such as Lucian Freud, David Hockney, Jonathan Yeo and Ben Quilty, this section also cites less-widely documented professional contemporary painters who maintain 'working from life' as their principal approach for painting portraiture. The British painters consulted by the researcher are Tom Wood[488], John Sprakes[489] and Tony Noble.[490] Australian painters are Mike Worral[491], Kasey Sealy[492], Wendy Bills[493], Peter Smeeth[494]

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[488] Tom Wood, born 1955, resides and works in West Yorkshire, UK. He has been a visiting lecturer at numerous universities in the UK and USA, and in 1993 became Visiting Professor of Fine Art at the University of Leeds. Amongst his many prestigious awards and commissions are: Prizewinner, 1985, the John Player Portrait Award (now the B.P. Portrait Prize), from the National Portrait Gallery, London; 1987, Public Arts Commission for the portrait of HRH Prince Charles; 1989, Honorary Fellowship Sheffield Hallam University. Apart from the portrait of Prince Charles, Tom has also produced portraits for the National Portrait Gallery, London, of the boxer Frank Bruno, Professor Lord Winston and author/playwright/actor Alan Bennett.

[489]John Sprakes lives and paints in Nottinghamshire, UK. He is a Council Member of The Royal Institute of Oil Painters (ROI); Member of The Royal Society of British Artists (RBA); Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts (FRSA); Member of The Manchester Academy (MAFA). He has been represented by Blackheath Gallery and The Mall Gallery, London, and exhibited extensively throughout the UK including the Royal Academy of Arts Summer Exhibitions, London, since 1981 – 2001. "John Sprakes", *John Sprakes.com*, 2011 www.johnsprakes.com/

[490] Tony Noble lives and paints in West Yorkshire, UK His work was selected for *The Sunday Times Watercolour Competition* (2009, 2010) and the *Royal Society of Portrait Painters* in 2010 and 2011. Noble was finalist in *The BP Portrait Award*, the National Portrait Gallery, London, in 2008, 2010, 2011 and 2012. [490] The National Portrait Gallery commissioned the portrait of English member for Parliament Austin Mitchell and his wife Linda McDougall. "Tony Noble–Artist", *Tony Noble*, Yorkshire, UK. www.tonynoble-artist.com/Home.html

[491] Mike Worrall, born 1942, emigrated from the UK to New South Wales, Australia, in 1988. Mike exhibits regularly at the Wagner Gallery, Sydney, and is also represented in Paris, France, by La Galerie L'Oeil Du Prince. "Mike Worrall", *Mikeworral.coml,* NSW, Australia. www.mikeworrall.com/

[492] Kasey Sealy, born 1961 in Forbes, Australia, has painted professionally since 1980. Kasey is primarily a landscape painter, renowned for his 'Mastery of Light & Atmosphere', but has produced figurative works and maintains a strict regime of life drawing and painting. He is represented by several galleries throughout Australia and New Zealand, by *Piano Nobile Gallery* in London, UK, and by *Ann Long Fine Art* in Charleston, South Carolina, USA. "Kasey Sealy Australian Contemporary Impressionist", *Kaseysealy.com.* www.kaseysealy.com.au/

[493] Wendy Bills is a full-time professional artist, living and working in N.S.W., Australia. She exhibits through a number of N.S.W. galleries. Wendy was twice finalist in The Portia Geach

and Greg Somers[495]. These primary sources provided their opinions via a series of direct interviews and personal correspondences. All these artists engage in portraiture as a significant part of their professional artistic practice. All have produced and exhibited in major portrait prizes. Tom Wood is particularly well represented in London's National Portrait Gallery with several commissioned portraits. He was also commissioned to paint H.R.H. Prince Charles. [496] All the painters' various perspectives provide a comparison of contemporary opinions regarding the value of the artist/sitter relationship to their portrait painting practice.

Richard Brilliant notes that in all other genres of painting other than portraiture, while the artist pursues unique ideas and concepts, there is no dependency, expectation or 'compulsion' for the viewer to equate the work to anything outside the image. However, with portraiture of a specific individual known to the artist then there is a 'vital relationship between the portrait and its object of representation. [Portraiture is a] particular phenomenon of representation in Western art that is especially sensitive to changes in the perceived nature of the individual in Western society'.[497] The artists interviewed by the researcher in this section and the citations of examples of other contemporary painters here, have all produced works that would fall into this categorization of the painted portrait.

Lucian Freud is of particular interest and relevance to the researcher's own

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Memorial Award for portraiture by Australian women artists in 2011 and 2013. Wendy Bills, Artist", *Wendybills.com*. www.wendybills.com/index.html

[494]Peter Smeeth, born 1949 in Griffith, N.S.W, became a full-time portrait artist in 2008. He is Fellow of the Royal Art Society of N.S.W., a Member of the Australian Watercolour Institute and a Member of Portrait Artists Australia. He is a three-times finalist in The Doug Moran Portrait Prize (2002, 2004, 2009) and The Archibald Portrait Prize (2006, 2007, 2010), and four-times finalist in The Shirley Hannan Portrait Prize (2006, 2007, 2008, 2010).[494] He was also the winner of The Sulman Prize – an annually awarded prize of $30,000 (non-acquisitive) for 'the best subject/genre painting and/or murals/mural project'[494] at the Art Gallery of N.S.W. in 2011. http://petersmeeth.com

[495] Greg Somers is a portrait and landscape painter, based on the Central Coast of New South Wales. He was a finalist in The Archibald Prize, 2010, and a finalist in The Black Swan Prize for portraiture, 2010. He is a Member of Portrait Artists Australia. http://portraitartistsaustralia.com.au/browse-portrait-artists/somers-greg/

[496] Tom Wood's website: www.tomwoodartist.com/ or tomwood.typepad.com/.

[497] Brilliant. *Portraiture,* 8.

work and practice, since, as this account demonstrates, the production of his work was dependent on time spent with the sitter and his relationships with them. His wide critical acclaim– he was referred to, in 1993, as 'the best realist painter alive'[498] by critic Robert Hughes, was awarded Britain's highest awards by the Queen, the Companion of Honour and the Order of Merit,[499] and, in 2013, was described by writer Tom Wolfe as 'the greatest British painter of the past one hundred years,'[500]–rests on a vast body of work in paint, the result of observing individual friends and associates over long periods of time in the intimacy of his studio. His modus operandi–'I paint what I see' said Freud in conversation with Michael Auping in 2009.[501]– his aims and objectives of such painting, resonate with the researcher through his own practice-led research discussed later.

Sarah Howgate, of London's National Portrait Gallery planned the exhibition, *Lucian Freud Portraits*, to coincide with the London Olympic games of 2012. However, despite his death in 2011, the exhibition went ahead, in celebration of Freud's life. Howgate, in the exhibition catalogue, states:

> For several decades his work, like that of many painters of his time working in a figurative vein in the UK and USA, was regarded as running quite against the flow of developments in contemporary art, whether abstract, minimal or conceptual. The sheer quality, persistence and consistency of his painting across several decades have changed that view. Longer continuities within Western art… will outlast the passing interests of some contemporary commentators.[502]

Howgate rejects any sidelining of portraiture, seeing it as a relevant practice for contemporary artists.

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[498] Robert Hughes. *The Fat Lady Sings*. February 1993. Time.com.http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,979911,00.html
[499]Sarah Howgate with Michael Auping and John Richardson, *Lucian Freud: Portraits* (Richmond, Victoria: Hardie Grant Books; London: National Portrait Gallery Publications, 2012), 13.
[500] Tom Wolfe. *Breakfast with Lucian* by Geordie Grieg. UK. Farrar, Straus and Giroux. 2013.
[501] Sarah Howgate *et* al., *Lucian Freud:* Portraits, 216.
[502] Howgate *et al.*, *Lucian Freud: Portraits,* 7.

Freud's method of working was 'only from life… he once claimed, "I could never put anything into a picture that wasn't actually there in front of me."'[503] The practice of painting from life enabled him to engage and form strong emotional and intimate bonds with people as friends. That 'Freud's portraits chart the comings and goings in his studio, the beginning and end of a relationship with the sitter'[504] suggests that the purpose of the long sessions of the artist painting the sitter, often over a period of months and sometimes years, is equally about the two individuals getting to know and enjoy each others' company as it is about facilitating the making of a painting. Accordingly, after specified three-hour sessions of morning, afternoon or evening brackets, Freud would often take the sitter for lunch or dinner–as this provided him with the important opportunity to study and get to know other aspects of their personality that could inform the portrait.[505] 'His painting schedule was rigorous. Almost every day, for decades, he painted in both the daytime and the evening.'[506] David Dawson, who worked for him as his assistant for twenty years, developed a close friendship with Freud before eventually he became his model and trusted photographic documenter of the comings and goings of his studio. Even then, Dawson says, Freud was a very private individual.[507] The relationship grew to the extent that 'Freud said that he knew Dawson better than anyone else. He was his most consistent model. They shared a mutual respect for one another and a love of painting.'[508] In the final months of his life Freud was working on what was to be his last portrait ever, *Davidscape* or *Portrait of the Hound,* 2011. (See Image 47.)

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http://www.tagesspiegel.de/images/heprodimagesfotos86120131103gdkfreud-jpg/9021854/3-format43.JPG

Image 47
Lucian Freud (1922–2011).
Davidscape or
Portrait of the Hound, (2011).

[503] Ibid., Flysheet.
[504] Ibid., 19.
[505] Gayford, Ibid., 17.
[506] Ibid., 48.
[507] David Dawson, "Inside Lucian Freud's Studio", *Economist Magazine*, March 13, 2012. www.youtube.com/watch?v=ab6eQEK8j_o&feature-fvwp
[508] Howgate et al., Ibid., 35.

Michael Auping confirms that the personal relationship was vital to Freud's choice of sitter. Sitters were not merely a vehicle enabling calculated, dispassionate paintings to be made. Freud was genuinely interested in them as individuals:

> One could almost say that his subjects constituted his social life as much as his professional one. If we suspect that they were in many cases more than just models, we would be right. They were friends, wives, girlfriends, his children, his art dealer, his assistant, a performance artist, a restaurateur.[509]

Auping further records Freud as saying:

> Getting to know them is part of doing the portrait. These portraits can take a very long time. A relationship always develops.[510]

Freud recognises the unavoidable, inextricable link of a sustained relationship with the sitter and his practice as a painter and appreciates its value. The process is cyclical; time spent together with a sitter has the consequence of a portrait being made but the portrait is only made because Freud wishes to spend time with the particular person, getting to know them through the intimacy of the enterprise of the painting.

Freud only ever really turned his hand to painting well-known public figures very late in his life. He almost never took commissions. When he did paint 'celebrities' from outside of his circle of 'art friends' it was because there was something about the individual that made him want to paint them. In the case of model Kate Moss, Steven Morris writes:

> Freud, 82, contacted Ms. Moss after she gave an interview in *Dazed and Confused* magazine in which she revealed that one of her few remaining ambitions was to be painted by him.[511]

He arrived at this singular and principled position through bad experiences where he attempted to work contrary to his regular method. In the 1940s,

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[509] Ibid.,48.
[510] Ibid., 209.
[511] Steven Morris, "Painting of Kate Moss sells for £3.5m", *Guardian*, February 10, 2005. www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2005/feb/10/arts.artsnews2.

Freud was commissioned by *Time* magazine to paint the portrait of the Swedish film director Ingmar Bergman. Freud recalls that he was never happy about taking the commission because it would mean him working from someone he didn't know on a personal basis and it would not be in the familiar surroundings of his own studio. Freud says:

> I did everything to put them off. I said, 'I work with great difficulty from people I know well in rooms I know, where I've always worked– and even that doesn't always work. So to go to another place and another country, to work from someone I've never met who, to put it mildly, I don't admire…'[512]

Freud regretted ever taking the commission, which he ultimately abandoned.

> It was entirely my fault. I was in a false situation. I did something which was only what a hack does and I was treated like one. Which I didn't like. It's the only thing of that kind that I've ever done.

There was no respect between the two parties – 'he was just messing me about' said Freud of Bergman.[513] Incapable of building any kind of artist/sitter relationship, the whole enterprise failed and became nightmarish for Freud, something that he resolved never to do again.[514]

This experience confirmed his belief in his standard practice to only work in the familiar and intimate surroundings of his own studio and only with those whom he chose to paint. Nevertheless 'in 2001 he took on a rare commission to paint a portrait of Queen Elizabeth II, which he donated to the Royal Collection.'[515] (See Image 48 and 49).

He had stated that he had a personal desire to paint her but, presumably mindful of the sometimes-endless hours he usually demanded of his sitters to complete a portrait, he may have thought it an impossibility to even contemplate. However, Freud's life-long friend, art historian and biographer,

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[512] Sebastian Smee interview with Freud in Bruce Bernard and David Dawson, *Freud at Work,* 22.
[513] Ibid., 23.
[514] Ibid., 23.
[515] Howgate *et al.*, *Lucian Freud: Portraits,* 35.

John Richardson, notes that in 1998 Freud wanted to do his portrait but that he, Richardson, had only a short time to offer:

> David Dawson had brought some 6x4 canvases back from New York. They were just the thing. For the next nine mornings I sat for Lucian from eight to one.[516]

The relative speed at which Freud completed this small painting seems to have encouraged him to accept the commission to paint Queen Elizabeth II, even though it would entail him leaving the creative intimacy of his own familiar studio space. However Freud's account of the experience seems to have been that it was an enjoyable one:

> She was very generous. She cleared her calendar for a proper amount of time. We did the portrait at St. James's Palace, where we could be left alone…For someone to be alone with the Queen for that amount of time is not normal.[517]

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http://www.uni-bielefeld.de/lili/personen/fleischmann/d_archsuse05/214_freud_queen.jpg

Image 48
Lucian Freud (1922–2011).
Queen Elizabeth II (2001).

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to view image please use Internet link:
http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/gallery/2011/jun/03/government-art-collection-in-pictures#img-1
Photograph from 'Freud At Work: Photographs by Bruce Bernard and David Dawson'. London, UK. Jonathan Cape/Random House. 2006

Image 49
Lucian Freud in studio painting H.R.H. Queen Elizabeth II, 2001.

When asked if the Queen sat for the whole portrait he replied:

> Almost. At a certain point, when I was far enough along with her face, she was able to go on about her business. But I did borrow her tiara and put it on someone just about her size so I could finish the portrait.[518]

[516] Richardson quoted in Howgate *et al.*, *Lucian Freud: Portraits,* 12.
[517] Howgate *et al.*, *Lucian Freud: Portraits*, 210.
[518] Ibid., 210.

Freud evidently found it difficult to compromise his 'working from life' practice, preferring a stand-in 'live' model instead rather than resorting to photographs.

Freud's personal affections remain detectable even in works where intricacies of relationships between multiple sitters require negotiation. In his painting *Large Interior W9* (1979). (See Image 50). Freud contrasts his aged mother, Lucie Freud, in centre focus of the canvas, with a reclining naked young model on a couch, who, although it is Freud's lover, is depicted, to use Richard Dorment's word, as an 'abject' figure, completely without pride or dignity, as if outside of Freud's human affection. Dorment describes how Freud's different relationship with each woman is discernable through his treatment of her in the work:

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http://artdone.files.wordpress.com/2012/10/lucian-freud-large-interior-w9-1973-trustees-of-the-chatsworth-settlemnet.jpg?w=635

Image 50
Lucian Freud (1922–2011).
*Large Interior W9 (*1973).

> She [Freud's mother] is painted with affection and accorded a dignity very different from the treatment of the nude on the couch in the background… Freud paints her just as carefully as he does his mother, but he tells us nothing about her. It is her body and her pose that interests him, not her personality.[519]

However, Sarah Howgate personalises the model on the couch. Howgate names her as 'Jacquetta Eliot, Freud's lover at the time.' Noting that this painting 'is the only work in which Freud didn't paint his mother alone' she adds that 'the figures were painted separately and never met during sittings'.[520] Freud would evade any enquiry as to any narrative implied by this

[519] Richard Dorment, "Lucian and His Women". *Daily Telegraph*. June 1, 2002. http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/art/3578401/Lucian-and-his-women.html
[520] *Howgate* et al,. *Lucian Freud: Portraits*, 28.

painting through this unusual working arrangement with the sitters.[521] Bruce Bernard, Freud's life-long friend, writer and photographer – and sitter – described this painting as 'one of the most curious pictures that Freud ever painted, and possibly the most uncertain in subject matter'.[522] Though Howgate highlights the intimate relationship that Freud had with both sitters, she interprets the work as 'a study of youth and age' that is 'no conversation piece–the models share the same room but are oblivious to one another'.[523] It is important that Freud has the canvas intentionally shared by these two most significant women in his life, but his separate relationship with each of them manifests itself quite differently. Dorment suggests the following reasoning:

> For if [*Large Interior, W9*] tells us little about the women in it, it reveals a great deal about Freud himself. Respect is a quality not dissimilar to fear, and sons sometimes compensate for the loss of power they feel in front of their mothers by dominating their wives and lovers. This, I think, may help to explain the extraordinary difference in emotional tone between Freud's treatment of his mother and the model.[524]

Overridingly though, Freud earned acclamation for portraiture that bore testimony to his own resolutely uncompromising terms:

> He also admitted that doing someone's portrait is a way of becoming more intimate with them. For better or worse it is an emotional interaction.[525]

The painting as object and the experience of painting it, are symbiotically dependent. Freud desires the finished work but it is only possible if the relationship takes its natural time and course. He seems beholden and impassioned by both aspects. His values and approach to portraiture have been influential on the London portrait painter, Jonathan Yeo. 'Yeo knew Freud and revered him as an artist.' He says of Freud, 'His work is a sort of textbook of how to look at skin, and an eloquent demonstration of the

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[521] Ibid., 28.
[522] Bruce Bernard and Derek Birdsall, eds, *Lucian Freud* (London: Jonathan Cape,1996), 21.
[523] Howgate *et al*., *Lucian Freud: Portraits*, 28.
[524] Dorment, "Lucian and His Women".
[525] Howgate *et al*., *Lucian Freud: Portraits*, 49.

limitations of photography.'[526]

Perhaps for financial reasons, different temperament, or objectives, other artists and sitters negotiate a satisfactory relationship that does enable commissioned work. This does not necessarily imply that the artist is a 'hack', to use Freud's word, or that they lack artistic integrity. Charles Richard Stone, for instance–described in the popular press as 'the Royal family's favourite portrait painter…[he] has become the most prolific royal painter of his day'–has painted Queen Elizabeth six times and 'the pair have developed a strong rapport'. In one session Stone says she 'asked me: "Do you mind taking a little off my waistline?" I said "I'll keep painting away and you tell me when to stop,"' but that later he repainted it to his own satisfaction. He values the privilege of painting the royal sitters– 'I don't spill paint on the carpets and I don't gossip'–but he feels his relationship can only be a professional one, saying 'It's not my job to probe, my sittings are not interviews…It's always friendly, but I'm not their friend'. [527]

Interviewing Tom Wood, the researcher asked if the burden of knowing the sitter and family, as well as considering a wider audience, hindered his enjoyment of the process; was he still able to advance himself artistically, making it important to him as well as the recipients:

> Absolutely. I don't think it's ever 'pure'. I think it's a kind of a balancing of compromises. I don't think you ever end up – certainly with commissions – maybe when it's your own work it's as pure as it can be, but when it's commissions it's never a pure statement, it's always a bit of balancing… but I always think if you can do it, do it, and see what happens. It's just an interesting journey to go on.[528]

Wood accepts that collaboration with a sitter for purposes of a commission

[526] Gayford, *The Many Faces*, 27.
[527] Roya Nikkhah, Royal Correspondent, *Royal Family's Favourite Portrait Painter.* February 10, 2013. The Telegraph. http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/theroyalfamily/9859509/Royal-familys-favourite-portrait-painter-reveals-secrets-of-the-royal-sittings.html
[528] Tom Wood, transcript of interview with researcher, July 1, 2009.

need not be seen as a compromise of artistic integrity but rather as a different enterprise to wholly personally motivated work.

John Sprakes related the saga of how an impasse can arise when some compromises become non-negotiable between the artist and sitter. Having been commissioned to paint the portrait of the chairperson of an important international company, John ran into problems with the demands of the subject's extended family:

> [The sitter] was in the early stages of Parkinson's disease, which was slightly beginning to show… I wanted to show some of these qualities that he had but also show him as he was at that moment when I met him and the period of time that I got to know him while he sat for me, and how we became much closer through him sitting for me… so consequently I didn't show him as groomed as he had been all his life… when I'd finished the painting he was himself pleased with it, he liked it… Then when his wife saw it she didn't like it at all. She disliked it intensely in the sense that I hadn't portrayed him as she saw him, as she had imagined the portrait would be… the problem then was that some of the family didn't like it… She wrote to me and asked me to change part of it. I wouldn't. I wouldn't change any of it…she wanted me to have him smiling which I flatly refused to do… she had tremendous influence on people and she had it taken down and put in a storeroom.[529]

If for financial reasons alone, artistic integrity may sometimes be sorely tested. Few artists have a relationship with their sitter such as Lucian Freud's with Brigadier Andrew Parker Bowles, who, when painting his portrait, told him, 'I paint what I see, not what you hope I see'[530] (See Image 50A). Tom Wood discusses how he navigates the difficult territory of the 'unspoken contract' implicit and developed by the artist/sitter relationship, even if a more legally binding written contract does exist:

> The thing that I usually talk about when I'm starting a portrait is–Look, I'm not an investigative journalist. I'm not here to dig-the-dirt on you and kind

[529] John Sprakes, transcript of interview with researcher, July 8, 2009.
[530] Jake Auerbach, *Lucian Freud Portraits*, video and DVD, (London: Jake Auerbach Films Ltd, 2004).

> of lay it out for everybody– on the other hand, I'm not here to flatter you.[531]

The suggestion that Wood steers a middle course between that of Freud and Sprakes is seemingly equitable to his own power and command of the relationship. Yet Jonathan Yeo, one of Britain's leading young portrait painters today, echoes Wood's sentiments; 'There's an intimacy to the bubble you are in when it's two of you in a studio even though the picture's going to be seen widely. I'm not going to tell the sitter's story literally, so they can reveal a vulnerability or sadness or hardness or whatever, a complexity in their personality or past that makes the picture more interesting.'[532]

The necessity of the artist to know and understand the sitter for it to work as a physical substitute for the person is greatly balanced by the artist's intention to personally explore and say something conceptually, giving purpose to the image beyond a documentation of physical appearance. Of his portrait by Freud, Gayford notes, 'It is a revelation of how Lucian Freud sees me, or, to be more precise, what possibilities he sees in me to make a picture.'[533] Though clearly for Freud's the individual personality and appearance is crucial to his decision to paint them, Gayford notes that 'most of Lucian Freud's pictures are not given the names of their sitters'.[534] This suggests the artist would rather the viewer initially enjoy the painting for it's own sake, rather than being concerned about likeness. Freud said:

> It can be extraordinary how much you can learn from someone, and perhaps about yourself, by looking very carefully at them, without judgement. You must make judgements about the painting not about the subject.[535]

Freud chooses what to show us, but he remains non-judgemental about what is in front of him. This device of limiting literal clues encourages us to do the same.

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[531] Tom Wood, transcript of interview with researcher, July 2009.
[532] Martin Gayford. *The Many faces of,* 21.
[533] Gayford, *Man with a Blue Scarf*, 115.
[534] Howgate *et al.*, *Lucian Freud: Portraits,* 215.
[535] Howgate *et al.*, *Lucian Freud: Portraits.* 210.

Tom Wood confirms this understanding of how direct observation of a sitter can be used to address more conceptual issues:

> There is the conceptual engagement wherein what you're trying to express about the sitter or yourself or the painting generally is expressed through your knowledge of the sitter. This can be a generalised broad concept such as truth, mortality, hope, desire, etcetera and, for me at least, this expression of wider concepts through the medium of a portrait is the painting's purpose.[536]

Further, Wood's observation that 'works become layered and obscure so that fairly universal ideas are expressed through specifics like family and friends'[537] underlines that painting people with whom he has a deep-seated relationship allows expression of conceptual thought. Martin Gayford argues that while the subject of a portrait 'is also an expression of the mind, sensibility and skills of its creator: the artist, … perhaps the true subject of a portrait is the interchange between painter and subject – what the sitter consciously or unconsciously reveals, and the artist picks up.[538] Auping adds:

> In any Freud exhibition, we are bound to run across one or more paintings at which we stop and think, 'What exactly was the relationship between Freud and his subject?' It is the moment when we recognise that these paintings are not only about the surface of the human body; there is something remarkably personal about them, though not easily defined… They expose real-life relationships that are both complicated and unique… Part of experiencing his paintings is thinking about the intricate character of human relationships, as represented through his relationships with his complex family of subjects.[539]

It is the relationship of artist and sitter, the specialness of the intense human interaction and connection over a long period of time in painting the picture, that is palpable in Freud's portraits of the particular people that make up his

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[536] Tom Wood, e-mail message to researcher. August 23, 2010.
[537] Duncan Robinson, *Man and Measure; The Paintings of Tom Wood* (London & Nottingham: Hart Gallery Publications, 1995), 7.
[538] Gayford, *Man with a Blue* Scarf, 20.
[539] Howgate *et al.*, *Lucian Freud: Portraits.* 48.

daily life, and this addresses universal concepts about the human condition, about real life.

Freud himself candidly stated, 'What I am doing is quite simple and, you might say, selfish… I combine my painting with the people that have come into my life. That's all it is.'[540] Yet for all his ability to remain somewhat low-key, his work attests to the human need for interaction and friendship with another human, and his rejection of photography as substitute.

> It is an important fact about [Freud's] paintings that they are done entirely by natural vision, his own idiosyncratic way of seeing. They are not seen through a lens; nor are they dependent in any way on the camera-eye view of the world… he feels the medium [of photography] has little in it to help him as a painter. Photography, he says, provides a great deal of information about the fall of light, but not about anything else.[541]

Martin Gayford here expresses something of the shortfall of photography; it does not easily satisfy the artist wishing to convey something of experienced space and time.

Ultimately, in the light of Freud's own recent death, his paintings now remind us even more potently, through their overarching comprehensive record of his relationship with the people that passed through his life, of our own fears, concerns, contemplations and acceptance of our own mortality, and that a significant reason for our very existence is that, as Edgar Degas once said, 'we were created to look at one another, weren't we?'[542]

David Hockney, who, like Freud, had always managed to maintain an artistic presence and relevance through figurative painting's 'wilderness' years, wrote extensively about what he found to be photography's limitations:

> there have been excellent portraits made in the 20th century by the still camera, but not many memorable ones, and none that can probe

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[540] Ibid., 55.
[541] Gayford, *Man with a Blue* Scarf, 97.
[542] Edgar Degas. "The Impressionist Era." *Oracle ThinkQuest*. Education Foundation. http://library.thinkquest.org/C0111578/nsdeg.html

> character like Rembrandt. Film and video bring its time to us. We bring our time to painting. It is a profound difference that will not go away.[543]

Hockney here is reflecting on the ubiquitous nature of photography being assumed as first recourse for the making of imagery. Its 'ravaging invasion'[544] on the other arts was feared and acknowledged as early as the mid-nineteenth century but Hockney suggests that today, with common universal usage of still and digital video technologies, readily accessible via personal mobile 'phones and the world-wide Internet, there is an acceptance of the place and role of photography for either personal use or networked into or alongside other art mediums. Acknowledging the influence of Paul Cezanne and Pablo Picasso, Hockney defends and continues to use the 'working from life' painting method himself, agreeing with Freud's observation that photography only really informs a painter about the fall of light in the real world. Hockney states:

> I can often tell when drawings are done from photographs, because you can tell what they miss out, what the camera misses out: usually weight and volume, there's a flatness to them.[545]

Hockney senses too photography's limitation as a means of reference to real three-dimensional space. Indeed, he has wrestled with the photographic medium throughout his career in an attempt to understand how it does affect our reading of reality and its consequences for painting.

Like Freud, the theoretical aspect of his practice is not separated from his personal emotional attachment to the sitters. They usually consist of his parents and family, other artist friends, writers and critics that have become friends, lovers and, like Freud, his animal 'friends'. He has painted some of his sitters several times over the years, though he says:

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[543] David Hockney, *Secret Knowledge: Rediscovering the Lost Techniques of the Old Masters,(* London, UK: Thames & Hudson, 2009).
[544] Scharf. *Art and Photography,* 163.
[545] Sarah Howgate and Barbara Stern Shapiro*,* with essays by Mark Glazebrook, Marco Livingstone and Edmund White. *David Hockney Portraits* (London: National portrait Gallery, 2006), 61.

> I don't really like struggling for a likeness. It seems a bit of a waste of effort… if you don't know the person, you don't really know if you've got a likeness at all… I think it takes quite a long time.[546]

The build up of memories and experiences with the sitter therefore contributes to the new sitting so that the problematic issue of 'likeness' becomes irrelevant.

Perhaps tellingly, in respect of portraiture's renewed interest as an artform of contemporary expression, it was not until 2006 that there was a retrospective of Hockney's work devoted solely to his portraiture, though he had consistently produced it all his life. Marco Livingstone, in the catalogue of Hockney's *Portraits* show at the National Portrait Gallery, London, in 2006 writes:

> Rather than abdicate this investigation of human physiognomy and psychology to the camera, however, Hockney has continued through his art to remind us how irreplaceable the hand-drawn or hand-painted portrait is. [547]

Hockney thus accepts both mediums for their individual strengths and weaknesses.

Freud and Hockney's careers have now spanned more than half a century but their concerns still resonate with contemporary art discourse and practice. In 2000, Adam Cullen won The Archibald Prize with his portrait of the actor David Wenham (see Image 51). Inferring a break with tradition at the start of the new millennium, Bruce James of *The Sydney Morning Herald* wrote, 'The doors of the academy have parted… Cullen, the bad boy of grunge, has entered.' Though the David Wenham portrait was done from life – as stipulated in the rules for entry – Cullen said, 'It took three or four hours'[548] to complete. Peter Ross notes that previously Cullen 'once would have numbered himself among the generation that universally despised Archibald

[546] Ibid., 43.
[547] Ibid., 6.
[548] Ross, *The History,* 121.

and all its works. Today, Cullen is impatient with contemporary artists who put [The Archibald Prize] down. “After all,” he told me, ”if contemporary artists get hung, it becomes a contemporary show, doesn’t it?”[549]

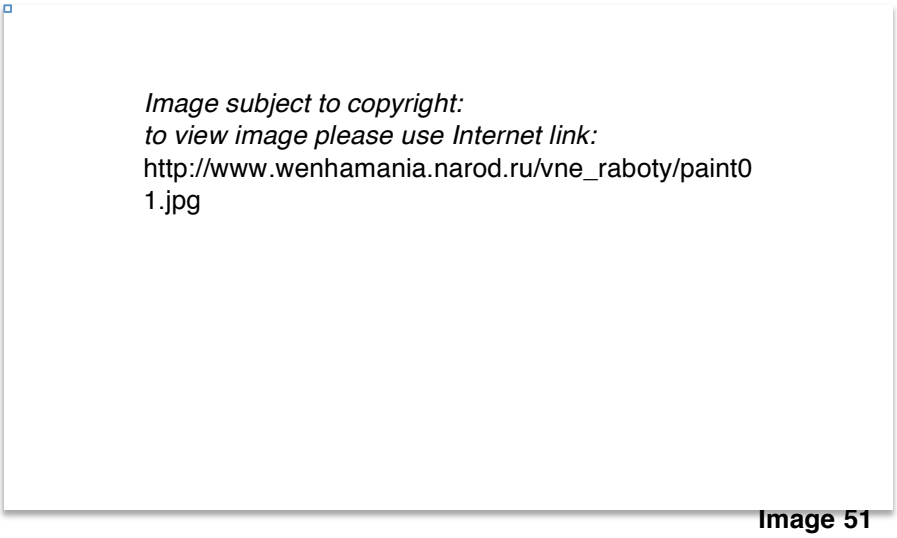


Image 51
Adam Cullen (1965–2012), right, with the sitter, David Wenham, in front of Cullen’s winning *Archibald Prize* for Portraiture, 2000, *David Wenham* (2000).

Ben Quilty has established a reputation as a contemporary Australian artist expressing his energetic responses to the stimuli of Australian, often urban, culture and the people with whom he comes into contact. Writing for Quilty’s exhibition at the Jan Murphy Gallery in Melbourne in 2006, the art critic Rex Butler writes:

> If there is an “avant-garde” art form in Australia today, it is undoubtedly figurative painting… Today it is figurative painting alone that knows what it is to be art after the end of art.[550]

He seeks to allay misconceptions that figuration in general, and portraiture in particular, is necessarily conceptually lightweight or exhausted as an artform.

[549] Ibid., 121.
[550] Rex Butler, *Painting after the End of Art* (Melbourne: Jan Murphy Gallery, Melbourne Art Fair,2006). http://www.benquilty.com/text.php?text=20120316140144

Like Cullen, Quilty works very quickly. Lisa Slade comments that 'the speed with which Quilty skids the paint across the surface of the canvas is also indicative of his comfort with the subject.'[551] He uses this physicality of paint to 'explore self and culture, for negotiating personal, artistic and national identity'[552] but also feels comfortable considering some of the people he meets as subjects for submitting into portrait prizes such as The Archibald Prize, which he won in 2011 with his portrait of artist Margaret Olley, (see Image 52), and *The Doug Moran Prize for Portraiture,* which he also won in 2009 with his portrait of rock singer Jimmy Barnes. Olley was a judge of the Brett Whiteley Scholarship in 2002, which was awarded to Quilty. He says that she, 'became a friend and supporter of [his] work ever since.'[553] However, when he asked her if he could paint her she declined at first. It was 'her lack of ego [that was] so appealing', said Quilty. He made frequent visits to get to know her at her studio. Quilty told Olley that he had made up his mind, and was determined to paint her. 'I will keep on bringing you chocolate cake until you do agree to do it, and then she agreed', he affectionately recalls. The artist sitter/relationship developed through these frequent visits and he reflects on how it benefits the portrait, saying:

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http://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/prizes/archibald/2011/28931/

Image 52
Ben Quilty (b. 1973).
Margaret Olley (2011).

[551] Jacqueline Millner, "Ben Quilty", in *Ben Quilty and the Emotional Eloquence of Painting*, ed. Lisa Slade and Michele Helmrich (Brisbane , Australia: University of Queensland Press, 2009),14.
[552] Ibid., 39.
[553] Jo Litson, *2011 Archibald Prize Catalogue* (Sydney: Art Gallery of N.S.W. 2011).

> She's such an amazing human. The relationship between the artist and the subject, I think that's the most interesting thing about The Archibald Prize, that it really stands out when somebody does know the sitter. If it's only about meeting them for a one-off meeting to do the portrait then all it is a likeness, nothing more– unless it's a famous person and then all you're going from is the knowledge that you have of that person through the media, which again is not intimacy; and all of my past subjects, everyone of them, all of them have been people who are close to me or, funnily enough, people who I like and admire. [554]

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see Internet link
http://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/prizes/archibald/2011/28931/

Image 53
Artist, Ben Quilty, with sitter, Margaret Olley, 2011.

Quilty evidently ascribes a certain pride in being associated with the sitter, which seems, for him, to add to the value and meaning of the award regardless of any monetary consideration. (See Image 53).

Robert Hannaford is perhaps best known to the Australian public for his numerous hangings in The Archibald and The Doug Moran portrait prizes. 'In 2001, he was commissioned by the Commonwealth Government to paint the Centenary of Federation 2001.'[555](See Image 54). For this commission 'Robert did more than one hundred individual sketches from life of each of the members of parliament and others in preparation for the

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http://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Senate/Research_and_Education/pops/pop57/c05

Image 54
Robert Hannaford (b. 1944).
Centenary of Federation (2001).

[554] "Ben Quilty: Archibald Prize 2011 Winner" (Sydney Art Gallery of N.S.W., 2011). Video. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AP41QzGMY1A&feature=player
[555] "Robert Hannaford". *Roberthannaford.com* http://www.roberthannaford,com.au/

painting.'[556] Hannaford is accepting of his work being considered 'traditional', [557] if by that it infers a masterful and thorough understanding of established painting methods in portraiture. However, one might deduce from the amount of times that he has been an Archibald finalist though never winner, that the Trustees awarding the Prize seek something beyond skillful academicism. Nevertheless, the numerous times that he has received the People's Choice Award, clearly indicates that a sizable number of the audience attending the show still enjoy seeing portraiture in this mode:

> Hannaford does not work from photographs. He sees the process of painting a portrait as 'observation though time'. For him it is a matter of 'honouring the subject of the painting. For this reason, the frozen or single point of time provided by a photograph is 'anathema'.[558]

Indeed, 'Hannaford has commented that the use of photographs as a 'crutch' for young painters means that they never 'learn to stand on their own two feet.'[559]

Contrastingly Tony Noble, three times finalist at Britain's annual BP Prize for portraiture, has produced successful portraits where photography has had to be the prime reference. (See Image 55). He explained in correspondence with me:

> I think a sitting is desirable though not always possible… When I painted the portrait of Austin Mitchell MP and his wife Linda I didn't have any time for a sitting and had to work exclusively from photographs.[560]

However, Noble also stresses that a personal relationship and human connection is of paramount importance for him to even consider wanting to make the portrait,



Image 55
Tony Noble
Austin Mitchell, M.P., and his wife, Linda McDougall (2010).

[556] Ibid.
[557] John, Neylon. *Robert Hannaford: Natural Eye*. Adelaide, South Australia: Wakefield Press, 2009), 137.
[558] Ibid., 137.
[559] Ibid., 99.
[560] Tony Noble, e-mail message to researcher, July 14, 2010.

> Personally, I could not paint, or rather I wouldn't waste my time painting, someone I've never met… I need to know something of that person and need to have made some kind of physical and mental, psychic connection.[561]

His observation that, though painting from life is an ideal, the taking of some photographic reference is a practical necessity, is supported by Greg Somers, himself an Archibald finalist.

> Knowing the subject has the benefit, probably because you have painted them before, and know their character and personality, which comes alive on the canvas through the conduit of paint. That is a magical thing, which all artists know but is seldom written about.[562]

Peter Smeeth, another Archibald finalist also concurs:

> Painting from a photo, by an artist without life painting experience, produces a two-dimensional painting of a big photo… A painting done from life over a period of time involves many different looks and emotions giving a truer and more complex representation of the subject's character and personality rather than the single "moment in time" captured by a photograph… If you want to produce a truly lifelike realistic portrait then a large proportion of the work has to be done from life.[563]

All these artists' statements support the notion that observance of the sitter from life is the ideal, though the realities of life sometimes prevent its consistent eventuality.

Painter Mike Worral intimates the notion of what is certainly an often heard criticism of portraitists who heavily rely on photographs; that the artist is somehow hood-winking the audience into believing that the portrait has been done from life. Worral writes:

> Photography seems to play an ever-increasing role in the painted portrait… I have used it as an aid myself at times when it has been difficult to get the sitter to sit long enough because of time restraints etc. I always feel I am guilty of cheating when using a photograph to help, and I

[561] Ibid.
[562] Greg Somers, e-mail message to the researcher, September 6, 2012.
[563] Peter Smeeth, e-mail message to the researcher, July 27, 2012.

> try to avoid it. I always start the portrait from life and hope to finish with no help from a photo. After all when an artist announces they are going to paint a portrait from life, how can they then take a photo and then copy it?[564]

Worral raises here the concern that some spectators of portrait exhibitions hold the arguable supposition that to paint from life is technically more difficult than working from a photograph, and that a more skillful artist should manage without the 'crutch' of the photograph. Ironically, populist praise for much portrait prize finalist work is often directed at works of a 'photo-realist' bent. Admiration takes the form of likening how closely it tricks the spectator into believing it is in fact a photograph. Painter Kasey Sealy refers to this differentiation of respect, even on the part of the some artists, for paintings that are photographically dependent:

> The skill factor of relating to your sitter, one on one, is like chalk and cheese... Portraits done from photography always look as though the artist has been a slave to the photograph; stiffness, over drawn black shadows are the give away. You can't beat that happy mistake, an urgency – working from life.[565]

The consensus of these artists is that working from life provokes unpremeditated and unexpected responses that are both enjoyable and challenging in the making and, in their unpredictability, imbibe the painting with certain life otherwise unattainable.

National portrait prizes such as London's BP Prize have become so highly regarded on the annual art calendar as to attract submissions from all over the world and the platform of such a prestigious show attracts painters of high pedigree. The winner of the 2011 competition was the Dutch painter Wim Heldens, while 2012's Prize went to the American painter, Aleah Chapin. The 2011 show attracted over 2,000 entries, adding fuel to the notion that 'the traditional art form is having a major resurgence.[566] Such shows can be seen as an invaluable opportunity to display individual artist's talents, raise their

[564] Mike Worrall, e-mail message to the researcher, May 3, 2012.
[565] Kasey Sealy, e-mail message to the researcher, May 13, 2012.
[566] "Wim Helden's Wins the BP Portrait Award",

public profile and therefore be a means to establish new connections with potential commissioning client/sitters. For Tom Wood, accepting commissioned portraits lead to establishing relationships with 'repeat' sitters who became supporters and benefactors of his non-portraiture, though usually figurative, painting. In 1987, he was artist in residence at Dean Clough Art Gallery in Halifax, UK.

The opening of a new exhibition of Wood's work coincided with a visit to the space by HRH Prince Charles, who, on seeing Wood's portraits, said to Tom, 'You must do one for me.'[567] The critical acclaim of the resultant paintings – there were several studies, two large oil paintings and a smaller head study, which is now in the Prince's private collection – lead to many private commissioned portraits and several from the National Portrait Gallery, London. (See Image 56).

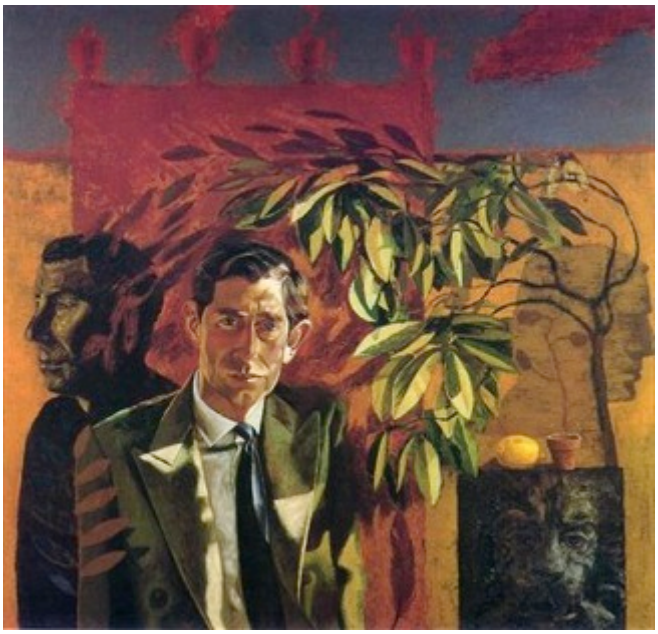


Image 56
Tom Wood (b.1955).
HRH. Prince Charles (1987).

Interviewing Wood, he talked me through the process of establishing a trusting relationship with the sitter:

> I have a first initial meeting where I go and meet them – you always go to them generally, because they're always so busy – also it's good to see their environment… it's your chance to get a look at them as well… they'll maybe sit in a particular way, or they'll hold their hands or they'll play with… for instance, Prince Charles has got a ring on his little finger, which he constantly plays with. Little things like that, you think, oh, that's an interesting little mannerism that you might be able to use or might not...Then the second sitting I'll do a drawing… the drawing is just a

[567] Tom Wood, transcript of interview with the researcher, July 2009.

> method by which I'm trying to understand. Then I'll take lots of photographs… lots of them, lots of their environment, go for a walk. In Prince Charles's case, he's got enormous gardens – so go for a stroll round the gardens taking lots of shots… then I'll come back to the studio and I'll start to work out the composition. I'll start to work out the scale… I'll have loads of tape and I lay it out on the floor and I'll look at it, walk away and then I adjust it a bit… then I'll get that panel made up.[568]

Here photography is employed as a convenient and 'instant' visual notebook, after some sense of what will constitute the portrait has been established through a personal meeting.

The work of Euan Uglow, who died in 2000, demonstrates his total reliance on the need to work from life – his painstaking and grueling lengthy sessions rivaling even Freud's for their intensity and demands on the model –but the resultant paintings do not seek to express any intimate emotional insight or 'human touch' with the person depicted. Uglow depends on the human body as a vehicle for assiduous analysis purely on which to base carefully calculated aesthetic and mathematical judgments, relating the human form as unified and integrated with all that is around it. Uglow sets up the studio space to allow him to place the figure into the controlled, constructed environment. 'From here, Uglow pursued a "visibly exacting process through which, in small increments, he endows the model with a form he can trust"'.[569] Occasionally, as in *Georgia* (1968-73. See image 58), a personal affection for the sitter is implied. In this case 'using her name as the title befits the close

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http://www.bbc.co.uk/arts/yourpaintings/paintings/georgia-176961

Image 58
Euan Uglow (1932–2000).
Georgia (1968-73).

[568] Ibid.
[569] Catherine Lampert, *Euan Uglow: The Complete Paintings* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007), xiii.

relationship of sitter and artist that continued until Uglow's death'.[570] Archetypal of Uglow's analytical figure works is *The Diagonal* (1971-7. See Image 59).

Image subject to copyright:
to view image please use Internet link:
http://www.bbc.co.uk/arts/yourpaintings/paintings/georgia-176961

Image 59
Euan Uglow (1932–2000).
The Diagonal (1971-7).

Speaking to Martin Gayford in reference to this painting, Uglow said:

> I can start off with an idea… it could have been a plank really, but it was a girl. Much more interesting to look at than a plank. But it was to do with a formal idea of a diagonal going the wrong way on a root two rectangle.[571]

Uglow here underlines his unemotional detachment from the figure as an individual. Although, for Uglow, there is a need for *a* human figure to be used as an important formal compositional element within his painting, there is no intention of expression of 'human touch,' no reflection on the unique situation of the artist as a person sharing the same space and time with another person, an individual. He is dispassionate to them and their emotions. He is

[570] Ibid., xxxii.
[571] Ibid.,134.

concerned with their physical attributes for the holding of a particular pose that he painstakingly observes and calculatingly maps out onto a surface. Uglow's paintings draw their strength from their exquisitely modulated surfaces of painterly notational marks, of dashes and scratches set into planes of nuanced colour, but any reference to the figure as a living, breathing human being is heavily subjugated to more formal ideas. His profound indifference to the individuality of the sitter as a person to the extent where sometimes various sitters amalgamate to make up a whole, contrasts markedly with Freud's thinking of sitters. The comparison of the two distinct mindsets, while still dependent on the 'working from life' approach, serves to define what is meant by the 'human touch' in the artist/sitter relationship, showing that the value of the artist/sitter relationship can be used to various ends.

3:1(ii) What is the value and experience of the artist/sitter relationship from the sitter's perspective?

It would be remiss in this discussion of the value of the 'human touch' to the artist/sitter relationship not to consider its value from the sitters' perspective. Martin Gayford's revealing account of his nine-months of sittings for Lucian Freud is therefore invaluable. (See Image 60 and 61). Gayford, who had already written many articles and reviews about Freud, knew him to the extent that:

> one afternoon, over tea, I – very tentatively – mentioned to him that if he wanted to paint me I would be able to find the time to sit, my motive was partly the standard one of portrait sitters: an assertion of my own existence.[572]

[572]Gayford. *Man with a Blue Scarf,* 9.

Image subject to copyright:
to view image please use Internet link:
http://static.guim.co.uk/sys-images/Observer/Columnist/Columnists/2010/9/20/1284996260933/man-with-blue-scarf-006.jpg

Image 60
Lucian Freud in studio with Martin Gayford

Image subject to copyright:
to view image please use Internet link:
http://www.google.com.au/imgres?q=Freud.+Man+in+a+blue+scarf&hl=en&client=safari&sa=X&tbo=d&rls=en&biw=1680&bih=914&tbm=isch&tbnid=

Image 61
Lucian Freud (1922–2011).
Man in a blue scarf (2004).

Conversation between the artist and sitter makes the sitter feel more engaged in the process and allows the sitter to try and sense, if somewhat elusively, what it is the artist is thinking about. Gayford documents the enjoyable conversations that cement the friendship and seem vital to the enterprise of the painting: 'The talk is, I begin to realize, almost as much part of the sitting process as the drawing and painting'. Gayford says that the engaging conversation makes him feel that the artist 'is intensely interested in *you.* Obviously, this too is charming'.[573] While these conversational exchanges appeal to the sitter, as a distraction from a certain boredom of a lengthy pose:

> the disadvantage is that as soon as this happens [the artist] concentrates on talking rather than painting. Therefore the more [artist and sitter] are diverted into conversation the more entertaining the sittings will become, but the longer the whole picture will take.[574]

The portrait itself is distinctly a more concrete goal, easier to quantify, but it is sometimes difficult to gauge the value of the intimate relationship between artist and sitter in relation to the making of the portrait. According it due time can be underestimated.

Freud's painting of Sue Tilley, simply entitled *Benefits Supervisor Sleeping,* (1995, see Image 62) in reference to her usual daytime job, confirms that It

[573] Ibid.,19.
[574] Ibid.,19.

Image subject to copyright:
to view image please use Internet link:
http://www.theoccidentalobserver.net/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/Freud-benefits-supervisor-sleeping.jpg

Image 62
Lucian Freud
(1922–2011).
Benefits Supervisor Sleeping
(1995).

matters not that the subject of the sitting be of any scholarly, artistic or worldly standing. Sue Tilley reflects on her role as sitter to Freud and how it changed her life:

> Working for Lucian was like going to University – you learn so much. I was a bit nervous about taking my clothes off. [Referring to the painting *Evening in the Studio* 1993 she says] I look horrible – like a big crab laid out or something… I think people are surprised that in real life I look a bit better. I think of it more as Lucian's image of me rather than me myself, if you can understand that.[575]

For Tilley the time spent in talking with Freud has more perceivable value to her than the actual activity of posing.

Freud was reportedly the father of forty children, fourteen of whom were identified and reunited with him. For some of his children, sitting for him has been the means to establish a strong relationship with their father.[576] His daughter, Isobel Boyt, sat for him several times. She recalls the sessions as arduous, but cherishes them because they were special, private times for her to get to know her father. Of her experience of being forced to sit for him as a young child, (*Large Interior, Paddington*, 1968-9, see Image 63), she says, 'I remember being taken, literally, screaming and crying from the family Sunday, and I just didn't want to go' but then adds, in reference to when she sat again for him just after she had separated from her husband:

[575] Sue Tilley interview in Auerbach: *Lucian Freud Portraits*.
[576] Simon Edge, "Freud the Lothario", *The Daily Express*, May 16, 2008.

> It was quite a tough time in my life at that time and so it really was quite pleasurable to be able to sit and read… being with my Dad…he was very sweet and kind. It's always something that I say I'll never do again and then I have… [because] I guess it's a way of having a relationship with my dad… I see the pictures as representing a period in my life… it's not like a snapshot, like a photo. When you've spent six months on something, it's a substantial period to have felt all that you're going through and sort of encapsulate it in a picture.[577]

Image subject to copyright:
to view image please use Internet link:
http://i.huffpost.com/gen/493805/thumbs/o-LARGE-INTERIOR-PADDINGTON-570.jpg

Image 63
Lucian Freud (1922–2011).
Large Interior, Paddington (1968-

Freud's daughter is meeting her father on his own terms and his own time since it seems to be the only way she will be able to establish a meaningful relationship of any kind with him.

The artist Celia Paul became Freud's pupil, model and lover. She features in several significant works by Freud and the experience of being his sitter reflects the changes in their personal relationship to one another. Again, the value to Celia of the paintings is as an encapsulation of a special period of time shared intimately with the artist, as opposed to the actual image itself. She says:

Image subject to copyright:
to view image please use Internet link:
http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/freud-girl-in-a-striped-nightshirt-t13719

Image 64
Lucian Freud (1922–2011).
Girl in Striped Nightshirt (1985).

> I know I used to cry a lot. Actually Lucian would be very nice about

[577] Interview with Isobel Boyt in Auerbach: *Lucian Freud Portraits*.

> it… but his work is all about truth and the only way that you really tell the truth is by concentrating and not turning away from it…I suppose I love the one of me in the striped night shirt (*Girl in Striped Nightshirt,* 1985. See Image 64)… I was pregnant at the time, so it's a sort of record of our closeness. I think we can see that he loves me in it.[578]

Through Freud's somewhat unblinking objective scrutiny of what he sees in front of him, the spectator is able to sense his subjective emotions and the intimate relationship between artist and sitter.

[578] Interview with Celia Paul in Auerbach: *Lucian Freud Portraits*.

Sarah Howgate gives an account of sitting for the third time for David Hockney at his Los Angeles studio in 2005.[579] (See images 65 and 66) She chose to wear a quite flamboyant dress for the sitting. Hockney had instructed her not to wear jeans or the like. Referring to one of his own heroes, he says 'Ingres's subjects dressed in their finery. People don't know how to dress anymore'[580] implying that Hockney still sees the sitting for a portrait, at least in this sort of situation, as linking to a tradition requiring a certain formality and decorum. 'Even the Oscars have lost their glamour. Now everyone knows what it's like to appear on screen,'[581] he bemoans. Howgate adds, 'However, fewer people have experienced sitting for a portrait',[582] implying a certain uniqueness remaining in the portrait painter working from life in this traditional manner. Similarly, she expresses a certain flattery in being selected by such a skilled, renowned artist, suggesting a painted portrait will have specialness by comparison to easily attainable digital images of herself. As she walks around the studio, Hockney suddenly tells her to hold a pose. She realizes that he has been 'sizing her up' as she freezes in the desired position. Howgate knows this painting has only two hours to work or fail. She notes that 'by imposing a difficult pose he is forcing himself to work

Image subject to copyright:
to view image see:
Howgate, S and Shapiro B.S., *David Hockney Portraits.* Victoria, Australia & London, UK: Hardie Grant Books, 2006.
Page 46.

Image 65
David Hockney (b.1937).
Sarah Howgate (2005).

[579] Howgate and Shapiro, *David Hockney Portraits.*
[580] Ibid., 47.
[581] Ibid., 47.
[582] Ibid., 47.

quickly.' Hockney adds, 'If they stand, I've got to paint faster. Well, to me I think speed's a part of it.'[583]

Image subject to copyright:
to view image please see:
Howgate, S and Shapiro B.S*., David Hockney Portraits.* Victoria, Australia & London, UK: Hardie Grant Books, 2006. Page 47.

Image 66
David Hockney painting Sarah Howgate in his studio, February 2005.

Howgate brings her expertise to evaluate how Hockney is working technically and enjoys watching his facial expressions. She notes that he concentrates intensely on her–there is no speaking while he is painting but when they pause 'he points out that a photographic portrait made at such close quarters would be distorted'.[584] After the two hours are up the painting has to stop. It is finished. Howgate compares the painting to a photograph taken of her posing for the painting.

> There is no comparison. In the photograph my features are frozen; I am static and slightly leaden. Yet in the painting… there is a dynamism and strength about the pose that contrasts with the surface pattern and the softness of the way the fabric of my dress falls. 'In the end you find it,' Hockney says. 'A camera finds it straight away but with a painting it is there to be unlocked.'… I was not expecting flattery and I did not get it, but there is a truth in that layering of time through paint.[585]

These observations draw a comparison between what working from life brings to the portrait as opposed to a photographic record of the same view, this time from the perspective of the sitter. These are one clear objective of Hockney's painted portraits.

[583] Ibid., 47.
[584] Ibid., 47.
[585] Ibid., 47.

Martin Gayford says of Jonathan Yeo that he 'is a twenty-first-century portrait painter…He creates images of specific people; he makes them in paint; and he does so in a way that is contemporary in both technique and mood.'[586] His portraits again reveal that the medium of paint is vital in allowing for the transference of observations and feelings over time as he gets to know his sitters. Yet while he does paint portraits of his immediate friends and family, perhaps his best known work is of the 'rich and famous', very busy people of power and celebrity; 'his forte is the depiction of achievers: he has been commissioned by them and he has sought them out. His intelligence and conviviality [is] a crucial attribute of the successful portraitist, who must quickly establish trust with the sitter…Yeo's portraits are ingenious partnerships, expressing the subject's selling points in the formal tradition, but modified and interpreted–as with all good biography– by researcher's own insights, perception and imagination.'[587]

Because of the difficulties of access to some of his sitters for extensive sittings, Yeo does use photography to help plan compositions or more ongoing minor references, but says of his sitters, 'At some point you need to let the experience of them and the sight of them on different days take over.'[588] One of his sitters, the renowned television host and interviewer, Sir Michael Parkinson, (See Images 67A and 67B), expresses that there was initial professional need for the meetings to enable painting from life, but that this evolved into a personal relationship. Writing of his experience as Yeo's sitter, he says,

> As he painted my portrait and chatted, I began to understand the similarity in what we do. The process of relaxing the sitter, of making what might be a strange and strained relationship seem perfectly natural and agreeable, is as important to a painter as it is to an interviewer…what

[586]Gayford. *The Many Faces,* 15
[587] Philip Mould. *The Many Faces of Jonathan Yeo,* 171.
[588] Jonathan Yeo in conversation with Sarah Howgate. *The Many Faces of Jonathan Yeo.* 231.

started as a professional relationship became a friendship and one based…on that most important of foundations: admiration.[589]

Far Right: **Image 67A**
Jonathan Yeo (b.1970)
Sir Michael Parkinson
(2010)
Right: **Image 67B**
Yeo in his studio with
Sir Michael Parkinson

Images subject to copyright:
to view image 67A please use Internet link:
http://images.npg.org.uk/800_800/7/8/mw193578.jpg

to view image 67B please use Internet link:
http://i.telegraph.co.uk/multimedia/archive/02095/jonathan-yeo_2095749i.jpg

3:1(iii) The experience of sitting for a portrait by the researcher.

The researcher now presents the findings of his own practice-led research into this area. The researcher's studio practice of portraiture from sitters provides empirical information as to the value of the artist establishing a relationship with a sitter. A relationship, by definition, involves more than one party. It is pertinent to investigate the comments of the researcher's sitters here since it offers comparisons with experiences of those documented above who have sat for artists of world renown. Despite the researcher's relatively obscure profile as a portrait painter, the research investigates the sitters' perspective, gauging if their experience seemed just as unique, just as revealing and special to them at it appears to have been for the aforementioned sitters to highly acclaimed portraitists.

The sitters all volunteered their time and came to sit at the researcher's home or university studio. The portraits were all non-contractual, non-commissioned. In this sense they all arose out of a willingness from all parties to explore the process of spending time together for the making of their portrait in paint.

[589] Sir Michael Parkinson. *The Many Faces of Jonathan Yeo.* (London. Art/Books. 2013.) 98.

Jean-Philippe Grange – JP – is 44 years of age. Originally from France, he has lived in Australia for fourteen years. He operates his own business from the Central Coast of New South Wales. The researcher has known him now as a personal friend for over twelve years.

> Having my portrait painted… was many things at the same time: a first for me, an interesting and surprising experience, a great opportunity to catch up with a good friend… and to be part of what was definitely, for me, an exciting project. Being asked by an artist to sit and have your portrait painted is certainly flattering but I was not sure of what to expect. I remember a good chat – in a relaxed and informal atmosphere – and great moments of calm – a definite break in my busy schedule at the time… but most of all I remember doing something very few people have the opportunity to do… and it meant a lot to me… But a lot was going on… it was also my turn to observe the artist at work… His brief words, his changes of facial expressions between his brief but sharp looks at me – concentration? Satisfaction? Frustration? – his interaction with brushes and colour palettes… I remembered thinking to myself wouldn't it be interesting to paint the portraitist right now?[590]

JP states what is not untypical of sitters; the notion that having one's own portrait painted is flattering since the experience, for many, seems to be outside of their scope of everyday opportunity; considered either rare and specialized or perhaps even obscure and outmoded. For the sitter there still remains, at some level, a vague sense that they are stepping into a continuum with portraiture's oil painting tradition. To be chosen is clearly a blandishment they find difficult to resist.

Associate Professor Daniel Reynaud, aged 51, Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Theology at Avondale College of Higher Education, sat for his portrait in 2010. The researcher and sitter have a mutual interest in music and song writing. Daniel wrote:

> I was excited about the idea of sitting for a portrait. It felt a bit old-fashioned yet also special, since these days a portrait is usually snapped

[590] J.P. Grange, e-mail message to the researcher, September 21, 2012.

> pretty quickly… I liked the novelty of sitting for a portrait; an experience that few people today have… I had no particular expectations of what would happen… I was interested in observing your technique for painting. I was expecting that you might begin with a pencil or charcoal, so when you began with a broad brush and wash, I was intrigued… I enjoyed the dynamic of being there and interacting with you… and I liked sharing familiar songs as you painted… After you finished the rough wash, and before you began to detail my face with oils, you looked at me in some surprise and said, 'You've got a beard!'… As I looked at it towards the end, I felt the portrait was finished, even though there was so much blank canvas and empty background. It felt complete then, and it still does. I am happy with the final portrait, which I used as an album illustration.[591]

Daniel echoes Sarah Howgate's suggestion in her sitting for Hockney, that the exercise of sitting for an artist still remains a unique experience even in the twenty-first century. The sitter feels both privileged and flattered to be the centre of an artist's attention for a long period of time. Daniel expresses the enjoyment of the human interaction. An initial four-hour sitting seems like a long time to someone not familiar with the needs of an artist who wishes to work directly from life. Consequently the artist needs to take, for the limited time available, an approach that will yield something of value facilitated by certain techniques, brush sizes and line of enquiry.

Frank Oxley, 47 years of age, sat for his portrait in 2010. Frank is a close friend, having once been next-door neighbour to the researcher for many years. Like Daniel, what amounted to perhaps only eight hours or so of painting directly from the sitter, seemed an inordinate amount of time to Frank, whereas for the researcher, the artist, it was an intensive session of hard looking, immersing oneself in the process of seeing to find an interesting visual response quickly. Time, from the artist's perspective, is of a premium and is the vital ingredient that layers together to deliver a nuanced and potent image evocative of the sitter. Certain techniques volunteer themselves as appropriate for truncated sessions. Observations need to be prioritized so that

[591] Daniel Reynaud, e-mail message to the researcher, August 24, 2012.

the portrait can be left to stand as a record of what could realistically be achieved between the two parties in whatever time frame was available. Frank wrote:

> I think most people would like that their portrait representation would align with the mental picture that they have of themselves (if not even better)… When it came time for my initial sitting I was really looking forward to the experience. I did not give a lot of thought as to how I would pose. I immediately assumed a position not very much different to that I would normally would when we would have a coffee and a chat. Andrew painted... and I sat there and drank coffee. Too easy… I was delighted and proud to see the finished job. Does Andrew's portrait capture me – does it intend to? I will leave it for others to judge. As far as I am concerned though, he "nailed it."[592]

The already established relationship makes for a natural, relaxed pose and atmosphere. The researcher felt that the finished painting was somewhat of a revelation to the sitter of the researcher's own personality, that it allowed him access and appreciation to a part of the researcher that had previously been closed. In this sense, the researcher gained as much from the experience as the sitter. It was fulfilling and extending of friendship for both parties to engage in this way, the painting given as a token of that friendship.

Michael Gerakios is a personal friend of Frank's. He worked in senior management for many years until now operating his own business. Enamoured of Frank's portrait, he volunteered his time to sit for the researcher in order to have his own portrait painted.
Michael wrote:

> I was thinking of how much of the artist's perspective of me would I recognise and relate to in the final image. Having known Andy Collis in our wider circle of friends had given me some assurance, but I was keen to somehow influence and/or enhance our communications during the sittings to assist in Andy getting as much of a true view of me as possible. That is why I asked if I could sing a song at the first sitting and contribute

[592] Frank Oxley, e-mail message to the researcher, September 12, 2012.

> in the establishment of a 'foundation' layer of a perspective of my emotional self that I truly influenced. This I feel, was successful, as the ensuing chats we had during all of the sittings, ensured a friendly and familiar environment free from the 'awkwardness' that is present in a "client/'service" relationship. The more open and comfortable the relationship, the more I felt that I was somehow contributing to the 'emotional' input through the artist and reflected onto the canvas.

Both sitter and artist in this situation are very conscious of a new relationship being explored and established through the vehicle of the painting sessions. They go to great lengths to assure each other's comfort and cooperation.

Stephanie Bennett, Tegan Little and Tegan's younger sister, Anne, were all in their early twenties, studying Visual Arts degrees, with the researcher as their lecturer. The three students attended the sittings together. This afforded the opportunity to paint female subjects, and ones of younger years than those that tend to have been usual sitters. This made for a different studio atmosphere and the triple portrait would require different compositional considerations. Stephanie Bennett writes:

> The sessions were always, without fail, such an enjoyable, fun and relaxing experience… Knowing Andy really made the whole experience relaxing and made us feel as though we could just be ourselves… I've always wondered what it would be like to sit for an artist and now that I have had that opportunity, I feel quite attached to the work. I also feel connected to the painting because I know Andy quite well, and sitting only gave us the chance to get to know each other better… Myself and the other two girls who sat continually discussed how much we enjoyed watching Andy paint; the process was so fascinating. Overall the whole experience was something I'll never forget, it was truly an enriching experience![593]

Anne Little wrote:

> It meant having someone look at you for hours, which sounded to me, a bit awkward… What also made me look forward to this experience was that the person painting me was someone I already knew. After we

[593] Stephanie Bennett, e-mail message to the researcher, September 9, 2012.

> arrived we were told to sit comfortably and act naturally and I discovered that sitting for a portrait was in fact very easy and not awkward at all. Andy made the experience comfortable with music and talking as he worked. The time flew by and as an artist myself it was amazing to see another artist at work. In the end I think I learnt a lot as well as assisting Andy by sitting for the portrait. In a painting you can see all the emotion and life that a photograph just can't quite capture.[594]

Tegan Little wrote:

> When I was first asked to sit and have my portrait done I almost felt famous!... It's such a privileged experience that involves a lot of time and skill to create a finished product and lets face it back in the day it was privileged for royalty and the prestigious… I started to get a little nervous. Nervous because I knew my face would have to be studied, analyzed and measured and I don't think even I took that much time to look at it in the mirror… This would last forever so I knew that I would want to be looking ok. In the end however I realized that I wanted to be seen as myself so no glittery, fairy-attire was required… I felt a mixture of excitement and nervousness… My self-conscious issues were thrown out the window as I watched Andy bring me to life on canvas. The whole experience was one that I will never forget, the finished product was amazing… The piece represents a moment captured that was shared with Andy, myself, Anne and Steph.[595]

The girls all recall a relaxed atmosphere in the studio which allayed any fears they may have had, based perhaps on preconceived ideas of portraiture's historical precedents of availability to an elite few. This both worries and fascinates them. They make the observation, as previously stated by Freud's sitters, that the portrait is more than a sum of it's parts; that to those involved it represents a special period in time shared with particular people for whom they felt a personal connection of friendship. It is noteworthy that two of the sitters state independently that it is an experience they will never forget.

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[594] Anne Little, e-mail message to the researcher, September 12, 2012.
[595] Tegan Little, e-mail message to the researcher, August 13, 2012.

Loretta Tolnai sat for a portrait alongside her husband, Dr Kit Messham-Muir. They had married less than a year previous to sitting for their portraits. The researcher had gotten to know them personally over the course of this research. Reflecting on sitting for the portrait, Loretta wrote:

> I was really excited about the idea of sitting for a portrait of my husband and myself… I remember on the morning of the sitting, deliberating on what I should wear, how I should wear my hair, what jewelry I would choose - considering it would be 'immortalised' on a canvas. Kit just put on his regular gear, black t-shirt and jeans… So Kit was himself but I actually ended up settling for a much wilder, unkempt look with my hair curly and all over the place, and a low cut top with loads of cleavage. So in a way, the image is different to my usual look and style, which I am really glad about. It's kind of a freer, bolder me… I liked the atmosphere of the studio, it was very relaxing and I felt really special, that someone had asked to paint my/our portrait. I thought it was a lovely gesture… all round it was really quite a sensory experience.
>
> I think the experience helped me to understand Andy and his approach to art, and I have since become really interested in what other work he is producing… I feel really happy with the painting… It's easy to forget the feelings you have for one another and the painting captures the sense of unity that exists between us. When I look at the image it reminds me of the day Andy painted it. A time when Kit and I were newlyweds and Andy suggested the portrait for a wedding gift. I think in years to come the portrait will bring back the good memories of living in Newcastle, in summer, in love.

The comments reveal the significance of the commitment to time, by all parties, to create something of true and enduring value, not equated with monetary worth, but with relational, personal intimacy. Its chief import is as celebratory of the couple's loving relationship. The artist feels privileged to have created the painting that symbolises and evokes the bond between the sitters, and in so doing, extends his relationship with both sitters himself.

The researcher's sixteen-year-old daughter, Annie Rose, offers her reflection on the sitting for her portrait:

> Knowing the artist very personally, the relationship between the artist and the sitter was no different than sitting around the dinner table of an evening. I was reading a book, looking down and not making eye contact with my father for the entire session, though I was surprised to see that regardless of the distance between myself and the audience, because of how impersonal I am in the painting, my personality and heart is still shown in the painting, because of the relationship I have with my father. It was interesting to see the personality he gave me when he had finished the painting. It's a perfect representation of me through my father's eyes, and that is evident when I look at the painting, that not only my personality, but our warm and trustworthy relationship is revealed through my father's hands. It could be no one other than his daughter.[596]

When artist and sitter are intimately related, the act of sitting for a portrait periodically is no surprise to either party. It is not unexpected that from time to time the painter will paint the portrait of their immediate family, and they will be comfortable about the idea of sitting. In this particular situation, it continues to reassure and confirm the established relationship; it seems as natural, expected and even necessary as having dinner together – as Annie Rose says.

Since the practical research explores the value of the 'human touch' through the development of an artist/sitter relationship, the researcher felt a need to approach someone 'known' only through newspaper or filmic media. The purpose was to compare and investigate through portraiture the value of human touch through the experience of meeting someone around whom a public persona has been created through the media. Having heard and seen recent media interviews with Lindy Chamberlain-Creighton, the woman who was at the centre of perhaps Australia's most publicized and debated news story internationally following the disappearance of her nine-week old daughter, Azaria, after a dingo had taken her from a tent in central Australia in 1980. The researcher secured meetings and sittings with her to enable the

[596] AnnieRose Collis, written statement to researcher, September 19, 2012.

painting of her portrait. Her reflections reveal that she enjoyed being part of a collaboration. She writes:

> Sitting for Andy Collis was a unique experience. I have sat several times before for my portrait, one of which hangs in the National Portrait Gallery, so I expected a similar experience this time… The sitting flew by… When he stopped and suggested coffee, I thought it was break time, but he was finished for the day. Expecting to see a rough monochromatic sketch only, he totally surprised me with a likeness of myself that some would have considered a finished portrait. On my final sitting we were able to discuss final details artist-to-artist and I really enjoyed the experience. Andy's concepts and philosophy for his present study I find fascinating. I love his news television piece, with the picture of Azaria and myself on the rock. The current portrait is my second favourite all time portrait, even if I do wish I had less wrinkles! Overall it was a quick and painless experience that I would not hesitate to repeat.[597]

The making of Lindy's portrait and the establishing of the relationship is analysed in detail in Chapter 3:2, but from Lindy's reflection here it is clear that, despite having been the focus of a phenomenal amount of, often uninvited, public scrutiny, she found this experience 'unique' and pleasurable. She implies in comments such as 'we were able to discuss final details artist-to-artist' that she feels equal in all aspects of the relationship, actively contributing to the enterprise. In her references to my other work, as in *Ode to remembrance: Age shall not weary them*, which references the much-publicised image of Lindy with her daughter Azaria a day before her disappearance in 1980, she enthuses over its new creative employ. Perhaps in this instance, and having gotten to understand the artist, she feels positive, assured and trusting about its use in his hands.

It is apparent from all these personal accounts from sitters about their portraits, whether for established world-renowned painters or for the researcher, that the sense of personal involvement and relationship with the artist colours the appreciation of the portrait, predominantly in a positive way. Regardless of

[597] Lindy Chamberlain-Creighton, e-mail message to researcher, November 26, 2012.

objective critical appraisal of the portrait as an independent work of art, for those that sincerely invested their time in the sessions that yielded it, the image clearly represents more than the sum of its parts. Tom Wood writes this heartening statement:

> Not all portraits end up in grand collections; some are treasured family mementoes, conversation pieces and much loved decoration.
> They might not be revered but they might be loved even if it's only by a half blind spinster in her dotage, but that's OK, not everything can be brilliant.[598]

This reminds us that the artist/sitter relationship is two-way. There is a certain responsibility and respect required from the artist entrusted to present the sitter as they see and understand them. The resultant work is not, as much other painting can be, about the ego of the artist.

3:2 The Value of Presence: A Studio Based Research Investigation

Through my own painting practice of working directly from the sitter or myself, or alternatively wholly from second hand sources, the research investigates what is brought to the resultant images via these alternate methods of working. As national portrait galleries and prestigious portrait prizes stipulate the pre-requisite of working from life, there is concern to identify the value of presence, of artist and sitter, to the making of a portrait. Alternatively to working from the sitter, and without implying hierarchy, I research what is expressed through works where the response is wholly to mediated – generally photographic – representations. Likewise, self-portraiture from direct self-observation reveals by comparison possible differences of aims, objectives and concerns in the practice of portraiture painted from life. The culminating exhibition is therefore presented not as discreet oppositional and unrelated practices within painting, but rather as an integrated installation where to view and make comparison of

[598] Tom Wood. email to researcher, August 2009

the works resulting from the different methods and sources it is to be informed of the value of the artist/sitter relationship to the resultant portraits, which features in the bulk of the work.

Beginning in April 2009 and culminating in February 2013, The chronology of the portraits discussed is as follows:

- *My Father, Aged 88,* 2009 (See Image 69).
- *My Mother, Aged 79*, 2009 (See image 70).
- *My Son, Simon: Aged 6,* 2009 *(*See Image 71).
- *Self-Portrait: No.1,* 2009 (See Image 72).
- *Self-Portrait: No. 2,* 2009 (See Image 73).
- *My Son, Thomas, aged 16, with his friend, John, aged 16,* 2009 (See Image 74).
- *My Daughter, Annie-Rose: Aged 14*, 2009 (See Image 75).
- *Self-Portrait No. 3*, 2009 (See Image 76).
- *Self-Portrait No. 4*, 2009 (See Image 77).
- *Self-Portrait No. 5: Decalcomania,* 2009 (See Image 78).
- *Portrait of Charlotte, aged 18,* 2010 (See Image 79).
- *Self-Portrait No. 6*, 2009 (See Images 80A & 80B).
- *Portrait of Kyle*, *Aged 17*, 2009 (See Image 81).
- *Self-Portrait No. 7*, 2010 (See Image 82).
- *Self-Portrait No. 8: Focus and Periphery*, 2010 (See Image 83).
- *Self-Portrait No. 9: A Turn of the Head*, 2010 (See Image 84).
- *Self-Portrait No.10*: (See Image 85).
- *Nichol Amy, apparently: 4 Panels,* 2010 (See Image 86)
- *Portrait of My Father, Aged 89: His Battle of Britain*, 2010 (See Image 87).
- *My Father: A portrait of Dementia,* 2010. (See Image 88).
- *Self-Portrait No. 12,* 2010 (See Image 89).
- *Self-Portrait No. 13,* 2010 (See Image 90).
- *Self-Portrait No. 14: Imprint,* 2010 (Image 91).

- *Daniel,* 2010 (See Image 92).
- *Friends I have never met,* 2010-2011 (See Image 93).
- *JP. 1: Top Panel*, 2010 (See Image 94).
- *JP. Panels 2 & 3.* 2010-2011(See Images 95 & 96).
- *Frank*, 2010 (See Image 97).
- *Self-Portrait: Grisaille*, 2011 (See Image 98).
- *Dr Colin Rosewell*, 2011(See Image 99).
- *Kit & Loretta*, 2011 (See Image 100).
- *Michael Gerakios*, 2011 (See Images 101, 101A).
- *Take Three Girls: Anne, Tegan & Stephanie*, 2011-12 (See Images 102A & 102B).
- *A model: A perfect stranger,* 2012 (See Images 103 and 104).
- *Ode to remembrance: Age shall not weary them*. 2012 (See Images 105A & 105B,)
- *Lindy Chamberlain-Creighton: A Dingo Took My Baby*, 2012 (See Images 106A, 106B, 106C, 106D, 106E, 106F)
- *Simon,* 2013 (See Image 107).
- *Thomas,* 2013 (See Image 108).
- *Sally: Lady Madonna*, 2013 (See Image 109).

3:2 (i) Investigating the value of presence through portraits produced directly from the sitter.

Works painted directly from life fall into four broad categories and are discussed in this order: a) Family and intimate friends. b) Self-portraits. c) Acquaintances, about whom the researcher knew little of their personal life. d) People whom I had never previously met prior to painting their portrait.

a) *Family and intimate friends.*

The portrait, *My Father, Aged 88,* 2009, (Image 69), is acrylic on gesso-primed board (120cm x 95cm). My painting medium of preference being oil on canvas, there was a conscious decision to work rather with these materials. The scale and the use of water-based acrylic paint would encourage me to make the head much larger than life size, working with large brushes over more spontaneous washes or impasto areas. In relation to what has been said about the material specificity of paint and what paint can offer by comparison to photography, the larger scale was important. Firstly it meant that the sitter was not easily in my cone of vision and therefore necessitated my moving around- I could not be a 'single lens' and easily adhere to Western 'rules' of perspective. It meant an amalgamation of various perspectives and a certain distortion, by usual photographic standards, through live binocular vision–an attribute of working-from-life that has been discussed. This affirms Hockney's observations of Picasso's 'marvelous portraits of his lover Marie-Therese Walter which he made during the thirties: he must have spent hours with her in bed, very close, looking at her face. A face looked at like that does look different from one seen at five or six feet. Strange things begin to happen to the eyes, the cheeks, the nose-wonderful inversions and repetitions. Certain 'distortions' appear, but they can't be distortions because they're reality. Those paintings are about that kind of intimate seeing.'[599] Wendy Wick Reaves also notes that this is also an experience that painting can allow: 'Both [Ivan] Albright and Hockney invited the viewer into their pictures to move around and experience



Image 69
My Father, Aged 88 (2009)

[599] Weschler. *True to life*, 22.

the imagery from different perspectives.'[600] Secondly, mindful of this researches discussion about the aura and silence that has been seen as peculiar to original works (see chapter 2:1 references to Benjamin's and Berger's writings), I was aware that the viewing experience of the final work should be valued as one quite distinct from viewing paintings as photographs. Therefore the scale and the presence of the medium had to be such that it would be heavily compromised if seen as a photographic image. This was a guiding factor in all the works that I executed from life and gives a counterpoint, visually and conceptually, by comparison to the works I executed from photographic sources.

As discussed in chapter two, Gerhard Richter's 1963 painting, *President Johnson consoles Mrs. Kennedy,* is purposely painted in oil on paper adhering precisely to the very small dimensions of the source photograph, thereby setting up the desired uncertainty between expectations and reading of a portrait painting and that of a newspaper image. In my portraits from the sitters, the reverse is true; I want the experience of being involved in looking in three-dimensional space to be impacted by the large surface areas. The large sizes of these works announce quite clearly that they are paintings first and foremost and the various distortions–by comparison to a photographic image–brought about by having to move physically to see and paint on such a large scale, separates them even more so from the experience of viewing most photographs.

Hoping to engender a sense of collaboration with the sitter and to embrace our familial intimacy, I also made the conscious decision not to 'direct' or 'enforce' the sitting myself. Therefore, I did not pre-plan or discuss a composition, or tell the sitter what to wear or how to pose. I imposed the timeframe of a one-day sitting and that I would leave the portrait as it was at

[600] Wendy Wick Reaves. *Reflections/Refractions: Self-Portraiture in the twentieth century.* Smithsonian Institution Scholarly Press.Rowman and Littlefield. 2009. 6.

the end of that session, in the hope that the singular mood and decisions of the day, which multiple sessions might obscure or destroy, might be retained.

My father, 88 years old at the time of this sitting, was in the mid-stages of dementia, having suffered a stroke two years earlier. Over my life, he is perhaps the person that I have most repeatedly drawn and painted. I was to do two much larger paintings of my father further into this research. In early 2012 my father passed away. He was always a willing and available subject for me, but it is only now that, on reflection, I realize I had not considered such willingness on his part as his way of having valuable time with his son. His motive was not to have or see himself in a painting, for the extent of his interest, knowledge and understanding of art only ever came from me, and so now I see these portraits as the by-product of precious times spent with him. (This affirms the aforementioned comments of Lucian Freud's daughter, Isobel Boyt and those of his lover, the painter Celia Paul. See chapter 3:1(ii)) The painting comes to represent the encapsulation and preservation of that time, the private conversations and silent communications between those intimately engaged in the process, regardless of its quality as an independent artwork to a critical outside audience.

I was conscious of visceral mark-making in paint, working with relatively large hog-hair brushes, dipping in the water and paint, dragging it across the board. It took approximately seven hours to paint. Though the scale and marks of this portrait became necessarily speedy, the idea of the image is that of an old man, on the point of sleep who has become lost in his own world, despite of, or perhaps because of, the comfortable presence of his son who paints him.

This approach, and the considerations therein, were extended in the painting *My Mother, Aged 79*, 2009, (Image 70). The head is slightly turned, not full-facing. In later portraits I would ensure the fully-frontal face and, generally, direct eye contact as a way of almost demanding a connection with the viewer–a demonstrable legacy of the discussion of Holbein's portrait of *Henry VIII* discussed in chapter 1.The extensive runs and dribbles of the thinner acrylic paint was something that I had not utilised in oils, but in this manner of painting seemed unavoidable though it should not become a contrivance. Again, the work was completed in a day–a relatively short time for painting, but I did not want to labour further without the sitter present, as this condition provides comparison to others in this research where I have had to complete some areas from photographic references.



Image 70
My Mother, Aged 79 (2009).

The painting of my youngest boy, *My Son, Simon: Aged 6,* 2009,(Image 71), was identical to that of the previous two portraits of my father and mother in all factors with regard to medium and set-up. The sitter being a young boy, I set up on a plinth so that his head was in line with mine as he watched DVDs on a laptop. The head is a three-quarter view, but the eyes look off to the left. By comparison to the direct gaze of my mother's portrait, this implies that the sitter is absorbed in something off-frame. There is the suggestion that he is comfortable with my presence since he is



Image 71
*My Son, Simon: Aged 6 (*2009).

not distracted or self-conscious but rather, lost in concentration and oblivious to my presence, he sucks on his thumb. The painting took about six hours to complete – the extent of my boy's patience. This prompted me to take a photograph to which I referred for another possible hour. As a consequence, the looseness of the paint has many more areas where thinner washes are glazed over them, and though initially blocked in loosely with house brushes, there is much more use of finer brushes in the detailing of features. In short, the portrait becomes tightened up somewhat. While this doesn't have to be a negative in of itself, I believe the coherence of form between the works as a series begins to break down here. I am reminded of Martin Gayford's conversation with Freud who said he was concerned for 'making the figure and its environment one organic whole.'[601] I sensed that in this work two working methods were starting to vie with one another.

My Son, Thomas, aged 16, with his friend, John, aged 16, 2009, (see Image 74), is a double-portrait of teenage boys who are close friends with one another, as well as my knowing them closely. I painted their portraits in a landscape format, with John occupying the left half of the composition and Thomas, the right. Their shoulders overlap, linking both body forms together. Their heads are just slightly cropped by the top edge of the board. The thinner stains of the initial acrylic work was reminiscent of egg-tempera painting, a technique I had once practiced extensively. An almost luminescent light can be suggested by scratching back very gently to the smooth primed gesso ground. To this end I began to employ a flexible razor blade to take back areas of acrylic, or re-paint thin layers over again. In other areas I built up some of the features, with the challenge still of maintaining an integrated surface. I have always been fond of Peter Blake's use of acrylic paint. In such works as *Titania*, 1972, or *Portrait of David Hockney in a Hollywood-Spanish Interior*, begun 1965, he wipes and gently scrapes areas back while other focal points, such as the facial features of Titania, are crisp and as polished

[601] Gayford. *Man in a blue scarf,* 188.

as porcelain.[602] (See Image 68). The finest hairline slivers of delicate coloured lines are, in their own quiet and restrained way, as painterly as any feverish expressionistic brushwork. I acknowledge the influenced of Peter Blake in my handling of acrylic paint of Thomas' features, particularly his ear and lips. It is impossible to say if the two teenagers will remember the session as anything remarkable, but for me it enabled at least some interaction and access to their otherwise somewhat closed world.

Image subject to copyright: to view image please see: Peter Blake: Exhibition Catalogue. London: Tate Gallery Publications, 1983.

Image 68
Peter Blake (b.1932). *Titania* (1972–74).

On returning to the painting after a few days, I felt happy with the faces–both heads looking down, their eyes downcast, they obviously seem engaged in something together in which the spectator does not share. They were, in fact, sharing an iPod and listening to music. It was a conscious decision to not include the obvious white earphones that ran across their necks to their ears. To do so, I felt, while being a reference to current technology and youth culture, would conflict with the more important idea of representing their relationship. This solution represents their close friendship, implying the exclusion of others. In retrospect the joint enterprise of listening to one iPod to the exclusion of others could just has ably expressed their bond, and perhaps in a more current and apt form.



Image 74
My Son, Thomas, aged 16, with his friend, John, aged 16 (2009).

The areas surrounding them, at this point, were quite bland rather than supportive or interesting. Stepping 'left-of-field' in

[602] Peter Blake, *Peter Blake: Catalogue for Tate Retrospective* (London: Tate Gallery Publications,1983), 54, 65.

an attempt to integrate two seemingly different approaches, I treated the background with extremely bold and limited colours. Following a rationale that the two heads should remain unified while all else could be at odds, I used flat-white house paint to isolate the two linked heads and necks. Using a bold aggressive gestural mark, I circumscribed an agitated Franz Kline-like outline around the edge of the heads and approximately around the shapes of their upper bodies. To the left of the left head, John, I poured and daubed red oil-based house-paint, whereas to the right hand side of the right head, Thomas, I daubed and painted oil-based green, the complementary colour of red. These colours then could be seen metaphorically to equate with the idea of friendship, the one completing the other, although quite independent. Aesthetically, the oil sheen spatters and the white surface that relates to what in reality was the background, which now comes forward and is dominant, quite aggressive but simple. The delicate tempera-like areas that relate to the faces, which in reality are in forward focus, are atmospheric, gentle and complex. There is, then, the attempt to make two completely opposite paint techniques work together on one surface.

For the painting *My Daughter, Annie-Rose: Aged 14*, 2009, (Image 75), I used acrylic on canvas, 95cm x 85cm. She sat in a comfortable chair, quite naturally relaxed and reading quietly to herself. There did not seem any need for conversation between us. There is the experience of communication; connectedness without words. There was no awkwardness. Happy in each other's company, she was involved in her book and I with my painting. She therefore has an averted gaze, as does the aforementioned painting of my son Thomas with his friend John. This makes a correlation with Gerard Richter's



Image 75
My Daughter, Annie-Rose: Aged 14 (2009).

painting of his own daughter, *Ella,* 2007, in which she also looks down. Moorhouse ascribes 'a sense of melancholy' to the averted gaze and notes that Richter painted his own self-portrait as also looking down, as well as that of his wife, Sabine, in *Reader*, 1994, which had in turn referenced Vermeer's *Woman reading a letter by a window*, c.1657-59. In the rest of my works I chose not to explore the notion of the inner feelings of melancholia that the averted gaze might suggest but purposely have the sitters making direct eye contact, so that the experience of meeting the sitter is more direct with the viewer.

With limited time I used broad washes directly onto the canvas, with a limited colour range–mainly flesh tints. The use of canvas allowed the washes to seep and bleed into one another and the fabric of the canvas itself. If the paint ran down the canvas or into pools, it only proved advantageous for the delicate but free aesthetic that conveyed a young teenage girl. I gave slightly more attention to the features of eyes, nose and mouth and the strand of hair, fortuitously serving as a visual linear link from the more detailed facial areas back to the hair, which creates a vignette against the white virgin canvas. The whole painting was finished in less than four hours. In 2012, I submitted this portrait to the Doug Moran Portrait Prize in Sydney. The entry form requires that the portrait has been worked from life and that 'Portraits that reveal a deep connection between the artist and their subject will be well received by the judges.' On these grounds I felt the portrait satisfied the criteria, and indeed it was duly short-listed for the $150,000 prize and displayed on their web site, although it did not win.

Leaving the painted image freestanding on the white canvas, with no suggestion of the context of the person, advanced desirable qualities that I began then to consider for the rest of my portraits. It accentuates the materiality of the paint directly as an expression of the person, rather than as an illusory representation of them in a particular space. This allows the spectator to read the image, as suggested by the accentuated qualities of the

paint, in his or her own context at the time of viewing, instead of having the sense of stepping backwards in time, into the illusory place that might have been suggested by rendering the atmosphere and trappings of the original sittings. Also, importantly, avoiding painting in the 'background,' as any suggestion of real space, means that there is no obvious border, edge or framing to the image as such. The image of the face, as marks in paint, 'hangs' in the air, as it were; the unframed, white canvas only detectable as separate from the white display walls by virtue of the shadow from the stretcher. There is some correlation to Francis Bacon's paintings, such as *Three Studies of Isobel Rawsthorne*, 1967, where 'represented space cannot clearly be distinguished from primary space…The figure is both inside and outside the image on the wall.'[603] In relation to Joselit's observations about the current survival of painting, as discussed in chapter 2:1 (iii), the painting becomes more part of the network of the gallery walls and space and the similarly treated portraits within that network, as opposed to singularly celebrated individually framed and isolated images. This also resonates with Eshelman's observations of how contemporary figurative painting can be a unified totality, also discussed in that same chapter.

Portrait of Kyle, *Aged 17*, 2009, (Image 81), is on identical size canvas with acrylic paint. The build up of subtle washes and, again, the Peter Blake-like rendering of the features was very controlled to the point of being stifling. I attempted to address this by pouring paint over sections of the image. Again there is advantage made of the stains and runs of paint breaking up the white canvas. Kyle is a teenage friend of my son's, who was visiting from UK. I had gotten to know him over his stay with us. The painting



Image 81
Portrait of Kyle, *Aged 17* (2009).

[603] Van Alphen. "Making Sense of Affect." *Francis Bacon: Five Decades,* 70.

sessions were done in a day while my son was at school. It provided me, again, with a 'legitimate' reason to have a teenager's attention. Again, two sometimes-separate generational worlds found common ground within which to communicate and create shared memory. As in the painting of my daughter, and as becomes the norm and for the reasons stated, the paint relates to the figure only. The rest of the canvas remains unpainted.

Portrait of My Father, Aged 89: His Battle of Britain, 2010, (Image 87). My mother brought my father to the studio. He had his walking stick and he sat down in a comfortable chair. Though we chatted for a while, it was not long before he had fallen asleep, by which time I had basically blocked him into the painting. I had no concept of how I would try and say any more about him than previous portraits I had done. I noticed my father's walking stick, which, through his dementia, was always an obsession for him to have at his side. As he slept and I painted, I recalled a conversation I had had with him. I had asked him what he considered the best period of his life. I was somewhat surprised by his answer that it was the Second World War. He had been in the Royal Air Force and travelled around the UK and to Canada as an engineer. The walking stick, placed as it was, suggested an aeroplane's joystick and it lead me to fancy that in his daytime sleep, and sometimes in his dementia, he may be remembering those embedded memories.

On another day's session, without my father's presence, I brought in a framed photograph of him, taken when he was nineteen years old, in his RAF uniform.



Image 87
Portrait of My Father, Aged 89: His Battle of Britain (2010).

I also brought in his war medals. The integration of these elements means that there are, in fact, four painted portraits on this canvas; the 'live' figure of my seated father, the painting of the photograph of my father aged 19, and the two painted profile heads of King George VI from the medals. This portrait then employs indexical ways of denoting my father and his service to 'King and Country'. There is enough semblance of the King and my father as a young man to let them serve semiotically within the iconography of the painting while hovering at strategic points to suggest the implied dream my father might be having. Similarly the chair appears as if it might be the cockpit of an aircraft, with suggested propellers and RAF insignia underscoring the inference. It seemed appropriate to contradictorily use a 'real' model of an aeroplane, which is stuck onto the canvas, top right. This painting then contains two representations of my father, one that is painted from life as an old man, one year away from his death, and the second portrait based on a hand-coloured photographic image of him in his youth. This image I had grown up around all my life, but which now I saw with very different eyes – the young and handsome, aspirational young airman, eyes cast upward as if ignoring or suppressing mixed emotions of excitement and anxiety as he steps into a very uncertain future. The viewing of this photograph recalls Roland Barthes' account, in *Camera Lucida*, of having found a photograph of his own mother showing her as a child. As with the photograph of my father, the image of Barthes' mother was from a time before he ever knew her, yet by virtue of it being a photograph it is seen to carry the physical trace of the person, enabling him to say of his mother, 'There she is! She's really there!'[604] As I have mentioned in the earlier discussion about *My Father, Aged 88,* these sessions afforded my father and I opportunity to share precious moments. For much of this time there was little verbal communication, but for me the images represent infinitely more than an aged war veteran close to death. I do not see them so much as a *memento mori* but more as a reminder of life to live.

[604] Barthes. *Camera Lucida,* 99.

Jean Philippe is a personal friend who offered to sit. We had two days of painting from life, producing what would eventuate as *JP. 1: Top Panel*, 2010, (Image 94). I changed from acrylic to oil after the basic forms had been blocked in. I knew JP reasonably well before the painting, though had spent little time with him without our marriage partners. The sittings for the painting gave much opportunity to establish a much stronger personal relationship, talking about a whole gamut of things but particularly music, books and art. I was relatively happy with the portrait painted from life, but decided to take a few photographs before he left, as reference to finish off. I duly started work from the photographs but the more I referenced the photographic image the more the original aesthetic of the portrait from life started to slip away. The face, depicting him with direct eye contact with the viewer, retained some of the idiosyncratic distortions that are the qualities of binocular vision, when painting from life, but the static quality that descended on the painting was, I believe, the result of more reliance on the photograph. In acknowledgement of this, I attempted to resolve the photorealist appearance.



Image 94
J.P. 1: Top Panel (2010).

True, a photographic print is flat, but it is an object in itself, it does have edges and a certain thickness to it. I continued to render the image to appear as if it were a photographic print pinned to a wooden surface, employing tromp l'oeil devices of illusory pinhead, stains and wood grain. In 1863, Judge RW Walker said, 'A most important requisite of a good portrait is that it shall be a correct likeness of the original', but Richard Brilliant, in reference to this remark notes:

> Even the notion of likeness assumes some degree of difference between the portrait image and the person, otherwise they would be identical and no question of likeness would arise… the more a portrait resembles its counterpart, the more obvious and destructive of the illusion of comparability are the substantial differences between them.[605]

[605] Brilliant. *Portraiture*, 26.

This was becoming the case with the portrait of JP. The wry humour from the play of *tromp l'oeil* illusion entertains the brain's propensity to gestalt switch between recognising painting as a painting and then being convinced it is the 'real' thing. I therefore accentuated the photograph as if an actual thing, but in reality, so to speak, it is a painted photograph. To extend this notion further, I re-stretched the canvas to a smaller dimension, so that the area of illusory wood became the side of the canvas, an inclusion that some viewers may unintentionally overlook. This painting became the centre panel of a three-paneled piece. It became the focus of discussion when I was interviewed for ABC radio in 2012. Subsequently the three-paneled work was put on display at the ABC shop.

My next-door neighbour of many years, Frank Oxley volunteered to sit for his portrait, (Image 97). I invited him to the studio where he sat in the chair with a cup of coffee and I began painting. Freud said that responding to the natural pose of the figure was often preferable to him designing a pose. 'It was the result of an interaction'[606] and, as he added, ' a collaboration or sometimes just their boredom. They relax physically and psychologically. That's when the interesting poses occur.'[607] He said it was 'not so much to do with my mind as to do with not wanting to have a particular method. I don't want to plan in advance.'[608] With my sitters I adopted this maxim as much as possible.



Image 97
Frank (2011).

[606] Auping. *Lucian Freud: Portraits*, 49.
[607] Ibid. 49.
[608] Gayford (in conversation with Lucian Freud). *Man with a blue scarf,* 37.

Frank spent a maximum of eight hours, including breaks, for one day. Working on such a large scale, 2.4m x 1.8m, I now took the usual approach of large brushes, thin acrylic paint gradually building to thicker acrylic. I gave the final hours to concentrating on the facial features and I did take photographs. The sitting was very relaxed and we enjoyed easy conversation as the painting progressed. Learning from the JP painting, and to avoid unnecessary concern for fidelity to a photograph as opposed to the original mood established by the live sitting, I broke up my time on the painting. Over several weeks I returned to the painting time and time again. I exaggerated the scale of the boot to give the appearance of protruding into the real space of the viewer. Much of the rest of the painting is left very loose and open, as it had been painted in the very first session. I was happier with the way this retained the spirit of the original session. Again, except for the chair in which he sits, there is no reference to background space; the protruding painted boot appears to push out from the loose open painterly marks into the viewer's space. Frank is painted with direct eye contact with the viewer. A sense of encounter and engagement is attained.

Having gotten to know Dr Kit Messham-Muir in his supervisory role for this research, friendship developed outside that prescribed capacity. I had also met his wife, Loretta, the very first time that I met Kit. Over the course of the four years we have enjoyed developing a personal friendship, and they have come to know my wife and family as personal friends too. They married during the first year of this study, so that when I came to



Image 100
Kit & Loretta (2011).

paint them, on the 1.8m x 2.4m canvas, though I did not suggest the pose, it seemed appropriate that they be seated facing one another, (Image 100). They chose the position of having their arms intertwined and to be looking into each other's eyes. Unlike the majority of the portraits from life in this practical research, there is no eye contact therefore with the viewer. This portrait is concerned with their relationship to the exclusion of others, but is testament to our artist/sitter relationship in the trust and lack of embarrassment at my sharing in their intimacy. They are painted as equals and as one, implied by the even balance of the space they accommodate, and their interlocking bodies. The wedding ring can be clearly seen on Kit's left hand. In Loretta's hair is a gold brooch –a treasured memento of her deceased mother. The profile of Loretta's face, with high forehead, and the positioning of the two heads looking across at one another, is reminiscent of Piero Della Francesca's portrait of the *Duke and Duchess of Urbino*, 1465/66. I included a *tromp l'oeil* painted version of Piero's famous diptych as if a postcard floating on the white canvas, again destroying any natural depiction of space, to the right of Kit's head, in acknowledgement of this historical reference and intimation of Kit's own profession as lecturer in Art History. Its illusory, mimetic representation contrasts and highlights the painterliness of the sitter's portraits. The sessions also allowed Loretta, who is not involved in art professionally, to share more in her husband's interest, and to contribute much to the atmosphere and discussion surrounding the portrait.

More mindful of the imminence of the final exhibition, I painted three portraits of the members of my family so that they could be hung as five panels, the complete family related as a poliptych. Alongside *My Daughter, Annie-Rose: Aged 14* and *Self-Portrait No. 6*, was hung *Simon,* 2013, acrylic on board, *Thomas,* 2013, graphite and watercolour on board, and *Sally:(Lady Madonna)*, 2013, acrylic on polythene on board with gold leaf. All five works are 120cm x 950cm, which links them all visually although the mediums and techniques used for each respond to the individual sitter as I perceive them.



Image 108
Thomas (2013).



Image 109.
Sally: Lady Madonna (2013).



Image 107
Simon (2013).

My Daughter, Annie-Rose: Aged 14 has been discussed above, and my *Self-Portrait No. 6* is discussed in the following subsection. *Simon*,(Image 107) a portrait of my ten-year-old son, is executed through a slow build up of acrylic washes. It is one of the very few portraits in the show that deals with a suggestion of background atmosphere. The painting employs chiaroscuro techniques whereby the face turns out of the shadows into light, and there is acknowledgement of Caravaggio-esque luminist refraction of colour on the sitter's left hand side. The highlights have been scratched back to the white gesso ground, as in Andrew Wyeth-like tempera techniques, with some of those areas over-washed again with acrylic. The detailed and gentle use of acrylic is empathetic with the sentiments of the relationship between father and youngest child. The portrait of *Thomas,* (Image 108), my eldest, twenty-year old, child is much more direct and spontaneous. Linear drawing transcribes busy, energetic looking over an hour's session. Water washes allow the graphite to bleed and run, qualities further exploited by the use of watercolour. The portrait is not a snapshot but does very much capture the sitter within a certain lively mood. There is a hint of a smile and parted lips, which infers movement and transience. Finally, I wished to have my wife, Sally, as central to the five panels, central to the family. She was a reluctant model, fearing I may use detailed mimetic representation, describing aging's physicality. I wanted though to represent her as friend and marriage partner, the persona that I know beyond her physical appearance, and as matriarch of the family group. To this end I evolved a different technique. I made a very

quick contour drawing on the board. I overlaid clear polythene over this drawing and, with an ink marker, outlined simplified areas, which I cut out of the polythene. These were then painted with acrylic colour and pressed, paint-side down, onto the corresponding area of the drawing. The effect was to create an icon-like image, akin to a stained-glass window. I pursued this thinking by using gold-leaf extensively on the background then covered the whole of the work with ultra-high gloss varnish, effectively creating the association with glass. This fitted with the idea of a church-like poliptych, in which the Madonna is central to the wings. I submitted this work to the *Gosford Regional Prize,* 2013, at which point I extended the title to *Sally: Lady Madonna,* (Image 109), in deference to the aforementioned traditions of such icon painting, –the notion of the mother-like-figure as Madonna is also described in Richter's portrait of himself with his Aunt[609]–and also as a personal wry nod to The Beatles lyrics, 'Lady Madonna, children at your feet, wonder how you manage to make ends meet,'[610] which was itself intended as a tribute to the everyday mother figure. The painting was selected and hung in the *Gosford Regional Prize.*

b) *Self-portraits.*

Throughout the practical research I would return to self-portraiture. There are multiple reasons for the inclusion of self-portraits in the final exhibition. As with the work done from photography, painting with the self as sitter offers, by contrast, insight into the value of the relationship and impact of the portrait done from the outside sitter with whom the artist has a relationship. Bond and Woodall state that, with self -portraiture, 'creativity and artistic freedom are frequently implied,'[611] the suggestion then being that in painting from the sitter these qualities may become more stifled. I generally found this observation to

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[609] Moorhouse. *Gerhard Richter: Portraits*, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VeEf_gj36gQ. Published on Jun 29, 2012.
[609] Ibid.
[610] Lennon-McCartney. *Lady Madonna.* Recorded**:** 3, 6 February 1968. Producer: George Martin. Released: 15 March 1968 (UK. Parlophone Records), 18 March 1968 (US. Capitol Records). http://www.beatlesbible.com/songs/lady-madonna/
[611] Anthony Bond and Joanna Woodall. *Self-Portrait: Renaissance to Contemporary.* London, Sydney. National Portrait Gallery, London and Art Gallery of NSW Publications. 2005. 7.

be true. Through self-portraiture, experimentation and intuitive exploring is easier to be indulged since there is no consideration of the sitter's ego, there is no explanation or discussion with another party and there does not need to be any concern for mimetic, physical likeness. 'Self-portraiture's gaze characterizes the artist as seer in possession of a vision that is both directed externally–at the world, at other people, at one's own outward appearance– and a source of insight.'[612] This struggle to perceive one's own 'identity through self-image remains a compelling contemporary theme'[613] in painting. Since one can never actually see oneself directly, only as a reflection or as a reproduced photographic or filmic image, self-portraiture engages the artist in looking at a representation on a foreign surface while at the same time being manifestly aware of its corporeal relation to one's own existence in that very space. The self-portraitist's solutions to grappling with harnessing one's own identity as an image in paint stimulates a desirable approach of delving deeper than surface likeness and it is this that benefits portraiture of an observed sitter. As I have discussed in the painting of sitters, I am conscious that the works need to offer a different insight, or ways of access into the person than other mediums may offer. Self-portraiture facilitates this interrogation and expression of inner feelings most appropriately, which, again, encourages the painting of sitters to rise above mere rendition of likeness. Bond and Woodall express this well here,

> The material substance of oil paint, and the way it can be visibly manipulated and reworked, can highlight the transformation of a body of material into an illusion of spirit or consciousness as a dynamic, ongoing process. A kind of equivalence can therefore be seen between "painterly" handling and the creative process of the subject represented. By making embodied artistry (in the figure of the painter and the way that it is painted) the very subject of representation, self-portraiture thus challenges the reduction of portraiture to the reproduction of a physical likeness.[614]

[612] Ibid., 11.
[613] Ibid., 7.
[614] Bond and Woodall. *Self-Portrait,* 11.

A further reason for the extensive experimentation with self-portraiture is perhaps more pragmatic, for as Ivan Albright noted, 'All self-portraits have the advantage of having an available model when and where you want him.'[615] With the ready availability of oneself as model and no constrictions on available time, whatever avenues of enquiry that present themselves can be wandered down freely. The opportunity of working from the same face, one's own, also means that the painter needs to find and offer something new in progressive works. As Jonathan Yeo expresses; 'No one picture tells the whole story…it is impossible to say everything about someone in one image.'[616] Further, if, as Wendy Rick Reaves asserts, 'in most portraiture, we "meet" the subject though the intermediary–the artist– so our experience of the person is indirect. In self-portraiture it is just the two of us,'[617] then the viewing of the paintings of sitters juxtaposed against self-portraits and portraits from photography should help evaluate the value of the artist/sitter relationship, since this is a differentiating factor.

Finally, as Vivian Gaston points out, 'Self-portraits demonstrate the principle of ogni dipintore dipinge se (every painter paints himself), in which artists reveal and remodel themselves in all the work they create, whether they take themselves as the model or not. In this sense all art is self-portrayal, as famously noted by Oscar Wilde.'[618] If this is the case, again, the proximity of these areas of approach to portraiture should enable the viewer to discern the extent to which the relationship with the sitter has impacted on the portraits done from their observation in life, which, in the final exhibition, were to form the major part of the show.

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[615] Ann Van Devanter and Alfred V. Frankenstein*. American Self-Portraits, 1670-1973*. (Washington D.C. International Exhibitions Foundation. 1974.) 158.
[616] Sarah Howgate. "Under the skin of Jonathan Yeo: An Interview." *The Many Faces,* 229.
[617] Wendy Wick Reaves. *Reflections/Refractions: Self-Portraiture in the twentieth century.* (Smithsonian Institution Scholarly Press.Rowman and Littlefield. 2009.) 2.
[618] Vivien Gaston.*The Naked Face: Self-Portraits.*_ Melbourne, Australia: National Gallery of Victoria, 2010.12.
Oscar Wilde. *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. New York. Harper and Rowe. 1965. 5.

With these considerations in mind, I executed fifteen self-portraits over the four-year period of this research and selected seven for the final exhibition. *Self-Portrait: No.1,* 2009, (Image 72), is acrylic on board, of the same dimensions, 120cm x 95cm, as the 2009 paintings of my mother, father and son, Simon. The execution was fast and immediate – the session being only four hours or so.



Image 72
Self-Portrait: No.1 (2009).

There are areas that I sense benefit from its speed. The right hand side, with its bisected background into relatively flat areas is broken by a few dribbles of paint, which form a bridge towards the more complex areas of the face. The tight cropping virtually allows for only the features to be seen. The overall image came to a standstill with some areas, particularly the eye on the left, becoming rather fixed and awkward.

Some of the portraits of Jonathan Yeo employ a similar technique that I have used here, that of firming up a tighter rendering of the features by contrast to looser areas of running paint. (See, for instance *Sir Michael Parkinson,* 2010. Image 67.) This has the effect of leading the viewer to simulate engagement with a 'live' person, in that one is drawn to this focal point, as in usual face-to-face contact, whereas the periphery is out of focus. It also prevents the image from becoming static and claustrophobic.



Image 73
Self-Portrait: No. 2 (2009).

Rather than working tonally in colour washes, I began *Self-Portrait: No. 2,*

2009, (Image 73), with graphite, making a very loose drawing, into which I then established limited form with watered down black acrylic paint. In an effort to break from the dominance of the brushwork and its related drips in other works, I used only my fingers dipped in the black acrylic paint, sculpting the facets of facial structure. As time would not allow, I left the work after barely two hours. Despite this, the portrait has a monumentality that the first does not.

I continued experimenting with a range of media on various surfaces – collage, chalks and pastels, inks: *Self-Portrait No. 3*, 2009, is pastels on canvas; *Self-Portrait No. 4*, 2009, is collage, ink and wash; *Self-Portrait No. 5: Decalcomania,* 2009, is gouache and ink on stretched watercolour paper. These were valuable as exercises, experimenting with techniques and mediums. The decalcomania technique, for instance, I used in *My Father: A portrait of Dementia.* 2010.

Left to right*:*
Image 76
Self-Portrait No.3.
Image 77
Self-Portrait No.4.
Image 78
Self-Portrait No. 5: Decalcomania.





Self-Portrait No. 6, 2009, started again as broad sweeps and washes in acrylic, studied through a mirror, and was then put to one side (see Image 80A). After several days, I used my hands in paint to entirely rework the self-portrait (see Image 80B) I used the first image to give me tonal clues and molded the thick rivened paint in response to the structure of the face. Fauve-like, there is an attempt to place complementary colours next to one another or through one another.

The chance spatters of paint streak out across the white canvas, some falling off the edge. As with Pollock's work, the marks suggest a rhythm as movement on the flat surface, but do not attempt to convey depth. I submitted



Image 80A
Self-Portrait No. 6 (2009)
stage1.



Image 80B
Self-Portrait No. 6. (2009).

this painting for the Gosford Regional Gallery Art Prize 2012, where it was selected and hung for the exhibition.

Having enjoyed the process and results of *Self-Portrait No. 6,* I worked directly onto a much larger canvas with large brushes and oil paint for *Self-Portrait No. 7*, 2010. I worked for several days on this portrait (see Image 82). The sheer size of the work meant that I was moving around all the time, seeing the face through the mirror from multiple angles. There were some interesting passages of paint but too much of the painting had a similarity of weight and character of mark. I abandoned the painting, starting immediately on another canvas of the same large dimensions, *Self-Portrait No. 8: Focus and Periphery*, 2010 (see Image 83). Trying to work out an alternative solution to the problem of being in movement and not being able to take in all that was in my cone of vision, I took my right eye as the fixed focal point in the mirror. I tried then to paint the rest of the face that I could see only in my peripheral vision. Having worked on this painting for



Image 82
Self-Portrait No. 7
(2010
Abandoned).

perhaps only two hours, it seemed to have drawn to it's own conclusion. To view it is to be locked into the one eye in focus with a sense of elements of the face in peripheral vision. In this way it allows the spectator to engage with the subject as it forces them to feel as though they are standing in the same spot away from the canvas as the painter and having the same experience of looking. It is therefore an attempt to show not so much what is seen as a 'real' reflection in a mirror but *how* the human eye sees things in front of it – the physicality of looking. As has been mentioned, cubism deals with some of these notions, but even much earlier painters, such as Rembrandt, use the impasto paint on areas of the face that push forward, such as the nose and forehead, to make the viewers eye lock onto these as the other areas fall away –thus replicating the usual physicality of seeing a 'real' person in 'real' space. As has also been mentioned, Yeo's portraits have areas of peripheral interest treated less 'tightly', allowing much more painterly application in the suggestion of sight being less defined or focused on those areas.



Image 83
Self-Portrait No. 8: Focus and Periphery (2010).

Having enjoyed the process and thinking behind this last self-portrait, I followed that line of enquiry through two more self-portraits on slightly smaller canvases. *Self-Portrait No. 9: A Turn of the Head*, 2010, uses household acrylic paints. Mindful again of theories of Cezanne, Picasso and, in turn, Hockney, of how we see things in space and time, I painted directly and rapidly with large brushes and premixed paints. Virtually each long look took the form of expressionistic contour, as in blind-contour drawing with paint. One eye, amongst the several views of the head on the



Image 84
Self-Portrait No. 9: A Turn of the Head (2010).

left, is very carefully rendered in pencil. It serves as an anchor point, through it's more 'naturalistic' mode of representation, to the other versions of the head around it. I submitted this painting for the *Gosford Regional Art Prize*, 2012, where it was selected and hung.

Self-Portrait No.10, 2010, (Image 85) shows two distinct views of the head and upper torso. Both views are in totally different media, one in acrylic paint, the other in compressed charcoal and wash. It was executed in the space of one day. These self-portraits, in their immediacy and representations of different views of the same head on the one canvas attempt to invite the viewer more into the space and sense the physicality of moving the eye and head.

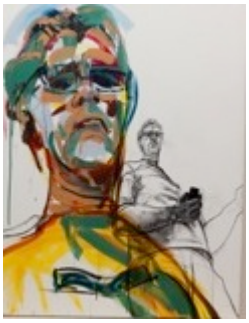


Image 85
Self-Portrait No.10 (2010).

Self-Portrait No. 12, 2010, (Image 89) and *Self-Portrait No. 13,* 2010,(Image 90) were both painted in quick succession. *No. 12 is* 2.4m high x 1.8m wide. This was the largest format I had worked on, in 'portrait' orientation. Having discovered a drum of decking varnish, I worked with large brushes, building up layer upon layer, equating with flesh tone and appearance. I used a little burnt umber and white oil paint, and scratched back through the paint with a modeling knife to get back to white canvas. The physicality of the medium, and its association with layers of skin is the attraction of this image. The sheer scale of it allows the enjoyment of the surface on an intimate level. There is little sense of this at all in a photograph of it.



Image 89
Self-Portrait No. 12 (2010).

In *Self-Portrait No.14: Imprint,* 2010, 120cm x 95cm, I totally covered the canvas with a stain of burnt



Image 90
Self-Portrait No.13 (2010).

umber oil paint. (See Image 91). I used a turpentine-soaked rag to wipe back where I observed light falling across my face. Therefore the white of the canvas became the main form of the face. I had appreciated the effect of the decking varnish in *Self-Portrait No.12* and determined to use it again in this portrait. Varnish, in usual oil painting usage, is as a topcoat, as a protective and unifying sheen. Though enhanced by it, the painting is ordinarily seen *through* the varnish. The varnish itself is not usually considered as worthy of note itself. Here I am reminded of Francis Bacon who 'always had his paintings glazed and framed, which notoriously makes viewing the paint more difficult and requires our movement to see beyond the reflective surface to the image behind…[as with] Marcel Duchamp's…*The bride stripped bare by her bachelors, even,*[this] ensures the physiological participation of the audience of the work, transferring the construction of viewing from author to viewer.'[619] The high gloss sheen of the poured varnish in *Self-portrait No.14: Imprint* reflects the viewer, as if in a glass, bringing the viewer into the presence of the sitter – their own reflected image is enabled by the face they are looking at through the varnish. I submitted this portrait to the Gosford Regional Art Prize, 2010, where it was selected and hung.



Image 91
Self-Portrait No.14: Imprint, 2010

I decided to paint a thin panel self-portrait, 180cm x 55cm wide, *Self-Portrait: Grisaille*, 2011, since this format would be identical to, and therefore directly associated with, other images, painted from photographic sources, in the final exhibition. *Self-Portrait: Grisaille* utilises approaches to portraiture more akin to seventeenth century Dutch Masters, such as Vermeer and van Eyck, as discussed in chapter 1. I had seen Ingres' grisaille version of his *Odalisque*, 1814, a 'traditional' technique that I had never used. Therefore, I painted the

[619] Bond. *Francis Bacon: Five Decades,* 20, 21.

whole piece, initially, as a grisaille, and then gradually layered glazes of colour to the facial area– a method of painting which exploits oil paints' malleable and extended drying qualities through a slow build of delicate colours and tones. I determined to leave the depiction of all the tools of the artist's trade–the implements, which are used to create the illusion in such works–totally exposed as a grisaille area. Therefore the illusionary face, painted through oil glazes, is both revealed and the three-dimensional illusion destroyed, or rather exposed as layers of paint on flat canvas. This attests to the notion of the artist as manipulator and constructor of 'virtual realities' through analogue means.

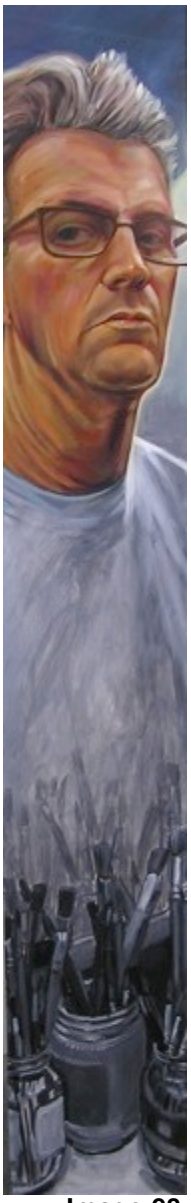


Image 98
Self-Portrait: Grisaille (2011).

These enquiries through self-portraiture into how to bring the spectator more into the space of the sitter paid dividends in their application to the paintings of other sitters. However by the same token, comparison of these self-portraits to those of sitters, as was experienced in the final exhibition, reveals in the latter a concern for representation of a degree of likeness to the physical identity of the sitter, particularly with regard to recognisable facial likeness, whereas in my self-portraiture, this was of little concern, since my own-self knowing tends naturally to deal with interior subjective enquiry and, as has been already stated, seeing and fixing of one's own physical reality is impossibly elusive. I did not feel inhibited or compromised by this, but rather became aware of the sense of the physicality of my viewing the sitter coupled with their collaboration in getting to know their inner selves through the time shared. The mutual respect–or mutual 'admiration' between artist and sitter, to which Sir Michael Parkinson refers–impacted the extent to which I felt I could employ the more experimental approaches investigated in my self-portraiture.

c) *Acquaintances, about whom I knew little of their personal life.*
Though the following sitters were not entirely strangers to me, the painting of their portrait was the first time I had spent any close individual time with them.

Portrait of Charlotte, aged 18, 2010, acrylic on canvas, was painted 'contre jour'. Charlotte was a twenty-one year old girl, visiting Australia and connected to my wife's family, although I had only met her many years ago, very intermittently and briefly. Having rendered the image in bright toned acrylic washes I knocked it back with hand-smudged charcoal. The depiction of the head, as chiaroscuro, meant the painting in of a very dark background, terminated by the edges of the canvas. This means that the viewer's space is very foreign to the portrait's. I was therefore dissatisfied with this consequence of disconnect to the sitter. Therefore this work was not in the final exhibition.

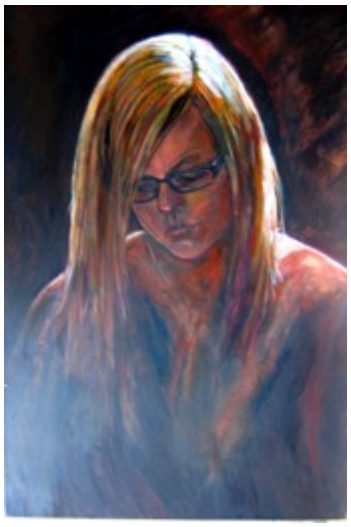


Image 79
Portrait of Charlotte, aged 18 (2010).

My work colleague, Daniel Reynaud, offered to sit for his portrait. He brought along his guitar, so the 'landscape' format offered itself as being suitable to accommodate the neck of the guitar. I worked in broad sweeps of acrylic paint, using a house paintbrush, again moving around because of the extreme size. Moving onto slightly smaller bristle brushes I painted the features and hair. As this seemed to make the image more stagnant, whereas in fact he had been engrossed in looking down at his music and playing his



Image 92
Daniel (2010).

guitar, thereby involving movement and sound, I used compressed charcoal sticks to overdraw several views of his hands and guitar neck as he fingered the fret board. Similarly, I drew various views of his head as it moved with the rhythm. Associations can be drawn here with Futurist approaches to movement, particularly Giacomo Balla's *Rhythm of the Violinist*, 1912. Again, there was no intimation as to the room setting by any painting of background, for previously stated reasons. It was all completed in little more than four hours; there was little time for small-talk, though we did chat and listen to music. As with a number of these portraits where the sitter is highly proficient in their own area of expertise but has little connection with the 'world of art', it was interesting for me to observe a sense of a shift in how we related to one another, in so much as I was very much more in control of the situation and the sitters were enjoying, it seemed, stepping into unfamiliar territory.

Dr Colin Rosewell sat for me for a day's session. I did a drawing on a gesso-primed board that I had purposely prepared for tempera painting. I duly completed a line pencil drawing on the gesso ground. It was reminiscent, to me, of Hockney's drawings of Celia Clarke from the early 1970s. Painting with thinned out gouache instead of egg tempera, for convenience, I chose to stop after completing just a few delicate areas. I liked the simplicity and intimacy of it. The sense of closeness of myself to his feet, his head set far back into the seat, could only be attained by such physical positioning of artist to sitter. I had only recently gotten to know Colin. As a painter himself, I sensed his interest in what I was doing and the whole session gave us opportunity to reflect on our own ideas about art. Only now, on reflection, do I recognise that the more open, less 'finished' and experimental state at which I am prepared to leave the work indicates my own



Image 99
Dr. Colin Rosewell (2011).

assessment of our relationship being that of two artists. As I have mentioned, in other paintings of sitters, who come from more diverse walks of life, I have been mindful of their likeness being important to them in the portrait, since the experience is an exceptional one for them and the painting, as their own property, needs to be acceptable and meaningful to them, the sitter as much as it is to me, the artist.

Michael Gerakios is a long time friend of Frank Oxley. He is a successful businessman and attended the interim exhibition of my work at the Ourimbah campus, at which time he saw Frank's portrait and asked if I would paint his portrait too. (See Images 101 and 101A). The dimensions are as Frank's portrait –2.4m x 1.8m. Michael gave me several days to work directly from him as sitter. The portrait was spread over several weeks. From the outset, Michael was very keen to know all about the process of painting and was perhaps the most animated of my sitters thus far. The whole process was thoroughly enjoyable and truly a way of two people from quite different walks of life getting to know one another through a mutual cause. At the very first session, before I started painting at all, he asked if he could sing me a song. He duly sang, over the backing track from his iPod, an old Elvis Presley song that talked about attaining goals and the importance of remaining true to oneself. He explained that he wanted to reveal to me another side of him that he usually felt a need to conceal to others in his business life. It opened up



Image 101
Michael (2011).

conversation and facilitated a direction for the work to advance. Through the painting sessions there was a real growth of trust between artist and sitter. I chose to include a same-size *tromp l'oeil* rendering of his business card at bottom left of the canvas. It alludes to the painted portrait saying 'This is who I really am', as an authentic witness rather than as an indexical definition of himself–his name, qualifications, logo and credentials on a printed calling card. This is therefore twist on Jan van Eyck's inclusion of his own writing as witness– Jan van Eyck Fuit Hic- in the Arnolfini Marriage group, as discussed in chapter 1.

Three of my students, Anne, Tegan & Stephanie, all in their early twenties, volunteered to sit for their portraits (see *Take Three Girls: Anne, Tegan & Stephanie*, 2011-12. Images 102A and 102B). I had painted a lot of male sitters, but few girls. I had painted solitary sitters and two dual portraits. Here was an opportunity to paint three young girls that all had a close relationship with one another, all were interested in visual art and all of whom I knew only from my role as their Art Lecturer. Unlike the two double-portraits that I had completed, where the couples have their eyes averted from the viewer, suggesting the relationship is between the two people depicted and not the artist/viewer, in this case I show the three girls as they all faced me, with direct eye contact. This has the sense of presenting the three girls as being linked in their lined, unified poses while the lecturer/student relationship is still suggested as if by three lines from me, the spectator at the apex of the triangle; connected, maybe pivotal, but still outside. We had three full day



Image 102A
Take Three Girls: Anne, Tegan & Stephanie (2011-'12).

sessions, over three weeks. I did take some photographs, which I used as reference while they were away from the studio. Again, the process facilitated much friendly conversation. I felt no awkwardness or difficulty in relating to their interests, and they seemed genuinely interested in the process of the painting. Towards the end of the painting, and to again overlap the two broad areas of portraiture that this paper has been exploring, I chose to paint an alternative indexical reference to the girls' identities. Much like the business card in Michael's portrait, I painted *tromp l'oeil* versions of their student identity cards at the exact size of the real cards. These cards feature a very poor quality photographic ID and encrypted computer information such that any individual who uses this swipe card passes as the owner, the bar-code authenticating their identity. This is at odds with the direct experience of perceiving the individual characters of the girls and their relationship to one another as expressed through the painted portrait.



Image 102B.
The first sitting for
Take Three Girls: Anne, Tegan & Stephanie.

d) *People I had never previously met prior to deciding to paint their portrait.*
I purposely painted *A model: A perfect stranger,* 2012 (See Images 103 and 104), as a vertical triptych, so that they would stand as a tall 1.8m high 'sliver' work, thereby unifying, while drawing comparison with, the other same-sized works in the final show. Thus, as with the previously discussed *Self-Portrait: Grisaille,* it forms a bridge, conceptually, with the similar shaped canvases that intersperse the larger 'painting from life' experiential portraits. The model for this painting, totally done from life, is unknown to me on a personal basis. I

went, for three weeks, to a painting group. The model was chosen, posed and lit before I arrived. My only control was to choose from which angle I would view the sitter, although this was also determined by available space. I chose, in each two-hour session over the three weeks, to paint a different view of the sitter, roughly taking in three sections of the body from head to toe, but moving around the figure.



Right: **Image 103**
A model: A perfect stranger. (2012).



Above: **Image 104**
The model for *A model: A perfect stranger.*

Working directly with broad brushes in oils on canvas, the painting is the result of this looking exercise. There is no emotional attachment to this work at all. My indifference to it is such a marked contrast to how I feel about the paintings of other sitters, with whom I have a relationship. In noting the value of the artist/sitter relationship then, this is cause to include it in the final show.

The practical research had not encompassed the painting of someone known widely as a public figure, perceived through his or her 'media' image/persona. To be able to paint such a person from life would demonstrate the value of presence to both me as painter and hopefully to viewer. On June 12, 2012, I listened to a radio report streamed live from Darwin which signaled closure for Lindy Chamberlain-Creighton and her former husband, Michael–the subjects of possibly Australia's most famous example of a miscarriage of justice and its repercussions. Closure came in the form of one piece of A4 paper, which stipulated, as Lindy had claimed thirty-two years earlier, that a dingo had taken her baby girl, Azaria.

I wrote Lindy a personal email – her own website enabling this. I expressed the nature of my research and my admiration for Lindy, who, in 1980, was

incarcerated for four years in a Northern Territory prison following the disappearance of her daughter Azaria, during which time another daughter, Kahlia, was born to her, 1982, and also taken away by authorities. She had never given up on the idea of justice for her first daughter, Azaria, and had fought to have the death certificate cite the reason for the daughter's disappearance to read as she had professed it to be, that a dingo had indeed taken the baby. It had taken thirty-two years, exactly half of her life, to see this come to fruition.

Her husband, Rick Creighton called me directly on my mobile phone, inviting me to their home in the New South Wales Hunter Valley. I had no real preconceived ideas of what to expect at the meeting. At the time of the taking of Azaria, 1980, I was a 24-year-old young man, living and teaching art in England. The news story that so gripped the collective consciousness of Australia, to my recollection, barely made the inside columns of the British press beyond reporting the initial incident. It was not until I emigrated to Australia in 1989 that I was to become more aware of the Chamberlain case, as periodically the media would report on the three inquests.

For my first meeting with Lindy, I had taken my laptop so as to 'break the ice' by talking about the kind of paintings I had been doing. Lindy was immediately engaging and disarming, making me coffee. She indicated examples of her own work – she is a very able painter and ceramicist – and several paintings depicting her, relating to her saga, including one given to her by Pro Hart MBE*, The Judgement at Ayers Rock.* The iconic photographic image of Lindy in a red jacket, looking down at her baby daughter, that has become synonymous with her story, also hangs on the wall. It registered that the 64-year-old woman standing next to me was the real person that had been morphed into this iconic image, forever fixed in this photograph in people's minds. It was difficult to extricate the real person today from the defining image of the historical incident. This image resonated with the source photographs with which Elizabeth Peyton works, as discussed in chapter 2:1(ii); the imminence if some life-changing event that catapults the subject of the image into public

awareness such that a retrospective analysis of the event is interpreted through the filter of what subsequently ensued. (This observation is developed in *Ode To Remembrance.*)



Image 106A
Andy Collis.
Lindy Chamberlain-Creighton: A Dingo Took My Baby (2012).

Having spent the day, there had been no time for the laptop images to be viewed but it was agreed that she would sit at the studio for her portrait. She had asked what she should wear, but I left the choice to her. It wasn't to be a 'stately' portrait, rather one that tried to honestly reflect my observations and perceptions of her as they developed through the conversations and the process of painting. While I wished to avoid a rehash of her backstory, coming as it did at this moment in time when she felt there was a certain closure in relation to her daughter's disappearance, the portrait should, I believed, reference its significance in some way. (See *Lindy Chamberlain-Creighton: A Dingo Took My Baby*, 2012. Images 106A, 106B, 106C, 106D, 106F.)

It was very easy to get caught up in the conversation Lindy. I recalled Martin Guildford's observation when he sat for Lucian Freud;

> The more we are diverted into conversation the more entertaining the sittings will become, but the longer the whole picture will take.[620]

[620] Gayford. *Man in a blue scarf.* 19.

So it is with Lindy. She is very engaging – interested and interesting. She was open in her discussion of recent and past events relating to Azaria's disappearance. As I painted her portrait, I realised the potency of having this larger than life image meeting with the viewer face-to-face. Being the eyes through which others might revisit their own assessment of Lindy became a responsibility, for authenticity to the subject such that the audience, artist and, just as importantly, sitter, felt fairly represented. Of all subjects, surely this should be the case for Lindy Chamberlain-Creighton. I therefore endeavoured to employ Freud's maxim to only paint what is there to be seen, and Tom Wood's and Jonathan Yeo's approach to neither flatter nor 'dish the dirt' – fundamentally to be honest, true to oneself and the sitter.

For reasons already discussed, I left the majority of the backgrounds in my other portraits as untouched white canvas. However, with the portrait of Lindy, I considered that I would possibly submit this portrait for the 2013 Archibald Portrait Prize. It would ideally meet all their prerequisites, as stated in Chapter 2. If it were to be accepted, it would be seen outside of the context of this exhibition and I needed to reconsider if an open background would best serve this portrait. To maintain the cohesion of all the portraits appearing together for this research exhibition and also to still bring the sitter into the viewers' space, I decided the background would be of very limited colour, mainly variations of subtle whites. This could be achieved if, conceptually, the nuanced background read as a wall on which were slightly yellowed rectangles of various size, indicative of a wall where photographs and images have been taken down. Indications of left over marks, pin holes, the occasional pin itself and scraps of paper and masking tape might allude to a former police-evidence wall, where, over time, all the evidence had been dismounted as it had been discredited; all the photographs and images that had been so scrutinised had been removed, the file closed. The use of mimetic rendering of objects in these paintings –the business card in the Portrait of Michael, the brooch in the hair of Loretta and here, the masking tape and pins on the wall – are used as devices to invite physiognomic

analysis by association with traumatic or emotional episodes in the sitter's lives. We discussed the possibility of Lindy being depicted as if holding the file, or the taken down photographs in her hand, on her lap. Though she stressed that she was supportive of whatever decisions I made about my own painting of her, she did contribute that she did not wish to imply that she disowned those photographic images in of themselves, as evidenced by those hanging in her home. Again, in reference to Barthes assessment of photograph as trace of the person, I was viewing the photographs from the perspective of the media-constructed image of Lindy, while she sees them as authentic of her experience of when and where they were taken. At her age of 64-years-old, I realised that for exactly half her life, she had been trying to answer questions to which few were prepared to accept the answers. The death certificate stating the truth about her daughter's disappearance drew a line in the sand, it could be seen to stand for the thirty two years 'out in the desert,' as it were.



Image 106B
Painting Lindy Chamberlain-Creighton.

In keeping with what painting took from photography[621], whereby the edge of the canvas does not contain the image, but rather implies continuance beyond the edges, as in Caillebotte's *Paris, Rainy Day,* 1877 or Degas' *Place de la Concorde*, 1875, I exaggerated the hands so that the tips of her left-hand fingers slightly fall out of frame at the bottom edge. Coupled with the upturned perspective of the chair in which she sits, these two devices, like the boot in the portrait of *Frank*, push Lindy forward as if into the very space of the viewer.

[621] Scharf. *Art and Photography.* See chapter 7: "Impressionism" 165-209, particularly "*Cutting-off and Cinematic Progression*", 198.

More significantly, underneath her hand, and again painted over the bottom edge of the painting, to suggest continuance into 'real' space, is the partially covered death certificate of Azaria Chamberlain. The Australian judiciary coat of arms is clearly seen, as are fractions of printing, indicating her accepted cause of death. Lindy sits in a solid, geometrical pose, her arms and shoulder creating a hexagonal. The full frontal pose is more akin to the direct poses as chosen by Francis Bacon, such as *Pope 1*,1951, which, in his transformation of Velasquez's *Portrait of Pope Innocent X*, c.1650, becomes much more square on to the viewer; more confrontational than the slightly three-quarter pose of the original. The visual centre of the painting of Lindy is her crucifix necklace, symbolic of the strong faith, central to her life. Her face is resolute, strong, perhaps stoic; but it is not hard, not unfeeling. It is lined with experience and acceptance of experience. It is an image of an admirable woman.



Image 106C
In the studio painting Lindy Chamberlain-Creighton.

Though I did work from photographs when Lindy was unavailable, particularly for references to her jewelry, the final sitting was done from life, so that both artist and sitter could feel they had witnessed the extent of the whole experience

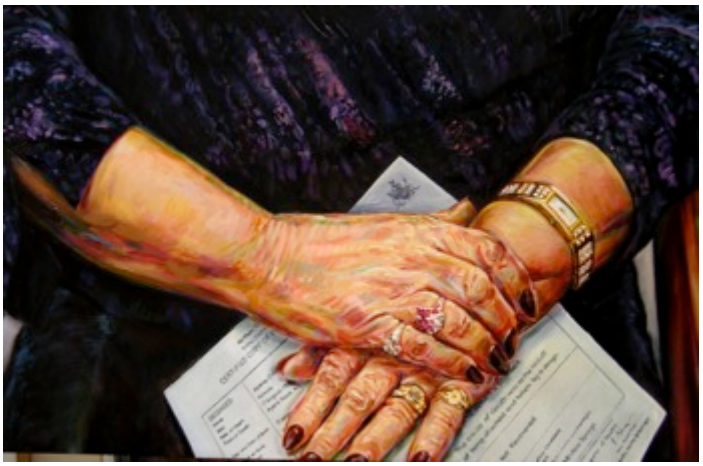


Image 106D
Detail: *Lindy Chamberlain-Creighton: A Dingo Took My Baby* (2012).

together.

A journalistic story about this work featured in the College newsletter, the place of my regular employment. In turn, the marketing people, picking up on the potential to perhaps publicise the College, circulated the story, and images, to local newspapers. Accordingly the Central Coast Express featured a full front-page colour image of myself under the banner headline *Lindy's New Profile*, directing the reader to an inside story. Inside was a re-run of the College story with another large colour image of Lindy at the studio sitting, showing a sideways glimpse of the painting, which was, at that stage, only a few hours into painting. Channel 9 NBN television news then singled out the newspaper story, contacting me for a TV interview at the painting studio in front of the incomplete painting, for the six o'clock evening news. In the same week I was also interviewed by Rhema FM radio station. I posted some of the clips and the TV interview on my *Tumblr* and *Facebook* sites. The response was quite phenomenal; touching, slightly overwhelming verging on bizarre. The story received such widespread attention because I had had the *real* presence of Lindy Chamberlain for *live* sittings. I wondered what interest there might have been had my portrait of Lindy Chamberlain been painted solely from newspaper cuttings, media television footage or hearsay. I wondered what I would have been able to say then through paint that offered any insight into Lindy Chamberlain-Creighton's personal feelings at receiving her daughter's death certificate. I conclude that the main reason for such media attention, or indeed that the painting was short-listed for the *Doug Moran* portrait prize, 2013, is that I sat face to face with this person in whom most of Australia has some interest or opinion, based on media reportage and news footage.



Image 106E
Newspaper articles display interest that Lindy Chamberlain-Creighton is sitting for her portrait



Image 106F
Artist, sitter and portrait. November 2012.

Cynthia Freeland, in discussing 'cyber-art's immersive future,' states that 'it only a matter of time before Web art can rival the astonishing 3-D visual realism of video-game technology…[with their] amazing renditions of three-dimensional space…The Web…draws people together and cameras enhance the sense of contact across cyberspace.'[622] Yet regardless of such advancement on Baudrillard's notions of hyperrealism and simulation, the physical viewing of original paintings, and portraits painted from life in particular, are starkly different experiences. They still retain something of the aura of which Benjamin spoke. Of Leonardo's *Mona Lisa,* Freeland says, 'People *do* still make a pilgrimage to see Leonardo's original painting in the Louvre. The feeling of awe is almost religious.' [623] The audience for the Lindy Chamberlain portrait wishes to see her through my eyes, to feel as if they have a closer understanding by virtue of my standing in their stead. They wish

[622] Freeland. *But is it Art?,* 203,204.
[623] Ibid., 187.

to eliminate the distance between them and the person as much as possible, to see the original on which the reproductions depend. They still want to share in the value of presence–the human touch.

Nevertheless in the very painting of this image, and others that the I considered for entry into portrait prizes, I had to first consider how the image might be viewed digitally, knowing that, in submission to prizes such as *The Doug Moran*, the first hurdle is for it to be selected from a submission of it as a digital image via the Web site. This resonates with David Joselit's conclusions in a 2013 paper presentation: 'The painterly mark of our time embodies a paradox: between touch as an index of affect, and touch as the automatic transcription of information. It carries a new kind of artificial intelligence.'[624] Joselit wrestles with the notion of painting still being capable of invoking directly personal, human emotions, while at the same time, because of the multifarious ways that art can be seen, accessed and experienced by today's audience–he gives the examples of accessing collections and exhibitions on-line, or going around galleries taking snaps on iPhones to view at a later time–then the painting becomes depersonalized, mechanical information to be viewed at a different time, in a different context and through a different format. Freeland makes a similar observation, prior to Joselit, noting, 'La Gioconda's aura is by no means a mirage, though there is something sadly ironic about visitors trying to capture her with their own mechanical reproductions.'[625]

3:2 (ii) The value of presence through portraits produced with no personal contact with the sitter/subject.

As the written research progressed to investigate broadening possible definitions of what could be considered 'human touch', as human interaction is enhanced and integrated through present day technology, it was appropriate

[624] David Joselit. *Intelligent Touch: Painting as Subject: Conference Abstract.* April 2013 http://paintingbeyonditself.fas.harvard.edu/icb/icb.do?keyword=k94134&pageid=icb.page581399

[625] Freeland. *But is it art?* 187.

to explore portraiture where the sitter was not present physically, sometimes not even known in person but as only another two-dimensional image. As the research has documented, while technology such a social media may have limitations if it professes to substitute for personally shared, live experiences, it can also facilitate a level of connectivity and personal interaction simply unattainable otherwise. These technologies have opened up avenues for the expression of emotion and intimacy that some find difficult to express face-to-face. The examples of 'leaked' intimate, often salacious, messages and images are an obvious if simplistic demonstration of what Roland Barthes called the 'paradoxical exposure of the private sphere'[626] and 'the creation of a new social value, which is the publicity of the private'.[627] But social media has very positive benefits to maintaining human touch. Even in my own case I maintain daily contact with my now twenty-one-year-old son by text messages. I am easily able to tell him of my fatherly concerns and love for him in a way that would have been logistically and practically very difficult for my own father to do for me, and virtually impossible if, as my own son has been, living in another country. In these works then, I wanted to both demonstrate technologies shortcomings and strengths in giving information with which to construct a relationship with the person perceived in an image set before us. I simultaneously worked on paintings of irregular widths, but either 1.8m or 2.4m in height, to explore human interaction through technology and to what extent information can be gleaned about the nature of others from such methods and imagery.

Nichol Amy, apparently, 2010 (See Image 86), is a quadriptych, which originally began as one large canvas 2.4m x 1.8m. The *Facebook* social media-networking site encourages subscribers to state personal details pertaining to their lives, ranging from whether they are in a relationship, to their education background, political and religious views. It also encourages the posting of personal photographic, video and sound clips. It therefore

[626] Barthes. *Camera Lucida,* 34.
[627] Ibid., 98.

presents a profile of the individual to anyone that is invited to share the information. Depending on the privacy settings, which individuals usually need to set themselves, all the information posted by the user may be viewable by anyone else, once accepted as a 'friend'. Small, thumbnail images of other would-be 'friends' that appear on ones own *Facebook* page are therefore often completely unknown to the first party.

This work takes such a thumbnail of someone proposing themselves as Nichol Amy. This initial image was of a young woman, bikini-clad and reclining on a sun-lounger with cold drink in hand. She appears to be on a sun-drenched, secluded beach, perhaps on a Greek Island. Alongside the thumbnail is a line inviting me, the receiver of the image, to be her *friend*. Assumptions about the girl in the photograph are based on the smallest of low-resolution images in the thumbnail. The assumption is that the person at the other end of the Internet connection is the same girl in the picture. This ambiguity and subjectivism, promises of intimacy and friendship, trading on the norms of 'human touch' relationships while having no course to authenticity, is the premise for *Nichol Amy, apparently.* It therefore highlights our willingness to believe in the photographic image as authentic, along Barthes line of reasoning that it is a trace from the live source.



Image 86
Andy Collis. *Nichol Amy, apparently: 4 Panels* (2010).

Yet, as David Hockney sates in relation to the movement away from chemical photography to digital, 'Today, in a sense, we're back to a hand in a camera. What I'm suggesting is, the hand was in the camera for four hundred years [before chemical photography] then chemicals were in the camera for a hundred and eighty but now there's digits in it. And that means you can move things about. Anybody can, …that's now getting very, very big. Are we therefore losing a veracity that we believed before, for a hundred and seventy years? We're therefore going forward and back to the construction of pictures, with the lens and the hand.' [628] *Nicole Amy, Apparently,* as the title suggests, explores this dilemma of wanting to make sense of the messages we read from a photograph, engendered by our instilled belief in them as authentic. The image of *Nicole Amy, Apparently* therefore explores Richter's central idea regarding the portrait based on photography; 'By presenting an inscrutable surface, they intimate that reality cannot be seen or known but remains hidden beneath a veneer of appearance.'[629]

I therefore exploited the various qualities of digital image reproduction. I used the technology of a standard, low-resolution, home-office printer to give me a hard copy version of the screen image. I used the technology of the photocopier to make an overhead acetate black and white image of the print. I used the technology of the overhead projector to blow up the image onto the 2.4m x 1.8m canvas. I painted in the grainy image of the girl on the beach in acrylic paints. As in Richter's works, the eye becomes a mechanical scanner, translating the blurry colours onto the canvas correspondingly to the flattened photographic image. Unlike painting from life, the photograph never moves or varies; there is time to evaluate and emulate every nuance of colour tone within that surface. There is no prioritizing; little consideration that one area may be a facial feature while another a rock. This will only become apparent in its appearance if the image is copied accurately enough to represent the

[628] David Hockney interview by Ancient Optics. "Secret Knowledge : The Lost Secrets of Old Masters Pt. 1". http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jMRpmqeKg-g&list=PL0F655C6493A71424
[629]National Portrait Gallery, London. *Gerhard Richter: Portraits.* NPG London 26 Feb 31 May 2009. http://www.npg.org.uk/richter/exhib.htm

photographs version of reality.

For the lower section of *Nicole Amy, Apparently,* I aped the *Facebook* pages by creating smaller thumbnails, even less distinct. To make the image recede in order for it to be less accessible, more screen-like, I mixed a lightly blue tinted glaze and rollered over the whole image. To reference the architecture of navigating the Internet, I overlaid outline boxes. The way that information is accessed via the computer is to hover the mouse cursor over areas of the screen. When something is accessible the cursor changes into a hand icon. It is the computers equivalent signal of 'human touch'- a pixelated pictogram. I therefore projected this icon onto the painting and painted it in.

The whole image, despite it having multiple layers that referenced Internet technology, appropriated its language and navigational methods, but still appeared very composed along the formal lines of painting, which I felt needed redressing. At this point *Nicole Amy, Apparently* was the same size as the large 'painted-from-life' portraits, 1.8m x 2.4m. However Internet information appears to have no clearly defined edges–one can take various routes as more and more information is uncovered. I implied this, and therefore broke the association with the painted-from-life portraits, by cutting the *Nicole Amy, Apparently* painting into four panels, all 1.8m high, but of varying widths, with the split image now totally wrapping around the four stretchers. Placed as interspersed slivers of information, as it were, amongst the larger statements of the portraits of 'live' sitters, these should suggest the glut and scramble of information technology, a hum only blotted out by the created spaces of the painted from life larger portrait statements. Again they would become more of a network within the gallery space, as opposed to volunteering themselves as the specialized area of focus. The origin of the digital image that purports to be *Nicole Amy* is therefore 'experienced as a relationship with technology in which the screen is the focus.' [630] The initial source image itself can only be verified by anyone who actually does know

[630] Gaston. *The Naked Face: Self-Portraits,* 12.

Nicole Amy in real life. Indeed this is the area that some photorealist painters since the 70s, such as Robert Bechtle or Dennis Peterson, have often explored. In *'61 Pontiac,* for instance, 'Bechtle works from photographs of familiar subjects (his family and home, for example), creating a record of a precise moment while withholding just enough detail to remain painterly.[631]

Friends I have never met, 2010-11, (see Image 93), is the logical successor to *Nichol Amy, apparently.* It further investigates the notion of intimate connection via the Internet, again via the reference to *Facebook* profile thumbnails of would-be friends, of whom one has no connection in *real* life. This image depicts the interconnectedness of Internet 'families' that could exist as avatars, or false profile fronts for non-existent or other identities–a current phenomenon explored in the movie and television program *Catfish.*[632] The low resolution and lack of information attainable from these source images is their strength in terms of the paintings interest in a formal sense, for, as in Bechtle and Richter's work, it generates painterly qualities but, in terms of telling us about the real people supposedly represented, they give very little away.



Image 93
Friends I have never met.
(2010-2011).

For the painting *My Father: A portrait of Dementia*, 2010 (see Image 88), the hand-tinted photograph of my father at the age of 19 in RAF uniform that I had painted next to his head in *Portrait of My Father, Aged 89: His Battle of Britain*, became the pivotal structure of the whole painting. While *Portrait of My Father, Aged 89: His Battle of Britain*

[631] San Francisco Museum of Modern Art "Robert Bechtle: A Retrospective.*"* 2005. http://www.sfmoma.org/exhib_events/exhibitions/180#ixzz2mIljygpR

[632] http://www.iamrogue.com/catfish. *Catfish* is a 2010 American documentary film directed by Henry Joost and Ariel Schulman, involving a young man, Nev, being filmed by his brother and friend, co-directors Ariel and Henry, as he builds a romantic relationship with a young woman on the social networking website Facebook. The film was a critical and commercial success, inspiring an MTV reality TV series, *Catfish: The TV Show*.

depicted the aged physical body of my father, this work attempts to paint a portrait of my father's mental condition, of the effects of dementia. Working only from the photograph, I lined in an approximation of his appearance, breaking it down into facets. I mapped the facet shapes onto heavy black plastic and cut out the corresponding shape. Using a roller, I applied oil paint onto these shapes and off-printed them onto the approximately corresponding shape on the canvas, thus creating textured and broken marks; decalcomania. I used some of the actual shapes of black plastic to stick onto the surface of the canvas. The youthful head therefore has broken down into shards. There are echoes of shapes that correspond but have become disconnected, the general idea being that of broken synapses, the frustration of dementia to recall connectedly. Clearly the image suggests associations with cubistic portraiture that portray the heightened emotion through the shattering of human form, such as Picasso's *Weeping Woman*, 1937. Though I worked in response only to the photographic image of my father, I do believe this portrait resonates with intimacy and poignancy. This may largely be due to my total understanding and emotional connection to the source image and person represented, and there is no use of it to make any real physiognomic depiction of my father at all.



Image 88
My Father: A portrait of Dementia (2010).

JP. Panels 2 & 3, 2010-11, (see Images 95 and 96), are two panels set below the painting discussed in the previous section, *JP. 1: Top Panel,* 2010. Put together like this, they stand 1.8m in height. In this format they align with the format and aforementioned ideas of the paintings from second hand imagery.

The centre image, panel 2, is based on JP's *Facebook* profile picture, which depicts him in front of a vast, mountainous landscape. The image investigates the idea of a photograph representing time, space and emotion only to those depicted therein whereas to the onlooker such photography has little meaning. In this image, JP sees in the photograph the incident as a recollection of the sublime. He had evidently faced the mountain ranges, something akin to Caspar David Friedrich's *Wanderer Above The Mists* (also known as *Wanderer above the Sea of Fog*, 1818)*,* and assumes that, having now turned around, the spectator of this image will grasp something of nature's impact on him from our seeing his expression-something we cannot do in Friedrich's painting. Yet to others seeing it as a small thumbnail any such magnificence is lost. The page can alternatively be seen as a slice from JP's real life, representing multiple facets of a JP's personality that the portrait from life would find difficult to express in one image. As with portraits from photographs, the lack of information to a wider audience creates an ambiguity, which is, of itself, engaging for the viewer to contemplate. The written messages in this panel reference unrelated day-to-day activities which make up 'real life', therefore the inclusion of 'analogue' handwriting is visible over the implied computerized letter forms, which of course, in this case, are in fact hand painted. The bottom panel of what becomes a triptych, is a direct copy, a clone, of the top panel. It apes and acknowledges, even further, the photographic source that began to take over the painting from life. These generational steps away from the source image, and therefore real person, reference computer software programs, particularly Photoshop, where copying and pasting is a frequently used function.



Top: **Image 95**
J.P. Panel 2: Centre Panel.
(2010).

Above: **Image 96**
J.P. Panel 3: Bottom panel.
(2010).

Such programs have the ability to manipulate the miniscule pixels – the 'DNA' of the digital image – luring the viewer into falsely assuming the authenticity of the depiction. Again, this references Barthes and Hockney's aforementioned observations.

What was to become *Ode to remembrance: Age shall not weary them,* 2012 (See Images 105A and 105B) evolved in consideration of the final exhibition as an installation whereby the paintings from photography and self-portraiture intersect with those from sitters. The differentiation of the latter to the former two might then be ascribed to the impact of the working method and interaction between two parties, therefore suggesting the value of the artist/sitter relationship to the resultant portrait. Initially then I considered that studio sessions with artist and sitter might be shown by way of a behind-the-scenes video display enabling the viewer to see stages of the artist/sitter relationship developing through the painting process. However, upon noticing

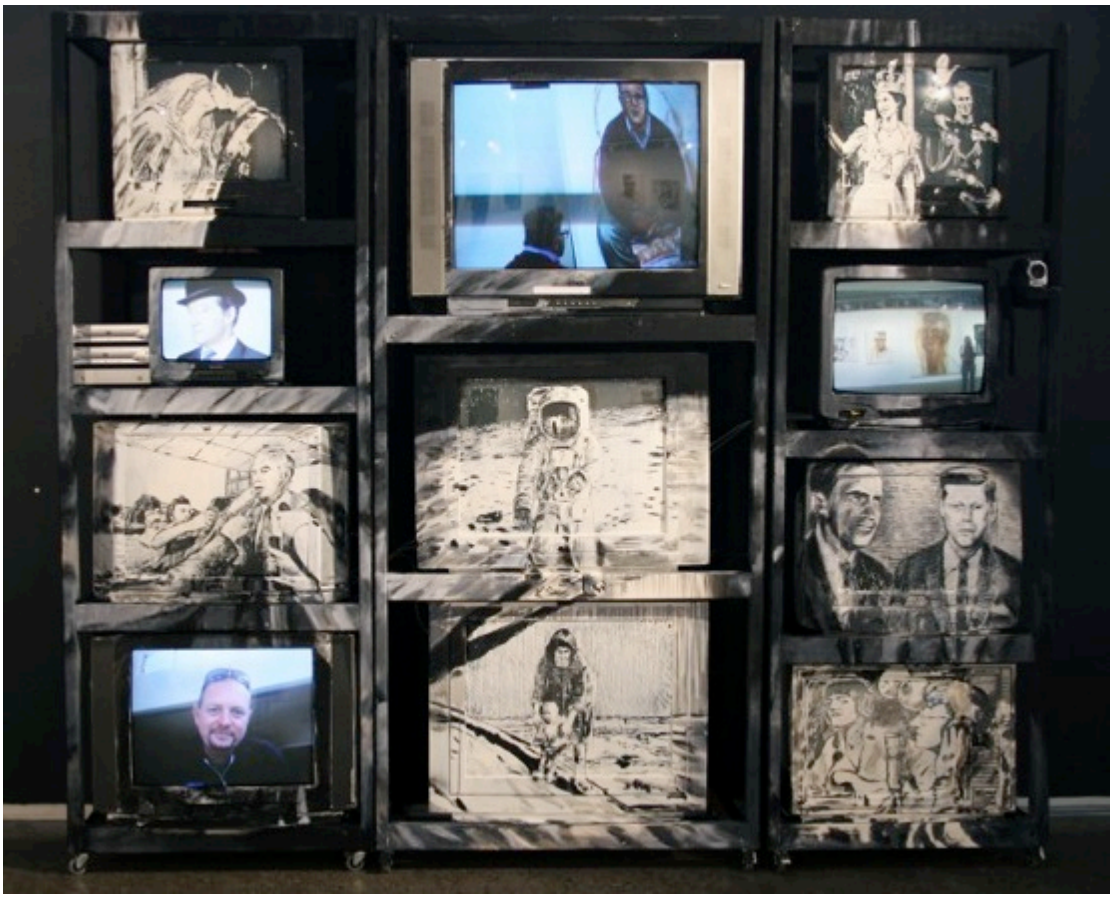


Image 105A
Ode to remembrance: Age shall not weary them. (2012).

multiple television sets, of older flat screen design, dumped by the roadside, presumably since flat-screen plasma technology has rendered them generally obsolete, the initial idea evolved to reflect that of painting being only part of a network of the materials; Joselit's ideas as expressed in his analysis of Jutta Koether's exhibition *Lux Interior*, as discussed in chapter 2.[633]

In the mounting of eleven various sized television sets, their original form is subverted by a painterly surface, which is largely monochrome. It therefore refers to the original black and white television signal, a trace of the people broadcast, yet sits on the surface of the glass screens; the painted iconic portraits spreading beyond the confines of the television tube. Nevertheless, the perceived black areas of the images on the television screens are in fact the actual screens themselves. As with Bacon's glass surfaces, the spectator and the gallery is reflected in them, in the gaps scratched out in the white paint. The painted iconic image-portraits from television history–a history of television from my selective remembrance– are anchored in their individual screens but spread out beyond those confines, across the painted wooden frame that holds them, to link with the other images. The fundamentally black painted wooden rack, broken with the painted tendrils from the iconic images, is, in the final display, placed against a painted black wall of the gallery, so that, again as with Joselit's notion of painting being only an integral part of a network, the painted image, their immediate supports, (the television sets), their support (the painted wooden rig) and the gallery wall (painted black) are all inter-related.

Four of the television sets transpired to be in perfect working order. It was logical to integrate the live footage of my painting from life with the sitters on one of these sets, juxtaposed so as to form debate with the scratched-in-paint imagery on the other sets. I chose specific pivotal images from television history that were significant to my period of life and cultural background.

[633] Joselit. *Intelligent Touch,*

To this end I found iconic photographic references for the seven screens that no longer functioned as TV screens. Of the seven images chosen, three represent England, my birth land and home until 1989, two images come from Australian television history, where I have resided and became citizen since 1999, and two from the USA, because their culture has so influenced my own and the particular images resonate as my childhood memories. The four working screens were to run video footage pertinent to the studio sessions and video portraits. There was an integrated soundtrack from the central screen featuring my interactions with the sitters, which could be increased at the spectators own interaction or left at a low volume, mingling with the other general; background noises of the gallery space. I fixed a 'live' camera so that the gallery space was shown live on screen. This had the effect of placing the viewer into the installation, alongside the iconic images or to see them as part of the network of the whole gallery exhibition. It directly gave them their 'Warholian Fifteen minutes of fame'. The bottom left screen ran recorded footage similar to Warhol's "stillies', (as discussed in chapter 2). The subjects were friends who sat for fifteen seconds, staring out, face-on from the screen, as if making direct eye contact with the viewer.

The first iconic TV image I sourced was John F Kennedy and Richard Nixon from the very first U.S. broadcast television political debate, one of four, where the candidates pitched for presidency. Held in West Virginia in 1960, it signifies the influential power



Image 105B
Ode to remembrance: Age shall not weary them. (2012). Details.

of the seen image and the creation of empathy with a charismatic character perceived through television medium, expounding Marshall McLuhan's 'Medium is the message' insights.[634] An estimated seventy million audience watched the first debate. Audiences that had listened to the debate broadcast on the radio had deemed Nixon the winner, while those who had access to the new medium of television gave the win to Kennedy. Much of the weight of decision was based on the impact of the candidate's visual appearance. Kennedy appeared young, handsome, film-star-like, while Nixon, appeared sweaty, uncomfortable and, since he had declined studio make-up, declaring it for homosexuals,[635] the early black and white television signal created a look of a 'six o'clock shadow', while make-up had done so much for Kennedy's appearance. Nixon was also reportedly quite ill.[636] 'Even Kennedy acknowledged the medium's role in his victory.' [637]

The second American historical TV portrait image refers to the image of the space-helmeted head of Neil Armstrong reflecting Buzz Aldrin on the occasion of the first moon landing in 1969. This historical moment is still remembered in distinct personal memory through these iconic images born of grainy satellite signals.

The first Australian television-set portrait is of the dismissal of the Gough Whitlam from his office as Prime Minister of Australia, sacked by the then Governor General, John Kerr, in 1975. The iconic image is of Whitlam speaking to the press where he utters his oft-quoted proclamation, 'Well may we say "God save the Queen", because nothing will save the Governor-General!" This image and speech has only ever come to mean anything to me

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[634] Marshall McLuhan, "The Medium is the Message", from *Understanding Media: the Extensions of Man* (New York: Signet, 1964), 23-35,63-7. http://www.bard.edu/graduate/mfa/summer/readings/documents/McLuhanMedium.pdf

[635] The Human Face: 3, Beauty, directed by James Erskine and David Stewart, series produced by Sally George (BBC, 2001). DVD.

[636] O'Brien, Michael. *John F. Kennedy: A Biography.* (New York. Thomas Dunne Books. St. Martin's Press. 2005). 407-408. His tanned appearance was likely darkening (hyperpigmentation) of the skin due to Addison's disease.

[637] Kayla Webley, *"How the Nixon-Kennedy Debate Changed the World"*, *Time,* September 23, 2010. http://www.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,2021078,00.html

in my adulthood since migration to Australia in 1989. Like the Chamberlain case, it is part of the fabric of Australian history and, in this particular context, is significant in relation to the images of Royalty and England included here.

The second Australian image is that of Lindy Chamberlain with her nine-week-old daughter, Azaria, at Ayers rock. The image, itself tragically poignant, in this context should give a double-take for the viewer as they see live footage of Lindy in the studio sitting sessions for her portrait alongside the portrait of her with the death certificate of the same child.

The first iconic TV portrait image relating to UK historical moments is Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip waving to the crowds from the palace balcony on June 2,1953, after her coronation: 'It is the first coronation to be televised. The number of TV sets in the UK doubles to three million and for many of the estimated twenty million who watch it is their first experience of television.'[638] Therefore this is a pivotal point in the introduction of this medium for the masses, from my own cultural background, enabling access to a sense of experiencing a wider world, and the people in it, through moving images beamed into their own homes. I was born three years after this event, aware of the monarchy through the medium of black and white television throughout my childhood.

Colour television broadcasts started in the UK in 1967, though most homes did not have them until the early 1970s. The second UK image comes from 1967. It is of John Lennon and Paul McCartney of The Beatles singing *All You Need Is Love*:

> The Beatles signed a contract to represent the BBC, and Britain, on Our World, the world's first live television satellite link-up to be seen by approximately 400 million people across five continents… John Lennon wrote the song especially for the occasion, to the brief given by the BBC: it had to be simple so that viewers around the world would understand it…National broadcasting companies from 14 countries provided material

[638] Andrew A. Green."The Diamond Reign Of Queen Elizabeth : A Timeline Of Events", *InfoBarrel*, February 23, 2012.
http://www.infobarrel.com/The_Diamond_Years_of_Queen_Elizabeth

for the 125-minute programme, which was shown in black-and-white.[639]

This then was the start of global TV satellite communication. The Beatles have been central to my youth and, indeed, significant to my adulthood. The year of 1967 is synonymous with The Beatles highly influential album on youth and pop culture, *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* defining 'The Summer of Love'. It would be remiss of me not to have a 'Beatle' reference as a demonstration of how technology can implant images into one's own consciousness that evoke personal history so vividly and shape ones life directly.

The last UK TV portrait is that of Prince Charles and Princess Diana kissing on the balcony of Buckingham Palace having just married on July 29, 1981. In this context, it contrasts with the other image represented here, that of Charles' parents on the same balcony. It suggests the cultural shift in responses to Royalty and the modernisation of 'The Royals' in their public show of affection, which foreshadows the fraught future for the young Royal couple and the involvement of the media to document it all for the world to see.

These iconic images, representing obsolete technology though maintained and brought to us now by the digital technology of computer downloads from Internet sites, suggest that that they have transcended their original confines to become independent of their initial source, part of the outside world, rather than forgotten memories. This is how they live on, this is how we remember them, hence the title. They also interact and remain relevant to my own persona, they are part of my make-up, of who I am. They are another multi-faceted, multi media self-portrait – the live present-day sitters and my contemporary concerns intertwined with my own experience of history.

[639] "The Beatles on 'Our World': All You Need is Love", *The Beatles Bible.* http://www.beatlesbible.com/1967/06/25/the-beatles-on-our-world-all-you-need-is-love/

3:2 (iii) The Human Touch: The final exhibition.

Newcastle University Gallery. March 27, 2013– April 13, 2013.

The large painted-from-life portraits dominated the gallery space to the left of the entrance. (See Image 110). The immediate wall to the left featured the portraits of *Michael* and *Frank* separated by *My Father: Portrait of Dementia*, which was hung opposite to the landscape-ways portrait of *My Father: His Battle For Britain*. As the exhibition moved to the far left hand wall the 'slivers' of painted panels that refer to second-hand imagery intersperse with paintings from life. The portrait of *Daniel* was central to this wall with the four panels of *Nichol Amy, Apparently* spaced between it and *Portrait of J.P*. and *Self-Portrait: Grisaille*. The intention here was that the spectator would be cognisant of the real space of the 'live' sitters coming into the physical space of the gallery, sharing the spectators space, while Internet sourced imagery– on equivalent height canvases, but of irregular widths and wrapping around the stretchers–accentuates the contrast of their flatness and screen-like allusions. They appear as grabs from Internet searches. This led onto a mirroring of the opposite wall with a continuance of the painted-from-life portraits, predominantly those of *Lindy Chamberlain-Creighton, My Father: His Battle For Britain* and *Kit and Loretta.*



Image 110
Final Exhibition. Newcastle University Gallery. NSW. View 1.

The last painting in this side of the gallery was *Self-portrait; Focus and Periphery*. Effectively this made a link to the right hand, far wall, if one bypasses the interrupting foyer area. Therefore, to turn to the right of the foyer, one entered the smaller space. (See Image 111) The far wall featured a line of

seven self-portraits. This revealed the extent of experimentation and disregard for physical likeness, in turn drawing attention to the concern and sense of need for recognisable likeness in the portraits of sitters.



Image 111
Final Exhibition. Newcastle University Gallery. NSW. View 2.

This led into the adjoining section, the five paneled work of the artist's family. (See Image 112). Central to the portraits of myself, two sons and daughter, is the portrait of my wife, *Sally: (Lady Madonna)*.

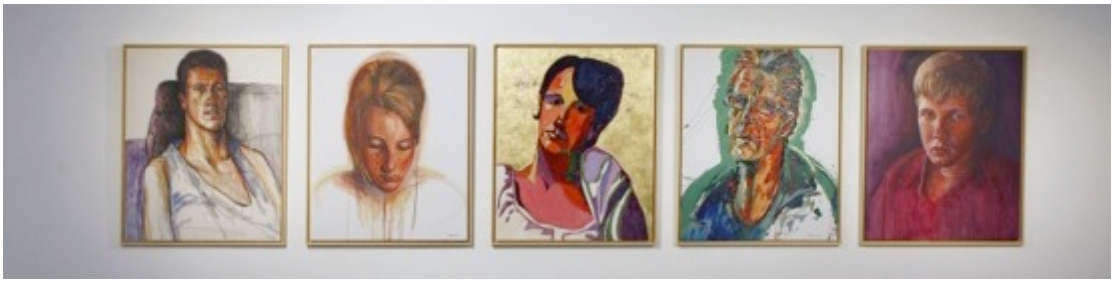


Image 112
Final Exhibition. Newcastle University Gallery. NSW. View 3.

In continuance of the family connection, this then lead to the two portraits of my mother and father, both framed in black to merge into the black wall adjacent to the left of the foyer. This became the black background wall against which the painted black rack holding the eleven TV screens, *Ode To Remembrance* was placed (See image 113). This formed the bridge back, bypassing the entrance foyer, to the main gallery space on the left of entry. (See image 114).



Image 113
Final Exhibition. Newcastle University Gallery. NSW. View 4



Image 114
Final Exhibition. Newcastle University Gallery. NSW. View 5

This chapter has chronicled the findings of my practice-led research. Initially portrait works explored how I both viewed and represented aspects of myself, and then sitters with whom I was already closely connected. Portraits from life naturally progressed to widening the circle of sitters to people with whom I had little previous personal relationship to ultimately painting someone from life that had been totally outside of my own social sphere but about whom I had felt I had some prior knowledge formed from newspaper and TV reportage. In these later examples an artist/sitter relationship necessarily developed through the process of the painting sessions. Simultaneously, I was also investigating how the absence of a sitter's presence affected the making and final image of a portrait. Sometimes this would result in alternative

portraits of a sitter that I had already painted from life, or, at the other extreme, portraits of people randomly chosen from Internet images.

Obviously, with regard to the latter category of portraits, it is impossible for there to be any artist/sitter relationship, yet as the whole body of work has developed I concluded that the exhibition of the portraits should not be arranged to infer unfavorable criticism or bias to any particular approach as a viable method of creating meaningful work. Most artists profess the purpose of painting for them is probably more about what is discovered in the actual process of painting, the results are almost a by-product for others to make of them what they will. It became apparent in this practice-led research, informed by the theoretical research, that similarly the choice to work with a sitter to paint from life is motivated much by the enjoyment and intellectual engagement that directs the work and is facilitated by the process. One is able to wholly appreciate why Lucian Freud favoured the process; for him, it really became his lifestyle, his very reason for living. But beyond whatever the original impetus may be–whether it be the desire to find out about the person directly and distill that personal relationship through paint, or conversely to use the springboard of second-hand imagery to explore a response to it–the artistic development of the ideas and concepts, and the mechanics of successfully delivering the ideas and concepts through the painted portrait, remain equivalent challenges to the artist regardless of favoured or chosen impetus.

Conclusion

This research has investigated the value of the human engagement described as the artist/sitter relationship. It determined the varying extent to which this engagement could be seen to impact and shape the working process of various artists and the making of the painted portrait of their sitters. By comparison to that of partial reliance on photographic references and that of total reliance on second-hand imagery, and even to that of self-portraiture, the research identified the strengths of the method of working directly from the external sitter as a continuance of an established tradition of canonical Western cultural art discourse that still remains appropriate and relevant as contemporary painting practice. The research addressed the significance and ongoing practice of the paint medium for the expression of this time spent between two people, concluding that the method and medium was capable of addressing universal concerns–particularly those of identity, authenticity and human emotions, often arising out of, or in keeping with, more personal and private concerns between both artist and sitter.

Chapter one established that, even before the invention of photography, the practice of observation of the seen world for purposes of artistic representation was not solely for factual documentation but rather to facilitate the imagination of both artist and viewer. Resultant portraits, through stylisation and idealisation of observed reality, directed the viewer to conceptual and psychological content as much as the joy of recognition of tangible humanity translated through the paint medium. Portraiture based on direct observation was shown to be a means of inspirational emulation or empathic understanding of another's personality and authentic life experiences. A particular value of the artist/sitter relationship was shown to be the entrustment of the sitter in the ability of the painter to present their image evocative of desirable aspects of their living self, even beyond their death.

The manipulation of the portrait image for conceptual and emotional purposes, even though seen as an 'official' portrait–exemplified through the portraits of

painters such as Hans Holbein, Gainsborough and David, anticipated what, superficially, photography might much later attempt to emulate, particularly through digital programs, though this would become simply another media option as artist's tool, not necessarily giving of better results. These artists establish the use of oil paint and its associated techniques as a most appropriate, durable and stable means of translating observations and perceptions of an individual made over a period of time, into a permanent image.

In seeking to establish the value of the relationship between parties involved in the production of the *painted* portrait, it was important for the research to determine the impact of the advent of photography on the role and purpose of the painter continuing to make portraits. Chapter two therefore presented historical and contemporary critical thought concerning what the painted image is capable of retaining and offering, informed by and in relation to the reproduced image or photographic portrait. The discussion analysed artists that referenced photography, worked independently away from, and with no desire for personal access to, the people represented in the images. In the absence of the human touch, artists such as Andy Warhol supplant that of the camera in the creation of iconic images of individuals to the extent that the sitters become synonymous with the mediated image. While this may seem to render the idea of the human touch uncertain, rather than authentic, ultimately any authenticity that is revealed is predominantly that of the artist, whereas the research has shown that the working from life method, through the medium of paint, gives precedent to the authenticity of the sitter. Photographically sourced portrait works, which have developed since the 1960s with Postmodernism, display what Fredric Jameson has called, 'depthlessness'.[640] The artist, and consequently the viewer, cannot, or are not concerned to, reconstruct the individual life of the sitter or the world depicted since 'there is nothing behind or beyond the picture that we can use to decode

[640] Fredric Jameson. *Postmodernism, Or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. Duke University Press. Durham, NC. 1991. 8.

it. It's surface and it's meaning are one and the same.'[641] The research has clearly identified the concern of artists to reveal authenticity of the individual, as defined in the introduction, through direct intimate connection as opposed to examining projected societal stereotypical character types.

Chapter two therefore established that the paint medium could be used for personal expression of concepts relating creatively and subjectively to the human condition and the human form; the concepts and resultant portraits providing comparison of argument for working directly with paint from the individual when ideas surrounding the expression of a shared and personal relationship to the sitter are primary concerns. To this end, the chapter also established the specific, material qualities of the paint medium, the critical arguments for its continued practice and the enthusiastic employment of it as proposed and promoted by elite professional artists. The understanding of these attributes of the medium is implicit in the pre-requisites for entry into the majority of portrait prizes around the world. Chapter two therefore interrogated the rigour of application of the pre-requisites, which, through their ongoing insistence of both sitter and artist signing to having met for purposes of observation from life, indicate an agreement that the human touch, the live experience of one person meeting with another, is necessary and well-expressed through the process of painting.

Furthermore, the research shows that far from this being an outmoded conservative, traditional approach to portraiture, it is very much enshrined in newly-established twenty-first century galleries and portrait prizes. The

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[641]Oxford University Press. *Fredric Jameson*: *Postmodernism, Or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*
http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803120822218QUICK REFERENCE
Fredric Jameson illustrates 'depthlessness' in his comparison of Van Gogh's painting *A Pair of Boots* (1887), painted from life, to Andy Warhol's photo silkscreen work *Diamond Dust Shoes* (1960). He states that while 'Van Gogh's painting is the disclosure of what the equipment, the pair of peasant shoes, *is* in truth', by contrast Warhol's work 'does not really speak to us at all.'(See *Postmodernism, Or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*.... 1991.p8) Similarly Donald Kuspit notes that 'Warhol's postart portraits…are unhuman–they are robotic papier mache creations of daily life…People are nothing but their social identity for Warhol. They are centered in it and apart from it they have no identity.(See Donald Kuspit. *The End of Art.* 170.)

founders and boards of such galleries and competitions were shown to acknowledge the essential value of the sitter having sat in front of the artist for at least part, if not all, of the portrait sittings to the extent that It is often stipulated as a legally binding agreement. Through noted examples, the chapter concluded that the 'working from life' clause generates certain detectable qualities within portraiture, but that, in of itself, it is not restrictive of innovative, imaginative and experimental work.

Chapter two therefore concludes that the painted portrait of a sitter from life remains a unique artform in that it is the result of a specific collaboration between artist and sitter to arrive at a mutually satisfying image that encapsulates their time together. This condensing of a shared experience into a singular image, not captured in a fraction of a second but borne over many looks and thoughts over time–an observation supported by many of the artists in the research– is identified as best facilitated through painting where the artist and sitter connect on a human level. The visualising of the elusive but essential felt connection between the artist and sitter, consequently perceived by the viewer, is shown to be better enabled through the 'working from life' approach. This is born out through the observations, comments and specified requirements of curators, boards and adjudicators of national portrait galleries and prestigious portrait prizes.

Revealed through direct correspondence and interviews with both artists and sitters, and citing notable exemplary portrait painters, particularly that of Lucian Freud, the research in chapter three argued that the actual human relationship developed over the time of the sittings is highly prized by both artist and sitter. Lucian Freud, for instance, acknowledging the considerable role his sitter, in this case, the critic and author Martin Gayford, has in the entire enterprise, states:

> you are here to help it…I have the impression that you are helping me very much[642]

[642] Martin Gayford. *Man with a blue scarf,* 108/146.

The example of Freud–his practice and ideas–is shown to be crucially influential, resonating with the researcher's own account of his experiences of sessions with sitters for portraiture. When successful and positive, it is shown to be an exclusive and deeply intimate experience – episodically non-verbal. The resultant portrait can be seen as the substantial by-product of the relationship established by the very process of painting. The portrait may serve as an important and unique celebration of the shared experience and, to the viewer, a privileged view into that relationship is sanctioned.

The chapter also concludes, through the particular example of Euan Uglow, that the 'working from life' method can be employed as a viable approach to serve individual conceptual and painterly goals quite absent of emotional engagement, as inferred here by the term 'human-touch'. In this case, though the human figure observed directly from life contributes to the aesthetic and conceptual content of the work, any insight into the artist and sitter's relationship is purposefully distanced in preference to somewhat clinical, rigorously constructed and calculated, mapped and unified surfaces. The example therefore highlights the value of the working-from-life approach even though the artist-sitter relationship is not an intimate one and there is no perceived 'human touch'.

The research does, however, reveal that photography is frequently used as adjunct to painting from life, as supportive reference material. Nonetheless, it concludes that, unless the goal of the artist is to discuss the nature and idiosyncrasies of photographic representation (as in photorealism), the experienced human connection between artist and sitter is more authentically expressed through the medium of paint, purposed for its unique, inherent qualities as object, distinctly separate from photography. However, the written and practice-led research areas testify that it is by comparison with the extreme diametric practice of working one-on-one, that the portrait borne of direct human relationship maintains its potency and relevance.

The practice-led research shows a working-out and testing of the assumptions and conclusions expressed above. Paintings referencing photographic or technological sources engaged with concepts pertaining to the questioning of identity and authenticity and the contradictorily attractive, familiar, though emotionally distancing, effect of photographic and filmic media. In these works, where no artist/sitter relationship existed, the images rely heavily on concept, supported by appropriate practical execution in an attempt to make them formally interesting. They are no less authentic of enquiry into how someone is represented through different media, nor, in that regard, less valid as portraits. However, these portraits are a visual response to personal concepts, none of which are informed by shared emotion and connectivity with the person depicted. Accordingly, the research has analysed the resultant works recognising and identifying the quite differing impetuses and objectives of the portraits, and, by comparison, how this informs the value of the artist/sitter relationship to portraiture.

The researcher oscillated between producing portraits painted from media images and those painted directly from life. Here, though dealing with the personal, the researcher became more cognisant and appreciative of the broader possibilities to explore and convey universal human concerns through shared, intimate and personal experiences embodied in portraits of particular individuals. The experience of time spent together with the sitter, eventuating in their portrait, revealed the value of time to the process. It facilitated not only the making of a unique portrait but also, and just as importantly, the exchange of ideas, the intensely pleasurable and fulfilling experience of sharing one's own expertise, of giving someone insight into the researcher's own sphere, both physically and intellectually, and the opportunity to hear and engage in theirs. Though it is often suggested that a purpose of portraiture is that of affording the sitter a heightened awareness of their own mortality, of marking their place in time and space, of saying 'this is who I am', from the artist's perspective the shared experience can be profoundly illuminating in this regard too. The portrait-painting studio, the quiet intimacy of collaborating in

some kind of shared goal, though not categorically known, attainable but at the end of an unknown pathway of artistic exploration, is facilitated by the meaningful artist/sitter relationship expressed as the 'human touch'. The reflections from the researcher's sitters and his own experience bore out those observations of prominent artists and their sitters cited previously in this research; as Gayford observes:

> It raises the question that occurs to everybody in childhood, and at intervals thereafter. What is this thing called 'me'? That is of course the central enigma of portraiture.[643]

Self-portraiture can attempt to answer this question about the artist himself, though, as the practice-led research indicates, subjectivity makes physical likeness even less of a concern. In that no one can ever physically see their whole external self, other than as a reflection or in reproduction, the research shows that, in self-portraiture in particular, technical and conceptual experimentation attempted to capture the elusive nature of one's own true reality, though, as Richter's inclusion of a full-length mirror at the conclusion of his 2009 London exhibition may have alluded, any such knowing of true reality of self is fraught with contradictions and further elusiveness. Nevertheless, techniques and avenues of uninhibited exploration facilitated through self-portraiture was shown to benefit approaches to working from sitters though their presence allowed also for objective observations resulting in a degree of life-like depiction. Though when the sitter is introduced into the equation, Gayford's question–What is this thing called me?–is also answered as much for the painter as the sitter through the human relationship facilitated by meaningful time spent in the making of the portrait. The customary solitary experience of the painter is, through the working from life approach to portraiture, necessarily opened up and exposed. Neither is this experience and practice the preserve of the past, an irrelevance today. In the 2013 catalogue that accompanies the Jonathan Yeo portrait exhibition at London's National Portrait Gallery, Gayford asks 'what can an exponent of brush and

[643] Gayford, *Man with a blue scarf*, 182.

canvas contribute in an age in which every smartphone can take photographs and videos and send them anywhere in the world in an instant?' and he answers it by referring to what David Hockney said about Lucian Freud's portrait of him.

> When you looked at a canvas, Hockney said, you could see all the hours of sitting 'layered' into the pigment. In other words, a portrait is the record of a relationship between two individuals, one that unfolds as the two people involved get to know each other–through time.[644]

It is significant here that it is Gayford, the sitter and not the painter, who acknowledges the value of the artist/sitter relationship to portraiture. Through his experience as sitter to major portrait artists he articulates the value of human touch; he understands it to mean time spent between two people as still most ably expressed to both parties, and a wider audience, through the medium of paint.

The research concludes then that the degree to which observations, perceptions and feelings, layered over time, affect and inject authenticity of the sitter into their portrait seems better served by an actual physical engagement between artist and sitter:

> I think portraits are maybe seen as one last vestige of authenticity whereby you sit there, you paint that person –'This is what this person actually looks like' – 'This is the real person' – you know, it's not some kind of 'Photoshopped' photograph.[645]

Wood implies the wheel has gone full-circle whereby the painting, produced through observation of real-life, is regarded as more authentic than the photograph, usurping the camera's claim to 'never lie'.

This research has extensively investigated approaches to portraiture focusing on the 'painting from life' method, which necessarily invests some relationship with the sitter, by comparison to the production of portraits of people to whom the artist has no personal access physically. The analysis of parity of the

[644] Martin Gayford, *The Many Faces,* 15.
[645] Tom Wood. Transcript of Interview with the researcher. July 2010.

resultant works, through written and practical research about the researcher's own portraiture and that of others, both contemporarily and historically, has established the value of an artist/sitter relationship, the value of presence often referred to as the 'human touch'.

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