

Self-Portrait

An exhibition of self-portraits by Members of the Royal Society of Portrait Painters in association with The Bulldog Trust

Foreword



Britain is arguably the leading centre worldwide for portrait painting. From the sixteenth century on, many notable foreign portraitists came and worked here: Holbein, Van Dyck, Lely, Kneller, West, Copley, Sargent, Whistler to name but a few. This is in addition to Reynolds, Gainsborough and Lawrence two hundred years ago, and so many wonderful British portraitists in the twentieth century. We seem to have both a great talent for portrait painting and because of our historical affluence, a great supply of sitters and patrons. The RP is therefore hugely central, both historically and currently, to the cultural and artistic life of this country.

Andrew Festing

President RP

An Exhibition of Self-Portraits

*by Members of the
Royal Society of Portrait Painters
in association with
The Bulldog Trust*

2nd – 10th October 2007

THE BULLDOG TRUST

2 Temple Place, London WC2R 3BD

Telephone: 020 7836 3715

Open weekdays 10am-6pm, Thursday 10am-8pm,

Saturday 10am-4pm, Closed on Sunday

The Bulldog Trust

In this exhibition, some fifty self-portraits by members of the Royal Society of Portrait Painters are on display. This unique show will offer an extraordinary range of contrasts. It is sponsored by The Bulldog Trust, whose chairman, Richard Hoare says “This is the first exhibition of paintings ever held at Temple Place, and we are delighted to be hosting The Royal Society of Portrait Painters and awarding the ‘Bulldog Bursary for excellence’ for the first time after a national competition.”

“As the Bulldog Trust supports the development of talent across the arts, we set up the Bulldog Bursary with the RP to encourage the perpetuation of the skills and excellence involved in professional portraiture. We are delighted to be able to offer the winner the truly unique opportunity of learning this art from the UK’s master portrait painters themselves.”



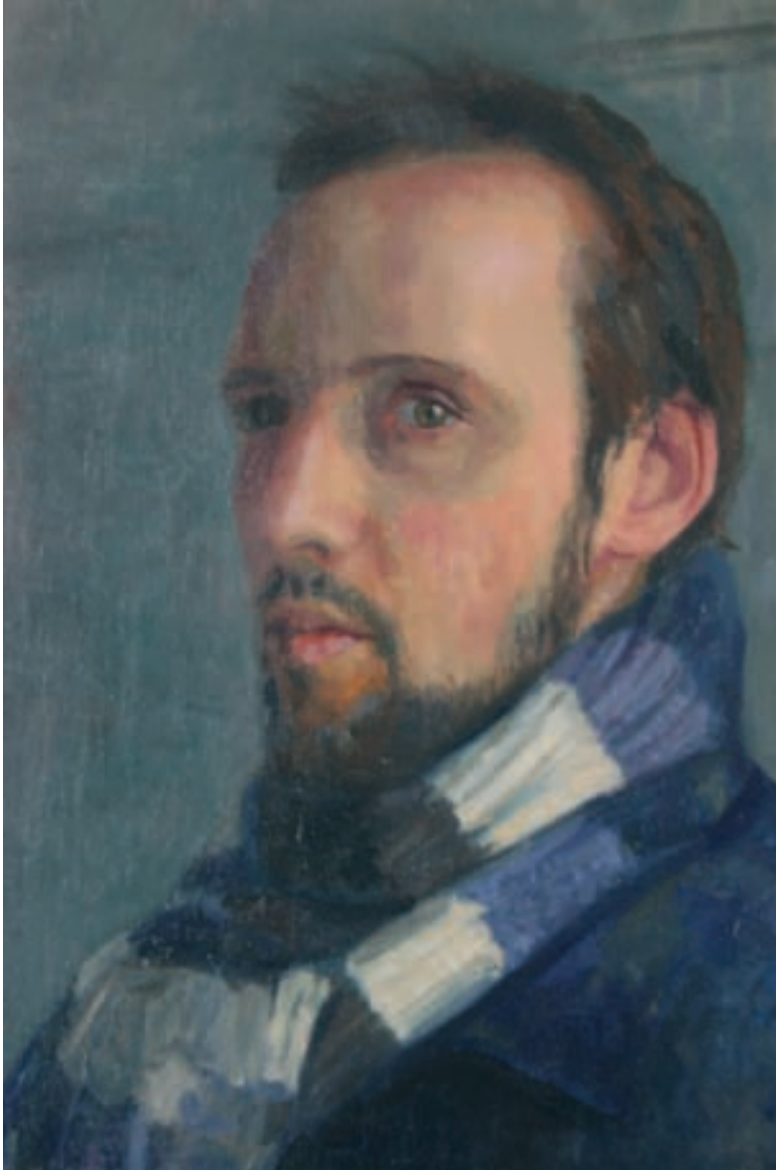
The Bulldog Trust

2 Temple Place, London WC2R 3BD

The first winner of the Bulldog Bursary will be presented with the £5,000 prize. He is Joseph Galvin and he is also exhibiting a self-portrait (see opposite).

The self-portrait is one of the most fascinating examples of the genre. It gives an insight into the character of the artist, showing how they depict themselves both for the viewer and for posterity. It is an excellent opportunity to judge their artistic skills as well as their tastes, and can reflect current trends. As the artist holds up a mirror to themselves, we can also judge them and their craft. This is particularly interesting for members of Royal Society of Portrait Painters as their work is normally commissioned. This exhibition offers the opportunity for them to explore portraiture beyond the boundaries of the commission framework.

Joseph Galvin (*Winner, Bulldog Bursary for excellence*)



Self-portrait in blue and white scarf
(2007)

50 x 40 cms

Oil

This portrait was created in my old studio in Cardiff, looking into a mirror propped up on my studio easel. It presented an opportunity to try out a new colour on my palette, Viridian, which I used as a cooler complement to mix with the warm flesh tones. My focus in the portrait was to create a simple image, which described the act of looking. I wanted the focus of the painting to be centred on the eye, to attempt to convey a feeling of intimacy with the viewer, and to reflect the nature of the activity.

This is a seasonal self-portrait. Aside from the practical function, I became interested in how the scarf as form and colour lent itself to the overall composition. It was also the first time that I had painted myself with a beard.

Introduction

By Philip Vann

The painters in this exhibition have taken time and great effort to feature and embody themselves for a wider scrutiny. Rigorous self-scrutiny underlies the task in hand yet the self-portraitist has to jettison all preconceived self-images in order to achieve a vivid likeness, to become literally the seer of themselves.

Without 'wise passiveness', an attitude of quiet, pristine self-reflectiveness, the resulting work will appear stale, mechanically photographic even.

Successful self-portraits have a seemingly paradoxical quality: they are at once images of both subtle and startling evanescence (the subject's stance and countenance can change infinitesimally or, indeed, drastically from moment to moment, as any series of swiftly delineated self-portrait drawings made at one sitting will show) yet they are also accentuated accounts of core individuality, alluding to the ineffably mysterious nature of personal identity – what the poet Gerard Manley Hopkins called "that taste of myself, of *I* and *me* above all and in all things".

From beneath a vibrantly patterned 'ethnic' hat, **Leonard McComb** peers unwaveringly at himself (and us) from behind wire-rimmed spectacles that appear like glinting gold. The greying moustache and hair just sparingly occluding the tip of his right ear, and the partly shadowed, partly luminous countenance, are infused with what the artist has called 'the experience of light both describing and animating natural forms' as well as a delight in 'the asymmetry of the human head (which) gives it its uniqueness'.

McComb's gentle, open look here has something of the fierce investigative quality that surely distinguishes most, if not all good self-portraits. Such works by others may appear less benign, perhaps more wry or acerbic, yet the exploratory mien characterising the authentic self-portrait usually encompasses simultaneous qualities of vulnerability and self-assurance.

In his self-portrait, **Saied Dai** looks obliquely away and downwards. Yet his tranquil, poignant look is ultimately no less piercing than McComb's. Dai's both glowing and subdued flesh tones standing out against the simple, classic black costume and backdrop, and flourishing dark curls, help endow this portrait with a psychological acuity like that seen in late 15th century northern European portraiture. The still gestural expressiveness of the outstretched hand-on-heart here is remarkable too.

A number of self-portraits here are characterised not only by the telling convention of the plain backdrop, necessarily rendering features in stark relief, but also by the probing focus of a severe, quite filmic close-up. **Geoffrey Hayzer's** self-portrait head is cropped of any superfluous detail. Through vast round, rimmed spectacles his gaze transfixes us, one eye appearing more



*Self-portrait (2002) by Dr Leonard McComb RA,
Hon. RP, Hon. RBA*



Self-portrait (2005) by Saied Dai RP



Untitled (2007) Detail by Keith Breeden RP



*Me in a magnifying mirror (2001)
by Daphne Todd OBE, PPRP, NEAC, Hon. SWA*



Eye to eye (2000) by Geoffrey Hayzer RP



Untitled self (2007) by Toby Wiggins RP

Introduction *Continued*

opaque than the other (itself a common aspect in self-portraiture, maybe partly signifying an artist's simultaneous mix of introspective withdrawal and engagement with the world beyond). This gripping self-image is actually one of surprising delicacies, as we observe the range of burnished flesh tones resembling a lustrously fluctuating landscape.

Keith Breeden's close-up self-scrutiny virtually abandons the backdrop, plain or otherwise, altogether. It is partial, cropped details of hair and ears that are actually seen to frame his facial features, with no breathing space beyond, contributing to a rugged, ineluctable encounter between subject and viewer, one of sensuous urgency.

Toby Wiggins' naked head and shoulders, against the pale lucid green background, appear sculpturally wrought as his taut features catch the light. His unsmiling, wary yet resolute regard is one pared of all illusion, stripped bare of any decorative sentiment.

Close-up focus perhaps reaches its apogee in **Daphne Todd's** *Me in a magnifying mirror*, about which she says, "The image is about the distortions actually seen rather than trying to guess

what constitutes any likeness to others." Yet the visual 'distortions' here have a paradoxical effect in that, freed from constraints of naturalistic representation, the intensified, fractured image is endowed with the humane clarity of an essentially true (though non-literal) 'likeness'.

Other self-portraits less austere set the artist within a wider milieu, amid familiar, self-revealing intimacies of place and things. **Melissa Scott-Miller** and **John Wonnacott** each portray themselves in the artist's persona, paintbrush in hand. Scott-Miller sets herself apparently in the act of self-portrayal, at her easel in her garden, in workaday creased blue shirt, with glistening greenery spreading on domestic brickwork beyond. The canvas she is working on is barely visible to us, yet the artist's serene yet still nervously alert look intimates a fertile anticipatory air.

The titles of **John Wonnacott's** pictures, *Self-portrait, Summer morning, the red shirt* and *Self-portrait, sunrise with February snow, the striped dressing gown*, each have a suitable, tersely expressive, almost *haiku*-like quality. Details (in the former picture) such as light illumining the billowing folds of the red shirt, and paint coagulating in a hand-held

palette, are notable for their heightened authenticity. In both works, the artist's poignantly open and expectant mien is evoked with unpretentious realism, one devoid utterly of any hint of that self-promoting brashness typical of much contemporary art.

Michael Taylor's self-portrait also shows him with paintbrush in one hand, the other handling a miniature metallic mechanism set in front of him. The powerfully subtle immediacy of his uncompromisingly upfront posture and expression, and the expressive naturalism with which details such as scintillating skin texture, arched fingers and delicately patterned sweater are so finely evoked – such are the primary components of this vividly alive, consummately imaginative self-portrait.

Philip Vann is author of *Face to Face: British Self-Portraits in the Twentieth Century*. He is also author of a monograph on the artist Dora Holzhandler, and co-author of forthcoming books on the painters William Crozier and Joash Woodrow. He lives in Cambridge.



Self-portrait in my studio (1998)
by Melissa Scott-Miller RP



Self-portrait, sunrise with February snow, the striped dressing gown (2006) by John Wonnacott Hon. RP



Self-portrait with machine (2005)
by Michael Taylor RP

The Royal Society of Portrait Painters

The Royal Society of Portrait Painters was formed to promote, maintain, improve and advance education in the fine arts and in particular to encourage the appreciation, study and practice of the art of portraiture and also to promote charitable purposes generally.

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* RP members with work in this exhibition

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The Catalogue

Alastair C. Adams RP



Self-portrait 2007 (2007)

66 x 92 cms

Oil

Self-portraits offer the portrait artist an opportunity to explore ideas often developed as a result of working to a commissioned framework. When the need to please or satisfy a client is removed from the painting process it leaves the artist uninhibited and able to explore painting language, influences, scale, colour, gesture and content.

For this self-portrait, I wanted to look at myself from the sitter's perspective, turning the tables on my scrutiny. The result of this ongoing process of observation, depiction and reflection has also helped me to capture my current situation as a touch stone for the future.

Jane Bond RP, NEAC

Fragment, City & Guilds Art School (1978)

29 x 20 cms
Oil

After many years working as a theatre, TV and film Costume Designer, I returned to full-time fine art studies at City & Guilds and the Royal Academy Schools. I'm showing a little self-portrait from my City & Guilds student days here, and my older, fatter self hiding behind a Persian pot in my studio this August, which may or may not be fully completed for this exhibition!



Jason Bowyer RP, NEAC, PS

Profile (2006)

56 x 41 cms

Oil

The great self-portraits of Rembrandt look at you from 350 years ago. They hold the present, no anger or falsity just empathy for the human condition and the potential for a quiet encouraging word. He is my teacher and inspiration when I paint myself.



Keith Breeden RP

Untitled (2007)

Detail

183 x 61 cms

Oil

If art has a value it is that through it, as through companionship and the observation of nature, we glimpse something beyond ourselves. A connection. We can feel for a moment that we are not the only one.



Tom Coates RP, PNEAC, PPPS, PPRBA, RWS, RWA



Corner of the studio (2007)

51 x 61 cms

Oil

David Cobley RP, NEAC, RWA

Clutter (2004)

61 x 61 cms

Oil

David studied at Northampton and Liverpool schools of art, and has been a finalist in both the BP Portrait Award and the John Player Award. His portrait commissions include HRH The Princess Royal, and in 2004 his portrait of Ken Dodd OBE was bought by the National Portrait Gallery for its permanent collection. He has exhibited regularly at the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition and held solo exhibitions at Beaux Arts and the Victoria Art Gallery in Bath, as well as Messums in London.





Self-portrait (2007)

Detail

100 x 50 cms

Oil

My children are the most likely heirs to my self-portraits. Somewhere in the middle of the vanity and the frankness of these paintings, I know that what I really intend is to remain with them a little longer, even perhaps, to outstay my welcome.

Anthony Connolly studied at Goldsmiths College. He lives and works in Wiltshire.

Saied Dai RP

Self-portrait (2005)

26 x 17 cms

Oil



Andrew Festing PRP



Self-portrait (2006)

127 x 81 cms
Oil

Richard Foster RP



The painter and the
milliner (2007)

76 x 63 cms

Oil

This was painted in my daughter,
Gina Foster's millinery studio, and
we are looking at one of her hats.

David Graham RP



Mirror image (2007)

58 x 56 cms

Oil

Full-time art student at 13, Hammersmith School of Art, then at the Royal College of Art. Exhibitions include: Leicester Galleries, Artist of Fame and Promise, Retrospective at the Mall Galleries, 100 paintings of Israel, Herbert Art Gallery and Museum. Inclusion in the publication 'Face to Face' (2004).

Rolf Harris CBE (Invited artist)



Homage to Rembrandt – portrait of the artist (2004)

109 x 71 cms

Oil

Rolf Harris CBE has been a serious painter for over half a century. He first studied art at London's City & Guilds and later, under impressionist Hayward Veal. He has exhibited at the Royal Academy Summer Exhibition and he is an Honorary Member of the Royal Society of British Artists. In recent years, through his television programmes, he has broken down many of the barriers and made art more accessible to millions of people. His paintings for 'Rolf on Art' were exhibited at the National Gallery and his portrait of HM Queen Elizabeth II, to celebrate her 80th birthday, was the subject of a BBC One programme 'The Queen, by Rolf'.

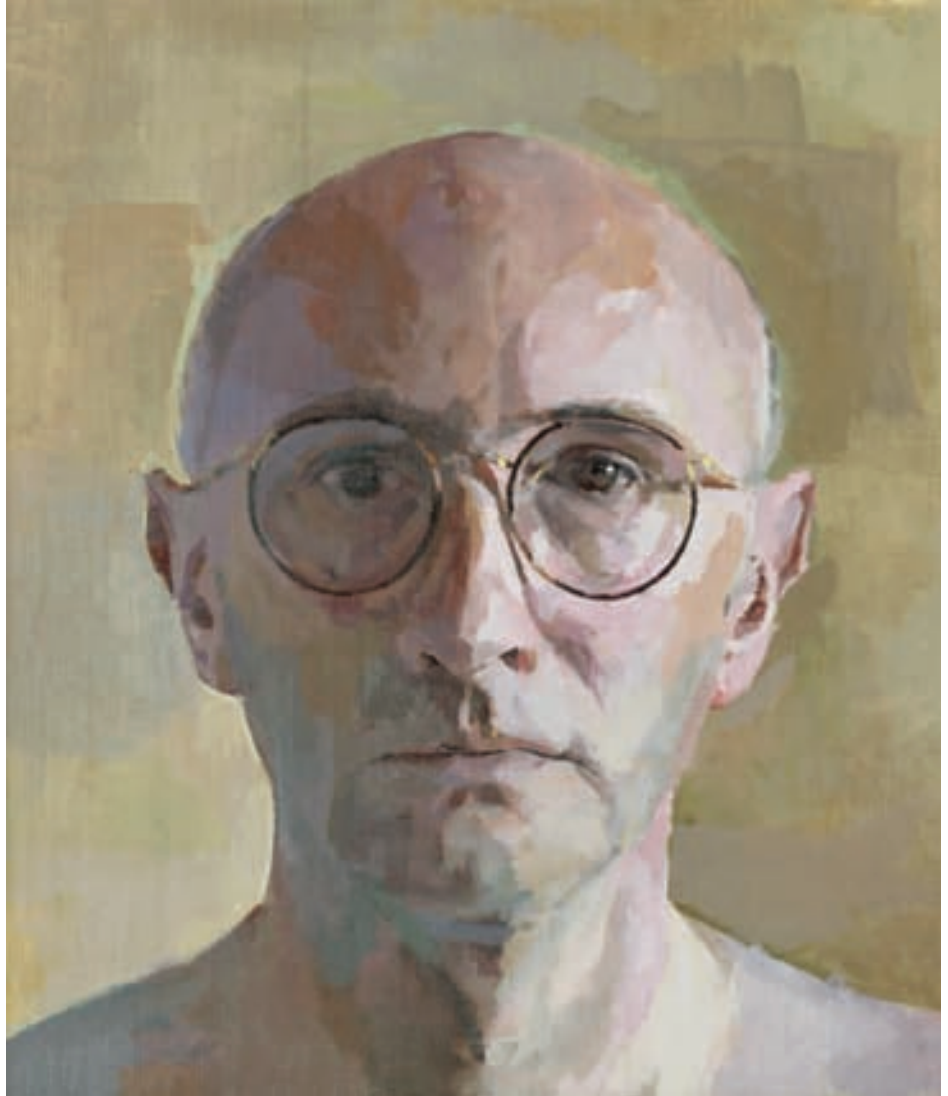
Geoffrey Hayzer RP

Eye to eye (2000)

47 x 44 cms

Oil

Having completed his degree in Graphic Design at St. Martin's School of Art, London, Geoffrey went on to work for 12 years in design groups and advertising agencies, managing several high profile accounts in both London and Paris. Upon his return to London, he studied at the Slade and began to paint full time. Geoffrey's work has been selected for exhibition at the National Portrait Gallery, London, during the BP Portrait Award exhibition in 1993, 1995, 1997, 1998 and 2000. He was elected a member of the Royal Society of Portrait Painters in 2000 and his work is held in a number of public and private collections in England, France and the USA, and can be seen regularly elsewhere in London and in the provinces.



Sheldon Hutchinson RP

Self-portrait (2007)

90 x 68 cms

Graphite

Sheldon was born in London in 1970. He read Philosophy and Economics at Oxford and then studied painting for six years under the legendary Ted Seth Jacobs in France. He was also taught sculpture by Martine Vaugel and, in London, by Polly Loxton and the late Patricia Finch FRBS. He won the Prince of Wales's Award for Portrait Drawing in 2001.



Andrew James RP



Self-portrait (2006)

35 x 28 cms

Oil

Dr Leonard McComb RA, Hon. RP, Hon. RBA



Self-portrait (2002)

23 x 18 cms

Oil

The portrait was painted in France in 2002. I'm pleased with the hat, which I bought in New York at the opening of my exhibition of 'Portraits' at the New York Studio School, February 2000.



Shapes, bits, and me (2007)

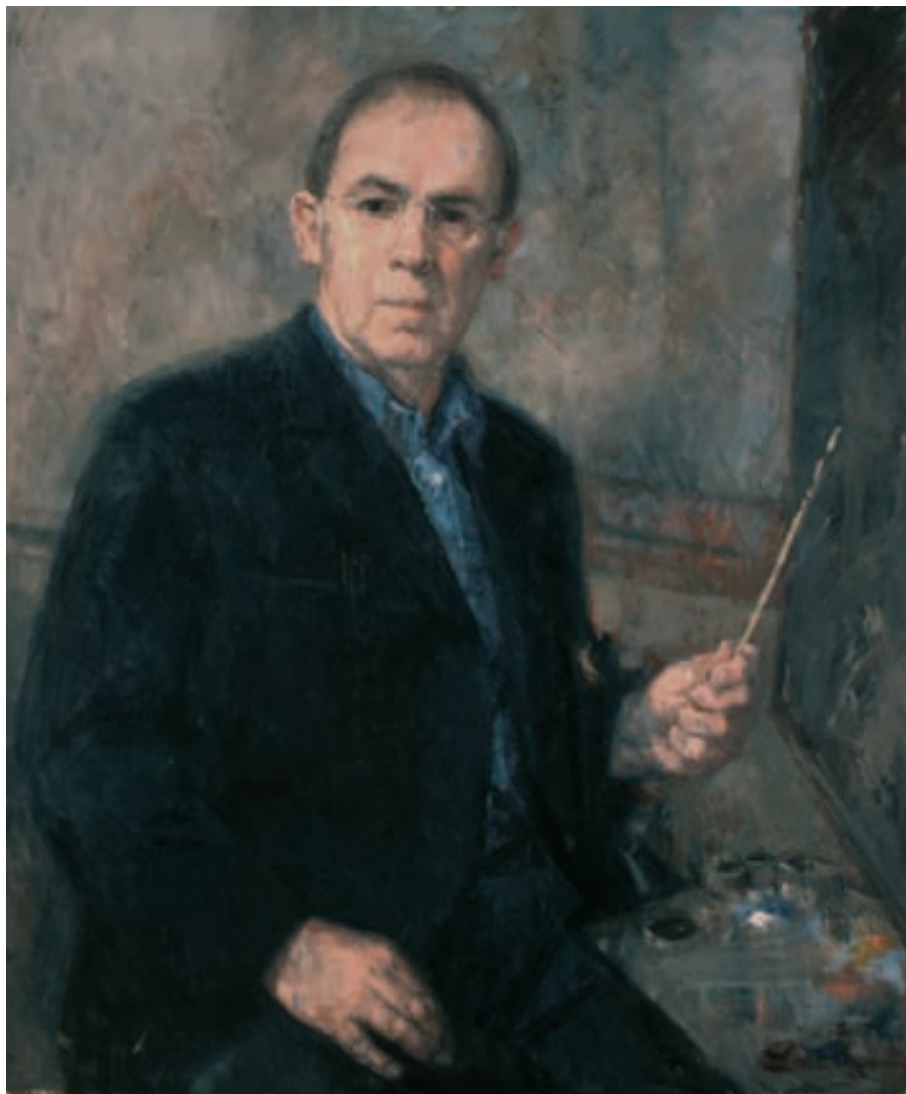
141 x 116 cms

Oil

Professional musician parents. Drawing as a child, interest in portraiture was apparent by the age of 12. After some years combining portraiture with commercial illustration of various sorts (book jackets; illustrated strips etc.) and as a professional actress, portraiture took over.

Portraits for industry; medicine; law; academia; government; H.M. Forces; music; theatre; sport, etc. plus private commissions, are in collections internationally. There are also several large group canvases e.g. House of Commons in Session (440 portraits), The Worshipful Company of Barber-Surgeons (120 portraits) etc. Lectures, TV and radio.

Anthony Morris RP, NEAC



Self-portrait (2006)

91 x 76 cms

Oil

Anthony Morris was born in Oxford 1938. He first studied at Oxford School of Art and then graduated to the Royal Academy Schools and studied under the late Peter Greenham CBE, RA.

He has painted people from all walks of life, including actors, writers, academics, politicians, lawyers, churchmen, military personnel, businessmen, and many private commissions painting people of all ages. In 1971 he was elected to membership of the Royal Society of Portrait Painters and in 1994 the New English Art Club.

His portraits are to be found in various Oxford & Cambridge Colleges including the Bodleian Library, Lincoln's Inn and the Open University.

Michael Noakes RP



Self-portrait, but economising over the frame (1995)

114 x 107 cms
Oil

Michael Noakes not only enjoys painting people, but landscape too. He likes to bring a sense of fun and variety to his pictures. This self-portrait offers a characteristic tongue-in-cheek response when faced with painting himself.

As well as domestic commissions, he has painted many public figures who have helped to form our history. The Queen and most other members of the royal family, Margaret Thatcher and Bill Clinton when in office, and Pope Benedict XVI, have all sat for him.

Tom Phillips CBE, RA, Hon. RP, Hon. PS



Self-portrait (1992)

39.5 x 35.5 cms

Oil

Portraiture is always a problem, and self-portraiture is a special case of that problem. If self-portraits have a tendency to look glum it should not be surprising. As Rembrandt discovered, it is difficult to laugh and paint at the same time. The laugh or smile is acted and the eyes fail to join in, being themselves otherwise engaged. Portrait of the Artist Concentrating on Making a Painting of Himself; that may be a more accurate title than Self-Portrait.

The other dilemma is (since a mirror is usually involved) that the image an artist makes is the wrong way round. It does not end up looking as the artist is seen (or painted) by others.

Such are the disadvantages of self-portraiture. The big advantage is the absolute reliability of the sitter. He cannot phone himself to cancel the sitting. His desire for a rest, cup of coffee etc. chime in exactly with that of the artist. A perfect arrangement.

Anastasia Pollard RP



Sleep-flyer (2007)

23 x 30 cms

Oil

Michael Reynolds RP

Reynolds with floral background
(2007)

90 x 61 cms

Oil



Susan Ryder RP, NEAC



Self-portrait in blue shirt
(2007)

81 x 62 cms

Oil

Susan Ryder studied at the Byam Shaw School of Art from 1960-65, since then she has exhibited regularly with the Royal Society of Portrait Painters, the New English Art Club and at the Royal Academy's Summer Exhibition.

She was elected a member of the New English Art Club in 1980 and to the Royal Society of Portrait Painters in 1992.

A winner of the 1995 Alexon Prize for Portraiture, she has had five solo exhibitions in London's West End, first at W.H. Patterson and recently at the Oakham Gallery. Her portrait commissions include Diana, Princess of Wales in her wedding dress in 1981 and HM The Queen in 1997.

Melissa Scott-Miller RP



Self-portrait in my garden (2006)

91 x 91 cms

Oil

Jeff Stultiens RP



Reflective self-portrait, Venice
(2007)

Detail – work photographed in progress
122 x 112 cms
Oil

This painting is inspired by numerous journeys through Venice on the vaporetti. The myriad reflections, *contre-jour* effects and the ambiguous, often illogical, juxtapositions of people with the texture and detail of passing buildings continue to fascinate me. I see myself very much as an observer – part of the crowd – and this particular situation seemed to embody all those elements.

Benjamin Sullivan RP, NEAC



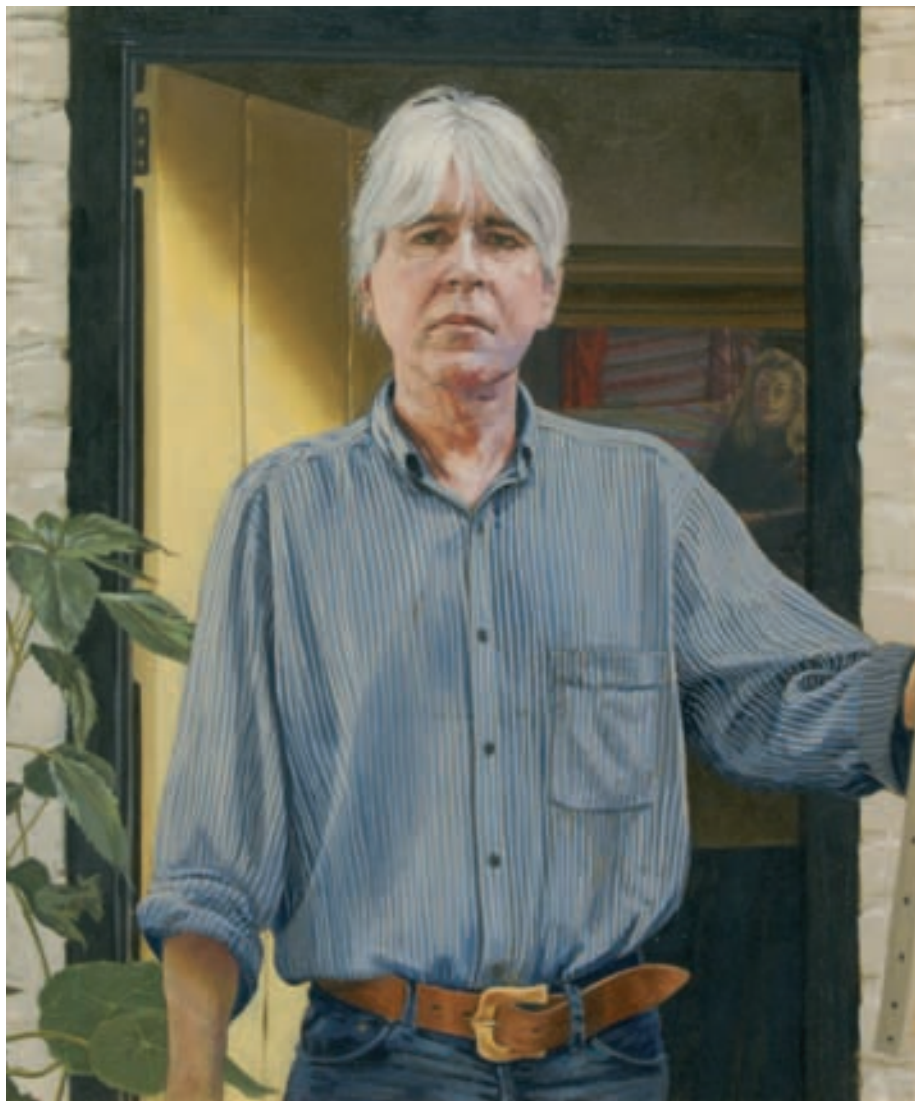
Self-portrait (2007)

46 x 46 cms

Oil

Benjamin Sullivan studied drawing and painting at Edinburgh College of Art, graduating in 2000. Whilst there he was awarded the Andrew Grant Memorial Scholarship (Edinburgh College of Art), and the John Kinross Scholarship to Florence by the Royal Scottish Academy. Benjamin has received a considerable number of prizes including the Elizabeth Greenshields Grant and the Carroll Foundation Award. He has exhibited at the Royal Academy and the National Portrait Gallery, and his work is in the Collections of Girton College, Cambridge, University College, Oxford and the Institute of Civil Engineers, London, amongst others. He lives in Suffolk.

Jason Sullivan RP



Self-portrait in studio doorway (2007)

64 x 58 cms

Oil

Living in Lymington, on the edge of the New Forest, Jason Sullivan has exhibited widely both here and abroad. He now concentrates on commissioned portraiture and private works exploring a personal interest in relationships between sitters.

Michael Taylor RP

Self-portrait with machine (2005)

49 x 21 cms

Oil

Michael was born in 1952 and has been painting interiors, figure studies and still-lives, one at a time, since leaving Goldsmiths School of Art in 1971.

Portraits have always played a part in his work and these include Baroness PD James, Sir John Tavener and Julian Bream for the National Portrait Gallery and saxophonist Andy Sheppard for the Holburne Museum of Art in Bath.

Awards include winning the National Portrait Gallery John Player (now BP) Award, the Holburne Contemporary Portrait Prize and the Royal Society of Portrait Painters Changing Faces Award.

He was elected an RP member in 2002.



Daphne Todd OBE, PPRP, NEAC, Hon. SWA



Me in a magnifying
mirror (2001)

41 x 41 cms

Oil

This work was painted at the request of the National Portrait Gallery for their exhibition of self-portraits by women called 'Mirror, mirror...' in 2001. It is featured in 'The Portrait Now' by Sandy Nairne and Sarah Howgate (NPG). The image is about the distortions actually seen rather than trying to guess what constitutes my likeness to others.

John Walton RP



Self-portrait with M100
(2001)

53 x 64 cms
Oil

Born 5 December 1925. Studied at Ruskin School, Oxford and Slade School, London, won the Melville Nettleship Prize for Figure Composition and gained a Diploma in Fine Art. As a portrait painter he has exhibited at the Royal Academy, the Royal Society of Portrait Painters, the Paris Salon, the Institut de France and throughout the UK. He was Governor of the Federation of British Artists from 1982 to 1996, Chairman from 1990 to 1996 and Treasurer of the RP 2000 to 2003. He has been Principal of Heatherley's School of Art since 1974.

The late John Ward CBE, RP, NEAC, Hon. PS (1917-2007)



Self-portrait (1980s)

24 x 34 cms

Conté

This is a drawing my father made in his mid 80s. At this time, he made a number of self-portrait drawings. This one is particularly delicate; we like it very much.

Toby Ward

Toby Wiggins RP



Untitled self (2007)

25 x 20 cms

Oil

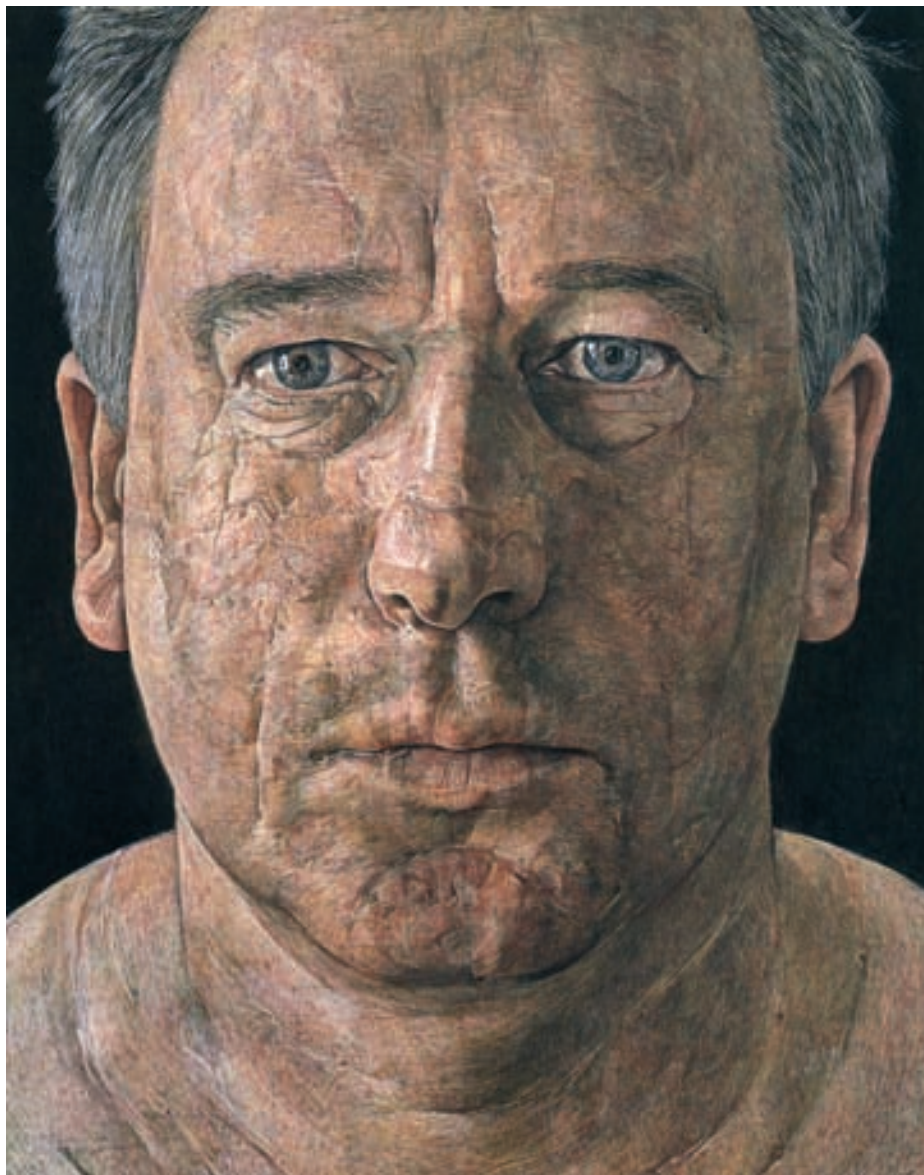
Toby Wiggins was born in Dorset. He studied painting at the Royal Academy Schools and was made a member of the Royal Society of Portrait Painters in 2006. He regularly exhibits at the Royal Academy Summer Show, the BP Portrait Award at the National Portrait Gallery and won the 2006 BP Travel Award. Toby was selected for the 2006 Jerwood Drawing Prize and has won a number of accolades for his portraiture including the Prince's Drawing School Award for Portrait Drawing 2005 and the Changing Faces Prize 2006.

Antony Williams RP, PS

Self-portrait (2004)

41 x 30 cms

Egg tempera



John Wonnacott Hon. RP



Self-portrait, Summer morning, the red shirt (2006)

61 x 51 cms

Oil

How to commission a portrait

The quality of work

As a charity dedicated to the promotion of excellence in portraiture, it is vital to the Royal Society of Portrait Painters that the quality of its members' work is consistently very high. To this end, members have each been elected by their peers through a long and stringent process. Clearing the judging panel to exhibit in the annual exhibition is just the first stage.

How to choose an artist

This exhibition is the annual showcase for current portraiture but a commissions service is run on behalf of the Society throughout the year. It is based at 17 Carlton House Terrace, just off Trafalgar Square. There is no charge so please feel free to make an appointment. It is a relaxed setting in

which our consultant will guide you through the options, introduce you to the chosen artist and then, unless otherwise helpful, step out of the way. Our members are very experienced and will look after you and your commission well.

Sittings

Sittings are enjoyable occasions and many long-lasting friendships have been formed between artist and sitter. As a rule, six to eight sittings of two hours each would encompass most artist's needs. Nearly all of our members are prepared to travel to their sitter, although sometimes there are advantages to working in the artist's studio, such as having a good quality of light. You will be surprised at just how relaxed and easy the creative process is!

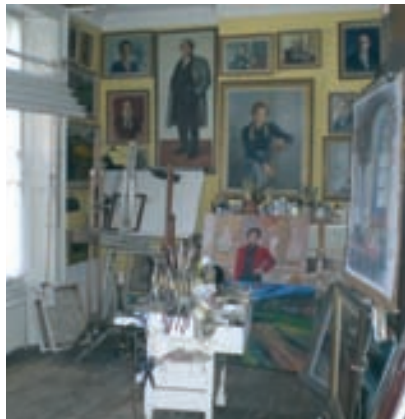
www.TheRP.co.uk

Visit our website, a comprehensive showcase for the Society, with detailed information on members and examples of their work. If you are interested in commissioning a portrait, this is the first place to look. Links take you to each artist's individual page, providing all the information you need to know about fees, sittings, media and any area of specialisation particular to the artist. Details are also provided on upcoming exhibitions, exhibition prizes and becoming a member of the Society. www.TheRP.co.uk.

To contact our commissions consultants, call 020 7930 6844 or email commissions@mallgalleries.com.



Consultants Annabel Elton and Lyndsey Leiper



A portrait artist's studio (Michael Noakes RP)



Sir Roy Strong and portrait by Paul Brason PPRP

The Royal Society of Portrait Painters

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Cover painting:
Clutter (2004) by David Cobley RP, NEAC, RWA

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