

PROGRAMME

- 16.00 **Introduction:** Eileen Hogan
Introduction to the speakers: Charlotte Hodes
- 16.10 **Résumé:** Jo Melvin:
About Face previous symposia
- 16.20 **Presentation 1:** Jo Melvin:
Facing legacies: what traces might an artwork's
re-presentation expose?
- 16.30 **Presentation 2:** Sean Lynch:
Marginalised Stories *
- 16.40 **Presentation 3:** Sandy Nairne:
New Portrait Commissions
- 16.55 **Presentation 4:** Stephen Farthing:
Portraiture: the Art School Curriculum
- 17.05 **Presentation 5:** Rab MacGibbon:
Exposed: The Naked Portrait
- 17.15 **Summary:** Jo Melvin
- 17.25 **Question & Answer:** Professor Anita Taylor
- 17.45 Finish
- 18.00 Late Shift

ABOUT FACE

Concepts of
Portraiture

About Face is a research group at the University of the Arts London which emerged from the UAL's commitment to encouraging communities of practice to work collaboratively and in cross disciplinary contexts. It brings together artists, theorists, curators and writers to examine what happens when different disciplines and perspectives are brought to bear on the concept of portraiture.

**ABOUT
FACE**

Since 2014 there have been a number of symposia with a range of invited speakers from across the UAL. External contributions came from colleagues at the Bath Academy of Art, the British Museum, the Holburne Museum, the National Gallery, the National Portrait Gallery and the Wellcome Collection.

The themes that have emerged from these events relate to identity, the embodied self, vulnerability, exposure, possession, gaze, power and the archival inhabitation of the body. Over the past two years the group has developed a web based learning resource that explores the boundaries of contemporary portraiture.

Symposium 4

Ondaatje Wing Theatre, National Portrait Gallery

1 July 2016

STEPHEN FARTHING

is an artist and writer. He is Professor at the University of the Arts, London where he holds the Rootstein Hopkins Chair of Drawing. He is a member of The Royal Academy of Arts, and Honorary Curator of their Collections; and Chairman of the Exhibitions Committee. His solo exhibitions include: *Titian's Ghosts*, National Trust, Ham House, London 2014, and *The Back Story*, 2010, Royal Academy of Arts. His recent publications include *Derek Jarman: the Sketchbooks*, Thames and Hudson, 2013 and *Art: the Whole Story*, Thames & Hudson, London, 2010.

CHARLOTTE HODES

is an artist and Professor in Fine Art at London College of Fashion, UAL. She often draws on archives and art collections as a source for projects. Solo exhibitions include *The Grammar of Ornament: Papercuts and Ceramics Jaggedart*, London & New Hall Art Collection, Cambridge, 2014; *Fragmented Images*, Wallace Collection, London; Marlborough Gallery, 2009 and *Drawing Skirts*, University of Northumbria, 2008. She has exhibited at the V&A 2002, Design Museum, London, 2003, Jerwood Space, London, 2010, and the Venice Biennale 2009 and 2013. She was Associate Artist at the Wallace Collection 2005-2007 and won the Jerwood Drawing Prize in 2006.

EILEEN HOGAN

is an artist and Professor in Fine Art in the CCW Graduate School (Camberwell, Chelsea and Wimbledon Colleges of Art), University of the Arts, London. Recent solo exhibitions include: Browse & Darby London, the New Art Centre, Roche Court, Wiltshire and the Yale Center for British Art, USA. In 2015 the film: *Tate Masterclass: Life Drawing with Eileen Hogan* was part of the display in Tate Britain Reception, *Rupture and Return: The Model and the Life Room*. Her portrait of a D-Day veteran was included in the exhibition: *The Last of The Tide* at the Queen's Gallery and at the Palace of Holyrood House. *Self-portrait, Pembroke Studios* can be seen in the BP Portrait Award 2016 exhibition at the National Portrait Gallery. She is currently Artist-in-Residence at The Garden Museum.

SEAN LYNCH

represented Ireland at the Venice Biennale in 2015. He has recently held solo exhibitions at Modern Art Oxford and Dublin City Gallery The Hugh Lane, and his artworks have been exhibited at the Camden Arts Centre, London, CAPC musée d'art contemporain de Bordeaux, and the Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin. He recently curated "Bandits Live Comfortably in the Ruins", a group show at Flat Time House, London.

*Sean will discuss the lives of John and James O'Shea, nineteenth century stone carvers whose work can still be seen today in Oxford. With little verifiable records remaining on these artisans, Lynch's use of rumour, hearsay and conjecture become the methods in which their historical representation emerges.

RAB MACGIBBON

is Associate Curator at the National Portrait Gallery. He is curator of the current display there: *Exposed: the Naked Portrait*. Other recent projects include *Simon Schama's Face of Britain*, 2015, at the NPG and *Royals: then & now* at Beningbrough Hall, Yorkshire, 2014-15. He has contributed to various publications including: Catharine MacLeod (ed.), *The Lost Prince: The Life & Death of Henry Stuart*, 2012, and Tarnya Cooper (ed.), National Portrait Gallery, *A Portrait of Britain*, 2014. He previously worked for the National Gallery, London and the British Council.

JO MELVIN

is a curator and writer, and Reader in Archives and Special Collections at Chelsea College of Arts, UAL. During 2015-16 she was Senior Research Fellow at the Henry Moore Institute, Leeds. Recent projects include "Animal, Vegetable, Mineral", Waddington Custot Gallery, 2016, (Feb-May 2016); "Christine Kozlov: Information No Theory", Henry Moore Institute, Leeds, (Dec 2015 -Feb 2016); "Five Issues of *Studio International*" Raven Row, London; "Palindromes: Barry Flanagan and John Latham" Flat Time House, London; and "The Xerox Book" Paula Cooper Gallery, New York. Recent catalogue essays include: "Seth Siegelau: Beyond Conceptualism", Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, and "British Art and Conceptualism, 1966-1979", Tate Britain. She is currently working on a monograph on Noel Forster, "The Seth Siegelau Source Book", to be published by König, 2016 and is working on the catalogue raisonnée of the sculptor Barry Flanagan to be published by Modern Art Press in 2018.

SANDY NAIRNE

is a writer and curator and Director of the National Portrait Gallery, 2002-15. He previously worked at the Institute of Contemporary Arts, the Arts Council and at the Tate. His publications include: *State of the Art*, 1987, 2012; the anthology: *Thinking about Exhibitions*, 1996; *Art Theft and the Case of the Stolen Turners* 2012; and the co-authored, *The 21st Century Portrait*, 2013. He chaired the National Museum Directors' Conference Working Group on Cultural Diversity, and is currently Chair of the Fabric Advisory Committee at St Paul's Cathedral, the Art Advisory Committee for Maggie's Cancer Care Centres and the Board of the Clore Cultural Leadership Programme. He is a Trustee of the Courtauld Collection and the National Trust.

ANITA TAYLOR

is an artist, Professor and Dean of Bath School of Art and Design at Bath Spa University; Adjunct Professor of the University of Sydney affiliated to Sydney College of the Arts, and founding Director of the Jerwood Drawing Prize. Previous appointments include Director and CEO of the National Art School in Sydney, Australia; Director of The Centre for Drawing, University of the Arts London; Dean of Wimbledon College of Art; and Vice Principal of Wimbledon School of Art. Panel memberships include the UK Research Assessment Exercise 2008 and Hong Kong Research Assessment Exercise 2014. She is Co-Investigator on the Arts and Humanities Research Council: Bristol & Bath by Design Project.

Commentaries from the About Face Steering Group

EILEEN HOGAN,
Professor of Fine Art
Camberwell, Chelsea and
Wimbledon Graduate School

I have painted people since I was a student, but often the works are distinguished either by the subjects' absence (with only a trace such as an empty park bench or tracks made in snow) or they are back views. Nowadays, some of the people have turned around and are looking out of the painting, but not directly at the viewer. A recent series of 'portraits' of Ian Hamilton Finlay was painted in fragments as a presence

in his garden. There was a relationship between the act of Ian walking towards or away from me, and that was the way I painted him - approaching, passing by and leaving. I paint other sitters when they are talking to someone else, an oral historian, who is recording their life story. This allows me to observe how their face and body change as they talk about their life, what shapes they tend to relax into as their tension reduces: their gestures and their postures when speaking. In both cases I describe portraits as being part of my practice and I never describe myself as a portrait painter, because in the context of the art world and the art school the words 'portrait' and 'painter' have uncomfortable connotations. For most of my working life figurative painting has been out of favour and practitioners of it were considered to be backward looking. This has meant that it was only the people who really wanted to paint who did and it became a rather eccentric activity. Painting portraits was even more so - something to be done in the privacy of one's own studio and not talked about. I set up this research project in order to start a conversation.

In 2015 I applied for modest funding from the UAL to start a 'Community of Practice' and the steering group quickly fell in to place: myself, Mark Fairington, Reader at CCW, Stephen Farthing, UAL Rootstein Hopkins Professor of Drawing, Charlotte Hodes, Professor in Fine Art at LCF, and Anita Taylor, Professor and Dean of Bath School of Art and Design. Charlotte and I now lead the project. What initially seemed like group therapy became a dynamic dialogue, which brought together artists, theorists, curators and writers, examining what happens when different disciplines and perspectives are brought to bear on the concept of portraiture. We have organised four symposia: at London College of Fashion (2015) and at Corsham Court, part of Bath Academy of Art (2015), and this year at Hauser & Wirth Somerset and at the National Portrait Gallery. The themes that have emerged from these events relate to identity, the embodied self, vulnerability, exposure, possession, gaze, power and the archival inhabitation of the body. These strands have been brought together through a series of essays commissioned for our web-based learning resource, designed by She Was Only and launched at the symposium at the National Portrait Gallery in July 2016. Here, artists and researchers explore the representation of exposure in their practice in the context of the works in the exhibition: Exposed: The Naked Portrait and of the NPG's permanent collection.

CHARLOTTE HODES,
Professor of Fine Art,
London College of Fashion

At school, the idea of portraiture was a common test of aptitude and technical accomplishment. The ability to render through observation a 'surface' likeness was seen as the highest accolade in artistic talent and one guaranteed to achieve high marks in what was then the O-level and A-level examinations. However, even at that stage in my education it made me somewhat uneasy, as I could not see

how such an approach necessarily revealed any deep understanding of either the person sitting inertly in the schoolroom or how it could be a vehicle for my own expression. This feeling continued when as an undergraduate at the Slade School of Art, I observed fellow students in the life rooms studiously working to capture a likeness of the model. I felt that there must be another way to proceed and one that engaged more sensuously with the material of paint itself. I looked for inspiration to works that fractured the self, such as Patrick Heron's, *Self Portrait* (1951) or Sonia Delaunay's, *Self portrait* (1916). The latter was used as the cover design for the catalogue for her exhibition at the Modern Art Museum, Stockholm, and was simply made up of concentric coloured circles.

As a young art graduate I was often asked whether my work was in essence a self-portrait and at the time I did not know the answer. I have been reflecting on this ever since and feel that perhaps I am more comfortable with my work being a reflection of the 'self' rather than as 'portrait'. In contrast to the focus on external appearance, as with the observed portrait, I see my work as emanating from a sense of the internal, or my 'female self', from the inside out. This embraces the idea of the body as a membrane through which experiences pass and as such I would claim they should be seen as self-portraits.

In Joanna Hogg's film *Exhibition* (2014) the character of D played by Viv Albertine has a deeply physical and tactile relationship to the environment of her modernist house, in which she lives along with her fellow artist and partner, H played by the artist Liam Gillick. In contrast to Gillick's character who is focused on external forces, D seeks to become as one with her environment, wrapping herself around and under furniture and on window ledges, becoming part of the furniture. I wondered whether these powerful images of D captured in the film were not portraits rendered, through the senses of the body's relation to the objects, with which it comes into contact.

The significance of *About Face* is that it has developed through conversations and dialogue. This reflects the creative approach of the project's initiator, Eileen Hogan, with her collegiate sense and openness to share. The project is on going and will be shaped by the varied practitioners, researchers and curators that already form the core group. I hope that it will also encourage our current students to reconsider the rich and diverse field of portraiture.

STEPHEN FARTHING,
Rootstein Hopkins Chair
of Drawing UAL

I don't know when portraiture began to slip off the art school curriculum but I suspect it had vaporized as being of even marginal interest to either staff or students, by the end of the 1960s. How we reconcile this with the successes of Andy Warhol and Chuck Close is unclear, but somehow we do.

During the three years I spent as a Diploma in Art and Design student at St Martins School of Art, at the very beginning of the 1970s, not one of my tutors suggested I take a walk down the Charing Cross Road and take a look through the front door of the National Portrait Gallery. Instead, I was sent to the Tate, Cork Street and *Studio International* magazine - never, I suspect, with portraiture in mind. It wasn't until 1975, when I spent the spring term living and painting at the Royal College of Art's studio in Paris that I began to see any connection between portraiture and my ambitions as a 'modern' artist.

First it was through reading an interview with (to my mind) an important American artist; and also the encounter with a painting by Hyacinth Rigaud, in Versailles. In the interview Jim Dine talked about his very flat bathrobe self portraits that he was showing at the American Cultural Centre, on Rue du Dragon. When Dine was asked: “Why empty bath robes?” he said he wanted to make a series of self-portraits, but felt a lot of pressure to be a modern artist. He had decided therefore, to use the bathrobe as a surrogate or body double. This caught my imagination: he thus provided me with a way of circumnavigating the problem of appearing to travel backwards.

The painting in Versailles, like Dine’s self-portraits focused on the wrapping of flesh and not the stuff we are made of. It was a high camp, decorative portrait of Louis XV in coronation robes. A storm of golden fleur de lys, silk tassels and baroque drapery that framed the figure, to the point of drowning, a 15 year old king’s tiny pink face. Rigaud gave me the subject matter and Dine both the mission and permission I needed.

The painting I made in 1974, as a result of the time I spent in Paris, started my career as a painter. It is an off beat, post modern portrait that owes as much to Dine and Pollock as it does to any deeper historical influence. The painting now sits in the Walker Galleries collection in Liverpool, what makes it strange, is that I did not go on to paint many more portraits. In 1974 it seemed a risky picture to paint. Today I can see that it was only risky in so far, as it looked beyond what was then fashionable, and what I was ever formally taught to paint at art school.

Today I suspect that whether it is painted, drawn, photographed, filmed or modelled, the portrait is such an important part of our visual culture, that we, the people who are responsible for creating the curricula in art schools, need to first reconstruct our understanding of the subject, then get it back on the curriculum.

MARK FAIRNINGTON,
Reader, Camberwell, Chelsea and
Wimbledon Graduate School

I have made paintings of people, of their faces but I have never called them portraits. After making paintings that interrogated the idea of the natural history specimen: the dead animal, the stuffed animal; people then began to appear. The paintings’ way of looking, however, remained the same. The scrutiny of a surface charged with the pleasure of examining in detail, as if this necessarily determines verity. In the insect paintings,

the complex surface of the collected specimen becomes the subject. The specimen as individual then is relieved of the task of representing the species. These were more like portraits than entomological illustrations, such as the Tudor portraits by William Larkin, where he revelled in the details of embroidery and the lace at the expense of character of the subject.

My paintings use photography as a way of recording information, a way of eroding the hierarchy between parts of the subject, and thus rendering every part as if they were of equal significance. In the Samson series I used photographs of male body builders from the magazines: Flex and Muscle and Fitness as source images. I excised the faces of the bodybuilders, not those faces where they are able to pose for the camera, but the ones where the physical exertion is too much and the face becomes a grimace. Cropped to remove any context for the facial contortions they exist as specimens of pain or ecstasy. These paintings reminded me of the ‘Character Heads’ created by the sculptor Franz Xaver Messerschmidt between 1770 and 1783: a taxonomy of expression and feeling, on the male face.

In my paintings of eyes, a single eye on a round wooden panel is depicted in isolation, reminiscence of Victorian keepsakes. In these ‘Lovers’ Eyes’ the portrait embodies the act of possession: a person captured, collected, indeed possessed by another. The fragment becomes an artefact representing the whole, much as the specimen might represent the species, and the history of its various taxonomies.

The Collected Human describes some of the human images that I found in the Wellcome Collection, in the storage depot. Miniature portraits of characters in the collection, anatomical heads, wax heads, death masks; the images are poised between life and death. The Forgetting (2014) is a painting of the head of an anatomical figure. The bandages that appear to bind it have been applied by conservators, to protect the object from accidental damage. My mother is in an advanced state of dementia, and the title for this painting comes from an increasingly rare and touching moment of lucidity, when she told me that, while she has no short-term memory, she has a very good forgettery.

ANITA TAYLOR,
Professor and Dean of Bath
School of Art and Design at
Bath Spa University

The Lens of Portrayal Drawing, documenting and depicting people has always been fascinating, where the privilege and liberty of looking at someone’s face comes to represent remarkable intimacy. As a sixth form student, my art teacher took me to see the David Hockney portrait drawings on show at the Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent. It was the 1970s, and my teacher shared his enthusiasm for

a revival of figuration. My fascination to draw others was endorsed; and I also began working as a portrait model.

At art school in the 1980s, the life room provided space both for reflection and the accumulation and acquisition of information, soon to be transcribed into paintings of invented, remembered, and memorialised narratives. It also provided space for affirmation, simply to find an equivalent to that moment in time in that singular space with that individual person. The modes of thinking about this activity were wide ranging, from the perceived conservatism of the academy to problematic issues levied through feminist and other political agendas. Nevertheless, it seemed to have a profound value to me and to what I wanted to make. A debate and discourse around figuration and portraiture was alive, through the exploration of pictorial language, visual rendering and the quest to form a perceptual equivalent to the experience at hand. A heady mix of influential works in my orbit dealt with “portrayal” of differing kinds: old, new, expressionist, analytical, observed; the genre examined through drawing included painting, sculpture, photograph, film and novels.

The drawings of Käthe Kollwitz had a profound influence on me, with their intimately inscribed, but stark emotive depiction, of grief and despair; so too Rembrandt’s or Dürer’s self analysis [or portraits]. The emphatic capacity of these drawings seemingly traverse time, with their direct connection to the now, through the immediacy of mark, trace of observation and empathetic authenticity. The sharing of the personal or collective narrative via depiction of individuals to whom others/we can identify still seems critical to an understanding of the human condition.

In my own practice, the journey has moved towards the exploration of the role and function of the drawn self. Consequently, over an extended period of time, I have been making large-scale drawings that explore the relationship of the female subject, as the artist and model, with the defining acts of scrutiny, gaze and feeling embodied through the act of drawing. As the transcriber of information [and as a model] there is something affirmative about looking at a face, at the individual trace of lived experience and, through drawing, facilitating access through that observation to enable the connections to see what I was/am thinking and was/am looking at.

I was delighted to be invited to participate in this group, About Face, and to begin to explore an under-mined dialogue about the ‘edges’ of contemporary portraiture and to seek to re-evaluate the role of portrayal through the lens of creative practice.

Symposiums 1-3

SYMPOSIUM 1

London College of Fashion, 4 February 2015
Rootstein Hopkins Centre,
London College of Fashion

Collected and Possessed: the collected human, where portraiture and still life meet

Mark Fairnington:

This presentation looked at the how a portrait might represent the act of possession and how the image of a person be regarded as a specimen. I explored these ideas through my own work, focussing in particular on my most recent research project with the Wellcome Collection.

Portrait of a Native American and the Buffalo 1913 Type 1 Nickel

Stephen Farthing:

Thoughts surrounding the “Indian Head” portrait of a Native American by sculptor James Earle Fraser, Buffalo Bill’s Circus and the National Congress of American Indians campaign to eliminate negative stereotyping of Native American people.

Self as Ornament

Charlotte Hodes:

Throughout history the naked female figure has adorned numerous objects from clocks and furniture to monuments and cars. Self as Ornament explored the use of the female figure as adornment and ornament by replacing it with myself in a group of drawings.

Process and Portraiture

Sarah Jaffray:

Using various portraiture studies held in the British Museum’s collection, I explored if artistic process is impacted by the artist’s relationship to their sitter, leading to questions of cognition and creative process.

Queer Images Project

Dominic Janes:

This project has enabled older members of the LGBTQ community to discuss their photographs as evidence for forms of queer self-fashioning since the 1960s. Selected items will then be stored in a digital archive as a resource for future research.

Portraits: the truth of the glance

Ian King:

Portraits are frequently the result of a staged pose where the female subject stares back at her beholders. In terms of the purpose of portraits, how authentic is this position? Throughout the history of portraiture we can identify many examples of in-authenticity and selective truth in images. The glance within an image on the other hand is more persuasive. It is rarely staged, as in real life, the result of an unguarded moment that captures the emotive sense of the individual. A single glance reveals more than any calculated pose.

Distributed personhood and the hard-drive

Trish Scott:

This presentation explored portraiture in relation to personal archives. Specifically, how Alfred Gell’s notion of distributed personhood can be understood with reference to digital archives. My discussion is grounded in a piece of research in which I handed over my hard-drive to another artist to ‘use’.

Seeing Something Else – The Drawn Self

Anita Taylor:

This presentation looked at the role and function of the drawn self. Over an extended period of time, I have been making large-scale drawings that explore the relationship of the female subject, as the artist and model; the defining acts of scrutiny, gaze and feeling are embodied through the act of drawing. These drawings seek to identify and visualise the relationships between what is seen, what is felt, and what we expect to see, disclosing an inherent paradox as the mind reveals the form it inhabits.

SYMPOSIUM 2

Corsham Court, Bath School of Art
and Design, 28 May 2014

Dialogic Portraits

Felicity Allen:

“Begin Again” was a project where the terms developed throughout the project’s duration and in response to its 76 sitters. It has informed two subsequent dialogic portraits projects: “Six Encounters” and “Life Painting”, whose themes have included time, place, recognition, and performativity, and through which I have sought possibilities for feminist portraiture.

Portraiture - identity, responsibility and ownership: A conversation on the portraits of three US presidents

Stephen Farthing and Ian King:

This presentation investigated the development of portraits for templates and explored the responsibility of the sitter and questions of ownership.

All portraits are traces that speak in a past tense

Eileen Hogan:

“A portrait is the creature of a confrontation, a meeting. A kind of progeniture. Yet what remains, what hangs there on a wall afterwards, is not a presence but a trace. All portraits speak in a past tense. All sitters have walked on.” (John Berger in a letter to John Christie – 5 February 2011).

The idea of a sitter “walking on” and the possibility, too of their passing by, or being en route somewhere else, indicates that however “polished” a portrait may be, it is by its very nature “unfinished”. These ideas have been explored through my own work focusing on the relationship between portraiture and the act of walking: the relationship between portraiture and oral history and the relationship between portraiture and empty or abandoned clothes.

The Inframince

Sarah Jaffray:

“I should like to paint portraits, which would appear after a century to people, living then as apparitions.” – Vincent Van Gogh in a letter to his sister Wilhelmina, 5 June 1890.

Van Gogh believed that the imposition of his subjective vision, on his human subject, could alter the subject into an apparition, a trace, an ‘intensification’ of their character. This act of creation, as Bataille explains, is the act of dominating the limits of experience - the moment sitter and artist are engaged. Is portraiture then ever the representation of a person, or is it the limited experience of being ‘re-presented’? Imposed upon by time and memory, is portraiture only ever inframince: the palpable presence of absence? This paper explored notions of presence and absence (trace) in portraiture through the works of Eileen Hogan, touching upon the ‘anti-aesthetic’ theories of Marcel Duchamp, Alain Badiou and Jacques Rancière.

The personal photograph as portrait and the role of time in LGBT lives

Dominic Janes:

Visibility has been a key element of the demands of gay and lesbian rights activists and battles over self-expression on the part both of artists and members of the public in general played a crucial role of the culture wars of the later twentieth century in Britain, as in the United States and elsewhere. This presentation shared some of the thoughts I have been developing about the way in which my wider research project into queer visibility, is becoming focused around the issue of portraiture. I will be thinking about the issue of photography, the personal photo album and the way in which the self is displayed in the moment of the photograph and on an ongoing basis over time.

Face Value

Isabel Seligman:

Examining the role of the face in portraiture, I explored different types of non-facial portrait in the British Museum collection. From Annibale Carracci and Artemisia Gentileschi to Edgar Degas and Avigdor Arikha, I examined instances of blurring, obstruction and substitution, all of which question the assumed site of the self.

Informal portraiture - an oxymoron

Jennifer Scott:

This presentation explored portraits of the monarchs through the ages, in particular the informal and the unfinished, raising the question who controls the ownership of the image.

Authenticity

Gavin Turk:

This presentation dealt with issues of authenticity and identity, engaged with modernist and avant-garde debates surrounding the ‘myth’ of the artist and the ‘authorship’ of a work of art.

Ownership and Identity

Colin Wiggins:

When a drawing is made from life there is inevitably a power balance between artist and subject. Who is in charge? Why do we use the word ‘model’ with its implication of passivity? This paper was prompted by the exhibition at the National Gallery, ‘Inventing Impressionism.’

The Absent Figure

Dan Allen:

The presentation summarised a series of case studies exploring ways of representing the self through nonfigurative means. Through the use of the chair as replacement, the presentation discussed studies in trace, gesture and object based metaphor. How can the viewer become the viewed? And how can 'self' become 'other'?

All portraits are traces that speak in a past tense

Eileen Hogan:

As above.

Seeing Something Else – The Drawn Self

Anita Taylor

As above.

Facing / Faceless

Robert Luzar:

Facing is said to be an action. If the action is true, in some ways opened amorously, facing becomes 'less than nothing'. Facing is then absolutely exposing: facing others as much as oneself, facing without any underlying face to really grasp, possess, or come back to. My presentation delves into such complexities, exploring implications the 'faceless' and 'facing' have for portraiture now. To do this, the exploration meanders through works and concepts by – amongst others – filmmaker Hiroshi Teshigahara, artist Janine Antoni, and writer Emmanuel Levinas.

Confused Heads

Sally Taylor:

Sally Taylor presented a slide show of recent works on paper. The drawings explore portraiture through child-like impressions of a 'mouth' or 'head/neck' motif. They affirm a desire to understand more about human relationships, specifically her own interaction with others. They are equally about forming a balance between formal concerns in relation to the communication of emotional resonance. Recent work has developed into an investigation of the dynamics of social groups, particularly how hierarchies emerge, how roles are assumed, and how behaviours are managed.

ABOUT FACE

About Face is a research group at the University of the Arts London which emerged from the UAL's commitment to encouraging communities of practice to work collaboratively and in cross disciplinary contexts. It brings together artists, theorists, curators and writers to examine what happens when different disciplines and perspectives are brought to bear on the concept of portraiture.

aboutfaceconceptsofportraiture.com

Design

She Was Only

Print

Park Communications

National
Portrait
Gallery

ual: university
of the arts
london