RALPH HEIMANS

PORTRAITS

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The Museum of National History at Frederiksborg
2018

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The Museum of National History at Frederiksborg 25 May – 2 September 2018

Editor: Thomas Lyngby
Translation: Culturebites (Proprietor: Annemette Fogh)
Layout and printing: Hillerød Grafisk
ISBN: 978-87-93049-22-2
On the cover: Portrait of HRH Crown Prince Frederik (detail)

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FOREWORD

Over the past 30 years, London-based portrait painter, Ralph Heimans, has developed an extraordinary body of work portraying a wide range of culturally significant figures from around the world and extending the genre of contemporary portraiture. He has painted prominent Royals, including HM Queen Elizabeth II and HRH The Duke of Edinburgh as well as other leading individuals on the world stage – world-class musicians, actors, writers, and politicians.

His luminous work is built on a foundation of traditional techniques, and through a mastery of complex composition, his subjects are woven into their surroundings to create a multi-layered narrative environment. To underpin the concept for each portrait Heimans wilfully manipulates apparent realities. He transforms elements to better tell the story of the subject's life. The spaces become 'landscapes of the soul', in which different times and places can merge: just as they do in our minds. In other words, Ralph Heimans lends artistic form to both body and mind, bringing us closer to the person being portrayed. It is not Realism or Surrealism: it is more a kind of "Spiritual Realism".

The people in his portraits seem caught in the moment, where they become one with themselves – their role and their character – and that moment expands, becoming charged with great significance. They seem to be tranquil and contemplative. They are often looking away. In other instances they reciprocate our gaze, as if they have the floor, describing a crucial moment in the story of who they are.

In 2006 Ralph Heimans created a portrait of HRH Crown Princess Mary for the Museum of National History at Frederiksborg. The Crown Princess was born and raised in Australia, so an Australian-born artist was chosen for the task. Set in the Garden Room of Fredensborg Palace, the portrait was widely praised for pushing the boundaries of Royal portraiture. To celebrate the 50th birthday of Crown Prince Frederik in 2018, the Museum decided to commission Ralph Heimans to create an artistic companion piece of the same dimensions as the previous portrait – a work, set in the same location, that would reflect both the time of its creation and the time that has passed since the portrait of the Crown Princess was created. The pair will no doubt become works of enduring significance in the collection of the Museum.

The presentation of the new work was also a welcome opportunity to organise a comprehensive retrospective exhibition of Ralph Heimans' portraits, providing visitors with a rare opportunity to appreciate the range and depth of one of today's leading portrait artists. This book is being published to mark this occasion. The first part of the book is an introduction to Heimans' works at Frederiksborg: the two portraits of the Crown Prince couple. The book then features a number of interviews and essays, more specifically about Ralph Heimans as an artist, his

methodology, technique and oeuvre. The third part of the book is the catalogue of the exhibition at Frederiksborg.

The Museum would like to thank the authors who have contributed to this book. We also owe a debt of gratitude to the many people and organisations, both public and private, and from as many as four continents, who have loaned works for the exhibition. Without the kindness they have shown and their willingness to allow unique works to be shipped thousands of kilometres, this exhibition would not have been possible. We must also express our heartfelt thanks to the artist, Ralph Heimans, who has played a crucial role in the preparations for this exhibition, and who has created the stunning new portrait. Finally, we extend a huge and warm thank you to HRH Crown Prince Frederik who gave his consent for the commissioning of the portrait and made this new work possible.

Mette Skougaard
Director of The Museum of National History at Frederiksborg

RALPH HEIMANS AT FREDERIKSBORG

PORTRAIT OF A CROWN PRINCESS

By Mette Skougaard

In 2005 The Museum of National History at Frederiksborg decided to commission a portrait of the new Crown Princess, the Australian born Mary Elizabeth Donaldson. For the commission of the portrait, the museum made no restrictions as to the size or composition of the work. It was, however, made clear from the outset that the painting did not need to be official in character but, rather, present a more personal study of the Princess, acknowledging her Australian background and her role in the present day Danish monarchy. This idea appealed to Heimans, who, immediately after taking on the commission, started to acquaint himself with Danish history and art whilst researching the role of the monarchy in contemporary society.

Work on the portrait began in May 2005, when Heimans visited Denmark and was introduced to the Frederiksborg Castle and the Museum of National History. He met the Crown Princess on several occasions, taking photographs and producing sketches during a lengthy sitting. He also had the opportunity to visit a number of rooms at Fredensborg Palace, which led to his decision to depict the Crown Princess in the famous Garden Room. This beautiful 18th century rococo interior – a room par excellence for representing Danish royalty – was most famously used as the setting for Laurits Tuxen's Christian IX and Queen Louise with Family in the Garden room (1882-83). Moreover, this is also the room in which the then Miss Mary Donaldson was presented to the public on the occasion of her engagement to the Danish Crown Prince in October 2003. Here, within an architectural setting that embodies the history of the Danish monarchy, the artist found the ideal context in which to symbolize the Princess' path from that of a young Australian fiancee to her present role as the Danish Crown Princess and future Queen. Heimans revisited Fredensborg and the Crown Princess in September 2005 and January 2006 in order to make further studies, and since then the work progressed in his studio in Paris.

In the painting the Crown Princess is shown almost full figure in the Garden Room, standing elegantly dressed in a modern suit, but without obvious signs of her status. A soft golden light streams into the room from the windows in the right side of the painting, towards which she is looking. She stands in front of a sofa, with chairs around her, seen in a moment where she is putting on a pair of gloves, as if about to leave the palace. A coat at the ready lies over the back of the chair in front of her. The mirror behind her reflects her figure whilst providing a deeper perspective into the interior of the Garden Room.

Portrait of HRH Crown Princess Mary (detail)

Portrait of HRH Crown Princess Mary, 2006.
The Museum of National History at Frederiksborg

Hans Holbern: Portrait of Princess Christina of Denmark, 1538. National Gallery, London

At first impression the room seems very true to life – the furniture with its gilt rococo ornaments and silk covers meticulously rendered in detail, is immediately recognisable as the Garden Room at Fredensborg. On closer inspection, however, the room is redolent with subtle incongruities and alterations. The most evident change is the substitution of a large mirror for Jacopo Fabris' landscape with Roman ruins (1750-51). Reflected in the mirror, on the back wall of the Garden Room, Fabris' paintings have been replaced by a view of historic buildings from Consitution Dock in Hobart.

The inclusion of the mirror provides a window into a new visual dimension and becomes an artistic device intended to represent the two worlds of the Crown Princess: her present day life as a member of the Danish Royal Family and her earlier life in Australia. In the foreground, the depiction of the Crown Princess preparing to leave the palace alludes to her present life, duties and obligations. Here she is depicted in a moment of thought as she is about to undertake her public duties and the viewer is prompted to imagine what she may be thinking as she is about to move from her private to her public realm. In the background, the reflected mirror image reminds the viewer of her Australian past, represented by a view of the city of her birth. In this way the metaphor of leaving represents the moment of transition between these two worlds of private and public life, and the bridge between the past and the present.

Heimans' portrait draws upon the pictorial tradition of royal portraiture whilst at the same time playfully infusing the tradition with new ideas and meaning. Rather than representing a formal and official image of the Crown Princess, the portrait departs from tradition by portraying her in an informal and everyday action, using a narrative approach to express the story of her life. The use of gloves, for example, a common symbol of status found in traditional Royal portraits such as Holbein's portrait of Princess Christina of Denmark (1538), here becomes an integral part of the portrait's narrative and a metaphor for the moving between two worlds. In this way, the narrative contributes to a far more accessible vision of the crown princess, as though the viewer is allowed a glimpse into her real world: she becomes more than a mere symbolic public figure, but a person the viewer can empathize with.

The result is a poignant and personal portrait of a princess that prompts us to reflect upon the evolving role of royalty in the modern world.

PORTRAIT OF A CROWN PRINCE

By Thomas Lyngby

To celebrate the 50th birthday of HRH Crown Prince Frederik in 2018, the Museum of National History commissioned a new portrait of the heir to the throne. Ralph Heimans was a natural choice for the project. The challenge was to create a work that would be a counterpart to the portrait of HRH Crown Princess Mary, which the Australian-born artist had previously painted for the Museum in 2006.

In conceiving of the new work, the artist realised that the portraits would need to interlock compositionally – a mirror image of mirror images – a conundrum of sorts, especially since so many elements of the room had already been altered in Princess Mary's portrait.

Both works are set in the famous Garden Room at Fredensborg Palace and are the same size. But where the Crown Princess is seen standing on the right-hand side of her portrait, the Crown Prince is depicted on the left-hand side of his, so the two works when seen together create an entity. By making the underlying mood of each work complimentary, the artist is using both works to make a narrative statement, not just about each individual, but also about the couple as a unit.

Moreover, the years that separate the creation of the two portraits are also reflected in the new work. The painting reveals what has happened in the intervening time, and the status of the Crown Prince's life now at the age of 50.

The Crown Prince seems to have risen from the chair at the table next to him. On the table there is a folder with his monogram. But as with the best of Heimans' work, there is the suggestion of narrative beyond the picture frame. The Crown Prince is stepping forward and looks ahead with the hint of a smile on his lips. His gaze does not meet ours but we can see what the Crown Prince is looking at. As in the portrait of Crown Princess Mary, Heimans has replaced some of Jacopo Fabris' recessed paintings in the Garden Room with mirrors, but this time they show the present and indeed the future rather than the past. In front of the Crown Prince, reflected in the mirror are the Crown Princess, dressed in an evening gown, and their four children gathered around a table. The oldest child, Prince Christian is standing, resting one arm on the back of a chair and looking towards his father.

Behind the family we can follow the Crown Prince's gaze further, out of two of the room's windows to the Palace Garden. We see trees, Johannes Wiedewelt's great marble monument symbolizing the Danish Nation and Brede Allé, the gardens main axis. There is an evening sky over the landscape with the distinctive colours and clouds, so characteristic of Denmark.

Heimans has not replaced all the paintings with mirrors. But in his portrayal, the artist is more loyal to the story of the Crown Prince than to Fabris' original works. So in one of them – on the far left – he has discreetly depicted the Crown Prince's mother, Her Majesty the Queen, wearing a long, dark red dress. From her position beneath the painting's antique, triumphal arch-like portal, like us, unnoticed, she quietly observes her son and his family.

In front of the painting in which the Queen is portrayed, there is a table, on which Heimans has placed two Greenlandic tupilaqs. Together with Wiedewelt's Denmark monument outside, they indicate the kingdom over which the Crown Prince one day will reign.

There is a sense of completeness in this portrait – The Crown Prince is seen surrounded by his immediate family: the children who have come into the world since his marriage to the Crown Princess, whose background and transformation were depicted in the earlier portrait. The Crown Prince is perceived as part of the order of succession, which is his innate destiny. From the picture with the historic scenery his mother observes him, while he can look ahead at his eldest son who one day will succeed him. The three of them are subtly linked with the artist's choice of colour, which moves the eye through the composition, accentuating the depth of perspective he has skilfully created.

In the new portrait the Crown Prince is wearing the Danish Navy's company uniform. He is carrying the cap in his left hand and a pair of white gloves in his right, mirroring also Princess Mary's portrait in this small but significant detail, which hints at their Royal duties. He is wearing the Order of the Elephant on the blue ribbon that hangs from his left shoulder, and around his neck is the Grand Commander Cross of the Order of the Dannebrog. On the uniform's jacket we also see the chest star of the Order of the Elephant and the Dannebrog Star, along with a number of medals.

Here is 50-year-old Crown Prince Frederik in his life and in his role as the heir to the throne. He has assumed the responsibility of being the future ruler of Denmark, the Faroe Islands and Greenland, and he performs his duties together with the family he has created with the Crown Princess. His eldest son, Prince Christian, will one day succeed him. Through the portrait we are afforded a glimpse of this family in the royal setting of Fredensborg, at a moment in the early evening, an interplay between their public and private roles.

Portrait of HRH Crown Prince Frederik (detail)

Portrait of HRH Crown Prince Frederik, 2018.
The Museum of National History at Frederiksborg

THE ARTIST

"The Coronation Theatre" was painted in 2012 to mark the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II. Her Majesty is portrayed in Westminster Abbey, standing at the centre of the Cosmati pavement, where she had been crowned 60 years previously. The mosaic pavement referred to by Shakespeare as "the floor of heaven" is rich in symbolism and was created to evoke the "eternal pattern of the universe". It has been an integral part of the coronation ceremony since Henry III and is where every English monarch has been crowned for the last 900 years.

The Queen is depicted wearing a state dress beneath the crimson Robe of State, which she wore at her coronation in 1953 and which she has worn to the State Opening of Parliament each year since. Her diamond necklace and earrings were made for Queen Victoria's coronation, and were worn by Queen Elizabeth on the day of her own coronation.
Westminster Abbey

"Portrait of HRH The Duke of Edinburgh" was produced in 2017. Seen in relation to the exhibition at the Museum of National History at Frederiksborg it highlights the historical connections between the British and Danish Royal families. Set in the Grand Corridor at Windsor Castle, The Duke of Edinburgh is depicted in Windsor evening attire, wearing the sash of the Order of the Elephant, Denmark's highest ranking honour. His Royal Highness is the longest serving Royal Consort in the history of the British Monarchy and in 2017 he retired from public duties at the age of 96.
The Royal Collection Trust

Q&A WITH THE ARTIST

Ralph Heimans and Mette Skougaard

M: Tell me about how you became an artist. What were your early years like?

R: Well there was never really any doubt in my mind that I wanted to be an artist. It felt like a real calling for me. My first memories from childhood are of drawing constantly. I used to love drawing cartoons, making up stories and drawing caricatures of my teachers and family.

Around the age of 14, I tried oil paints for the first time and that was it for me. I loved everything about it. I set myself up in a corner of the room that eventually became a studio – I was fascinated by the texture, the sensual quality of oil paint and its properties. I kind of instantly fell in love with the medium itself.

When I first discovered the tradition of Old Master paintings through art history books it was like a world had opened up for me, that in some way felt so fresh, and so hard to access. There were very few of these works in Australia, and it became something extra special, very exciting and quite radical compared to what other suburban kids were into.

I remember being pretty out of step with the Australian cultural scene at the time. Australia was very different in the 70's and 80's and I was just on my own path. I fell in love with classical music, opera, and the Renaissance and just threw myself into it. And you really had to seek it out because it just wasn't all around you.

M: So that was your path into portraiture?

R: Yes exactly, I just fell in love with the genre. I was just mesmerized by these faces, these characters from history. I felt so cut off from the European tradition of art in Sydney, but that was what I really identified with personally. My father is Dutch and so the Old Masters became a big part of my personal identity.

M: How did you train yourself as an artist?

R: When I finished school I really wanted to study art. I had won a competition when I was about 17 called the National Art Award and with the prize money I went off to Europe in search of a school. I checked out the Florence Academy, the Brera in Milan, the Royal Academy, the Slade and the Vienna Academy, but they weren't actually teaching painting techniques anymore – the sort of training I was looking for just wasn't in vogue.

When I came back to Sydney, my parents were in a bit of a panic about what I was going to do with my life. I remember at one point they took me to see a shrink

In Ralph Heimans' studio during the Q&A

who said, “What seems to be the problem?” and they both sort of blurted out in unison, “He wants to be an artist!” It was pretty hilarious. Anyway, to keep the peace, I enrolled in architecture at Sydney University, because I love architecture and I somehow thought it might be a bit of a fallback career. Needless to say, it didn’t work out – I was you know putting Doric columns all over the place and designing Renaissance edifices for suburban Sydney … But one of my lecturers did do me a big favour as I was being booted off the course, and that was to commission me to paint a portrait.

So that’s really how it started out. And then one commission rolled onto the next. And I feel like I’ve been learning on the job ever since.

In terms of my formal education, I stayed at uni and studied art history and pure mathematics, which I really got into. I have to say the maths has really stood me in good stead. I have quite a fearless attitude to geometry and perspective and reflection, which has enabled me to take on these complex spatial ideas and translate them to the canvas.

But still, I needed some proper training in technique. And one day this elderly Polish man who’d heard about me through a family friend, turned up at my home, clicked his heels and declared that he would teach me. So there it was – I found my self being mentored by this eccentric Polish master who had studied just after the war in Krakow when it was a very serious matter to study art. He had this real foundation in traditional European techniques and his approach to art education was that it was all secret knowledge. He would make his own mediums from scratch and mix up the pigments and he taught me about layering and glazes.

M: How did you develop from being a student to mastering your own way?

R: Well, at some point I had to break free from that education, because it was overpowering – very black and white. His approach was that there was a right way to paint and a wrong way, which was quite restricting. So after a very intense time, I had to really cut those ties and develop my own work. I was very conscious of that.

Ultimately what I learnt was the kernel of a technique, a way of thinking about constructing the painted surface to create the illusion of volume, depth and light that I have built upon and personalized over the years.

M: How would you compare your early works with the works you do now? What’s been the development in your approach?

R: Well, when I was starting out, trying to teach myself the methodology, I would paint portraits based on historical works, so I did a portrait of my sister for example in a Venetian Gothic setting, and a portrait of my mother which was inspired by Velasquez’s Pope Innocent X.

But my work has really developed through the process of being commissioned – you have to turn your head to how to represent real people in their contemporary lives. Sometimes it can be frustrating – you know contemporary dress can be a bit bland and I’m not hugely fond of jeans in paintings. That’s definitely something that the Old Masters had in their favour – all of these lush fabrics and costumes, so I often look for interest elsewhere – in the architecture, for example and in the composition, and of course, in the people themselves. People are absolutely fascinating to me.

One of the big areas of development is that the works have become more complex spatially. I’m trying to explore narrative in challenging ways and use devices to do that such as perspective and reflection.

I’d say though that I have had a single voice throughout my career. Many artists change styles dramatically, but I feel that with my art, there is a continuous thread that you can follow.

M: How would you define that thread?

R: I think one of the defining features of my work is narrative – it’s story telling. It’s the start of every project for me. It’s not just about capturing someone’s likeness on the canvas, it’s about choosing what story you are going to tell about them; what are you trying to say about them as an individual and then all the choices about how you are going to communicate that flow from there.

M: You’re very fond of the horizontal format. Does this have a specific purpose?

R: Yes, absolutely. The horizontal format for me is very cinematic and it gives me much more scope for narrative. I like to paint my figures at life size and you can just fit so much more context into a horizontal format. By broadening the picture frame, it turns the work in to something more than a portrait – it transforms it into a painting.

M: Tell me more about your process ... ?

R: Well, the first step for me is to try to come up with a concept. I always find it odd that people assume that portraits aren’t conceptual. I think that really underestimates the genre.

But whether it’s public or private portraits, coming up with the concept involves a myriad of decisions about the things like the context and purpose. Is the portrait for an occasion like the Diamond Jubilee, a retirement, or a landmark event of some sort? Is the portrait celebrating some aspect of a person’s professional life? Is it private, formal, informal, etc. … so many questions that I will put my attention towards in order to define the concept.

And then a number of decisions stem from there. The biggest one for me is the setting. Where will the portrait be set? Because the context really informs and defines the narrative.

Photos from Vladimir Ashkenazy's sitting

For the Queen's Diamond Jubilee portrait for example, I loved the idea of The Queen going back metaphorically to Westminster Abbey and revisiting the spot where she had been crowned 60 years previously.

For Prince Philip, the Grand Corridor of Windsor Castle is steeped in history and says so much about his ancestry as well as being evocative of the passage of time.

For Vladimir Ashkenazy, it made every sense to paint him at the Sydney Opera House because the purpose of the portrait was to celebrate his tenure with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra and his contribution to the cultural life of Australia.

But as fitting as these settings seem in retrospect, I will often spend many weeks trying to find them, researching my subjects and trekking out to different places and seeing different settings that might resonate with the story I am trying to tell.

M: So you are immersing yourself in the world of your subject? There is a tendency to the opposite approach in contemporary portraiture.

R: Yes I guess that's true. I'm not that interested in bringing each individual into my studio, sitting them in an armchair and inserting them into a standard template. If you do that, the painting risks being uninspired or potentially being more about the artist than the subject. So my approach is to reverse that and immerse myself in the world of the subject and draw inspiration from it to create the work through my own artistic lense.

M: You explore spatial elements such as perspective, reflection, geometry and light to create an immersive experience.

R: I guess you could say that these are distinguishing themes and part of the narrative language that I've been developing over time. I have quite a holistic approach in that I believe every element of the painting should enhance our understanding of the subject.

And my aim with every portrait is that it should hold the attention of the room. I generally unveil one work at a time, so if people are going to come out and see it, the painting needs to be engaging.

M: Once you've chosen the setting what happens next?

R: Well once I've decided on the setting, finding the right view or perspective for the composition can be very difficult because often these places can be quite overpowering. Westminster Abbey, Windsor Castle, The Opera House, they are all iconic buildings in their own right, so the challenge then is to adapt the existing architectural structure and make it work for a different purpose, which is to draw our attention to the subject of the portrait, the individual at the centre of it. Getting that balance right so that the setting doesn't overwhelm the sitter is the key.

I really believe that the setting is an extension of the subject. With Ashkenazy's portrait, for example, it wasn't until I actually lay down on the floor of the Opera House and looked up, that I had found a perspective that would work. It looked like the insides of a musical instrument, a grand piano, with all these parabolic cables stretching around the structure in a vortex of movement. There

was an architectural rhythm, which is itself so musical and it spoke to me of Ashkenazy's dynamism and energy as a musician. It felt like a visual manifestation of his musicality.

M: How do you go about working out the actual composition of the portrait?

R: For my practice, that means actually getting out pencils and paper and drawing up the entire work. Initially, underlying any composition is a set of simple geometrical lines, and basically, however complex, you can break a composition down to three of four principle lines that essentially describe the movement of the eye through the painting. So when you design a composition, you are essentially directing a pathway of movement for the viewer through the painting and ensuring that the energy of the portrait extends to all four corners of the canvas and brings the eye back to the subject. It's quite musical for me.

And then when I'm drawing up the composition more precisely, I find that I will have to entirely reconstruct the space on paper so that it works. Columns and walls or windows need to be moved, archways altered, ceilings, floors – everything have to be manipulated – nothing is actually as it seems. So invariably I'll be re-drawing perspective lines either on paper or more often even at life-size scale, you know with strings of cotton thread that will stretch across the canvas to line up the vanishing points and perspective lines.

It can be frustrating that often people don't realize the extent to which I've re-constructed the space. But I guess that's the measure of a painting's success. If it's not believable spatially, then it's a block – it reads as a mistake and the viewer spends their time in front of the work thinking about what's wrong with it. I don't want that. I want to hold the viewers attention on the soul of the portrait. That means that there is a flow and energy to the composition that keeps you in that moment.

M: And what about your group portraits – how do you compose them?

R: Well, yes with group portraits there's the further complicating factor of working out how the figures will interact with one another as well as the space they are in. And that is very challenging because when you have a group where the subjects are directly addressing one another, I find that you lose a sense of individuality of each person and they become subsumed by the notion of the group. I'm more interested in how the individual interacts with the group, whilst retaining a sense of themselves.

It's sort of like the Renaissance paintings of the Sacra Conversazione, where you have groups of saints that are in this quiet meditation. Even though they're within the same room, they're all in their own psychological space. I like to convey something about the inner world of each subject, so they might be looking in different directions but their bodies might be addressing each other in various

compositional configurations. There's that sense of unity through the geometry of their poses and their positions, and yet each figure is an individual in their own right.

M: Your canvases are often very large. What's your technique for getting the composition up onto the canvas?

R: Once I've developed a detailed drawing I will then blow that up to size using large scale printers so that I can see physically what it looks like at that size and very often that's a point at which I make many changes. Moving objects around, redrafting, re-printing – sticking overlays up at different sizes – things get very crafty in the studio. And I won't order the canvas until I'm absolutely happy with the proportions.

But once that's done and I've primed and sanded the canvas, I put down a dark imprimatur over the whole area, which is the basis of the old master layer technique. The dark base allows you to build up the surface in a series of transparent and semi-transparent layers and that's what gives the portrait its luminosity.

And then when I've transferred the blown up sketch to the canvas using charcoal, I have a very faint line drawing on the canvas as a guide to start the painting.

But whether it's a group or a single figure, for me the composition is everything and it can be very difficult. – That is what I wrestle with. Once I've cracked it, then the painting is fun and it's a joy bringing it to life.

M: You talked about light as one of the defining features of your work. What is your approach to achieving these effects?

R: Throughout my career, light has been one of my obsessions, one of my preoccupations. I mean, sometimes it's the subject in itself of a portrait. Light can elevate a very mundane scene into something quite magical. The way the painting is illuminated can provide a sense of movement, and depth as the light and the shadows fall across the painting. For me the shadows also impart a sense of mystery and meaning to the subject, so the painting becomes more truthful – people are not completely open, you know, they are complex.

When I'm right into the painting of a work, I use light and shadow to gradually build up the forms and the volumes, and through this process, accentuate a sense of spatial depth. Light surrounded by darkness is far more enigmatic and exciting – contrast brings a figure forward, creates separation from the background. And then there's the colours themselves – warm colours project, cold colours recede – so I'm constantly playing with these levers when I work to create a tangible sense of versimilitude.

M: It seems like you have a very structured approach.

R: Well yes and no, because it's a symbiotic process between the artist and the subject and that can never be too predetermined. I try to prepare as much as I can, but the creative process is a mysterious thing and even when you think you've got it all worked out, something will happen; the subject will give you something better than you imagined at the sitting or something unexpected and you have to be flexible. And the portrait is constantly changing and evolving as you work it up and so you have to be patient and open to seeing where the portrait takes you.

M: Does this extend also to the expressions of your subjects? Do you strive to get more than one expression? How do you create a timeless image?

R: Oh absolutely. That's a wonderful thing that develops as you paint. I'm often working on a portrait for 5 or 6 months and in that time the layers of personality seem to get built into the work. As well as that, events happen in their lives; births, deaths, seismic changes, and so the expression develops on the canvas long after the sittings. When you're creating a portrait you're trying to put all of your empathy, all of your understanding of that person into that one image. It's not like it's one of thousands of photos which each capture a different mood. It's not disposable and there has to be a degree of finality about it. The image you create has to say much more than the fleeting moment of a snapshot because everything is very intentional. – It's one single image and you try to encapsulate as much of the depth of that person as you can. You are trying to communicate something of the soul of that person to the viewer.

The artist filtering their impression of the subject is the underlying mystery of portraiture. I think that's what viewers find fascinating.

M: How do you choose the expression, whether the subject is looking at the viewer or elsewhere for example?

R: It's fascinating because both are very powerful but often you get a feeling immediately which one it should be. Very often it depends on your impression of a person, how reflective they are as a person, how extroverted they are, how direct, how protected they are or how open – all of these factors can influence how you represent them.

When the subject is looking directly at the viewer, it can be quite challenging or confronting for the viewer. They are wondering whether they are being looked at or judged rather than the other way round, which is an interesting dynamic. There is an internal monolgue or imaginary conversation that takes place in the viewers mind.

Often when the subject is looking directly at the viewer, the portrait has a degree of formality, because there's a consciousness about the process of portraiture, 'I am posing, I am looking at you'. However, if you represent the subject in such a way that they've turned to you spontaneously in a moment or they're busy doing something and then they've looked at the viewer, that can also be intrigu-

ing, because you're creating a sense of that they are living their life, but taking a moment's pause.

But actually, it's quite rare for me to have my subjects looking straight at the viewer. I find that when they look away, you are able to access a more internal moment – as though the subject were lost in their own thoughts – which often they are. I'm not very chatty during the actual sittings. I'm quite happy for the silence. I'm observing and allowing the subject to let their thoughts settle and that can be so revealing.

M: That was certainly the case with your portrait of The Queen.

R: Yes absolutely, I wanted to convey a reflective moment and I believe her expression is enigmatic. Which is very much like the Queen herself. She famously rarely offers an opinion in public and is certainly not an open book. Prince Philip on the other hand, has been able to be much more open in his public life and the expression that I chose for his portrait reflects that – it is nuanced, but quintessentially him.

M: Do you sometimes feel like your work is in dialogue with itself?

R: Yes often the dialogue I am having is with my own works. Trying to constantly develop and extend your own language is something that most artists struggle with. So for example, in producing the portrait of Prince Philip five years after my portrait of The Queen, I wanted the works to relate to each other, both compositionally and in terms of their emotional resonance.

M: I see parallels in your depictions of the Danish Royals.

R: Yes absolutely, there are some parallels. The portrait of Crown Princess Mary was my first royal commission, and it was wonderful to work with the Museum on that. It was a very successful collaboration because I was developing this narrative approach to portraiture and you wanted me to extend that in to the genre of royal portraiture, which was a really exciting challenge.

I guess my background in art history and that pictorial tradition with it's rules and iconography made it quite a natural transition, but I really felt that I wanted to push the boundaries within that tradition.

When I painted Princess Mary, she was really starting out in her role. She was actually pregnant at the time and was quite tentative. Now of course, she is a style icon and so assured, but back in 2006, she was really just finding her feet and I wanted to convey that. So we made decisions about her wearing informal dress – no tiara or sash. But by setting the portrait in this very significant room to the Danish Monarchy, the Garden Room, the viewer understands the passage from her old life to the new.

And then I also played with the elements in the room, changing paintings to mirrors and then reflecting images of Constitution Dock in Hobart rather than the famous paintings that actually exist in the room. Everything about the portrait was tied to her narrative at the time.

M: The Museum thought that it would be a good idea for the portraits to form a pair. Tell me about the challenges with that brief.

R: Well, this was a fascinating commission from that point of view because the setting was predetermined, and the challenge was to see if I could produce something original and complimentary using the same space. And that was actually quite tough, because I had already done so much in terms of the spatial complexity with Princess Mary's portrait. But it was great to be given those boundaries and I think the finished works fit together. They interlock compositionally. I mean this is really a story about both of them as a unit. And returning to the Garden Room at Fredensborg Palace 11-12 years later, now that they have a family, was a chance to say something about that.

So, to acknowledge the passing of time, I've recreated the space again and shown in a mirror behind Prince Frederik, a reflection of Princess Mary with their children, sitting by the windows, where I had depicted her alone ten years earlier when she was pregnant with her first child. He is walking towards them and they are both in evening attire. I like the idea of the narrative beyond the edges of the picture frame. What was he doing before and where are they going next?

M: There's something quite natural about the scene.

R: Yes, even though he's in formal dress, he seems comfortable in his skin and in his role. I wanted to portray him as I saw him – very open, dynamic, quite youthful. He is very sharp, charismatic. I had met him before, so there was a sense of familiarity. And you know he's only a couple of years older than me, so sometimes you have to remind yourself that he will be the King of Denmark.

But also while I was producing this portrait he lost his father, and I think the responsibility weighs even more heavily on your shoulders when an event like that happens. It becomes embedded in the narrative and in the layers of paint.

M: It's an interesting contrast in terms of the movement and the mood with the portrait of Prince Philip, who as we know is also a Prince of Denmark.

R: Yes, with the portrait of Prince Philip, I wanted to invoke a sense of his history, his ancestry, and the passing of time. I loved the rhythm of the light and shadows stretching back down the lengthy corridor. It was wonderful to paint someone with so much history behind them. I mean it's like he steps out of another time, and another age. He fought in the Second World War – he's had 70 years of public life. It's quite hard to fathom really.

Photo from Crown Prince Frederik's sitting

Sketch for the portrait of Crown Prince Frederik, 2017.
Private Collection

And so there you have a man at the end of his career, public life, and the sense of farewell about that portrait was ever present. He's turning towards the viewer, before one imagines him turning back and walking away, which I thought was a very powerful moment to portray.

M: Has looking at the person behind the role underpinned your approach to royal portraiture in general?

R: Well I think it's fascinating to explore the relationship between the individual and the role that in some cases they were born to do. It's interesting because we are born with this notion or expectation of free agency – that we can make our choices in our lives and to some extent determine the course of our own fate. But when you are born into a royal family, you're born into this notion of duty and a life of service effectively. I think it's interesting to examine this and shine a light onto how these individuals have interpreted their roles and effectively conducted themselves under these rather unusual circumstances. And really I think that is what a contemporary approach requires. For me pushing at the boundaries of royal portraiture means accepting and acknowledging the canon and the iconography of royal portraiture but moving beyond that to reveal something deeper about the subject.

M: Tell me about iconography in a modern context.

R: Well, portraits in the past used to follow what they would call a symbolic program. Obviously in royal portraits you had the main symbols of power such as the staff and the orb, but a whole complex language developed around other elements such as putting gloves on (which I used in Princess Mary's portrait) and understanding portraiture was like decoding a language.

I think that's the challenge for every artist working within the genre of royal portraiture; it's not to make the subject just a symbol of power, or a symbol of their role, but to peel back and try to reveal the person underneath that.

M: How important is likeness in portraiture?

R: Well likeness is so mercurial and it's usually the people closest to my subjects who can see whether I've got them or not. It's in the body language, the exhalation, and the changeable quality in the expression.

It's not important for everybody, but for my practice, I'd say likeness is very important. Like with the spatial aspects, if it's not right, the viewer reads it as a mistake and it's a barrier to connecting with the work. Likeness should be a given and then they can move beyond that to the deeper questions of identity and intent.

M: Tell me then about the process of collaboration – you've worked with some very powerful people. Any difficult people?

R: Well, I don't know if I'd characterize it like that. It's a creative process and my particular approach is to encourage collaboration. It's so important in the early stages to listen to the subject and be receptive to their ideas. These are fascinating individuals by and large and there is so much to learn from them. But then you have to be true to your vision.

M: Do you let people see the works in progress?

R: Well not if I can help it. Once compositional drawing has been agreed on, I don't really want people to see it until it's finished.

M: Why is that?

R: Well because, it's very hard for people to understand what's happening until it's done. They see that the surface is covered and it looks finished to them, but it's not. So much happens in those last coats – fine-tuning the expression, balancing the colours and the light – after months of painting, often something transformative happens in those last days and if people start interfering, it can jeopardize the work. And really it's my reputation on the line when a work is released publically. So I'll finish it to my highest standard and then if there is a comment I'll look into it.

M: When you're working on a public portrait how aware are you of the zeitgeist?

R: It's a really interesting thing and the artist has to walk a fine line because you are absorbing everything from the cultural moment around you and still you have to hold firm to your vision. This was especially true with my portrait of The Queen, because the Jubilee was happening all around me as I was producing the work – you know there were street parties and bunting and cupcakes and Pimm's – all fantastically British and everywhere there were images of this beaming Monarch which was wonderful and celebratory, but that was definitely not the mood of the piece I was producing. And I really had to steel my nerve to carry out my vision for a what I thought would be a lasting piece for her legacy and for what I hoped would engage the public in a more reflective conversation. And I think to that extent, it was successful, because it did elicit this groundswell of emotion from people for whom this Queen has been a constant throughout their lives. The emotional response was overwhelming and for me that makes a successful portrait. As an artist, the creative instinct is that you try to move people. The worst thing you can get is no reaction.

M: Is that why you enjoy painting high profile people. What is your take on celebrity?

R: Well I do like to paint well known people because despite the pressure involved, it's fun to be part of the cultural conversation – how does your portrayal of a

person resonate with the public's view of them, what can you add to their narrative, perhaps you can reveal something more that people might not have seen or considered, a different perspective. Portraiture should be revelatory to an extent.

But the term "celebrity", that doesn't really resonate with what I do. My portraits take time to finish, so I have to choose my subjects wisely. I choose people who interest me and whom I feel have made a lasting cultural contribution, so that they're still relevant by the time I finish the piece.

M: In this age of smartphones etc. … everyone's taking their own portraits constantly – what's the importance of having big commissions from institutions?

R: When you think about the genre of portraiture, I think it's fair to say that it has experienced something of a revival. I don't think we're at the point anymore where we have to argue for the validity of its existence as a genre. You know, just looking at the queues to line up to portrait prize exhibitions and the public interest when public portraits are unveiled affirms that. It's a very accessible genre – everybody loves to look at others and to interpret images of other people. But popularity doesn't necessarily equate with quality and a lot of what we see especially with the rise of social media, is very transient – there's a public obsession with the disposable self-image.

And so I think it's very important beyond the portrait prizes for institutions to continue the tradition of commissioning art. These provide the opportunity for artists to make lasting statements about the prominent cultural figures of our time – to create a cultural legacy. And it's a tradition which presents unique challenges for the artist that are often not understood, because you get given a brief of sorts and you have to navigate all these different dynamics; between the institution, the sitter and the audience and somehow still stay true to your own personal vision for the portrait in order for it to be a success.

M: Do you think that people who visit a portrait gallery and look at them are learning something about humanity?

R: I mean, you know, the maxim that art teaches people how to see the world I think is quite true. Through looking at portraiture and understanding how the artist has interpreted the subject I guess you can learn something collectively about the human condition.

When looking at Old Masters' portraits there's something about the feeling in them – you get a view into the continuum of humanity and yet they don't feel old to me – they still feel very immediate and relevant.

M: What do you think is the future of portraiture?

R: It's good to try to be ambitious, and produce a work that moves somebody emotionally, or that creates its own universe that in hundreds of years time people can still you know, feel that they know something about the person that is on the canvas.

I think you want to create a feeling that somebody through the ages, in another time, in another place, can understand who that subject is and get an impression of their character, without a written description. That's what makes a portrait succeed; it has to be for posterity, it has to be able to communicate in its own right. I think art has to speak for itself.

P. 46-47: The Coronation Theatre (detail)

P. 48-49: Portrait of HRH The Duke of Edinburgh (detail)

HRH The Countess of Wessex, 2016.
TRH The Earl and Countess of Wessex

HRH The Earl of Wessex, 2016.
TRH The Earl and Countess of Wessex

RALPH HEIMANS' PICTORIAL WORLDS

By Professor Erik Steffensen, Artist and Author

Not many people get the opportunity to be in the same room as Prince Charles and Crown Prince Frederik at the same time. But in March 2018 one particular person was doing so on a daily basis. The portrait painter, Ralph Heimans had portraits in progress of the two heirs to the throne on easels in his studio in the southern outskirts of London. They are meticulous, yet vibrant representations of the two royal men. Some people would call them psychological representations; others might remark that the recognisability and detail are spot on. There is nothing to criticise, no uncertainty, and no fumbling. They are impressive paintings, dignified portraits; but, apart from the purely technical aspect, difficult portraits too. Because Ralph Heimans is not merely a painter who sees. He is also a painter who understands the situation the subject is in, whether he is comfortable in his own body or whether there is a trace of awkwardness. Ralph Heimans' mastery consists of capturing this slight, hidden human 'impression' and discreetly revealing it. There is a reality that accompanies what we see. We sense its existence, though without being able to pin it down.

Ralph Heimans paints real people on the basis of in-depth studies and the use of photographic sources, but he does so in an apparently untraditional way; they are too radiant in that respect. Nor does he indulge in the sophisms of art history or surrealistic tricks. He paints in accordance with what he has experienced with the same loyalty as a novelist who needs to empathise with his characters; otherwise readers would simply not be interested in making their acquaintance. Charles and Frederik are not merely just any old Charles and Frederik. They are people whom the paintings invest with a historic afterlife, which will last much longer than their own earthly life. They will be perused and even admired by thousands, if not millions of eyes, while their own royal gazes will also closely scrutinise viewers and places, because Ralph Heimans has thought it over and decided that in the pictures the direction of the eyes should work as geometrical guidelines for the person's life and place in the universe.

Every decision the portrait painter has made is closer to eternity than many of the other decisions painters make. Because portrait painting is a peculiar genre, they are at once past and contemporary, heavily charged with symbolism and material presence, and in Ralph Heimans' case maybe they even make a future-oriented point: this middle-aged man will succeed to the throne. It is not a case of Game of Thrones – and yet. The painting comes across as curiously modern, maybe due to the vivid, quasi-synthetic colour scheme, which has an

Dame Judi Dench (detail)

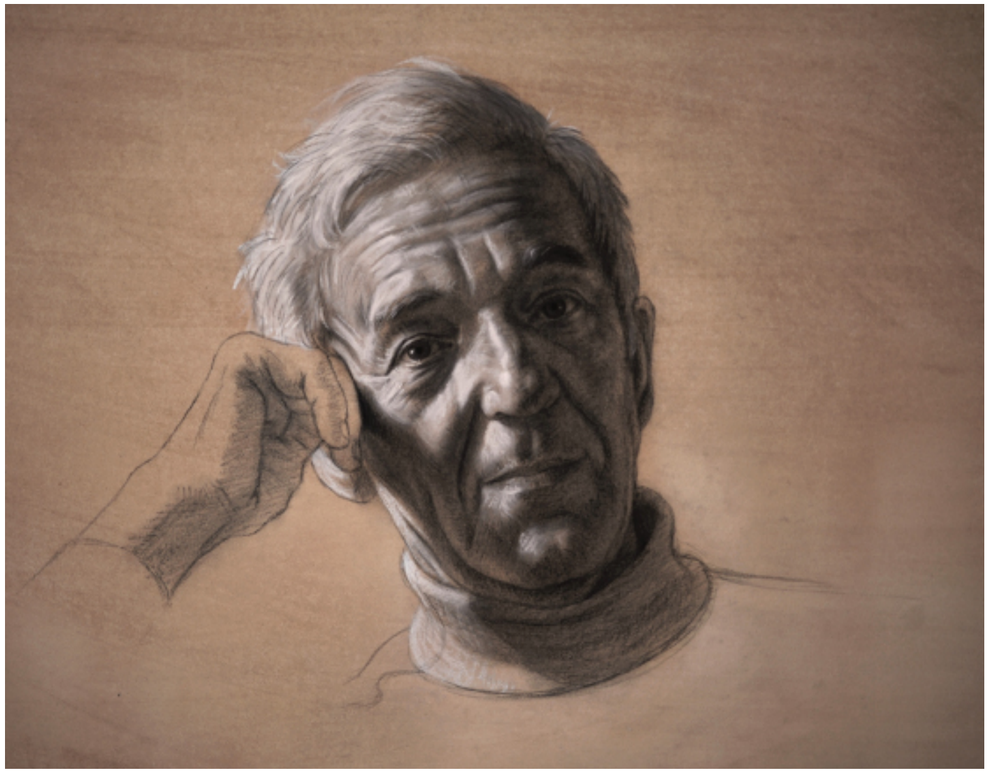
almost cinematic quality. There is a mixture of science fiction, HBO and fantasy illustration in this painting's galaxy. In any case, there is nothing dusty about the enterprise, not even when the subjects are actors, writers and interpreters of William Shakespeare, despite the fact that he wrote his plays more than four hundred years ago. Ralph Heimans' portraits are not timeless; they are of our time. But they do not cut any familiar axis. They are playful without being indifferent; serious without being weighed down by severity. Maybe that is what makes them akin to literature, theatre and serial culture. Shakespeare is not far away. Not even for someone like Heimans, who was born in 1970 in Australia.

The fact that Ralph Heimans decided to become something as specific as a portrait painter can be no surprise, if you look at his family's history. Not only are there Dutch ancestors, but also Dutch citizenship on his father's side, and Lebanese roots on his mother's. It is an unusual blend. But, from a Jewish point of view, the fact that his parents settled in Australia was the most natural thing in the world. Whilst portrait painting and the kaleidoscopic worldview are surely nothing strange for any Dutchman with a tradition that encompasses Rembrandt and Vermeer, it is quite unusual in a southern hemisphere perspective. Australia has no great tradition, when it comes to older art history. On the other hand, though, there is no shortage of incredible personal stories. Ralph Heimans' own family is a good example of world citizens with southern, northern, eastern and western roots. More than that, in their professional life, his family have investigated stories about life among people to form images, sound and text that other people can immediately use. Whereas Ralph Heimans paints his stories in oil on canvas, throughout his life Frank Heimans has been the most assiduous producer, author, interviewer and documentary-maker imaginable. He has worked on all sorts of interesting historical subjects and, through personal evidence, communicated images of who and what Australia and her people are. This man of Jewish background has been controversial, investigating the Holocaust, the Aborigines, pornography, drugs and the occult in his international award-winning films and stories. So the painter, Ralph Heimans has a background of research that does not come from strangers or any training. It is in his family's nature to move, to understand points of view from many perspectives and to delve into topics that seem unusual. When projects are voluntary, work starts in the studio, so the preliminary work is not spontaneous. Ralph Heimans' creativity is more complex. He puts together a jigsaw puzzle consisting of many pieces, and part of the foundation also comes from his education and interest in high-level mathematics.

Ralph Heimans studied both Mathematics and Art History at university in Sydney before committing himself to a career as a painter and continuing his studies at art school. In addition, he took lessons with a Polish artist, Ziggy, an emigrant from Kraków, who lived on the outskirts of Sydney. The Pole's work bore indelible traces of traditional European painting in terms of practice and methodology, equal portions of mysterious and secretive alchemy, and discussion of

serious issues through sensory perception of the outside world. A lesson could easily consist of a conversation about colour during a walk in the woods, while observing nature, or practical work on underpainting or the awareness of pigments and materials in the studio. The work was slow and with no apparent result. You could even have taken Ziggy for a character in the quirky educational environment of the Harry Potter stories, only with modern-day Sydney as the setting. There is nothing mysterious or inaccessible about portrait art, but slowness is a keyword: something for which the subject must make a pact with the painter, if the paint-

Dame Judi Dench, 2018.
Private Collection

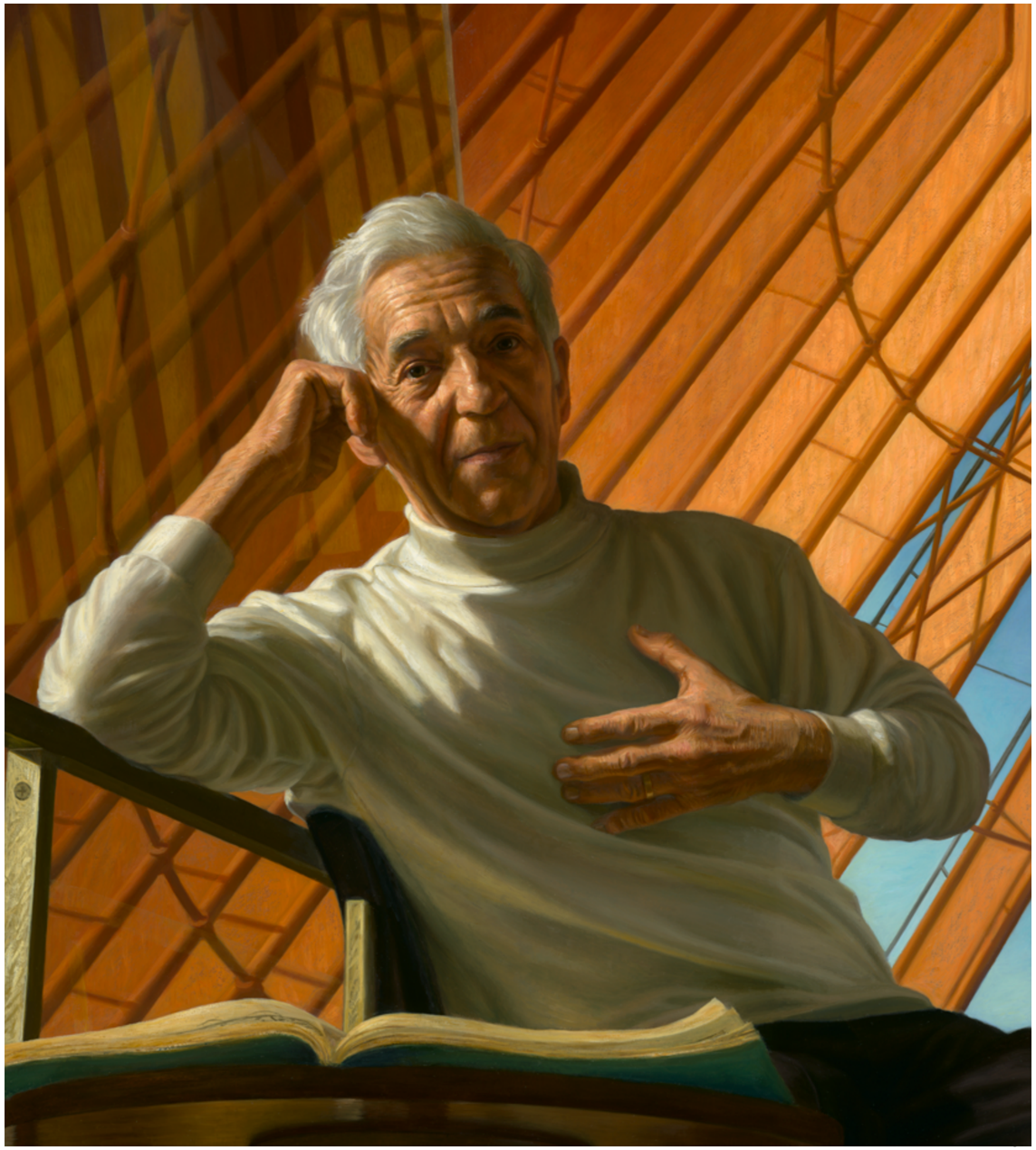


Study for Architecture of Music (Vladimir Ashkenazy), 2011.

Detail of Architecture of Music (Vladimir Ashkenazy), 2011
National Portrait Gallery, Canberra (gift of Michael Crouch AC and Shanny Crouch)

ing is to become a reality. It takes practice, and it is not something you learn on a course. It is something to which you must commit and devote long-term study.

Looking at the same face, and judging whether you have really captured its character, and estimating whether your entire concept for the painting is sustainable, requires not only skills, but also conversation. It is desirable if the artist more or less captures the universe of the subject or adds something to the portrait of the person or family, which we were not previously aware of. Ralph Heimans works towards the realisation of a work with great patience, even though it may sound enchanting that the entire research phase and getting to know a family might take place during a skiing holiday in the Alps. Extravagance and generosity can go hand in hand, but the process is always the same, even if he suddenly has to conjure up a painting of a family, in which there are strong sexual undertones, and in which the fetishistic value of things can be perceived through the



The Architecture of Music
(Vladimir Ashkenazy), 2011.
National Portrait Gallery, Canberra
(gift of Michael Crouch AC and
Shanny Crouch)

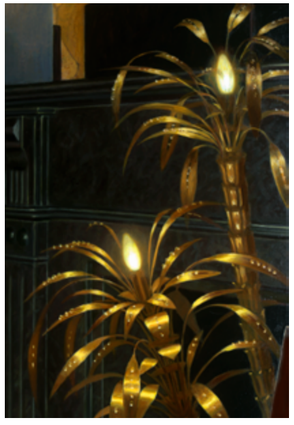
The Boyers, 2008.
Private Collection

bright red soles of the Louboutin shoes at the end of a pair of long, freshly shaved women's legs on a thick pile carpet in Hong Kong. The subject is seen, but so is the surrounding space, without the interpretation inclining one way or the other. It is not the decadence of a lifestyle that Ralph Heimans highlights in a portrait, nor is it about flattery or exposure. He does everything on the basis of loyal affection for the person, space and the artist's skills, which the client has recognised in the painter. It is a dual activity. Without this exchange, the artist could not produce good portraits. It is the individual client who determines the degree of sensitivity, privacy or publicity. The Australian element can have a liberating effect, like an alien's eye in the middle of an otherwise heavily charged reality, where heritage can control an environment. So is it not wonderful to see Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II standing in a setting, which was created by the painter; as opposed to where she was standing when he met her prior to her Diamond Jubilee, which was the reason the painting was commissioned? The official portrait of the Queen was originally shown at the National Portrait Gallery of Australia in 2012, where it attracted a record number of visitors and received international attention. Now this portrait and another of Ralph Heimans' studies of the Diamond Jubilee are part of the permanent collection in Westminster Abbey, where from this year it is hanging in the Abbey's Triforium Gallery. A portrait painter is also a sorcerer, who can bring tempers to the boil. Even though the painter is not so exposed, his works are: as objects of wonder, hate, vandalism and eulogy. Society does not receive all gifts with equally open arms, but, to an overwhelming degree, art still seems to be the link that connects us on a deeper level, be it film, painting or some other artistic genre.

Twenty years ago, in 1997, Ralph Heimans settled in the Montmartre district of Paris. In recognition of the fact that the career of a portrait painter evolves differently from that of other artists, because he works from project to project and each project takes time, in Europe there was greater opportunity to get a career off the ground. Because Ralph Heimans is determined and ambitious, though there is no mistaking his sympathetic, jovial Australian tone. Maybe we should just view it in the light of his upbringing surrounded by Dutch furniture and a quiet sensitivity as in a 17th-century Dutch painting. Making a living as an artist is not easy and, even though Paris sounds like a Mecca for tourists when it comes to artistic experiences and culture, France is a financial wilderness for any artist trying to establish him/herself. It is a long time since Paris led the field as a global artistic metropolis for visiting artists. But Ralph Heimans continued and gradually got commissions in neighbouring countries. A breakthrough to a large circle of wealthy customers came after the commission to paint Mary, Crown Princess of Denmark, who was born in Hobart, Tasmania, and so was matched with fellow countryman, Ralph Heimans as a portrait artist. It was both an exciting and brave choice of artist, and it was a successful portrait. Since then Ralph Heimans has painted portraits of several royal figures.

One of his best-known works is of the conductor and concert pianist, Vladimir Ashkenazy, whose relaxed attitude, but confident, friendly look is captured in a strictly orchestrated painting, in which the organic architecture of the Sydney Opera House turns in on itself like a Möbius strip in the context. Ralph Heimans' background in Architecture and Mathematics does not fail him in this warm painting, in which the shades of the wooden structures reveal an obvious interest, not only in the aesthetic dimension of art, but also in music as a whole. What we see is a symphonic study rather than a chamber music composition. The title is simply The Architecture of Music (Vladimir Ashkenazy)(p. 54), but we can see that the truth is greater than that. We immediately perceive that there is a spatiality and strange perfectionism shared by the respective domains of the pianist and the artist.

Whereas Sydney Opera House forms a modern backdrop for a portrait, Westminster Abbey is an older 'set' and a private home is something altogether different. Ralph Heimans seems to mix fiction and fact in his paintings. Maybe he even enjoys the freedom that art can provide in an otherwise close-knit concept: if there is no recognisability in the physical appearance of the subject, the portrait has failed. Ralph Heimans elevates the recognisable element of a painting to a supernaturalistic level. He flits round at ease in fancy apartments and rooms, even though planning the projects can often be so logistically challenging that the artist is only given an hour of the model's time. The artist operates with his camera and his preliminary studies and ideas with great accuracy in a sitting, before taking all the material back to his studio and coming up with the master plan, which then forms the essence of the painting. Ralph Heimans' painting is almost like a time machine, in which you could just as well be in the No Man's Land of 1770, when the Europeans claimed Australia, as in 2018, when the children have just been sent off to school after a hectic family breakfast. Everyday life and events merge freely. In a reflection behind the Danish princess we see what may be a view of her birthplace, Hobart, even though we presume we are in a castle in North Zealand. There is also a magical element to the series of portraits of writers, on which Ralph Heimans worked for a number of years, in which interpreters of Shakespeare are put under the magnifying glass. The Norwegian author, Jo Nesbø is an excellent example of this (p. 74). His flat in Oslo comes across as a kind of occult medieval temple with a tattered picture of the moon hanging over the bed in the bedchamber. In the painting, what is true and what is false? It is the universe of books. Here there is room for mass murder and Macbeth, and our own imagination is aroused. Jo Nesbø's hoodie brings us face to face with everyday life. Once we have noticed the ultra real garment, it is hard to imagine other than that the person is real. Alive and kicking. And yet only through the reality of books and art? Moving on this knife-edge of magic realism is an art in itself. Consider Your Ways (p. 96), as another painting is titled, is not just the motto of the setting incorporated as advice to young people. It also resounds in Ralph Heimans. He chooses his ways with care, and always finishes before the deadline.



The Boyers (details)

Tetty, 1995.
Private Colletion

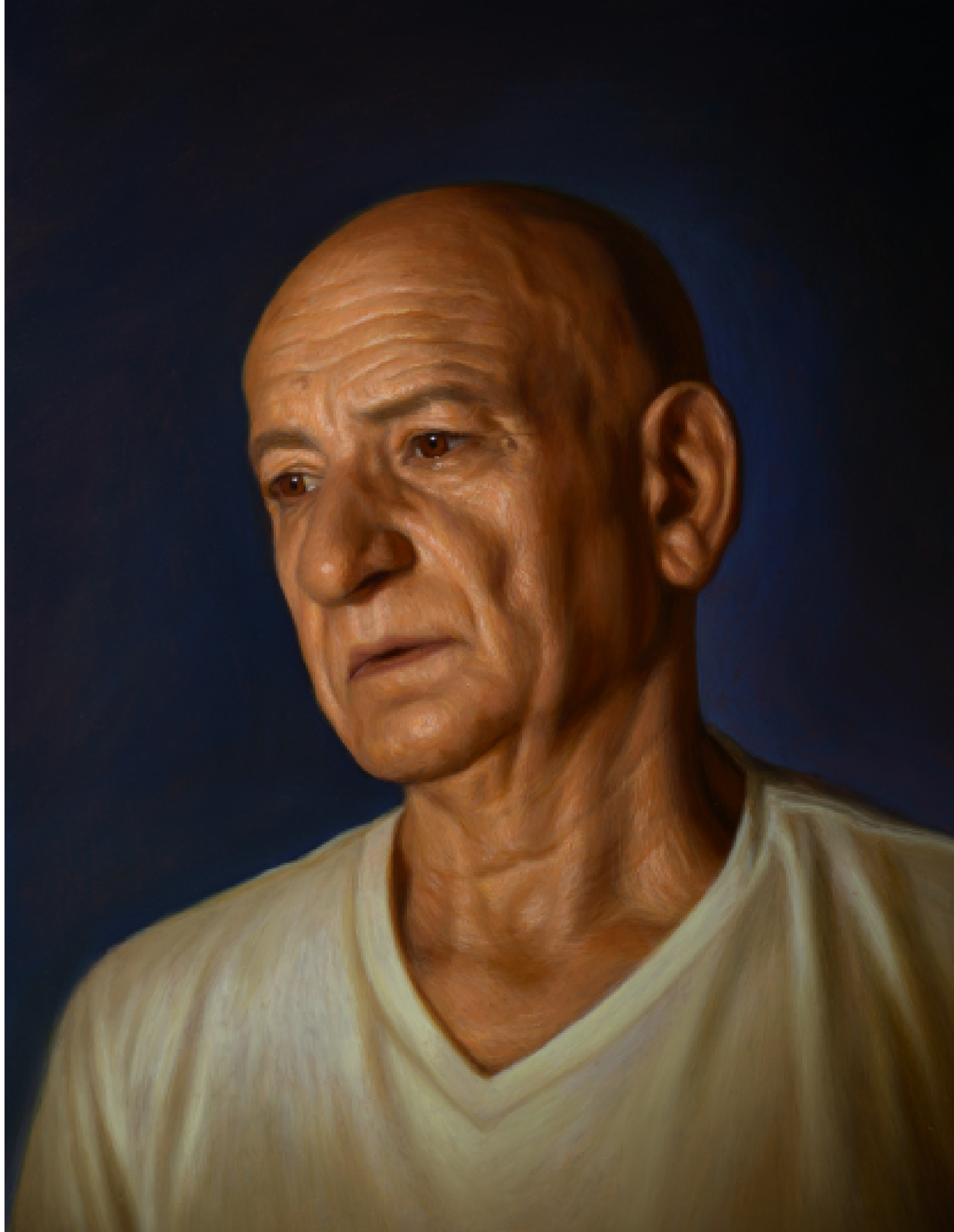
The artist paints women and men. And children and young people. And pets as if they were members of the family. He weaves dream and reality into paintings of great strength and authenticity without resorting to gimmicks.

The frequently large scale of the paintings allows him to tell extraordinary stories. The family portrait, The Boyers, measuring 190 x 250 cm, portrays a family in a relaxed attitude, where each member of the family seems to have his or her own space: even the dog, which is positioned centrally in the picture, stands with its end towards the viewer and vigilantly keeps an eye on the distant walls or doors of the deep room (p. 56). Is a sound coming from the kitchen out there? In any case, it is alert to the fact there is something outside this room, full of antiques, modern art and personal belongings. The youngest son, sitting on the floor, has screen time on his Mac, while the daughter, barefoot, is sprawled over the sofa her mother is sitting in. There is exposed skin and choice fabrics. It is an erotically charged picture underscored by a painting on the wall of the large, almost regal living room, fitted with chandeliers, beautiful fabrics and dove blue wallpaper. The painting on the wall depicts a nude woman seated in a basket chair. The painting lends the scenario an oriental touch. There are a number of details that point in that direction: a floor vase, a Buddha statue and a starry-sky wall, which blends gently with the other modern artefacts in the room. Even the lamps have something cosmic about them with their glowing sensual shapes that resemble conches, shells and vegetation. It is a voyage round the world in objects, but you also get a sense of a family whose history is tied up with the things. There are personal preferences in the choices, depicting the individuals involved, seen from the point of view of both the painter and the people depicted. There is also a discreet hint of meaning. Who binds the family together, and where are they in their lives right now? As mentioned before, the dog belongs in the picture, but the maid is also there. It is a collection of people who desire intimacy. The painting also depicts a well-off, privileged family of individuals. It is an important picture that extends beyond the client's self-image. Ralph Heimans has succeeded in creating a work that incorporates modernity. The dog, the high-tech appliances, mobile and computer have all been given a place in the picture. There is a world outside the picture. The family is connected: like the rest of us and with the rest of us. We are part of the picture. It is a picture of the world, Version 2.0.

One of Ralph Heimans' smaller pictures, the portrait of the 97-year-old Tetty, who survived her internment in the Auschwitz concentration camp, because she had a rare blood type that could be used in the Nazis' medical experiments, shows us a woman with a look that extends beyond time. Sad and fixed. It is a calm portrait, a soulful portrait with a particular detail. The mark from her time in the camp is still there: a prisoner number tattooed on her forearm, discreetly visible under the sleeve of her blouse. Tetty is just a number in the line in the camp with no other identity. A black umbrella hangs on her arm: an object that evokes weather and protection. Choosing an umbrella as the protagonist's most

Study for portrait of
Sir Ben Kingsley, 2018.
Private Collection

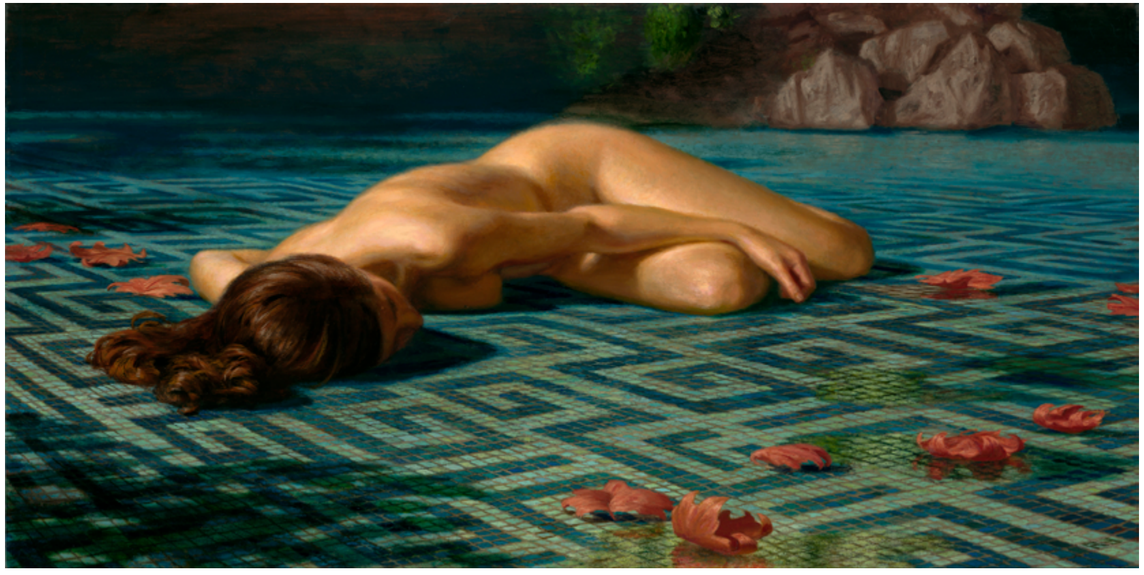
highly treasured object is, in its way, an adventurous choice. There are no valuable objects or attempts to elevate her in the world via symbols, art and incense. Tetty is important for who she is, in her own right. The painter is aware of this. Just like his father, whose first major research project was about the Vienna Boys' Choir who were going to tour Australia in 1939, but had the good or bad fortune to get stranded there. The ship never sailed back to Europe, because Australia declared war against Germany that same day. The boys were between 8 and 13 years old, and several of them never returned, but were declared hostile aliens and placed with foster families in Australia. The boys could sing. Now they were 'prisoners of war'. It was not until Frank Heimans had carried out his research that their fate became public knowledge. The same can be said of Ralph Heimans' painting of Tetty. If it were not for its presence on the artist's website alongside Queen Elizabeth of England, we would not notice the eternal pulse of history. It is the artist who obtains and processes the material, be it high or low, and no project seems to be tackled without sympathy and empathy with the life and being of the person being portrayed. Ralph Heimans' painting is personal without being private.



Paula, 2008.
Private Collection

The Jungels, 2011.
Private Collection

Pam, 2016.
Private Collection



Nude, 2003.
Private Collection

SHAKESPEARE REVISITED

By Jennifer Thatcher

Ralph Heimans is used to painting extraordinary people, whether royalty or prominent figures within the fields of music, law or government. He is therefore well used to dealing with those whose achievements or position require them to develop a public persona. With his portraits, Heimans encourages us to look beyond this public mask to reveal something more nuanced, more human, more like us. His previous choice of subjects, then, surely proved helpful when dealing with Shakespeare, whose plays scrutinise the psychological effects of power and desire, while his own life remains shrouded in mystery.

For Shakespeare400, the anniversary of his birth, Hogarth Press asked a number of internationally acclaimed authors to reinterpret one of Shakespeare's plays as prose fiction. Howard Jacobson, invited to rework The Merchant of Venice, suggested to Heimans that he paint accompanying portraits of these authors. In addition to Jacobson, five of them – Margaret Atwood, Tracy Chevalier, Gillian Flynn, Jo Nesbø, Anne Tyler – agreed to sit for him. The series was exhibited as Shakespeare Revisited at Shakespeare's Globe, London, in April 2016. The challenge was that, while all the authors had been assigned their Shakespearean play to rewrite, most had not yet completed their novels at the time that Heimans painted them. The resulting paintings, then, required Heimans to fill in the gaps with his imagination and incorporate his own interpretation of the play.

It was vital, in Heimans' view, to acknowledge the rich iconography, contemporary and historical, related to these authors and Shakespeare. The contemporary visual context includes the novelists' existing public images, as well as the popular film adaptations of the authors' novels, such as Tracy Chevalier's Girl With a Pearl Earring and Gillian Flynn's Gone Girl. The historical visual context includes Johannes Vermeer's 1665 painting of Girl With a Pearl Earring, the inspiration behind Chevalier's eponymous novel; and, more generally, the whole art-historical sub-genre of art associated with Shakespeare. This genre comprises portraits of Shakespeare himself; the art celebrated during the Bard's own lifetime, Caravaggio being the most famous across Europe; artworks inspired by Shakespeare's plays, particularly in the 18th and 19th centuries, the height of which was John Boydell's Shakespeare Gallery on Pall Mall; and finally, theatrical paintings of Shakespearean actors, such as Johann Zoffany's portraits of David Garrick as Macbeth and Hannah Pritchard as Lady Macbeth and Charles Macklin as Shylock (both 1768).

Heimans drew on all these sources when devising a concept for each painting. He typically spends weeks researching each subject, reading and listening to audio tapes as he works, and planning in advance all the compositional elements of his painting in order to maximise his often-brief time with the sitter. In this

Margaret Atwood
"... the abysm of time ..."
(The Tempest), 2016.
Private Collection

Tracy Chevalier
"... show me thy thought ..."
(Othello), 2015.
Private Collection

way, he pre-plans the sitting, the accessories he brings for them to wear, the props he adds, the settings he chooses or plans to invent and the idiosyncratic, historic frames he has sourced and often painstakingly restored for each one. The frame for Gillian Flynn's painting once held a painting by John Constable, for example.

London-based Howard Jacobson was the only author Heimans had previously met. However, in contrast to his royal paintings, for which he is allocated a fixed time slot (usually one hour) with his subject, the Shakespeare series allowed for more relaxed encounters, mostly in the sitter's own home. Jacobson recalls the extensive discussions he and Heimans had about The Merchant of Venice's alleged anti-Semitism. Indeed, the intensity of that debate, seems to be captured in Jacobson's expression in the portrait, the light emphasising the furrows on his forehead and watery, downcast eyes – although, as befits a comic writer, Jacobson facetiously claims that the expression derives from a guilt-ridden inner debate about whether or not to eat a biscuit. The close cropping of Jacobson's head and shoulders against a black monochrome background emphasises that this is a psychological study.

The portrait is clearly recognisable as Howard Jacobson-the-contemporary-writer, but it also carries the suggestion that Jacobson has so internalised Shakespeare's play, physically and mentally, that he literally embodies its tensions. The evocative title No sighs but of my breathing … is a line of Shylock's, in which he bemoans the fate of losing his daughter and his wealth. In selecting this quote, Heimans effectively casts Jacobson himself as Shylock. Indeed, the white scarf Heimans has added around Jacobson's neck suggests an Elizabethan ruff, while also casting highlights and producing a dramatic chiaroscuro contrast between dark and light, known as 'tenebrism'. It is no coincidence that Heimans chose a baroque painterly effect, since he enjoys imagining the kind of art that Shakespeare might have seen, or even been inspired by, in his own day. For this portrait, the intense expression, the austere background and sombre colour palette contrasted with strong highlights on the face all create a link with Rembrandt's uncompromising portraits and self-portraits – although he would only have been a boy when Shakespeare died.

It was no doubt also an irresistible coincidence that Tracy Chevalier was drawn to another great Dutch portraitist, Vermeer, for her earlier novel, Girl With a Pearl Earring. Heimans acknowledged their shared interest in Dutch Golden Age painting, by borrowing some of Vermeer's most recognisable tropes for Chevalier's portrait. As with Vermeer's portraits, Heimans set Chevalier in a domestic interior, her London home. We see her sat at a table, hand wrapped around a mug, the silhouette of her cat's back and tail clearly visible in the foreground. Like Vermeer, Heimans made abundant use of textiles as props and decoration to add texture, colour and light. The rich mottling of the cat's fur is echoed on the left-hand side of the portrait by the folds of an oriental rug. Vermeer used tapestries and rugs to similar framing effect, in, for example, The Art of Painting (1666), The Procuress (1656) and Woman in Blue Reading a Letter (1663-4). (Heimans admits to having

Jo Nesbø
"... a walking shadow ..."
(Macbeth), 2016.
Private Collection

the rug delivered to Chevalier's house without her prior knowledge!) The strong primary colours – the vermillion rug with lapis blue accents picked up by Chevalier's striking eye colour – are also those favoured by Vermeer to create strong contrasts. Finally, Heimans borrowed from Rembrandt and Vermeer the technique of chiaroscuro, here achieved through the sharply defined white accents of Chevalier's mug, fur collar and cuffs.

Chevalier drew on her childhood experiences for her version of Shakespeare's Othello, setting it in a 1970s primary school in suburban Washington. Heimans, however, preferred to make an ingenuous visual reference to the original Shakespeare play by adding an imaginary tapestry as a backdrop, serving both to mask the contemporary fittings of Chevalier's kitchen (she was sitting in front of her fridge) and to offer us a neat visual summary of the dynamic between the play's principal characters. The tapestry depicts Othello – a lone African among white figures in the manner of Renaissance paintings of the Adoration of the Magi – firmly gripping Desdemona's wrist, whose arm is in turn being held protectively by an anxious Emilia behind her, while Iago looks shifty at her other side.

Jo Nesbø's portrait is also set in a highly stylised domestic space, in fact his Oslo home. The Norwegian writer, in his characteristic hoodie, seems to come right to the foreground of the painting, as if the bookcase and open doorway to his bedroom behind him were part of a stage-set. His youthful clothes and rock-star good looks are offset by the wrinkles on his well-worn face, the contrast accentuating his haunting, brooding expression. The painting's landscape format adds a more contemporary, cinematic aspect and creates enough space around the figure to include intriguing narrative elements. Eerie candlelight in the bedroom emphasises the white sheet of the un-made bed and casts a subtle glow on the moon picture above it that infers that it is night-time. What is Nesbø doing up at night, fully clothed, clearly restless?

As a bestselling crime writer, it is no surprise that Nesbø chose Macbeth to interpret. As with Heimans' other portraits, the viewer alternates between seeing Nesbø as himself, and also as a Shakespearean character, here of course the guilt-ridden Scottish King, Macbeth himself. Indeed, Heimans has given a Scottish baronial twist to what was a more typically Scandinavian décor: a throne-like chair on the right, the impressive library of antiquarian books and the Gothic-looking frame (itself from a Scottish castle). To heighten the noir aspect of this portrait, Heimans pays homage to Caravaggio – with his suitably murderous reputation – specifically, his candle-lit, theatrical paintings that frequently use red cloth as a dramatic accent.

The title of Nesbø's portrait …A Walking Shadow … is an extract from Act 5, Scene 5 when Macbeth had just learned of his wife's death and bitterly laments the brutality and transience of life:

Out, out, brief candle!
Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
And then is heard no more.

In the context of these lines, then, the candles in the painting take on existential symbolism, while the red lining of Nesbø's hoodie, coupled with his dagger necklace, can only reference one thing: blood. Macbeth has blood on his hands

Watching Ralph Heimans at work – his extreme care in finding the proper setting, his dedication to revealing the inner nature of his subject – was very much like watching a novelist at work. I felt when I saw my finished portrait that I truly recognized myself, in the way that I have never recognized my photographs.

Anne Tyler, 2018

and must live with the guilt. In casting Nesbø as Macbeth, Heimans invites us to consider Nesbø's own state of mind. What psychological effect does writing about crime have on an author? In writing about serial killers, murders and other violent crimes, what insights might Nesbø have gained about the human propensity for evil?

If Heimans created the impression of a stage-set for Nesbø's painting, for Anne Tyler's portrait he created the illusion of the painting as a window through which she is looking out, a large house with its grand front porch reflected behind her. The trompe l'oeil wooden windowpane in the picture echoes the 'real' Venetian pastiglia (moulded) frame, creating a frame-within-a-frame. Furthermore, the window-mirror and the double frame could be seen within the tradition of mise-en-abyme, the technique, made famous by Velasquez in his 1656 royal portrait Las Meninas, of creating an infinite reflection within a painting (or a story-within-a-story, as used by Shakespeare, most famously in Hamlet). Who is the real voyeur here; who is looking at whom?

Known for writing about American suburban life, and particularly the Baltimore area in which she has lived and written about for half a century, Heimans exploits her reputation as a reclusive writer, casting her as a curtain-twitching neighbour, head slightly tilted, observing the goings-on around her. Her demure hairstyle and sober, high-necked turtleneck jumper (its ruff collar, as with Jacobson's portrait, a subtle Elizabethan reference) together with her shrewd, penetrating expression lend her something of a Miss Marple-type allure, someone you wouldn't suspect of spying. Yet, like the window-mirror illusion, all is not what it seems. Tyler is anything but meek. Her contribution to the Shakespeare series, a reworking of The Taming of the Shrew, is brilliantly caustic. In Vinegar Girl, Tyler recasts the suitor Petruchio as Pyotr, a Polish lab assistant to her father, who offers him his reluctant daughter Kate – the 'shrew' – in marriage to solve visa problems. That the main characters (other than Kate's self-obsessed, indulged sister Bunny) inspire affection despite their obvious flaws, is the huge charm and achievement of Tyler's novel.

Heimans had a clear art-historical concept for Gillian Flynn, who has chosen to retell Hamlet for her novel (to be published in 2021). For this portrait, Heimans explicitly cast Flynn herself as tragic Ophelia from Hamlet, who goes mad following the murder of her father by her lover Hamlet. His inspiration was visibly Sir John Everett Millais' celebrated depiction of the scene, Ophelia (1851-2). In Millais' painting, she lies open-mouthed in a stream, singing, weighed down by her long dress and appearing to lose her grip on the delicate flowers she is holding – soon to drown. Ophelia is arguably as famous for the lengths Millais went to achieve realism in his painting as the literary subject matter, particularly the fact that Millais required his long-suffering model, Elizabeth Siddal, to sit for lengthy spells in a bath, resulting in her catching a severe cold. Happily, Heimans traded the bath for a floral carpet in Flynn's Chicago home, having brought Flynn a bunch of flowers to hold. The exuberant botanical backdrop points us to a second art-historical source: the flower-filled meadow and flowing locks of Flora in

Anne Tyler
"... sit by my side and let the world slip ..." (The Taming of the Shrew), 2015.
National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution (acquisition made possible through the generosity of David Kowitz)

Gillian Flynn
"... we know what we are ..."
(Hamlet), 2016.
Private Collection

Howard Jacobson
"... no sighs but my breathing ..."
(The Merchant of Venice), 2015.
Private Collection

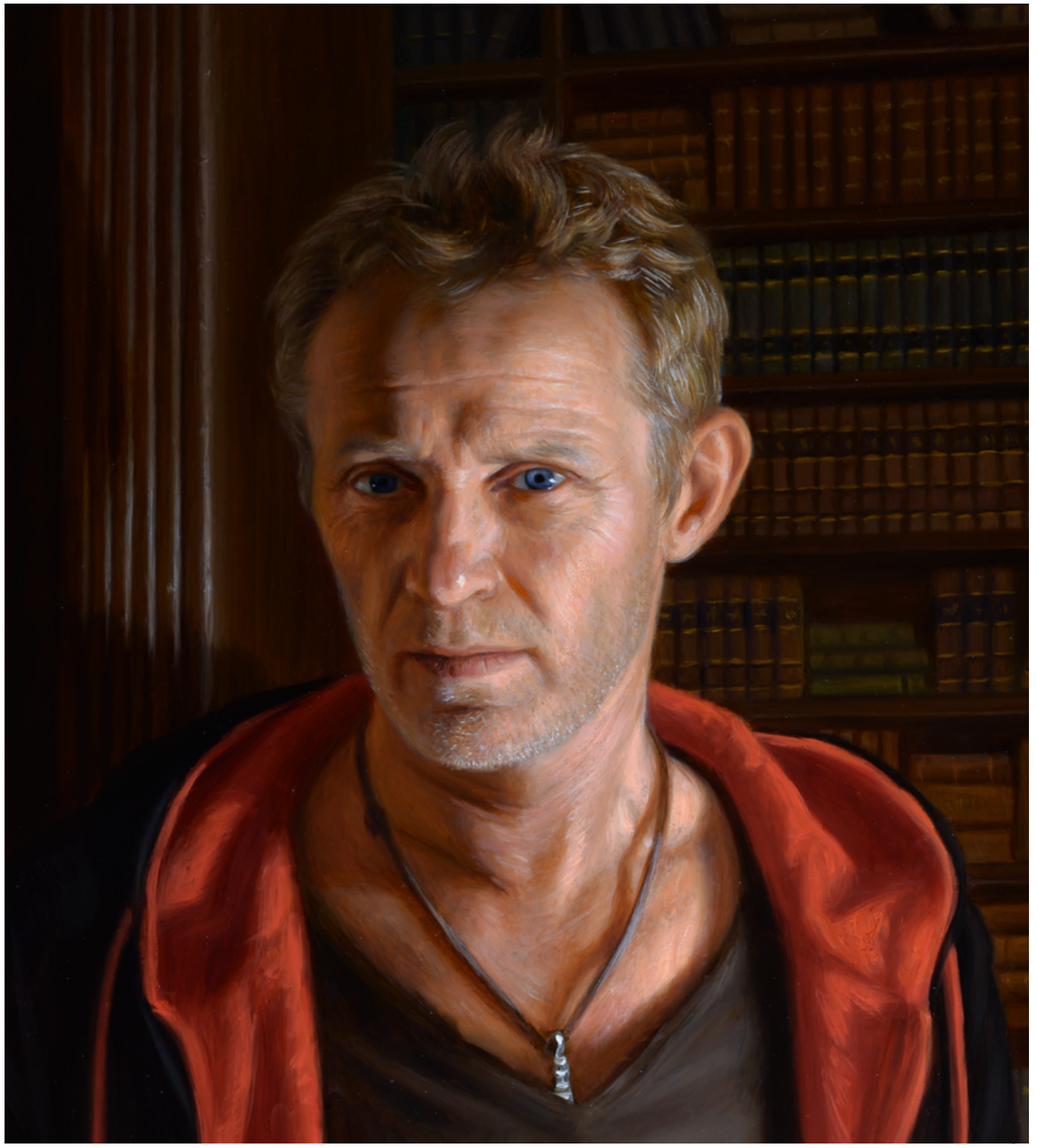
Botticelli's celebrated allegory La Primavera (c. 1477-1482). The link is not arbitrary: Botticelli was revered by the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood.

Heimans made the macabre connection between Ophelia's death-wish and that of anti-heroine Amy in Flynn's thriller Gone Girl, this latter's death-drive, however, both suicidal and murderous. It seems that Heimans has added a touch of Amy to Flynn's portrait. As might Amy, then, Flynn-as-Ophelia looks provocatively at the viewer, a slight smile playing on her lips; although lying down, she is very much alive and certainly not a martyr.

Known for her dystopian fiction and particularly The Handmaiden's Tale, Margaret Atwood fittingly chose the apocalyptic The Tempest as her Shakespearean play. She set her version in a prison – the play given to prison inmates to perform as part of an educational drama project – exploiting the situation's potential for black humour. In her portrait, Atwood also looks directly at the viewer, her arched eyebrows and piercing eyes suggesting that she is assessing the viewer as much as we her. Nonetheless, her face is luminous, her grey head of curls like a halo emerging from the dark background with its just-visible shadowy landscape. Like the other novelists she wears contemporary clothing given a baroque edge by her scarf and exaggerated cuffs. With both hands she holds a wooden staff (actually, Heimans' painting stick), its shadow creating a thick stripe across her face, and giving her a saintly attitude in the manner of St Jerome in the Wilderness – an effect also reinforced by the gnarled tabernacle frame, that was used in 15th-century Italy for private devotional images.

The stick is a clear reference to Prospero's magical staff in the original play. Given that Prospero is often viewed as a stand-in for Shakespeare himself, this comparison acknowledges Atwood's formidable reputation and the respect in which she is held in contemporary literature. Atwood's novel, on the other hand, is defiantly titled Hag-Seed, from the insult levelled at Caliban by Prospero. It is tempting to read the title as an attempt to reclaim that misogynist term 'hag'. After all, Atwood has claimed that The Handmaiden's Tale was partly inspired by a New England woman (possibly a relative of hers), who was wrongly accused of being a witch in the 17th century.

With this series, Heimans celebrates the astonishing inventiveness of these six authors and the creative risks they took in rewriting Shakespeare. The portraits allow the author's choice of play to reveal something of their own worlds and their personality, especially as so many of the writers took inspiration from episodes in their lives. Like the new versions of the plays, Heimans' paintings borrow from the past – the Old Master techniques and composition; the pre-Raphaelite romantic tropes – but never surrender to pastiche. The portraits don't hide their contemporary references, whether clothing and accessories, homeware or architecture, but give them a subtle historical inflection to suggest a continuum between past and present. Fiction and portraiture are as relevant and demanding today as they were in Shakespeare's time, offering multi-layered insights into even the most private and enigmatic personalities.



THE HOLISTIC PORTRAIT

By Peter Michael Hornung, Editor and Art Critic at “Politiken”

Like other artists in our chaotically picture rich modern age, the painter Ralph Heimans also owes a professional debt to the art that preceded his own work historically. However, though he may have turned to it, asked it questions and drawn inspiration from it, he has never copied it. On the other hand, though, his personal standpoint as an artist is a result of the inspiration he drew from it.

No one can create anything lasting and valuable without swearing some sort of oath to history, and any artist, even the most rebellious and experimental (or the opposite), must inscribe his or her work in a development, in which he or she serves as a link between past and future: between what went before and maybe influenced them, and what will come after and perhaps be coloured by them.

This applies particularly to any artist who has chosen portrait painting as his or her sphere. In this field, the models extend far back in history. The need to be portrayed has existed for as long as there has been people with power and influence: people who wished to be notably present, not only in their age, but also for posterity. Portraits are like memories. With the right degree of likeness they possess the special capacity to make absent people present. Consideration for this likeness is also the reason why people still allow themselves to be painted, modelled, photographed, sketched etc.

Heimans’ success as an artist in this historic genre lies not only in the fact that his paintings present a ‘likeness’, as it is referred to in the profession: in other words, that there is a clear and visible correspondence between the character appearing in the painting and the person who was the reason for that painting, and whom the painting must either remind us of or introduce us to.

When we take a good look at all the paintings, particularly the commissions, which today constitute Ralph Heimans’ oeuvre, we notice that, despite his relatively young age and his cultural affiliation, he has certain chosen affinities with older European art. The fact that Dutch art in particular played a role for him is easily explained. He has Dutch blood. Yes, he was born and grew up in Australia in suburban Sydney and was also educated there. However, his father, Frank Heimans, a director of documentary films, originally came from the Netherlands.

A number of Dutch portrait painters from the 17th century relate particularly to the way Heimans works: painters such as Pieter de Hooch, Jan Vermeer van Delft, Bartholomeus van der Helst, Gerard Dou, Gerard Houckgeest, Gabriel Metsu, Nicolaes Maes and, of course, Rembrandt, who is particularly close to his heart. Because all these artists went far beyond the simple act of executing a portrait of the person to be painted.

Consider Your Ways: Portrait of Madeleine and Douglas (detail)

They knew, and proved in their painting, that a portrait can extend far beyond the person, which the painting sets out to depict and thereby presents to us. Behind the person, and around the person, a painter can create an entity of consciously selected details, which both together and individually have something important to say. This is the simulated/imitated level that exists deep inside the painting's fictive, illusionistic space. For the sake of simplicity, let us refer to it as "the background" or "the setting". This setting is the space that serves as the context for the person being painted. It is incorporated into the entirety of the painting to reveal something more than what the features of a face can tell us. This is where an artist can consolidate more observations of, and truths about a person than simply that person's exterior.

Of course likeness is the name of the game, but in this context likeness relates not only to physiognomy, but also to a larger context. We can regard this setting as an individual or social geography: a special universe with precise references to the person in the portrait, which would otherwise be concealed and untold.

Nor is the background ever merely decorative. It plays a special, characterising role, about which Ralph Heimans has written: 'Context plays such an important part of my portraiture, so finding the context and collaborating with the subject, finding a meaningful setting, is a very important part of the process.' (The Rover, p. 19)

In a classic portrait a model often literally stands in front of something that model actually stands for. This applies to so-called status portraits, in which a king is depicted in front of his court or castle, the landowner in front of his estate, the learned scholar in front of his library, the victorious general in front of the battlefield etc.

What we refer to as 'likeness' does not necessarily end with the likeness to a person's physicality or his or her physiognomy. It can also encompass a greater context. Because the context will tell us what the person identifies with, and what he or she is interested in or wishes to be associated with. It can help pinpoint what sort of person the subject is, what his or her province is, where he or she is, has been or hopes to be. This background is like a backdrop in a theatre performance. The stage is also a perfect place to reveal a character through the set design that is chosen for that character's environment.

We know of countless examples of this in the history of art. One of the best known is The Arnolfini Marriage (1434) by the Dutch painter, Jan van Eyck. The painting is a double portrait of the Italian merchant, Giovanni Arnolfini and his wife. What we know about the two people and their relationship we know by virtue of what the room – their immediate surroundings – tells us.

The artist who allows the presentations in his portraits to play out against an architectural background also has to account for the spatiality. He needs some knowledge of perspective and of how, on a surface that consists of two dimensions, you can also create the illusion of a third. But chiefly he must possess some knowledge of people in general and, in particular, his own models.

Jan van Eyck: The Arnolfini Marriage, 1434.
National Gallery, London

THE FIRST ROYAL PORTRAIT

In a kingdom, everyone knows what the members of their Royal Family look like, even though the majority of us have never actually met them or stood in the same room as them. What we know about their appearance comes from photos in newspapers and weekly magazines, TV programmes etc. We retain that knowledge. When it comes to official portraits, it is not just that we expect correspondence with the photographic image we associate with the person; we almost insist on it. Likeness is an unconditional requirement. But, as already mentioned, in Ralph Heimans' portraits there is more than merely an external likeness to the person being portrayed. This particular quality was also the reason that the people of Denmark first got to hear about Ralph Heimans.

On 7 April 2006, a new and fairly large portrait of Crown Princess Mary was unveiled (p. 12-13). The ceremony took place at Frederiksborg Castle, where the picture became part of the Museum of National History's Collection. It hangs there to this day. Now, twelve years after the unveiling, the painting will not only have company, but also the most obvious and natural company imaginable. It will be joined by a portrait of Crown Prince Frederik, Mary's husband, commissioned from, and painted by the same painter, but for a very special occasion: the Crown Prince's 50th birthday (p. 18-19). The two paintings of the Crown Princess and the Crown Prince are also exactly the same size. After all, they are companions: two portraits of two royal personages.

The unveiling of the portrait of Crown Princess Mary was a national event. People observed that, despite its affiliation to Denmark and its significance for the history of Denmark, the portrait was not entirely Danish. Because it was painted by an Australian and alluded to the time when the person in the picture, Crown Princess Mary of Denmark, was not yet Danish at all, but a British-Australian young woman by the name of Mary Elizabeth Donaldson who was born in Hobart in Tasmania.

In a way it made perfect sense for the first official portrait of Crown Princess Mary of Denmark not to be painted by a Danish artist. Everything that relates to such a representative work of art reflects some special objectives and is governed by an agenda. Very little in them is the result of accident. Even the choice of artist is significant. It certainly was in this case. Because the fact that the Crown Princess ended up being immortalised by a painter from Australia was nothing to do with a lack of Danish artists who would be quite capable of rising to such a challenge and more than happy to do so.

It was more about strengthening the international bond between the country 'down under', where Crown Princess Mary was born on 5 February 1972, and the small nation up north, where one day she will be Queen. So the idea was to find an artist from the Crown Princess's own country to paint the portrait. On one hand, the museum wished to establish a focus on her homeland and, on the other, to introduce Australian portrait art to the people of Denmark. Finally, everyone would be able to see that the woman in the painting had a different

national background from that of the many other prominent personages already hanging in Frederiksborg Castle and serving as gold framed images for the continuing chronicle of Denmark.

In order to come up with the best possible artist, the Director of the Museum of National History, Mette Skougaard, contacted her colleagues at the National Portrait Gallery in Canberra about a potential collaboration. She then travelled to Canberra to assess with her own eyes what the options were. The project convinced the National Portrait Gallery that they too should own a portrait of Crown Princess Mary. So, by the time Mette Skougaard returned to Copenhagen, the original project had turned into two projects: one Danish and one Australian.

That also meant that there were now two Australian portrait painters in the running for Mette Skougaard to present to the Royal Household. Jiawei Shen, a slightly older painter of Chinese background, would deal with the portrait of Mary for the museum in Canberra, while Ralph Heimans was entrusted with the task of painting the picture for Frederiksborg.

AN OUTSIDER IN RED

At that time (in 2005) Ralph Heimans had not yet received commissions of the same significance as the portrait of the Crown Princess. They did not come until a few years later, particularly as a result of the reception, which this, his first official portrait of a royal personage, was given by the general public.

But he had painted pictures that were important in an Australian context. One of the most notable was the portrait of the Honourable Michael Kirby, AC, CMG (p. 112). He painted the picture in 1997, one year after Michael Kirby had left his position as Chief Justice for the New South Wales Court of Appeal to take up a position as a Justice of the High Court of Australia. Michael Kirby had served as Chief Justice in the Court of Appeal for eleven years. Now was the time to immortalise him in the official, ceremonial costume worn by members of the country's highest judicial authority. It consists of a crimson gown edged with fur. The long white wig is another feature of the office.

Radical Restraint was the title of Heimans' portrait. It is a reminder of the critical and consistent attitude, which Michael Kirby was to represent during his term in office. He was not like the vast majority of judges, but very much a man with his own opinions. The fact that he often expressed dissenting opinions led to his nickname: 'The Great Dissenter'.

In other areas too he differed from what the Norwegian playwright, Henrik Ibsen called the 'compact majority'. In 1984 he came out publicly as a homosexual and committed himself wholeheartedly to defending the rights of gay people in society. At the time, more than thirty years ago, while declaring one's sexual tendencies was a human right that was protected by law, it was not something, to which most people reacted favourably. The fact that Kirby was profoundly religious, describing himself as 'Protestant Anglican Christian' did not prevent him from openly criticising a couple of Australian bishops who, in his opinion, were opposed to the rights of gay men and women.

At first sight, Ralph Heimans' portrait of Kirby comes across as a group portrait. It is the depiction of a profession. But one person stands out in the small assembly of judges. He is the only one turning towards the painter and, ultimately, towards us. Nor is Kirby wearing a wig. His colleagues are, though. They are grouped together. They apparently have something in common and are talking to one another. But Kirby is not. He is facing us. He is his own person: by virtue of his convictions a loner. But the painting is not merely a depiction of him. It presents a person in a tangible context, which helps characterise him.

That is why Heimans chose the large landscape format. This particular format enables the setting to play a role, providing the picture with enough space

The Badminton Club, 2003.
Private Collection

for its total narrative. It is these backgrounds that make Ralph Heimans' portraits so different. Because Heimans is also a person who wants to stand out via the pictures he creates.

For such representative portraits of individuals, an artist generally selects a format, in which the height of the picture is greater than its width. But in Ralph Heimans' portraits the opposite is usually the case. Heimans has often returned to landscape format in a series of major private portrait commissions in Australia, the United Kingdom and Hong Kong: for example, The Badminton Club, Consider Your Ways, Joshua Tree, The Jungels, Paula and The Boyers. But he also used the landscape format in the most publicised part of his oeuvre: the official portraits of the Crown Princess of Denmark, Queen Elizabeth II of England and her husband, Prince Philip. The fact that he also used the format in his most recent commission for the Museum of National History at Frederiksborg Castle, the portrait of Crown Prince Frederik, was not unexpected.

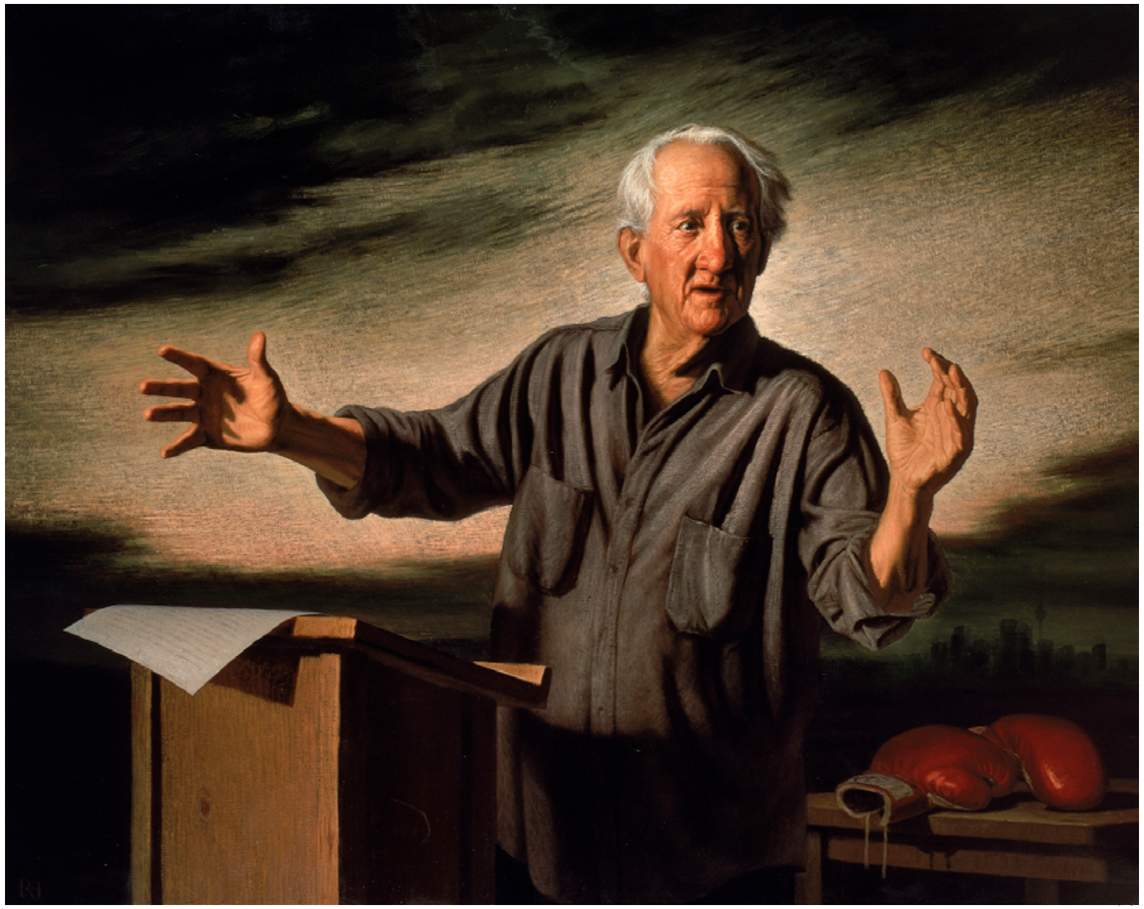
THE PORTRAIT AS A HISTORY PAINTING

Heimans calls portrait painting "a collaborative process": between the artist and his partner, the person to be painted. That is why it is important for Heimans to meet his model before taking on the task of painting that person's portrait. This is also how the artist gets to know as much as possible about the person he will portray. He wants to know his subject.

He then thinks about how the portrait should be painted. The literary term, genius loci (the spirit of a place) seems very apposite in this context. The idea for the composition of a picture is never something that merely happens. The composition is conditioned by the place, in which the person being portrayed is most natural: in other words, the place, in which the setting will reveal the most about a person's background and character. So it is important for Heimans to amass all the knowledge that will make it easier to place such a person in the world. Once the artist knows how his model should be placed in this world (in other words, society at large), he also knows more about how to place the model in the picture he is going to paint.

Heimans always wants his portraits to tell a story. For the same reason he regards his paintings as something akin to history paintings. That does not mean that they have to be set up and consciously staged. He wants to stay free of what he calls "the self-consciousness of a portrait": portraits, in which the model consciously poses to assert, or create the illusion of a portentousness that is perhaps not entirely justified. On the other hand, he is very happy for the person to look as if he or she is about to do something that could change the situation in the painting. That is one of the aspects of Rembrandt's portraits that continues to fascinate Heimans: they often contain an action or an event, in which the people being portrayed are the protagonists. That applies particularly to The Night Watch in the Rijksmuseum.

Making sure he has space to depict this or that action or event is the reason why Heimans favours the panorama format. Compared to other official portraits, this can be considerably large. But the format is the artist's supreme decision. He often refers to his "cinematic approach" to pictures and painting them. This special fascination with a cinematic approach did not come from nowhere. Both his parents worked in the film industry. While a film requires time to tell the whole story, a picture requires adequate space. Only then is there an opportunity to express a story in its entirety.



Gloves Off (Tom Uren), 1996.
National Portrait Gallery, Canberra
(purchased with funds from the
Basil Bressler Bequest)

Portrait of Dame Elisabeth Murdoch, 2006.
Private Collection

Study for the portrait of the Queen, 2012.
Private Collection

Pelham Crescent, 2001.
Private Collection

After Heimans had been commissioned to paint the portrait of the Crown Princess, he came to Denmark, where he was shown round Fredensborg Palace. After the visit he was in no doubt as to where in the Palace he should paint Mary: the Garden Room. The Garden Room originally had a Baroque interior, but in the 18th century King Frederik V transformed it into a dazzling Rococo interior with decorative ornamentations and gilded furniture in the period's richly embellished style. It was also in this room in the late 19th century, in which the Danish artist, Laurits Tuxen chose to paint the entire Danish royal family assembled with their closest European relatives.

However, in his painting of Crown Princess Mary Heimans has replaced the inlaid paintings of the Garden Room (the ruin landscapes of the theatre and decorative painter Jacopo Fabri) with a huge mirror, which reflects a picture showing Constitution Dock in Hobart, the capital of Tasmania and the native city of Mary Donaldson. Heimans has also transformed the ceiling of the Garden Room into one, which actually belongs to one of the halls at Frederiksborg Castle (The Angels' Hall). But the couch is the same couch, in which Frederik and Mary sat, when they were photographed on the occasion of their engagement.

In other words, the room in the painting is not entirely identical to a real room. It is a constructed setting, a symbolic space that contains various references: to the Crown Princess's past (Hobart), to her future (Fredensborg) and to the picture's future (Frederiksborg Castle). But the space is principally a reflection of the person being immortalised. As far as Heimans is concerned, everything in a portrait should possess meaning.

The portrait of Crown Princess Mary shows her standing in an interior, in which lighting effects, shadows and reflections are refracted so intricately that

Portrait of a QC, 2004.
Private Collection

Consider Your Ways: Portrait of Madeleine and Douglas, 2015. Private Collection

it is hard to separate reality from illusion. If it were not for the sunlight beaming in from the right as if from a well-angled spotlight, she might not have been the first element you noticed. She is not standing in the centre of the picture or in the immediate proximity of its central axis. In fact, she is standing in the centre of the picture's right-hand half. Nevertheless, the Crown Princess is also present in the left-hand half. Because, had it not been for the shadow, which the back of the Crown Princess's body casts in the mirror on the wall, the fact is that two thirds of the picture would not have contained a trace of her.

The painting of Mary is somewhat reminiscent of a couple of portraits by the Danish 18th-century painter, Vigilius Erichsen, particularly that of Dowager Queen Juliane Marie (1776) (National Gallery of Denmark): not only because the person in the portrait is standing in a royal setting, but also because both these pictures are slightly more than just portraits. They also include a small action.

In the art of painting, mirrors and mirror effects go back a long way. In the past they could be symbols of many different situations and properties: for example, purity, integrity or a human soul (which is why vampires do not have reflections!). But mirrors can also play a narrative role. Artists often used mirrors in their portraits to show two different profiles of the person being portrayed. This is what Vigilius Erichsen did in his portrait of the Empress Catherine II (at the Hermitage). By using a mirror, you can literally turn the picture of a single figure into a picture of several figures.

With the assistance of mirrors, Heimans presented Mary partly from the side, and partly from behind. Without this effect it would not have been possible to place Mary herself so far to the right. Then the composition of the painting would have been subverted (just try covering the image of Mary with her back to us!). A mirror like this also enables us to see much more of the room, in which the subject is standing. The same also applies to the new portrait of Crown Prince Frederik. The Crown Prince is also standing in a room, where a huge mirror enables us to see what the Crown Prince is looking at and, consequently, what he is thinking about: his immediate family – Crown Princess Mary and the couple's four children, Prince Christian and Princess Isabella, and the twins, Prince Vincent and Princess Josephine.

Heimans has also used reflections in other paintings. He used a similar effect to that in the picture of the Crown Princess in his portrait of the Governor-General of Australia, Dame Quentin Bryce, who was the first woman ever to hold this position (p. 118). Here the glass façade of the building, which the Governor-General is about to leave, reflects more than merely her back. The façade also reflects the trees in the landscape, which are adjacent to the building. Heimans also used the duplicating effect of a mirror in his painting, Islay, a private commission (p. 111).

With the help of a mirror, our gaze can wander through the spaces that are located outside the frame and outside the picture plane. We can see the chambers spreading with a depth that is only present as an illusion on the surface. These openings and the daylight provide us with an explanation of why, in the portrait,

Crown Princess Mary is putting gloves on. She is about to leave the Garden Room at Fredensborg Palace.

In visual art, something as innocent and mundane as a glove can also have multiple meanings. The glove can be associated with aristocracy, with the distance of rank and with dignity. But in the art of ancient times, in the context of certain religious subjects, the glove can also symbolise sincerity, incorruptibility and the purity of heart that characterise the chosen one. On one level, this little detail in the painting reveals that the Crown Princess is putting something on: the glove. On another, more symbolic level the very same movement implies that she is taking on a task and going to work: work that is defined by the official duties incumbent upon a member of the Royal Family.

THE RETURN OF TRADITION

We have already touched on the importance of likeness. But an important portrait comprises more than that. Likeness also refers to the artist's style. Heimans is a master of his craft: a craft with historic roots, because he was determined to learn this craft.

He has mainly acquired his competence through the projects he has taken on. But his education in Australia also played a part: first he studied Architecture, Fine Arts and pure Mathematics at the university. Later he studied at one of the oldest art schools in the country, the Julian Ashton Art School.

Heimans had long been searching for an art school, which could give him a more thorough knowledge of old painting methods and techniques. He also wanted to learn about anatomy and perspective. But none of the European academies he contacted could offer this knowledge. Their interests were completely different. Their view was that these painting traditions had long outlived their relevance to contemporary art.

At the Julian Ashton Art School, though, they had held on to the belief that creating good art still depended on mastering good craftsmanship, in particular trusting one's own eyes. The founder of the school actually said to his successor: "Teach the students to see. To see the beauty of shape and tonality, and the colour of the world that surrounds them. And teach them to transfer this to paper and canvas. Individuality in art must always emerge from the knowledge that technique is a tool, which the creative spirit makes use of."

It was at this school that Heimans learned to hone his drawing skills. Heimans often makes sketches of his models' faces on toned paper. The coloured paper enables him to play with light after determining the shape in lines and adding shadow sections. He can then indicate the facial highlights with white, and due to the character of the coloured paper the white of the eyes comes out immediately. This was the same procedure the Baroque masters used when sketching preliminary studies.

In addition, Heimans also wanted to take private lessons with a painter, who had been trained in an artistic tradition that was almost completely absent in the West. This knowledge came from a Polish immigrant. He introduced Heimans to

Joshua Tree, 2010.
Private Collection

P. 104-05:
Joshua Tree (details)

techniques which resembled those, which the Dutch masters had practised 500 years previously. He achieves the deep, almost golden tone that is so characteristic of his pictures by using transparent or semi-transparent glazes and painting and by painting from a dark prime building up the picture with lighter colours.

But there is more to it than that. Just as crucial for the result is Heimans' interest in mathematical structures, which can make three-dimensional shapes such as architecture believable on a picture's surface. His in-depth knowledge of architecture helps Heimans in making the settings behind the people in his portraits, giving each picture a great individuality. They are all very different.

In 2001 he was commissioned to paint the couple, Kira and Michael Blaustein. The couple were a clinical psychologist and prominent financial advisor, who at the time resided in London with their young daughter. As the setting for his picture he chose Pelham Crescent, the family's home (p. 94). Pelham Crescent is a famous place in London. The buildings were designed in 1825 by the architect, George Basevi, a student of the eminent English architect, Sir John Soane. The formidable curve, with which these white Neoclassical façades front the square, mark one of the grandest residential neighbourhoods in South Kensington.

The composition of the picture is reminiscent of that, which Heimans was to use some years later in his portrait of the lawyer, Robert Stitt, though that painting has an interior setting. Robert Stitt is one of Australia's most prominent QCs. The title of the painting is actually just Portrait of a QC (p. 95). QC stands for 'Queen's Counsel', a title that until 1980 was awarded to particularly respected members of the Bar. Receiving this title was the highest honour a lawyer could achieve. Robert Stitt QC is standing in a circular room, which virtually encapsulates his body, and he is surrounded by shelves that follow the curve of the room, which is just about covered with bound volumes, probably statute books and legal literature. The QC is holding a cup of tea, and on the table in front of him lies the wig, which as a barrister he wears during trials, and which in this context he has taken off.

THREE COMMISSIONS

Three works in particular stand out amongst the Heimans recent commissions. One is the portrait of the two teenagers, Madeleine and Douglas Kowitz, entitled Consider Your Ways (p. 96). When Heimans visited the Kowitz family's home, a converted castle in Hastings, he could not fail to notice the large boat with faintly glowing lights hanging in the centre of the stairwell. It is this boat, which the artist used in his picture: not so much as an exotic prop to attract the eye, but as a symbolic vessel for two young people in a broader existential context. Metaphorically, the boat will transport its passengers, in this case Madeleine and her brother Douglas, on their journey out into the world.

He also noticed this phrase "Consider Your Ways" engraved in the plasterwork of the Castle stairwell. The phrase is a quotation from Chapter 1, Verse 5 of the Book of Haggai, one of the last books in the Old Testament: "Now therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways." (The King James Bible). So it became the title of the painting, Consider Your Ways represents both admonition and encouragement prior to the life journey that is about to begin.

The other painting, Joshua Tree belongs to a private collection in Hong Kong (p. 99), and tells a particularly tragic history. The picture was commissioned by Christina Hellmann in memory of her son Joshua, who had died in 2007 after a protracted period of severe illness. Josh, as he was known, was ten years old when the first symptoms appeared. He suffered from a rare disorder known as MELAS syndrome (Mitochondrial myopathy, Encephalopathy, Lactic acidosis and Stroke). It is a fatal and progressive disease, in which the patient suffers repeated strokes, eventually losing sight, hearing, motor function, learning ability etc. When Joshua died he was just 15 years old.

In the painting a tree has been given a central position and a particularly symbolic significance. The picture is a posthumous commission, but Heimans chose not to depict Joshua himself. Instead, Joshua is indirectly present. The person who is absent from the picture is given presence.

The artist had been told that Joshua loved sitting at the base of this tree, and that he was also buried here. Heimans happened to see Joshua's two sisters on the branches of the large tree and got the idea for his picture. In the foreground he painted Christina Hellmann and the family's dog with their backs to us, and behind them the sun, which colours the sky above them as it sets over the South China Sea. The family is gathered around the person, whom they miss and who is no longer physically present. Christina Hellmann is looking up at the girls in the tree. It is they, through whom the family will live on.

The third major project, which Ralph Heimans took on, was maybe particularly important for him. It was the portrait of Vladimir Ashkenazy (p. 54). The idea of painting the portrait of such a prominent musician really inspired him. That is because Heimans is passionate about classical music and is a huge admirer of Ashkenazy. This was the very first time this internationally renowned conductor and pianist had agreed to be painted, and the portrait consumed more than six months of Heimans' life. The fact that the maestro agreed to be painted in such a relaxed garment as a polo neck sweater is a reflection of the particular dress code he prefers when standing on the podium. Audiences virtually never see him perform in full evening dress, which is what conductors and orchestral musicians usually wear. The fact that he insists on such informality is also one of the reasons he is so popular with musicians. That is also how he comes across in the portrait: informal, spontaneous and relaxed.

Ashkenazy started his career as a pianist and later became a conducter. He is one of the most widely acclaimed musicians of our time. In an interview he described the reservations he initially harboured about having to stand in front of a huge orchestra, giving them instructions about how they should play. It was neither something for which he was professionally educated nor a privileged posi-

tion for which he had competed. In fact, it was something that came about by accident. It was the musicians who gave him the courage to persist. What he lacked in terms of the necessary technical skills for his new pursuit, he made up for with his direct ability to communicate simply, clearly and enthusiastically. Musicians in England, Iceland, Switzerland, Japan and Australia love working with him. It is said that he always puts his heart into everything he does as a musician, and that may very well be why in the painting he has his hand on his heart.

This spontaneity and straightforwardness are qualities that characterise the man with the white polo neck sweater and the thick grey hair. In front of him is the score he is in the process of studying. It could be orchestral music by Tchaikovsky, Rachmaninov, Sibelius or Shostakovich. Late Romanticism has been his stamping ground. But what about the context chosen for his portrait? Because this setting, a piece of modern architecture with countless transversal sequences of lines and irregular spaces is rather complicated and cool, and may simply be there as a contrast. But the architecture, with its encounter between various rhythmic structures, can also be read as a metaphor for the complex musical compositions which any conductor has to tackle: 'a visual fugue'.

The setting is taken from the interior of Australia's best-known building: the architect Jørn Utzon's Opera House in Sydney. It was here, in the Sydney Opera House, that the Sydney Symphony Orchestra – Ashkenazy's orchestra – performed concerts when it was not touring abroad. Originally his appointment with the orchestra in Sydney was only intended to last four seasons, starting in 2009. The painting was unveiled in 2011. It accompanied the announcement that Ashkenazy's contract with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra had been extended by another year. Today the portrait belongs to The National Portrait Gallery of Australia in Canberra.

THE CORONATION THEATRE

Heimans' largest project to date is his full-length portrait of Queen Elizabeth II of England (p. 22-23). Not only is Elizabeth II the Queen and Head of State for the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. She is also the head of fifteen other Commonwealth countries, including Australia.

The reason for the portrait was the Queen of England's eagerly awaited jubilee of her reign. As one of the longest-living monarchs, Elizabeth II has been her country's ruler since 6 February 1952. On 2 June 1953, a little more than a year later, she was crowned in Westminster Abbey in London. Now, 60 years on, the time had come not only to commemorate this remarkable event, but also for her to look back. It is this dual situation that the picture sustains.

Only one English ruler before had celebrated a Diamond Jubilee. That was Queen Victoria, who on 22 June 1897 celebrated her 60 years on the throne. When the English painter, Andrew Carrick Gow was appointed to immortalise the event, he chose to depict the moment when the ageing Queen's coach draws up in front of Saint Paul's Cathedral. Because of the huge turnout of subjects, the Queen herself makes little impact in the context. Tumultuous turnouts of people feature in other portrayals of coronations and royal jubilees. Obvious examples include: Carl Gustaf Pilo's huge painting, The Coronation of King Gustav III of Sweden (The National Museum, Stockholm); Jacques-Louis David's painting of the coronation of the Emperor Napoleon and the Empress Josephine in the Cathedral of Notre-Dame (1806-07) (The Louvre, Paris); Adolph von Menzel's painting of the coronation of King Wilhelm II in Königsberg in the 1860s; and Laurits Tuxen's The Marriage of Princess Maud of Wales, 22 July 1896 (The Royal Collection, London).

For his painting of Elizabeth II, Heimans chose a solution that could hardly have been more different from tradition. He chose to make the English queen the only figure in a painting, which measured an impressive 250 x 342 cm, thereby matching the magnitude of the unique event. He presented her in solitary majesty: in an introverted moment, looking back on her exceptionally long life as Regent.

Heimans had just one hour in the company of Queen Elizabeth II. The meeting took place in March 2011 in Buckingham Palace in the Yellow Drawing Room. Despite the fact that the Queen of England is diminutive in stature, the artist was impressed by the dignity and dedication to the task, which this small, yet powerful woman displayed, sixty years after her accession to the throne. He had no time to sketch, but he took as many photos as possible of his royal sitter.

For Heimans, taking photographs is not much different than taking notes. He regards photography as a tool or resource to support the process whenever necessary. But he never bases his preliminary drawings or the finished painting directly on his photographs. In the process he mixes the shots he has taken with his sketches and observations, while also trusting his memory and intuition. The expression in a painting is always a combination of diverse impressions and never taken from any particular photograph.

As the setting of the portrait Heimans chose Westminster Abbey. In the history of England, the Abbey is a national monument and its history dates back centuries. During the day he was not able to access the enormous space. He had to work at night, when the Abbey was closed to visitors. Heimans had been granted permission to photograph the interior of the Abbey, including the mosaic floor, which dates back to the 14th century.

Since 1066, all coronations in England have taken place in Westminster Abbey. In his attempts to recreate this vast space and its complicated Gothic architecture, not to mention its equally complex lighting, it helped that a few years previously Heimans had faced similar challenges when working on The Badminton Club (p. 89). For that commission he had to paint the interior of the Royal Courts of Justice: a Neo-Gothic building on the Strand in London, which dates from the 1870s and also houses one of the biggest courtrooms in Europe. If the patterns of that building's mosaic flooring in perspective foreshortening made huge demands on Heimans' structural preliminary work and artistic discipline, the demands of

Self Portrait in the Metro, 2004.
Private Collection

Stand on the Right, 2005.
Private Collection

Westminster Abbey were even greater. The vast floor area with its marble mosaics in various geometric patterns is one of the most impressive works of the Cosmati family of Rome: a family of highly skilled architects and sculptors.

What is more, he had less time for this huge and highly demanding job than he had imagined. Under normal circumstances, a picture on such a scale and of such importance would require a year of work. Heimans had only half this time at his disposal and the project did not admit any deferments. So the process involved much longer working days than he was used to: between 18 and 20 hours. He did not get much sleep during this period. But there is no sign of this exhausting, highly stressful process in the result.

The Coronation Theatre: A Portrait of Her Majesty Elizabeth II, the official title of the picture, was well received by the public. It achieved even more awareness when a vandal spray painted it, just one month after it was first shown to the British public in May 2013 in Westminster Abbey. But the damage whilst shocking was quickly remedied.

In 2017 Heimans also completed a portrait of Prince Philip (p. 24-25). It was of course not the first portrait of Prince Philip. In 1983 the Prince was painted by the English artist, Bryan Organ in a work that is now owned by the National Portrait Gallery in London.

It is hard to imagine two more fundamentally different portrayals of the same person. Organ's picture is in upright format and rigidly symmetrical, with Prince Philip positioned directly in the picture's geometric centre, sitting front on, against a dark background of classic, beaded wall panels.

Heimans' portrait of Prince Philip is in the large, panoramic landscape format, which we usually associate with him, and which he favours. Instead of shutting out the background to allow the figure of the Prince to dominate the picture's space, he chose to have his model standing in the Grand Corridor of Windsor Castle, a large, richly decorated gallery with several references to the Prince's own history. This background was the artist's own suggestion. He felt drawn to what he called the gallery's "dramatic perspective" and the interaction between the windows on one side of the space and the row of glowing white busts on the other side.

Even though the rich setting of the painting is eye-catching, it also helps to illuminate the portrait's protagonist, but not only in the literal sense with the inflow of light from the windows. Because it was in the Tapestry Room at the end of the Grand Corridor that Prince Philip's maternal grandmother, Princess Victoria, and later his mother, Princess Alice were born. The Prince is also standing in front of the artist Laurits Tuxen's painting of Queen Victoria and her huge family gathered in the Green Drawing Room of Windsor Castle to mark the occasion of her 50th jubilee.

Prince Philip is a member of the House of Glücksburg, born Prince of Greece and Denmark and great-grandson of King Christian IX. In Heimans' portrait there is yet another sign of the Danish Royal Family's connection. That is the Order of the Elephant, the oldest and noblest chivalric order in Denmark, which the Prince is wearing, draped from his left shoulder to his right hip.

At the time of writing, Heimans is putting the finishing touches to two major royal commissions : the portrait of Crown Prince Frederik, heir to the Danish throne; and the portrait of Prince Charles, Prince of Wales and heir to the British throne

SIMPLICITY AND ENTITY

When we choose to regard this or that phenomenon as an unconditional entity rather than merely the sum of its parts, this is known as holism. In his portraits Ralph Heimans insists that a person should never be alien to his or her surround-

Mr. Philips' Projection, 2001.
Private Collection

Islay, 2007.
Private Collection

ings. The subject should preferably emerge from them, or they from the subject. This is the perception that he aims to communicate in his paintings.

However different Heimans' paintings are, they are interconnected by the premise or the artistic conviction that there must be a link between the person portrayed and the environment or location that surrounds him or her. If such a connection did not exist, a picture would consist of random coincidences, of stand-alone, unconnected phenomena. Ralph Heimans tends to refer to holistic portraits when he talks about what he constantly strives for in his painting.

Holistic portraits are an expression of the structural entity, which we often unsuccessfully seek in reality, but which we can rediscover in painting, perhaps as an act of will. It is this quality that can elevate painting above photography. A painting can seem as if it is being perceived by many eyes. It can consolidate many observations and many moments within the same frame. Photography cannot do that. A photo is definitively bound by the unique moment when it is shot.

The official portrait has not lost as much ground to photography as the portrait painters of the previous century feared or expected. What for a time seemed to be painting's worst competitor has actually turned out to be its best assistant. In the past 120 years or more, portrait painters in particular have relied on photographs, but without being restricted by the photo's distinguishing feature.

In our modern age and a society, in which everyone can take portraits of one another if they have a camera or mobile phone, a portrait in oil on canvas might seem trivial or something exclusive for people of a nostalgic nature. But that is not the case. The painted portrait lives on. Because it is still the exponent of a special complexity. In the work of Ralph Heimans the portrait is also the only place where so many different truths about one and the same person can come together in a way that is both harmonious and meaningful.

SUBJECT AND MASTER

The Honourable. Michael Kirby AC CMG

Soon after I was appointed as a Justice of the High Court of Australia in Canberra, I participated in an interview for a television documentary in my judicial chambers in Sydney. The director was Frank Heimans, a greatly respected oral historian and filmmaker who already had dozens of admired film documentaries to his credit. He does his portraits, you see, on film.

'I have a son, Ralph, who, I think, has gifts as an artist', he said.
'Oh yes?' I replied, striving to look more interested than I really was.
'Here, look at this portrait of an elderly relative. What do you think?'

I peered at the arresting image in the photograph held before me.

'Good. Very good', I declared.
'Well, would you be prepared to sit for him? He has not yet produced a major work. He would like to start on you'.

I agreed to Frank Heimans' request. Which goes to show how one never knows where chance decisions can lead.

'There is only one problem', I cautioned.
'I just do not have the time to sit still staring into space for hours. Your son will have to come in the weekend when I am working at my desk. He can do sketches, photographs and notes, as he pleases. When he wants me to look up, he will have to say so and I will do it. However, so far as I am concerned, I will just have to get on with my work. Do you think he could create his portrait under such conditions? If so, we have a deal'.

True to our deal, the young artist began appearing in my chambers over a couple of weekends. He was polite and respectful. But he had a glint in his eye. He knew where he was going. From time to time, he would call on me to "Look up!" And so I did. And ultimately, an extremely detailed sketch was produced, which, I later discovered, became the basis of my image brought to life in the portrait.

Because the canvas was so large, it came to dominate the Heimans' home in Sydney. Ralph Heimans and his family lived with it for months. He has a passion about perspective. I put this down to his mathematical interests and training at university. The challenge is to portray the subject in relationship with the sur-

Radical Restraint (Justice Michael Kirby), 1998.
National Portrait Gallery, Canberra (purchased with funds from the Basil Bressler Bequest)

The Kirby Institute, 2014.
The Kirby Institute

roundings, animate and inanimate. It might be a London underground train. Or a university office. Or the Sydney Opera House.

In my case, the setting was one that would ordinarily never be seen: a private ante room to the judicial entrance to the Banco Court in the Sydney Law Courts Building. And there were all those judges arrayed in vivid robes. Most of them with their backs turned towards me.

By the time of this portrait there had been discussion in the public media about my occasional disagreements with judicial colleagues over this case or that legal principle. I had not yet earned a reputation as the 'great dissenter'. That was to haunt my days in the High Court of Australia. In actuality, the turned backs in Banco might have had no significance other than that all of us were getting ready, ultimately in unison, to walk into a large courtroom that awaited our grand entrance. Yet for Ralph Heimans, the artist, those backs conveyed a different image. The image of isolation and loneliness that often accompanies a judicial life. But especially a judicial life that, more often than most, had displayed different values and sometimes differing outcomes for the problems submitted for resolution. Independence of the judiciary includes independence from one another. It is a precious feature of our legal tradition. If occasionally it means that backs are metaphorically turned against the judge, so be it.

A year later (for the portrait took many months to complete) I was accompanied to the Heimans home to view the finished product. My partner and my brothers, Donald and David (the latter by then himself a judge) each exclaimed on seeing the work. Magically, it seemed, Ralph Heimans had captured in his portrait a look I had given my brothers decades earlier. When, in our parental, home we were all studying late into the night, they would occasionally interrupt the older brother to seek information or guidance for their studies: 'A pained look would come upon your face. It would show, at once, mild irritation at the interruption we were causing. But also a reluctant sense of the duty to respond. It is extraordinary that the artist has captured that conflict of emotions'. Whilst the viewer of the portrait might ascribe the inner judicial turmoil on my face to the turned backs of my colleagues, the artist and I shared a secret. It was that he had extracted that look by his command: 'Look up!'

Radical Restraint, as the portrait was named, was acquired by the National Portrait Gallery of Australia. I still have, as a gift from the artist, the very detailed sketch used as the centrepiece of his portrait. The portrait and that sketch are on display in this Retrospective in Denmark. I am told that the portrait has proved to be one of the most successful and popular of the acquisitions of the National Portrait Gallery in Canberra. It is full of rich metaphors. The National Portrait Gallery in Canberra immediately abuts the building in which the High Court of Australia performs its functions. As things worked out in that court, the metaphor on the large canvas of Radical Restraint became a kind of fulfilment for my many years of service in that Court. If I were superstitious, I would ascribe this to the occasional inclination of life to imitate art. And the danger of accepting the request of a noted filmmaker to allow his gifted son to use me as the model that helped to launch a magnificent artistic career.

Ralph Heimans has gone on to execute many important portraits of Royal subjects and other cultural figures, some of which are on display in this Retrospective. Also displayed are portraits of Vladimir Ashkenazy at the Sydney Opera House and a determined image of Dame Quentin Bryce AD, CVO, past Governor-General of Australia. There is even a second portrait in which I feature with the late Professor David Cooper AO of the Kirby Institute in Sydney.

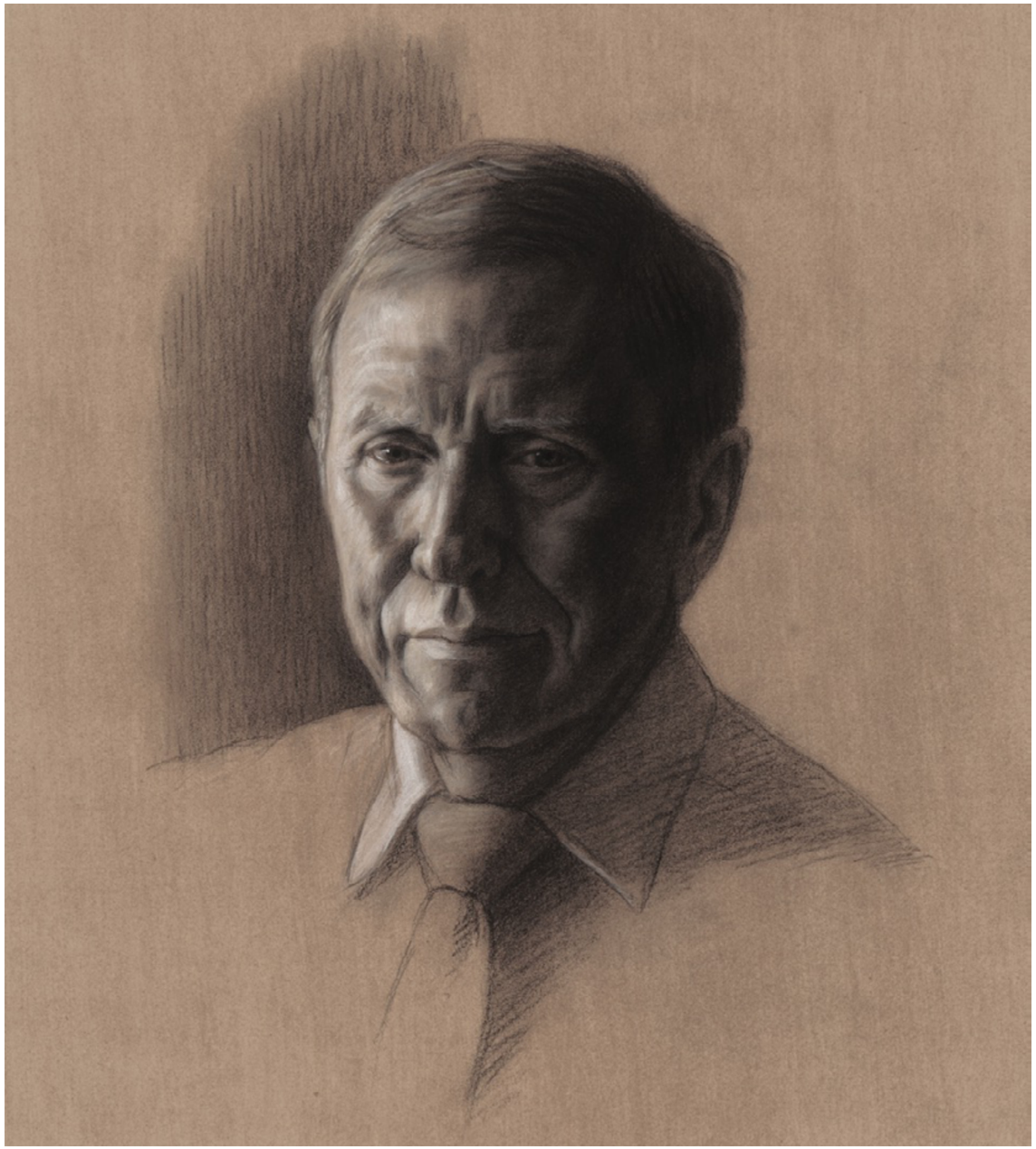
Inevitably, Radical Restraint is a favourite of mine. In these few words, I have attempted to explain how it came about. Between an artist and his model there are often secrets. It is a special experience to be the subject of such a master.

The Kirby Institute (detail with David Cooper)
The Kirby Institute

P. 117: The Honorable Michael Kirby AC CMG, 2013.
The Kirby Institute

In 2014, Ralph Heimans completed a commissioned portrait for the Kirby Institute for Infection and Immunity in Society in the University of New South Wales. This portrait showed long-term Director, Professor David Cooper AO and me, in the midst of discussions. Once again, the artist captured the perspectives of the building, this time modern, in which we were displayed. The portrait, which is on loan for this Retrospective, has proved unexpectedly precious. On 17 March 2018, David Cooper died after a short illness. He was a great scientist and a much loved physician who treated the first cases of HIV in Australia. Apart from his brilliant mind, he was loving and caring: features evident in the portrait. Colleagues in the Kirby Institute await the return of his portrait, as a reminder of their Founder, a distinctive Australian hero.

Michael Kirby, 2018



The Governor General: The Honourable Dame Quentin Bryce AD CVO, 2014.
Historic Memorials Collection,
Parliament Art Collection,
Canberra, ACT

The Honourable Quentin Bryce AD CVO

I am thrilled that my official portrait from our Historical Memorials Collection will be included in the exhibition of Mr Ralph Heimans paintings at the Museum of National History at Fredickborg Castle in Denmark, from May until September this year.

I treasure the memory of its unveiling at Parliament House by Prime Minister Abbott at the conclusion of my term as Governor General – my first glimpse of the finished work of art and beauty that carries deep meaning for me.

It was a rare honour to be painted by an artist of such extraordinary skill, talent, distinguished reputation; to watch his careful preparation, his astute observations, curiosity, conversations, ideas shared amid long pauses for quiet deep concentration.

I am struck with wonder and admiration at the way Ralph captured a time and a place in my life that brought immeasurable joy to the enriching and rewarding years of serving our community as Governor General.

There are many aspects to the close warm friendship that Australia and Denmark share, in particular our country's appreciation of the beauty and sophistication of Danish art and design. Mr Heiman's portraiture will draw enormous interest in Denmark for many reasons – at first instance the subjects, but oh the symbolism, the detail, the history …. composition, technique, the light, the darkness, craftsmanship…

I am truly delighted that our Parliament is contributing to this major retrospective exhibition by our highly acclaimed portrait artist. It will draw significant international attention to the role of the Historic Memorials Collection in the cultural life of our Australia.

A charming gesture towards the 50th birthday celebrations of Crown Prince Frederik!

Quentin Bryce

April 3. 2018

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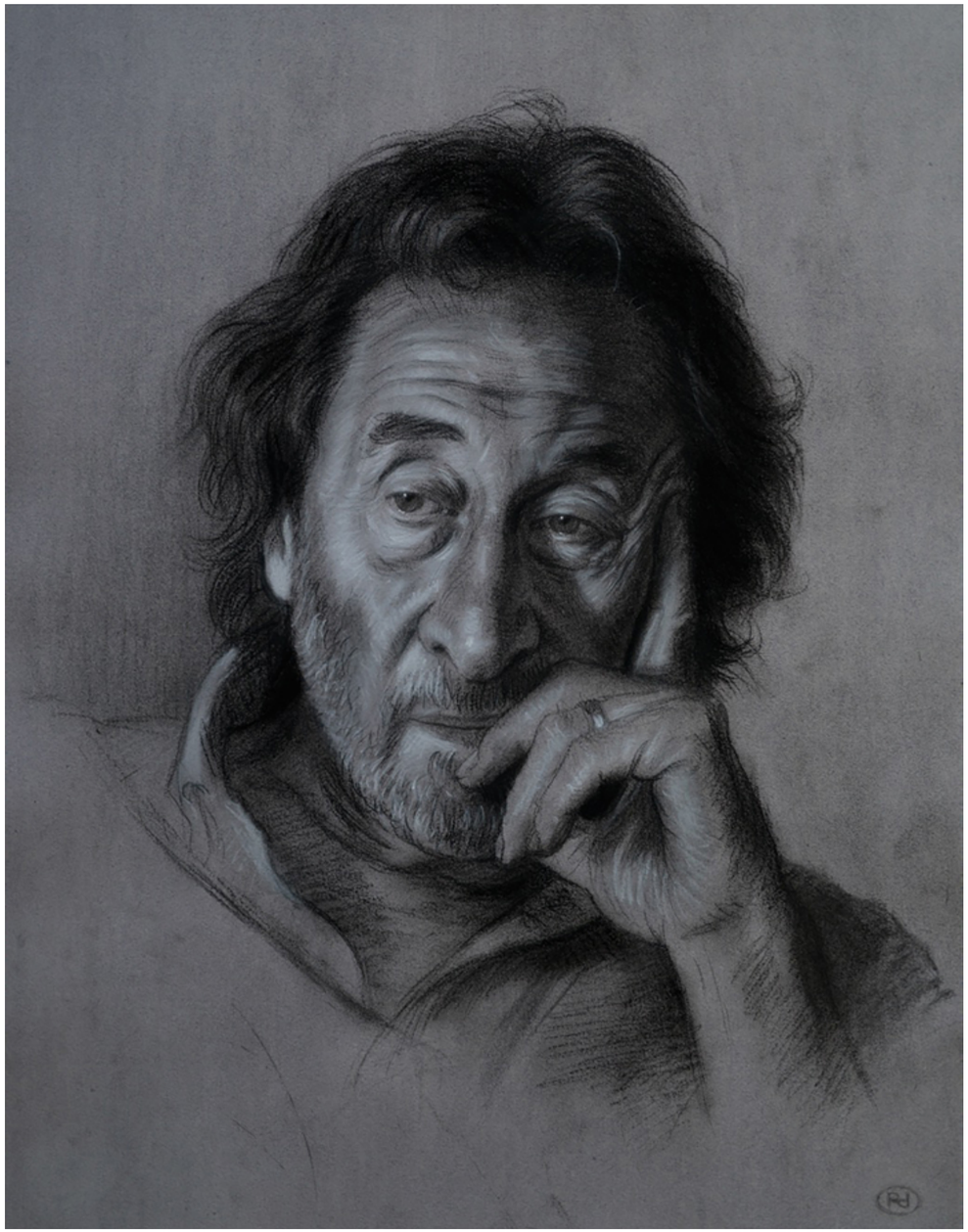


THE HUMAN HEART IN THE HUMAN FACE

Interview with Howard Jacobson by Jennifer Thatcher

J: Can you begin by telling me how you met Ralph Heimans?

H: We met five years ago at a big Royal Academy party for the Australia exhibition. It was a very starry one. His wife Tami came over and introduced herself.

J: As a fan of yours?

H: As someone who knew who I was, who had read my books. And there was something in common because they're Jewish and so am I – although I try to hide it! And there's also an Australian connection. I've written about Australia. I was with my wife and we thought they were lovely. I'd heard about Ralph's painting of the Queen that had been defaced. We brought that painting up, and he said, would you like to see it? And they took us round to see it a few days later. And I liked very much what he did. And, right at that moment, an idea formed in my mind. I'd just been commissioned to write a novel in a series by Hogarth Press, who came up with an idea to have novelists do versions of Shakespeare. And I thought, it would be very good to have someone who could either illustrate them in some way or maybe do portraits of the writers. I thought that would be a good one. I didn't say anything to him, but I talked to the publishers to see what they thought. Obviously, they're always frightened about how much money is going to have to be spent for things like that, but I thought, well it's a possible alternative to fancy photographs that sometimes get taken for the inside covers. So I talked to them and then I talked to Ralph and, before long, he was in conversation with them about it. And so he ended up doing portraits of most of the writers in that series. Some didn't want to do it for reasons of their own. I was very keen. I fancied him doing my portrait. There was something about the way he looked at me. There was something about the warmth that we'd established between us as friends over the months that we'd got to know each other since that party. And I like his eye. I thought, I would like to be looked at by this person.

J: What was it about his eye? How would you describe his eye?

H: It was penetrating and genial. He is very, very sharp, very intelligent, very acute, but at no point does he give you the impression that he's seen through you. He's seen you, but not seen through you. And that struck me as a magnanimity. I

Sketch of Howard Jacobson, 2015.
Private Collection

thought it about the Queen and I think it about the portrait he's just done of Prince Philip. He's not an ironist. Although there's something deeply ironical about what he's doing, when you think about it, doing modern characters in that form. It's not ironical in the belittling sense, it's ironical in the sense of bringing disparate forms together and making you look at things in a way you're not accustomed to. And so, it got fixed up that he would do some of the writers in the series.

J: Were you the first?

H: I probably was the first. Because it seemed to both of us that if he was going to persuade the publishers that this was a good idea, he wanted an example. And since we'd started off the conversation and I was the second novelist in the series anyway (Jeanette Winterson was the first; for some reason she didn't want the portrait doing) ... And he came round to take photographs to begin with. I was very busy writing the book then. I didn't have a lot of time to give him. And he said, no, I don't need that. I'd rather just come around and we'll talk, and I'll take photographs.

J: How far had you got in writing Shylock Is My Name when he took those photographs?

H: Maybe I was a third of the way through. I was certainly absorbed in the whole question of Shylock by reading around Shylock and by reading everything to do with Shakespeare, Venice and matters Jewish. So maybe I was looking more Shylocky than I would normally have expected to look. Maybe that's what he saw. But he came around; I remember him quite vividly. We chatted about all sorts of things. And he said: Don't pose, just let me take photographs.

J: Were you wearing that scarf anyway? Or did Ralph bring it for you to wear?

H: I don't think I would have been wearing that scarf indoors. In fact, let me look at the painting. It's not in my eye-line now but it will be in a second. I wear scarves a lot; he'd have seen me wearing scarves.

J: So it felt natural to wear a scarf, but he may have added this particular one as a kind of Shakespearean prop?

H: Yes, that's right. It's a white, silky-looking scarf. I don't have such a thing, so he'd clearly invented that. Well, it's of the period and it's a very nice feature in the picture because it takes light; it receives light and it throws light back into my face. It's a clever choice.

J: Did he direct you in any way?

H: Not at all. He was very determined that I just talk. And, in fact, I think the photograph that got him most was a photograph that he took at the moment when I was making a decision, and that decision was whether or not to have a biscuit that my wife had brought up. She'd brought up a plate of biscuits for us to have and, as always when someone comes to visit, the visitor never has the biscuits and I eat all the biscuits. And we'd been talking about that and I'd been thinking, I must stop doing this. Do I have a biscuit or do I not have a biscuit? And in that moment of deciding about the biscuit, it seems that he or his camera had seen all that they wanted to see: the seriousness of the man perplexed. And that's the expression that he got. And when I saw the painting, I loved it and I actually bought it. It's an act of vanity, I know, but I wanted it.

J: Has your feeling towards the painting changed since you've owned it? Is it displayed prominently?

H: It is displayed prominently – well, reasonably prominently. You don't want to stick people with it the minute they come into your house! And maybe it's an immodest thing to do. But I feel what I'm showing is not me but Ralph. I'm pleased to have a painting by Ralph on the wall. It took my breath away when I first saw it. It doesn't take my breath away now because I am accustomed, but the first shock of it – well, it's rather tragic, even though I know it's only a biscuit. But behind one decision is, of course, every other decision. What he's seen, too, is some of the melancholy of Shylock. We talked about Shylock a lot. We're both interested in the whole argument about is this an anti-Semitic play, which, to my mind, it is absolutely not. And I talked to him about how I'm touched by Shylock in the play, particularly his remembering his wife. Now, it could be, that it's nothing to do with the biscuit and it's the moment when I'm talking about Shylock remembering his dead wife, who is mentioned in the play only once when he hears that Jessica has run off and stolen the ring that his dead wife Leah left – it's my ring, she gave it me when I was a bachelor, he says, I would not have given it for a wilderness of monkeys. I was very interested in that moment of the play. In fact, I wanted to call my novel A Wilderness of Monkeys because that's the moment in which the play absolutely piercingly – briefly but piercingly – opens up Shylock's heart, and that's the moment that makes it impossible for one to think about it as an anti-Semitic play because that's Shakespeare the great dramatist showing you, this is what it is to know another person. The Venetian ratbags think of him just as 'the Jew, the Jew', but at that moment, you don't think of him as 'the Jew', you think of him as the father and the lover, the young man, the older man. And it might have been while I was talking about all that and feeling my way towards Shylock's melancholy and perhaps identifying a melancholy streak of my own that Ralph saw what he wanted to see.

Photo from Howard Jacobson's sitting

J: There are multiple layers within the portrait, then: the writer grappling with the responsibility of rewriting Shakespeare, and a particularly difficult, controversial play at that; but also you channelling Shakespeare or perhaps the character of Shylock as some kind of conduit?

H: That's an interesting way of putting it. A conduit back into myself, you mean? I don't know whether I thought that. But I felt a connection. I felt that I knew how to read this play and that the best critics of the play that I'd read knew how to read the play and didn't talk about it as just some ugly, anti-Semitic play – only that aspect. I was interested in Shylock's sadness and hated the way he's jeered at in the play. I don't mean I hated Shakespeare for doing that; I think what he rendered was the particularly vile cruelty towards him and it's one of the saddest things in Shakespeare. And we'd been talking about all that. And maybe that's there in the picture.

I remember joking to him when I saw it that this was the nearest I was ever going to get to being looked at by Rembrandt. And it is very Rembrandty. And of all portrait painters, Rembrandt is the one I most admired since I was a teenage boy. As a student, I had Rembrandt's self-portrait reproduction on the wall. Nobody sees the human heart in the human face the way Rembrandt does. Nobody sees the inner man or woman in the eyes the way Rembrandt does. Just the weight, the sort of animal weight, of being a person is what Rembrandt gets. I feel that there's a touch of that in this.

J: Did you think about visual representations of The Merchant of Venice, or other Shakespeare plays, when you were doing the research for your book? I was thinking of portraits by Johan Zoffany or Maurycy Gottlieb, for example.

From Howard Jacobson's sitting

H: In my version of the play there is a painting, which I thought would be appropriate. Because in my novel, my Shylock is divided in two. There is an actual Shylock himself. That was the second version of my novel because at the beginning I thought I'd find a modern equivalent. Then I thought the modern equivalent doesn't do the job as well as Shylock himself, so I kept them both. And my modern equivalent is an art dealer of some kind. He's involved in an argument with other art dealers in the north of England, who are the equivalent to the Antonios and so on of the play. There is an issue around a painting. In fact, the American edition in front of me at the moment shows that painting, Solomon J. Solomon's Love's First Lesson. I thought it would be interesting if my modern collector would be interested in Victorian Jewish painters, so there are speculations about Jewish painters and particularly Jewish painters from the north of England in the novel. I'm not sure if any of that is justified by the play …

J: In your version, you also give Beatrice a line about Rembrandt's portraiture.

H: You're quite right, so I do. And she talks about the darkness and the light. I suppose I was thinking about that: the power of light in art, the force of shadow and obscurity in art, and that's something you certainly see in The Merchant of Venice itself, where the play does vanish into shadow; it's shadowy, and then sometimes glaringly, unbearably bright.

J: What did you think about the title Ralph gave your portrait, … no sighs but of my breathing …, which sort of casts you into the role of Shylock?

H: That entirely came from him. And if he was thinking of me as Shylock, given how I was talking about Shylock, that wasn't a problem. I mean, once upon a time, if someone had called me Shylock I would have taken it as the deepest insult. But given how I was thinking about Shylock, given how we were talking about him together, no, I rather liked that. And it's funny because the first two people who saw it – my assistant and a neighbour – they both actually guessed, and my assistant shed a tear. He looked away; he said, I find this deeply, deeply upsetting. I think that he felt that the painting carried a depth of feeling, and I think Ralph's work does because he is a person of great feeling himself – because of what he is doing, because he is evoking older styles of painting, and not in the spirit of pastiche at all. I felt we were doing something similar: I'm aping but at the same time writing a sort of critical essay as well as a novel about Shylock and so I'm going back in time, thinking about now and then; and Ralph's done the same in his paintings. And you get a great depth when you go back that way, because you're piggybacking on older feelings and there's something about thinking deeply over time. We live in an age which is mad on now, where people have no memories. We think that everything is of the present, and we must catch the fleeting moment on a screen. What Ralph has done and what I've done,

in our separate ways, are acts of remembering. And they are acts of remembering full of feeling.

J: How do you feel your portrait compares to the other five Shakespearean portraits?

H: Ralph's done terrific things. The Margaret Atwood is very, very good indeed. I like them all. I think it lent an added gravitas to the series. I'm the saddest of them.

J: Your portrait is the only one that doesn't have an elaborate background, whether architectural or landscape. It's the only one floating in darkness.

H: It's my soul. He's painted my soul.

Howard Jacobson
"... no sighs but my breathing ..."
(The Merchant of Venice), 2015.
Private Collection

CATALOGUE

ROYAL PORTRAITS

1
HRH Crown Prince Frederik
2018
Oil on canvas. 170 x 250 cm
The Museum of National History

2
HRH Crown Princess Mary
2006
Oil on canvas. 170 x 250 cm
The Museum of National History

3
HRH The Duke of Edinburgh
2017
Oil on canvas. 160 x 230 cm
The Royal Collection

4
HRH The Countess of Wessex
2016
Oil on canvas. 113,5 x 118,5 cm
TRH The Earl and Countess of Wessex

5
HRH The Earl of Wessex
2016
Oil on canvas. 113,5 x 118,5 cm
TRH The Earl and Countess of Wessex

COMMISSIONS
AND OTHER PORTRAITS

6
Tetty
1995
Oil on canvas. 95 x 70 cm
Private Collection

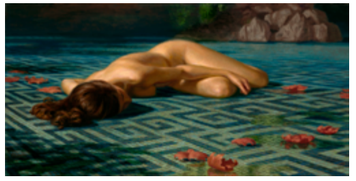
7
Radical Restraint (Justice Michael Kirby)
1998
Oil on canvas. 183,1 x 228,7 cm
National Portrait Gallery, Canberra
(purchased with funds from the Basil
Bressler Bequest 2001)

8
Gloves Off (Tom Uren)
1996
Oil on canvas. 122 x 152 cm
National Portrait Gallery, Canberra
(purchased with funds from the Basil
Bressler Bequest 2001)

9
Mr. Philips' Projection
2001
Oil on canvas. 100 x 130 cm
Private Collection

10
The Badminton Club
2003
Oil on canvas. 86 x 118 cm
Private Collection

11
Pelham Crescent
2001
Oil on canvas. 115 x 165 cm
Private Collection



12
Nude
2003
Oil on canvas. 70 x 140 cm
Private Collection

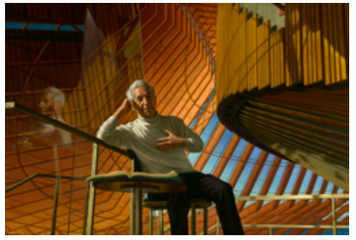
13
Portrait of a QC
2004
Oil on canvas. 97 x 146 cm
Private Collection

14
Self Portrait in the Metro
2004
Oil on canvas. 85 x 170 cm
Private Collection

15
Stand on the Right
2005
Oil on canvas. 85 x 170 cm
Private Collection

16
The Boyers
2008
Oil on canvas. 190 x 250 cm
Private Collection

17
The Kirby Institute
2014
Oil on canvas. 150 x 250 cm
The Kirby Institute



18
The Architecture of Music (Vladimir Ashkenazy)
2011
Oil on canvas. 168 x 244 cm
National Portrait Gallery, Canberra (gift of Michael Crouch AC and Shanny Crouch, 2017)

19
The Governor General: The Honourable Dame Quentin Bryce AD CVO
2014
Oil on canvas. 136 x 190 cm
Historic Memorials Collection, Parliament House Art Collection, Canberra, ACT

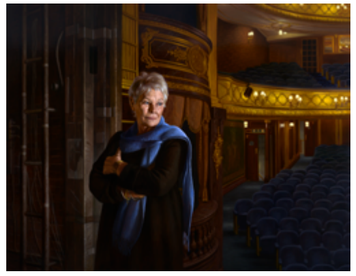
20
Consider your ways: portrait of Madeleine and Douglas
2015
Oil on canvas. 205 x 254 cm
Private Collection

21
Paula
2008
Oil on canvas. 120 x 210 cm
Private Collection

22
Joshua Tree
2010
Oil on canvas. 200 x 160 cm
Private Collection

23
The Jungels
2011
Oil on canvas. 150 x 220 cm
Private Collection

24
Pam
2016
Oil on canvas. Diameter 30 cm
Private Collection



25
Dame Judi Dench
2018
Oil on canvas. 142 x 175 cm
Private Collection

26
Islay
2007
Oil on canvas. 210 x 200 cm
Private Collection

THE SHAKESPEARE SERIES

27
Jo Nesbø
"... a walking shadow ..." (Macbeth)
2016
Oil on canvas. 79 x 100 cm
Private Collection

28
Tracy Chevalier
"... show me thy thought ..." (Othello)
2015
Oil on canvas. 80 x 74 cm
Private Collection

29
Margaret Atwood
"... the abysm of time ..." (The Tempest)
2016
Oil on canvas. 93 x 67 cm
Private Collection

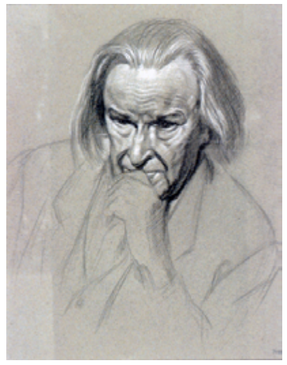
30
Anne Tyler
"... sit by my side and let the world slip ..."
(The Taming of the Shrew)
2015
Oil on canvas. 56 x 45 cm
National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian
Institution (acquisition made possible
through the generosity of David Kowitz)

31
Gillian Flynn
"... we know what we are ..." (Hamlet)
2016
Oil on canvas. 69 x 110 cm
Private Collection

32
Howard Jacobson
"... no sighs but of my breathing ..."
(The Merchant of Venice)
2015
Oil on panel. 64 x 55 cm
Private Collection

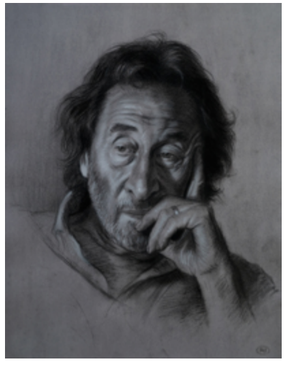
SKETCHES

33
Study for the portrait of the Queen
2012
Charcoal and white chalk on tinted paper.
59 x 42 cm
Private Collection



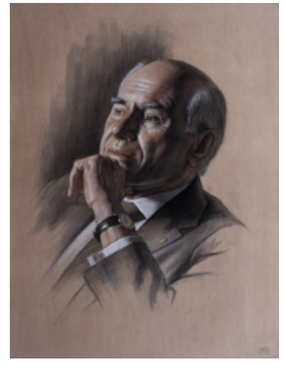
34
Portrait of professor Derek Freeman
1996
Pencil and pastel on paper. 40 x 32 cm
National Portrait Gallery, Canberra.
(purchased with funds from the Basil
Bressler Bequest 2001)

35
Study of Vladimir Ashkenazy
2010
Charcoal and white chalk on tinted paper.
40 x 60 cm
Private Collection

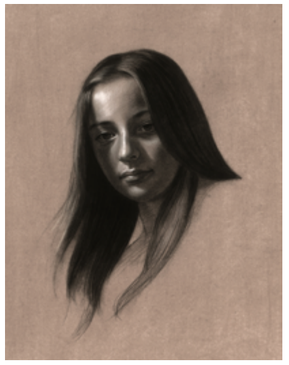


36
Sketch of Howard Jacobson
2015
Charcoal and white chalk on paper.
70 x 55 cm
Private Collection

37
Portrait of Dame Elisabeth Murdoch
2006
Charcoal and white chalk on tinted paper.
40 x 30 cm
Private Collection

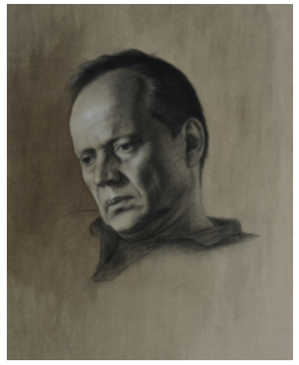


38
A portrait of John Howard
2013
Ink and charcoal on tinted paper. 59 x 42 cm
Royal Collection Trust / © HM Queen
Elizabeth II



39
Athena
2011
Charcoal and chalk on paper. 60 x 45 cm
Private Collection

40
Scientia Professor John Kaldor
2013
Charcoal on paper. 65 x 50 cm
The Kirby Institute



41
Professor Gregory Dore
2013
Charcoal on paper. 65 x 50 cm
The Kirby Institute

45
Islay (preliminary sketch)
2007
Charcoal and chalk on paper. 45 x 60 cm
Private Collection

42
The Honourable Michael Kirby AC CMG
2013
Charcoal on paper. 65 x 50 cm
The Kirby Institute

43
Scientia Professor David Cooper AO
2013
Charcoal on paper. 65 x 50 cm
The Kirby Institute

44
The working drawing for the portrait
“Radical Restraint”
1996
Charcoal and chalk on paper. 60 x 45 cm
Private Collection

RALPH HEIMANS

Born in Sydney in 1970, Ralph Heimans lives and works in London. Known as one of the leading portrait artists of his generation, he was chosen to paint HM Queen Elizabeth II in Her Diamond Jubilee Year. The work received widespread international acclaim when it was unveiled at the National Portrait Gallery of Australia in 2012, drawing record numbers of visitors to the Gallery. In a rare act of acquisition, it now forms part of the permanent collection of Westminster Abbey, where it serves as the centre-piece of the new Triforium Gallery.

In 2017, the year of his retirement, HRH The Duke of Edinburgh sat for a large-scale portrait to be included in the retrospective exhibition at the Museum of National History at Frederiksborg. Other notable works include a portrait of renowned conductor and pianist Vladimir Ashkenazy, actor Dame Judi Dench, private portraits of HRH Princess Sophie and HRH Prince Edward, and celebrated authors including Margaret Atwood, Anne Tyler and Gillian Flynn, Jo Nesbø, Tracy Chevalier and Howard Jacobson. His portrait of Crown Princess Mary commissioned by the Museum of National History was accompanied by the unveiling of a new portrait of Crown Prince Frederik at the opening of the exhibition at Frederiksborg.

Heimans' works are held in major international collections including The Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery in Washington, The Royal Collection, The Museum of National History at Frederiksborg, which is the National Portrait Gallery in Denmark, The National Portrait Gallery of Australia, Westminster Abbey, Australia's Parliament House and The European Court in Luxembourg.

In 2014 he was awarded a Member of the Order of Australia for services to portraiture.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Ralph Heimans would like to thank the following people who have made this retrospective possible: Mette Skougaard, who had the faith to commission me twice and the vision to produce this massive exhibition. The Museum's staff for their efforts in preparing for the exhibition; the editor and the writers of the catalogue: Thomas Lyngby, Professor Erik Steffenson, Peter Michael Hornung, Jennifer Thatcher, The Hon. Michael Kirby, Dame Quentin Bryce, Anne Tyler and Howard Jacobson for their wonderful words. Tami, Ellie-Rose and Hannah for their incredible support behind the scenes. And finally to all the sitters over the years who have engaged in the creative process with me and enabled me to produce this body of work. Thank you.