

## FORWARD

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 50<sup>th</sup> 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.

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