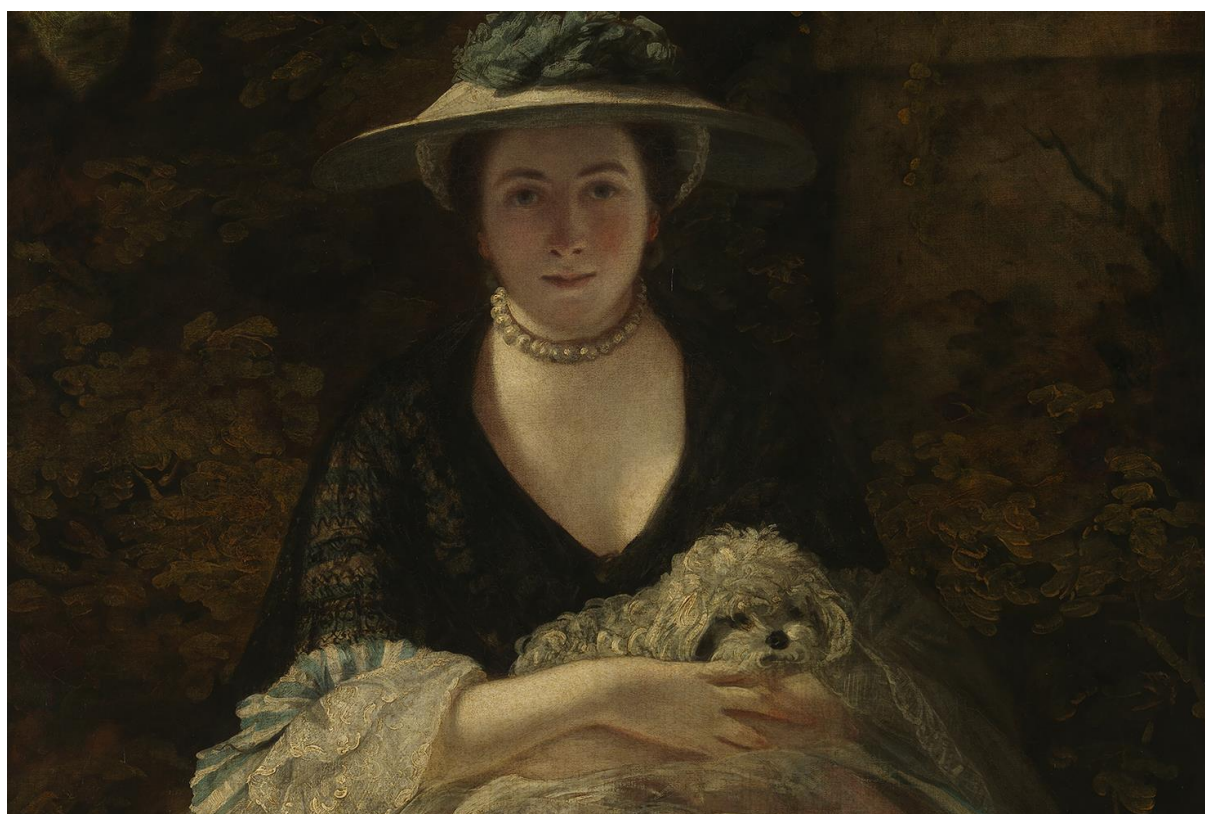


## Introducing... Reynolds and His Rivals

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<b>Dates</b>	Tuesday 14 and Wednesday 15 September 2021
<b>Times</b>	18.00-20.00 GMT
<b>Location</b>	Zoom Webinar
<b>Tutor</b>	Jacqui Ansell
<b>Level</b>	All Levels

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Joshua Reynolds, *Miss Nelly O'Brien*, about 1762-63 (detail)

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### Course Description

The great painter, Sir Joshua Reynolds, was famously the first President of the Royal Academy, founded in 1768. The son of a Devon schoolteacher, he rose through the ranks of society to achieve his ultimate aim – to paint for King George III. In his mission to raise the status of painting to the same rank as its ‘sister art of poetry,’ he developed a style of portraiture known as the ‘Grand Style’, imbued with intellectual content. Known as much for his experimental techniques as his innovative iconography, Reynolds’ paintings often suffered from the ravages of time and taste – with young artists of the 19th century christening him ‘Sir Sloshua’!

Fashion, in terms of dress as well as approaches to portraiture, will be the key subject of this course, as we explore Reynolds’ attempts to appeal to posterity, as well as to his contemporaries.

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### **Session One: 'Something Modern for the Sake of Likeness'**

The 18th century was a 'Golden Age' for British portraiture, with Hogarth, Reynolds, Ramsay, as well as Wright of Derby, Gainsborough and Lawrence emerging to lead this field. The rise of Rococo fashions in art and dress created a concern for frills and fripperies, which posed a problem for artists. Not only were these fiddly and time-consuming to consign to canvas, but the rapid pace of fashion change meant that portraits could look old-fashioned before the paint was dry.

In our first sessions, we'll consider Reynolds' training under Thomas Hudson, and the attempt to create a timeless ideal by following in the footsteps of Van Dyck. We'll then explore Reynolds' elegant solution to this problem, evidenced by some of the great portraits from the Wallace Collection - 'something modern for the sake of likeness, and the general air of the antique, for the sake of dignity'.

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### **Session Two: Making Faces, Making History**

Portraits proliferated in the 18th century as a rising merchant class became determined to record their economic and professional progress. Dynastic success remained a key concern for aristocratic patrons and the notion of childhood took on a new meaning and importance, in line with the thoughts of enlightenment philosophers such as John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau.

Focusing on great works from the Wallace Collection such as Reynolds' *Strawberry Girl*, in our second session we'll explore this notion, and also ask how well such portraits have withstood the test of time. We'll also delve deeply into the lives of sitters such as Nelly O'Brien and Mrs Robinson, and consider what it meant to sit to Reynolds, and why rivals such as Gainsborough and Romney would also paint the same sitters and bring out different aspects of their characters (with the aid of clothing).

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### **Course Tutor**

Jacqui Ansell gained an MA from the Courtauld Institute enabling her to decode and date dress in art, and to educate others in this field. As an experienced gallery educator she has devised and delivered numerous courses for the Wallace Collection and the National Gallery, and is an accredited lecturer for The Arts Society. As Senior Lecturer at Christie's Education, she is currently writing, presenting and tutoring online courses in Art History and Luxury. She is particularly interested in exploring the links between furniture, fashion and fine art, and the wider cultural history of the long 18th century.

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### **Previous Skills, Knowledge or Experience**

None required. This course is designed as an introduction to the subject.

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### **Joining Information and Format**

This course will be taught through Zoom Webinar. For more information, including instructions on how to download and use the system, please visit [www.zoom.us/support](http://www.zoom.us/support).

Each course session duration is 120 minutes, including a five-minute break and time for Q&A with the tutor.

Tickets are for both dates. Ticket holders will be emailed the Zoom link, Webinar ID and Passcode 24 hours in advance of the first course session, which should be retained for accessing both sessions of the course.

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### **Course Recording**

This course will be recorded. Within 48 hours of each course session, ticket holders will be emailed a link to view the recording, which will be available for one week only.

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