

National Portrait gallery

Some portraits that caught my attention as I visited the gallery.

King Henry VII

by Unknown Flemish artist
oil on panel, 1505
16 3/4 in. x 12 in. (425 mm x 305 mm) arched top

<http://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/portraitLarge/mw03078/King-Henry-VII?search=ap&subj=370%3BTudors+and+Elizabethans+tour&rNo=0>

This is the earliest painting in the gallery. It has an arched top to the portrait. There is an unusual portrayal of the hands; they appear to be touching a board with writing on. The subject is shown $\frac{3}{4}$ profile but with the eyes looking directly at the viewer. It is believed, apparently, that it was painted as part of an unsuccessful marriage proposal as Henry VII hoped to marry Margaret of Savoy as his second wife. Therefore it probably wasn't intended to be seen by the numbers of people that see it today.

Charles Darwin

copy by John Collier
oil on canvas, 1883 (1881)
49 1/2 in. x 38 in. (1257 mm x 965 mm)
Given by the sitter's son, William Erasmus Darwin, 1896

<http://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/portraitLarge/mw01728/Charles-Darwin>

Unusual in that this is a copy of an original done by the same artist. Darwin's son described it as 'an improvement on the original'. It shows Darwin a year before his death. The original was painted for the Linnaean Society to honour Darwin's contribution to science and would have been seen by members of the Society. Darwin's son is also quoted as saying "Many of those who knew his face most intimately, think that Mr Collier's picture is the best of the

portraits and in this judgement the sitter himself was inclined to agree.'

**Bernard Law Montgomery, 1st
Viscount Montgomery of Alamein**

by Francis Owen ('Frank') Salisbury
oil on canvas, 1945
40 1/4 in. x 49 7/8 in. (1022 mm x 1267
mm)
Lent by the sitter's son, Viscount
Montgomery, 1977

This portrait is different in that it was
commissioned by the sitter himself, the
purpose for which isn't clarified by the
gallery. It shows Montgomery, in uniform, in

front of a map of Normandy presumably briefing an audience on the D Day landings. According to the NPG website Montgomery "flew the 71-year old artist to his headquarters in Berlin for a sitting". The portrait successfully sums up the wartime achievements of the subject.

[http://www.npg.org.uk/collections/
search/portraitLarge/mw04484/Ber
nard-Law-Montgomery-1st-
Viscount-Montgomery-of-Alamein](http://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/portraitLarge/mw04484/Bernard-Law-Montgomery-1st-Viscount-Montgomery-of-Alamein)

**A.S. Byatt (Portrait of A S Byatt : Red, Yellow,
Green and Blue : 24 September 1997)**

by Patrick Heron
oil on canvas, 1997
38 1/8 in. x 47 7/8 in. (968 mm x 1216 mm)
Commissioned, 1998

Finally a very different portrait. Commissioned for the
NPG itself therefore intended to be seen by many. This
is a portrait painted by one of the leading abstract

artists at the time. It is all about colour and not any faithful rendition of features. The NPG says that this was relevant to the sitter's wishes: 'What I wanted was the presence of the idea of me.'

[http://www.npg.org.uk/collections/
search/portraitLarge/mw10340/AS-
Byatt-Portrait-of-A-S-Byatt--Red-
Yellow-Green-and-Blue--24-
September-1997?locid=56&rNo=1](http://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/portraitLarge/mw10340/AS-Byatt-Portrait-of-A-S-Byatt--Red-Yellow-Green-and-Blue--24-September-1997?locid=56&rNo=1)