The Aesthetics of Portraiture

- An Annotated Reading List -

Portraits are everywhere. We think we know what they are for and what they do. They depict what people look like and they capture or distil their particular identity. But in everyday life, it might be argued, portraits trade in stereotypes and clichés. And if the advent of identity politics has demonstrated anything, it is how deeply problematic it is to think that identity can be 'captured' or 'distilled'. This reading list encourages a more analytical understanding of portraiture as an artistic genre, with particular reference to feminist/gender/disability/ethnic/post-colonial issues. How have artists pushed at the limits and conventions of the type, how are people represented in portraits, and how have philosophers understood its essential nature? The list aims to address central topics in aesthetics and philosophy of art through the genre of portraiture, adding relevant insights from art history and art theory, and thus enabling students to acquire a more sophisticated understanding of what making and looking at portraits actually involves.

Lotte Laserstein
Self-Portrait with Cat (1928)
Image courtesy of Leicester Arts and Museums Service

Set up

The reading list has nine different modules. These modules work well in conjunction and in the particular order presented here. But the list equally allows for themes to be reorganized so as to create a different course structure. Alternatively, specific texts can be pulled out of the list and used in other aesthetics-related courses and modules (e.g. on genre, beauty, or expressiveness).

For each reading a summary of the content is provided, as well as details of one or two portraits that will be particularly helpful in the study of the relevant topic. Further discussion of the listed portraits is usually (though not always) to be found in the essays and chapters they are paired with.

The texts are selected from a variety of sources, including academic journals, newspapers, monographs, edited volumes. Since most academic libraries will provide students with access to the journals listed here, an effort was made to limit the number of books in this bibliography, so as to keep acquisition costs as low as possible.

Some of the readings are relevant for more than one of the proposed themes. Hence, at the end of each module, the reader will find a brief list of texts that also touch upon the central topic of the module ("See also: …").

Diversification

The reading list as a whole and each of the proposed modules is diverse in a variety of ways, namely in: (i) centrally featuring writing by members of underrepresented groups; (ii) devoting significant philosophical attention to topics related to members of underrepresented groups; (iii) including texts that give significant philosophical attention to artworks by, or featuring, members of underrepresented groups and of non-European traditions. Finally, the list also aims at (iv) methodological diversity in combining insights from, and inviting cross-fertilization between the disciplines of aesthetics, art theory, and art history.

I. Definition

What is a portrait? In what way is this genre similar to and different from other genres? Is portraiture an exclusively Western phenomenon? Do portraits necessarily fall within the domain of non-fiction?

1. Freeland, 'Animals'

Defines a portrait as a representation of a living being as a unique individual possessing (1) a recognizable physical body along with (2) an inner life. A third condition is that the subject consciously presents a self to be conveyed in the resulting artwork. Pictures of animals can meet the first two criteria, but not the third.

Freeland, Cynthia, 'Animals' (Chapter 1), in: *Portraits & Persons*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010, pp. 4-41.

> **Portrait suggestions**
> George Stubbs, *Whistlejacket* (1761-2)
> Freeland disputes the image's status as a portrait partly because of how formulaic it appears.
>
> Jill Greenberg, *Monkey Portraits* (2006)
> The artist anthropomorphizes the animals, as is evident in the titles she chose for some of the works ('The Misanthrope', Oy Veh'). So, do they qualify as portraits?

2. Winter, 'What/When Is a Portrait? Royal Images of the Ancient Near East'

Argues that ancient sculptural images of Mesopotamia, while non-naturalistic, should be regarded as portraits. The title is a reference to Nelson Goodman's shifting of the question 'What is art?' to 'When is art?' in his book Ways of World-Making.

Winter, Irene J., 'What/When Is a Portrait? Royal Images of the Ancient Near East', *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society,* 153, 2009, pp. 254-270.

> **Portrait suggestion**
> *Standing sculptures of Gudea, ruler of Lagash* (ca. 2110 BCE)
> On the basis of detailed lexicographical and iconographical research, Winter concludes that these sculptures, with their recognizably broad face and chin, large ears, and muscular arms, were intended as portraits.

3. West, 'What is a Portrait'

Explores three fundamental claims: (1) portraits can be placed on a continuum between the specificity of likeness and the generality of type; (2) all portraits represent something about the body and face, on the one hand, and the soul, character, or virtues of the sitter, on the other; (3) all portraits involve a series of negotiations – often between artist and sitter, but sometimes there is also a patron who is not included in the portrait. NB: In the Introduction preceding this chapter West also questions the cliché that portraits are an invention of the Renaissance and an exclusively Western phenomenon.

West, Shearer, 'What is a Portrait?' (Chapter 1), in: *Portraiture*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004, pp. 21-41.

> **Portrait suggestions**
> Jan Van Eyck, *Madonna With Chancellor Rolin* (1433) vs Rogier van der Weyden, *The Donor, Chancellor Rolin, Kneeling in Prayer;* from the reverse of Last Judgment *Polyptych* (1445)
> A comparison of these two paintings reveals how likenesses are always mediated by the varying functions of portraits and the distinct styles of the artists.
>
> Angelica Kauffmann, *Portrait of J.W. Goethe* (1787-8)
> For women artists such as Kauffmann the control of the gaze during sessions with male sitters could be socially uncomfortable but empowering.

4. Pointon, 'Portrait, Fact and Fiction'

Considers portraiture an unstable, destabilizing, potentially subversive art through which uncomfortable and unsettling convictions are negotiated. As such, it is primarily an instrumental art form, a kind of agency. Also argues that there is an element of the fictive involved in all portrait representations. Explains how portraiture is a slippery and seductive art.

> **Portrait suggestion**
> *Garibaldi at Caprera,* frontispiece of G.M. Trevelyan*, Garibaldi and the Thousand*, May 1860 (1931 edition)
> A reproduction of a photograph of a copy of a many times copied portrait of the guerilla leader. Devoid of monetary or aesthetic value. Not very likely that Garibaldi looked like this or posed for the artist. The portrait works to endow the historical narrative with its illusion of a unified subject.

See also: 5, 14, 16, 30

II. History

Who have traditionally been the sitters and makers of portraits? Which functions have portraits fulfilled in different cultures and historical periods? Why have some people been reluctant to have their portrait taken? Why did the old and respectable art of portraiture become so unfashionable in the 20th century?

5. West, 'The Functions of Portraiture'

Posits that aesthetic value has only rarely been the primary inspiration in the commissioning, display, and reception of portraits. Discusses the different functions that portraits and portrait collections have fulfilled. Includes sections on the portrait as biography, the portrait as document, the portrait as proxy and gift, the portrait as commemoration and memorial, the portrait as political tool.

> **Portrait suggestions**
> Anonymous, after an engraving by Simon Van de Passe, *Pocahontas* (after 1616)
> Words painted on a portrait were often important in establishing the authenticity of the likeness, but in this case that claim is misleading, as this portrait was a third-hand image. Moreover, Pocahantos is depicted as white, described as a Christian convert, and principally identified as the wife of John Rolfe.
>
> Jean-Étienne Liotard, *Portrait of Maria Frederike van Reede-Athlone at 7 years of age* (1755-6)
> Because pastel portraits rendered the person both lifelike and seemingly touchable, they potentially had an erotic and fetishistic quality and were collected obsessively.

6. West, 'Gender and Portraiture'

The gender of both artist and sitter needs to be taken into account when considering the history of portraiture. Explores how and why women were often portrayed in certain roles (as goddesses, historical or religious figures, allegorical embodiments of abstract notions). Discusses why many women artists before the 20th century were portraitists and considers a few examples. Also highlights changing notions of masculinity in portraiture.

West, Shearer, 'Gender and Portraiture' (Chapter 6), in: *Portraiture*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004, pp. 144-161.

Portrait suggestions
Lotte Laserstein, *Self-Portrait with Cat* (1928) vs Otto Dix, *Portrait of the Journalist Sylvia von Harden* (1926)
Both portraits were painted in 1920s Germany by artists linked to the New Objectivity art movement. Still, there is a notable difference between the 'objective' view of the male artist and the subjective self-image of the woman artist.

Elizabeth Siddal, *Self-Portrait* (1854)
There's a marked contrast between the unhappiness and fatigue visible in this self-portrait and the beauty and eroticism in Dante Gabriel Rossetti's Beata Beatrix (c.1862) in which he transfers the ideal qualities of Dante's Beatrice into the real portrait of Siddal.

Artemisia Gentileschi, *Self-Portrait* as "*La Pittura*" (c. 1630)
It could be said that the artist is complicit in the tendency of portraitists to generalize their women subjects as she embodied herself as the allegory of Painting. Nevertheless, Artemisia does not show herself in an idealized way and by self-consciously manipulating a set of conventions makes a unique contribution to the corpus of self-portraiture.

7. Strother, '"A Photograph Steals the Soul": The History of an Idea'

Traces the origins of, and eventually challenges, the idea that many people in non-industrialized countries refused to have their photographic portrait taken due to the belief that it would steal their soul. Investigates and refutes the evidence provided by Richard Andree, James Napier, James G. Frazer. With references to C.S. Peirce, Rosalind Krauss, Susan Sontag.

Strother, Z.S., '"A Photograph Steals the Soul": The History of an Idea', in: John Peffer and Elisabeth L. Cameron (eds.), *Portraiture & Photography in Africa*, Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2013, pp. 177-212.

Portrait suggestion
Antoine Freitas, *self-portrait with handmade box camera in Bena Mulumba, Kasaï Province* (1939)
A masterpiece of composition, showing the photographer at work, surrounded by children and women who would normally be kept away from recognized sorcerers (thereby demonstrating that the photographer was not considered an evil soul-stealing sorcerer).

8. Berger, 'The Changing View of Man in the Portrait'

Argues that the painted portrait has become outdated in the 20th c, partly because of the growing popularity of photographic portraits which turn out to be more informative, more psychologically revealing, and in general more accurate. But the main reason for the decline is that portrait painting is no longer able to fulfill its primary function – to underwrite and idealize a chosen social role of the sitter – because fewer and fewer people in capitalist society are able to believe in the social value of fixed social roles.

Berger, John, 'The changing view of man in the portrait', in: *The Moment of Cubism and other essays,* Pantheon Books, 1969, pp. 41-47.

See also: 2, 3, 18, 20, 23, 30

III. Beauty

Is beauty the same thing as normalcy or attractiveness? Do only beautiful people deserve to have their portrait painted? How can portraiture help to challenge or change standards of beauty?

9. Brand, 'Beauty as Pride: A Function of Agency'

Questions the ideal standard of beauty portrayed throughout the history of art, particularly in form of the female nude, and examines works of art that defiantly challenge that ideal. Argues that in certain representations of disabled persons the model is empowered and not exploited and that beauty trumps offensiveness. Pride wins.

Brand, Peg Zeglin, 'Beauty as Pride: A Function of Agency', *APA Newsletter,* 10: 2, 2011, pp. 5-9.

Portrait suggestion
Joel-Peter Witkin, *First Casting for Milo* (2004)
Portrait of Irish artist Karen Duffy engaged in a silent performance of 'disarming' Venus. In her own words, she is aiming to 'liberate herself from histories of oppressive representations of women and disabled women in particular.'

10. Silvers, 'From the Crooked Timber of Humanity, Beautiful Things Can Be Made'

Starting from our appreciation of cubist portraits, asks why it to commonplace for us to contemplate distorted depictions of faces with eagerness and enjoyment but to be repelled by real people whose physiognomies resemble the depicted ones. Argues that the aesthetic process that permits our attraction to portrayed human anomalies can be expanded so as to offset the devalued social positioning of real people whose physiognomic features are anomalous. Presenting an anomaly as originality rather than deviance is crucial.

Silvers, Anita, 'From the Crooked Timber of Humanity, Beautiful Things Can Be Made', in: Brand, Peg Zeglin (ed.), *Beauty Matters*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000, pp. 197-221.

Portrait suggestion
Pablo Picasso, *Maya with a Doll* (1938)
Cubist portrait of a child. Silvers interestingly compares this to a photo of a child with osteogenesis imperfecta.

11. Silvers, From the Crooked Timber of Humanity, Beautiful Things Should Be Made!'

Follow-up essay (note the one-word difference in the title). Adds the idea that medical professionals have at least a mild duty to cultivate aesthetic judgment of individuals with biological differences. Also makes the case that beauty is not the same thing as attractiveness or normalcy.

Silvers, Anita, 'From the Crooked Timber of Humanity, Beautiful Things Should Be Made!', *APA Newsletter*, 10: 2, 2011, pp. 1-5.

> **Portrait suggestion**
> Riva Lehrer, *Susan Nussbaum* (1998).
> This portrait of disability activist Nussbaum invokes Picasso's famous portrait of Gertrude Stein (1906). It is discussed in Garland-Thomson.

12. Buckley, 'Portrait Photography in a Postcolonial Age: How Beauty Tells the Truth'

Drawing on ethnographic research in the practice of portrait photography in The Gambia, West Africa, proposes the centrality of beauty to the way people experience, make sense of, and participate in their everyday lives. Focuses on the Skin Bleaching (Prohibition) Decree of 1995 in The Gambia, which targeted the sphere of beautification, and the photographic studios' reaction to this. Investigates the (de-) politicization of beauty in portraiture.

Buckley, Liam, 'Portrait Photography in a Postcolonial Age: How Beauty Tells the Truth', in: John Peffer and Elisabeth L. Cameron (eds.), *Portraiture & Photography in Africa, Bloomington and Indianapolis*: Indiana University Press, 2013, pp. 287-312.

> **Portrait suggestion**
> Modou Jeng, *Portrait of Girl* (2000)
> After the Skin Bleaching Decree photographers developed a technique of altering the mix of inks in the printing machines and adding more red ink so as to produce portraits in which sitters appear to have bleached their skin.

IV. Medium

What is the role of the medium in portraiture? How do portraits in painting and photography differ? Are cell phone 'selfies' really self-portraits? How to understand the intermediality of portraiture in a given culture?

13. Wilson, 'Facing the Camera: Self-Portraits of Photographers as Artists'

Argues that the automatism inherent in the production of a photograph has made it possible for artists to extend the tradition of self-portraiture in a way that is radically different from previous visual arts. Demonstrates that automatism need not stand in competition or conflict with artistic agency.

Dawn M Wilson, 'Facing the Camera: Self-portraits of Photographers as Artists', *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 70: 1, 2012, pp. 56-66.

Portrait suggestion
Ilse Bing, *Self-Portrait with Leica* (1931).
It is usual for portraits to show a person's head either in profile or in a frontal position, but this self-portrait shows both alternatives simultaneously. It also depicts the presence of two mirrors in such a way that we are in a position to judge that the camera has recorded its own reflection. Thus, we see both the face of the artist and the "face" of the camera: it is a double self-portrait.

14. Freeland, 'Portraits in Painting and Photography'

Considers two fundamental but conflicting aims of portraiture: the revelatory aim of faithfulness to the subject, and the creative aim of artistic expression. Explores how the two media of painting and photography might differ. Argues that despite photography's alleged 'realism' and 'transparency,' it allows for artistic portraiture and presents the same basic conflict between portraiture's two aims, the revelatory and the expressive.

Freeland, Cynthia, 'Portraits in Painting and Photography,' *Philosophical Studies: An International Journal for Philosophy in the Analytic Tradition*, 135: 1, pp. 95-109.

Portrait suggestion
Richard Avedon, *Jacob Israel Avedon* (1969-1973)
Photographs of the artist's dying father. These frank portraits succeed at both artistic expression and the subtle rendering of the sitter's inner psychological states or character.

15. Förster, 'The Intermediality of Portraiture in Northern Côte d'Ivoire'

Addresses medium and intermediality in West African portraiture. Beginning with wooden ancestor statues and ending with picture files on cell phones, incorporates different pictorial media in an attempt to highlight their particularities and show how they build on social practices. Outlines how the human portrait is shaped by, but also informs, a multifaceted visual culture.

Förster, Till, 'The Intermediality of Portraiture in Northern Côte d'Ivoire', in: John Peffer and Elisabeth L. Cameron (eds.), *Portraiture & Photography in Africa*, Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2013, pp. 407-437.

Portrait suggestion
Picture of Zakaria Koné on a cell phone (2008)
Showing the picture on a cell phone and forwarding it to the phone of a friend became a means of defying the official politics of the rebellion in Northern Côte d'Ivoire.

16. Judge, 'Rembrandt's Lessons for the Selfie Era'

17. Stallabras, 'On Selfies'

Judge argues that selfies – trivial, banal, and ultimately disposable – are not self-portraits. The selfie threatens to distract us from what we should be doing, and what a great artist like Rembrandt did: looking at ourselves closely, honestly, but compassionately.

Judge, Jenny, 'Rembrandt's Lessons for the Selfie Era: why we must learn to look again', *The Guardian,* 16 October 2014. Stallabras, Julian, 'On Selfies', *London Review of Books*, 5 June 2014.

Stallabras comments on the curious fact that some of the most popular and advanced camera apps for smartphones have a built-in nostalgia for a time when the medium of photography was much more limited (sepia or black and white filters, etc.) Argues that this new daily practice gives people detailed knowledge about the way standard images of beauty and fame are produced so that they become more sophisticated in the making of images and sceptic about their effects.

Stallabras, Julian, 'On Selfies', *London Review of Books*, 5 June 2014.

Portrait suggestions
Rembrandt, *Self Portrait* (1659)
His self-portraits show him, not as he wished he might have been, but
as he was: ageing, thickening, alone in the gathering gloom.

Amalia Ulman, *Excellences and Perfections* (2015)
The first Instagram masterpiece? The artist's spoof selfies and Insta-
gram account tricked thousands.

V. Expression

*How have art and science interacted in the study of facial expressi-
on? How do portraits express attitudes and emotions towards their
subjects? How do great artists succeed in finding the expression
that implies all others? In what way can a sitter's pose be expres-
sive?*

18. Freeland, 'Expression'

Sketches how art and science have interacted in the develop-
ment of portraiture since the 17thc and how both fields have
contributed to the study of facial expression. Discusses Descar-
tes, Le Brun, Lavater, Charles Bell, Duchenne, Darwin, Ekman.

Freeland, Cynthia, 'Expression' (Chapter
4), in: *Portraits & Persons*, Oxford: Oxford
University Press, 2010, pp. 119-153.

Portrait suggestion
William Blake, *Democritus* (1798)
Johann Kaspar Lavater included portraits of many famous people in
his Essays on Physiognomy. William Blake was one of the artists who
helped illustrate the English edition.

19. Gombrich, 'The Mask and the Face'

Suggests that we have not one face but a thousand different fa-
ces as our expression changes constantly. This gives rise to the
problem of 'catching a likeness': how to abstract from constant
movement and find the expression which implies all others;
how to create an image which may be objectively unlike in
shape, color, stillness, and is yet felt to be like in expression?

Gombrich, E.H., 'The Mask and the Face:
the perception of physiognomic likeness
in life and in art', in: E.H Gombrich, Julian
Hochberg, Max Black, *Art, Perception, and
Reality,* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Universi-
ty Press, 1972, pp. 1-46.

Portrait suggestion
Pablo Picasso, *Françoise Gilot, "Femme Fleur"* (1946)
Picasso thought a realistic portrait of Gilot would not capture her at
all: 'Even though you have a fairly long oval face, what I need in order
to show its light and expression is to make it a wide oval. I'll compen-
sate for the length by making it a cold colour – blue.'

20. ten Cate, 'Posing as Professor: Laterality in Posing Orientation for Portraits of Scientists'

Investigates posing orientation on portraits. Female portraits in particular show a left-cheek bias. Connects this with the general hypothesis that differences in posing biases between different portrait collections are due to differences in the emotion they are meant to express.

ten Cate, Carel, 'Posing as Professor: Laterality in Posing Orientation for Portraits of Scientists', *Journal of Nonverbal Behavior*, 26: 3, 2002, pp. 175-192.

> **Portrait suggestion**
> Jan Maurits Quinkhard, *Portrait of Friedrich Gotfried Houck* (1749)
> Example of a right-cheeked portrait supposedly perceived as more scientific.

21. Hopkins, 'Douglas Gordon as Gavin Turk as Andy Warhol as Marcel Duchamp as Sarah Lucas'

Illustrates the great complexity of attitudes, ideas, and emotions that can be expressed in a single image. This portrait can be read as a comment on the constructed nature of gender and photographic representation. But it can also be seen as a response to Harvey's painting of Myra Hindley, implying that the artist identifies with Hindley. The portrait may even be an expression of the artist's 'Scottishness.'

Hopkins, David, 'Douglas Gordon as Gavin Turk as Andy Warhol as Marcel Duchamp as Sarah Lucas', *Twoninetwo*: Essays in Visual Culture, 2, 2001, pp. 93-105.

> **Portrait suggestion**
> Douglas Gordon, *Self-Portrait as Kurt Cobain, as Andy Warhol, as Myra Hindley, as Marilyn Monroe (*1995).
> All of the well-known people named in the title have a synthetic-looking blondness in common. Hopkins explores what these citations could mean and also examines references to earlier work by Marcel Duchamp, Sarah Lucas, Gavin Turk, Richard Prince, Cindy Sherman.

See also: 14, 22, 26, 27

VI. Style

How does personal style – of the artist and of the sitter – enter into the act of portraiture and how is it connected to someone's identity and group membership? How do depictive strategies and stylistic elements of one culture compare to and interact with those of other cultures?

22. Berger, 'Frida Kahlo'

Observes how most of Kahlo's paintings are not on canvas but on metal or Masonite and argues that for Kahlo's vision to remain intact she needed to paint on a surface as smooth as skin. With her small brushes and meticulous strokes every image she made aspired to the sensibility of her own skin.

Berger, John, 'Frida Kahlo', in: *Portraits: John Berger on Artists*, London: Verso, 2015, pp. 335-340.

> **Portrait suggestion**
> Frida Kahlo, *Diego and I* (1949)
> Self-portrait with Diego Riveira painted on her own forehead. Perhaps the best illustration of how it was always as if she were drawing and painting on her own skin.

23. Abíódún, 'Àkó-graphy: Òwò Portraits'

Argues that the introduction of photography did not significantly interfere with, or terminate, the àkó legacy of portraiture. Shows instead that the stylistic elements of the àkó life-size burial effigy – a sculpted portrait that attempts to capture the physical likeness, identity, character, social status of a deceased parent – informed the photographic traditional formal portrait in Òwò, Nigeria.

> **Portrait suggestion**
> Mamah, *Carved, life-size, fully dressed second-burial effigy for Madam Aládé, EÌpelè- Òwò, Nigeria* (1972)
> Striking example of the practice. Demonstrates how the àkó tradition appears to have influenced the way elderly people posed for photographs.

Abíódún, Rowland, 'Àkó-graphy: Òwò Portraits', in: John Peffer and Elisabeth L. Cameron (eds.), *Portraiture & Photography in Africa*, Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2013, pp. 287-312.

24. Hovey, 'Picturing Yourself: Portraits, Self-Consciousness, and Modernist Style'

Focuses on the modernist literary portrait in general and on Wilde's novel in particular. Also contains multiple references to painted portraits. Argues that queer modernist portraits concentrate on dynamic aspects of style and personality, presenting both the sitter's style and personality and the personality of the artist who renders her. Explores how style becomes another vehicle where a dangerous homosociality can be reduced into a manifestation of the merely particular (and vice versa).

> **Portrait suggestion**
> Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890)
> Cleverly framed as a story about a portrait within a portrait, and written by Wilde in part to demonstrate to his artistic nemesis James McNeil Whistler the superiority of writing to painting, *Dorian* serves to illustrate the central thesis of Hovey's study. Interweaves reflections on Wilde's personal style, his style as an author, the style of the painter and of the painting, the style of the characters in the book, and queer modernist style in general.

Hovey, Jaime. 'Picturing Yourself: Portraits, Self-Consciousness, and Modernist Style,' in: *A Thousand Words. Portraiture, Style, and Queer Modernism*, Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2006.

See also: 3, 21, 26, 31

VII. Stereotype

How do portraits perpetuate or undermine stereotypes? What is the role of the artist in this process? What is the role of the sitter, of the viewer, of the media?

25. Chambers 'Face to Face: Representing Facial Disfigurement'

In-depth analysis of how the Saving Faces exhibition challenges stereotypes of disabled people as dependent invalids or exotic specimens. Discusses the artist's rejection of experimentation in favour of a painting style that is as 'straight' as possible (and so makes for an interesting contrast with the use of cubist painting in Anita Silver's essays). Also draws attention to the interaction between artist and sitter and to the process of portraiture.

Chambers, Emma, 'Face to Face: Representing Facial Disfigurement', in: Richard Sandell, Jocelyn Dodd, & Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, *Re-presenting Disability: Activism and Agency in the Museum*, London: Routledge, 2010, pp. 179-193.

26. Stallabras, 'What's in a Face? Blankness and Significance in Contemporary Art Photography'

Investigates a new quasi-ethnographic strand in art photography, as seen in the portraits of Rineke Dijkstra, Jitka Hanzlova, and others. This type of work manifests an interplay of stereotype and the palpable presence of an individual, so that the viewer is encouraged to place the individual within the stereotype but also to perturb the stereotype with the individual. Draws attention to the agency of the sitter and to the tendency to exploit the effect of the 'data sublime' (very large amounts of data in this strand of photography).

Stallabras, Julian, 'What's in a Face? Blankness and Significance in Contemporary Art Photography,' *OCTOBER*, 122, 2007, pp. 71-90.

Portrait suggestion
Rineke Dijkstra, *Kolobreg, Poland, July 23, 1992* (1992).
Her work is compared and contrasted with the mannered portraiture of celebrity society, the quasi-anthropological participant-observer model, fashion photography, and the documentary strand in portraiture. Her portraits aim to induce the awareness that we are all irreducibly alien, contingent, and particular.

27. Campbell, 'Myra: a Portrait of a Portrait'

Considers philosophical problems with representation, particularly in regard to the loss of particularity and individuality in instances when an identity takes on symbolic proportions. Hindley, the woman, has been totally merged with Hindley, the monster. Her particularity has been subsumed as a two-dimensional stereotype by having her photo treated with obsessive media attention by being repetitively linked to that same hated stereotype.

Campbell, Shelley, 'Myra: a Portrait of a Portrait', in: Hannah Priest (ed.), *The Female of the Species: Cultural Constructions of Evil, Women and the Feminine,* Oxford: Inter-disciplinary Press, 2013.

Portrait suggestion
Marcus Harvey, *Myra* (1995)
Despite Harvey's attack on reflex reactions to Hindley and his verbal protest to the contrary, his portrait has further incited public outrage and denied her a chance of fair treatment. There's a clear discrepancy between what the artist has said in interviews and what the painting appears to express.

See also: 6, 9, 21, 31

VIII. Objectification

What is it for a portrait to be objectifying? Can portraits be 'subjectifying', too? How to understand the general dynamics of power involved in the making and contemplating of portraits?

28. Freeland, 'Intimacy'

Begins with a discussion of objectification, first at the cultural and social level, as investigated by Catharine MacKinnon, then at the personal level, as investigated by Martha Nussbaum. Freeland also considers what 'subjectification' might amount to and how portraits can either be objectifying or subjectifying.

> **Portrait suggestions**
> Lucian Freud, *Naked portrait* (1972-3).
> The people in Freud's 'naked portraits' are not shown as active or autonomous, but rather as inert material things. Their boundaries are violated, says Freeland.
>
> Mary Cassatt, *Children Playing on a Beach* (1886)
> Portraying children as autonomous, distinct individuals with inner lives.

29. Chino, 'A Man Pretending to Be a Woman: On Yasumasa Morimura's "Actresses"'

Argues that Morimura's portraits achieve something that depictions of the female body rarely can. Morimura invites the violent male gaze with his exposed body and then, in the next moment, snubs and nullifies it. With references to Andy Warhol's portraits of Marilyn Monroe and Cindy Sherman's work.

> **Portrait suggestion**
> Yasumasa Morimura, *Descent of the Actresses* (1994).
> Self-portraits in which the artists impersonates famous actresses.

30. Pointon, 'Slavery and the Possibility of Portraiture'

Draws attention to the fact that portraits of slaves are rarely exhibited or discussed; and that not all images of slaves are portraits. Reflects on the dynamics of power involved in portraiture and on the relation between subject and viewer in particular. Includes extensive commentary on the historical development of portraiture and the place of portraits of slaves therein.

> **Portrait suggestion**
> Francis Wheatley, *A Family Group in a Landscape* (c.1775)
> A dark clad black boy stands motionless at the extreme left of the canvass, scarcely making into the group. He is literally in the shadows.

See also: 6, 9, 26, 32

IX. Empowerment

Can portraits help to empower someone or a group a people? How are portraits able to accord dignity, authority, and symbolic capital to subjects who are ignored or marginalized in society?

31. Smalls, 'African-American Self-Portraiture'

As 'always already' racialized object of the white patriarchal look African-Americans have enduringly suffered from having to negotiate notions of the self from a crisis position. The act of self-portraiture for the African-American artist has the value of bestowing upon the self-portraitist a sense of empowerment.

32. Steinbock, 'Generative Negatives: Del LaGrace Volcano's Herm Body Photographs'

In conventional film photography, negatives are used in the darkroom to produce positive images, but in the outmoded medium Polaroid 665 the positive image is used to make a unique negative that can then be employed to make positive prints in the future. This generativity of the Polaroid 665 negative is used by the artist to mirror the complexity of feelings regarding intersex bodies. The series shows how negative affect can be productive and political, even when it appears to suspend agency.

Steinbock, Eliza, 'Generative Negatives: Del LaGrace Volcano's Herm Body Photographs', *Transgender Studies Quarterly,* 1: 4, 2014, pp. 539-551.

Portrait suggestion
Del LaGrace Volcano, *Herm Body* (2011-)
Self-portraits which clearly reference the work of John Coplans and reflect on Volcano's midlife embodiment changed by hormones, age, and weight. The title draws attention to the materiality of its subject, insisting that we receive the body as 'herm' – a word Volcano uses to name intersex history and claim trans embodiment.

33. Garland-Thomson, 'Picturing People with Disabilities'

Provides a close reading of formal portraits of people with disabilities. Focuses on the fundamental elements of traditional portraiture: frame, pose, costume, likeness. Central argument: a conservative representational genre can act in the service of a progressive politics. Through framing, pose, costume, and likeness portraits accord dignity, authority, and symbolic capital to disabled subjects.

Garland-Thomson, Rosemarie, 'Picturing People with Disabilities: classical portraiture as reconstructive narrative' in: Richard Sandell, Jocelyn Dodd, & Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, *Re-presenting Disability: Activism and Agency in the Museum*, London: Routledge, 2010, pp. 23-40.

Portrait suggestions
Doug Auld, *Shayla* (2005) Portrait of a black woman with significant burn scars. Compared and contrasted with Gilbert Stuart's portrait of George Washington (1810).

Sasha Newley, *Christopher Reeve* (2004). Juxtaposed with earlier iconic portraits of the 'man of steel'.

Marc Quinn, *Alison Lapper Pregnant* (2006). Powerfully asserting that a woman with significant disabilities who is evidently sexual, about to become a mother, is worthy of being seen on the Fourth Plinth in Trafalgar Square.

See also: 3, 4, 9, 10, 25