

Laocoön

KEY FACTS

Who is the artist? The original piece was made by Greek sculptors Agesander, Athenodoros, and Polydorus. Our plaster copy was made by Antonio Canova.

When was this portrait made? The original sculpture was likely made in the first century AD. Our plaster copy was made around 1816.

What materials is the portrait made of? The original sculpture was made in marble. Our version was made in Plaster of Paris.



Who does this portrait represent?

This plaster cast represents Laocoön (Lay-ock-oh-on), a Trojan priest from Greek mythology. During the Trojan War, when the Greeks were fighting the Trojans, Laocoön tried to warn his people that the Greeks were planning to trick them by hiding their soldiers inside a wooden horse. The goddess Athena, who supported the Greeks, was angry and sent sea serpents to attack Laocoön and his two young sons. This is the event that is shown in this sculpture.

How was this portrait made?

The original sculpture was carved in marble. In the nineteenth century, Antonio Canova took moulds from it and made this exact replica in Plaster of Paris. Making a cast such as this is a complex process - it took four years to learn how to be a cast maker.

Why did the artist make this portrait?

Antonio Canova made this plaster cast to circulate knowledge of sculptural works. In the nineteenth century, not everybody could afford to travel to Greece or Rome to see the original pieces of sculpture but by making casts and sending them across the world, more people could see ancient sculptures and learn from them.

How would you describe the emotion in Laocoön's face?

LOOK & RESPOND

Is Laocoön a young man or an older man? How can you tell?

Can you see the heads of the serpents in the composition? What are they doing?

CREATE

This portrait incorporates a lot of action and is used to tell a story. Try creating a dynamic portrait of your own. What pose and expressions could you choose to tell a story?

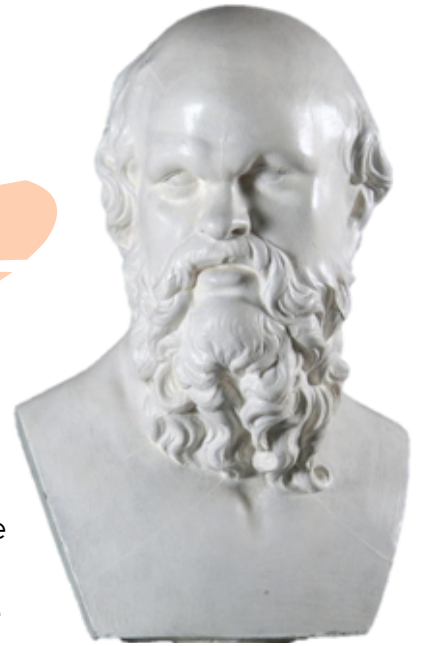
Socrates

KEY FACTS

Who is the artist? The name of the artist who made the original piece has not been recorded. Our plaster copy is likely to have been made by Antonio Canova.

When was this portrait made? The date of the original sculpture is uncertain, but it was likely made in ancient Greece or Rome. Our plaster copy was made around 1816.

What materials is the portrait made of? The original sculpture was made in marble. Our version was made in Plaster of Paris.



Who does this portrait represent?

This is a portrait of Socrates, an ancient Greek philosopher who was active in the fifth century BC. Socrates taught his philosophy students about ethics and morals: the concepts of right and wrong. He did not write down any of his teachings - his students published his thoughts.

How was this portrait made?

This portrait was not made to show the full figure - it is a bust. Busts show just the upper part of the human figure including the head and neck and usually part of the shoulders and chest.

Why did the artist make this portrait?

This portrait was made to highlight Socrates' individual facial features, which was unusual in ancient Greece. Usually ancient Greek portraits were idealised - meaning that they showed the sitter looking perfect, better than they did in real life. Socrates is shown in a more realistic way. He has a furrowed brow, a bald head, a snub nose, and a messy beard.

LOOK & RESPOND

Socrates' portrait is not idealised - it gives us a good idea of what he really looked like in real life. Can you find a portrait in the Sculpture Galleries that does look idealised or too good to be true? What differences can you find between the portrait you have chosen and that of Socrates?

If an artist wanted to make a portrait of you, would you prefer to be represented in an idealised way, or in a realistic way? Explain the reasons for your choice.

CREATE

This plaster cast can be described as **monochrome**. There is only one colour, a pure white. But in the ancient world, busts like this one would have been painted in vibrant colours.

Do you think that adding more colours would improve the piece, or do you like it as it is? Create a monochrome portrait of your own.

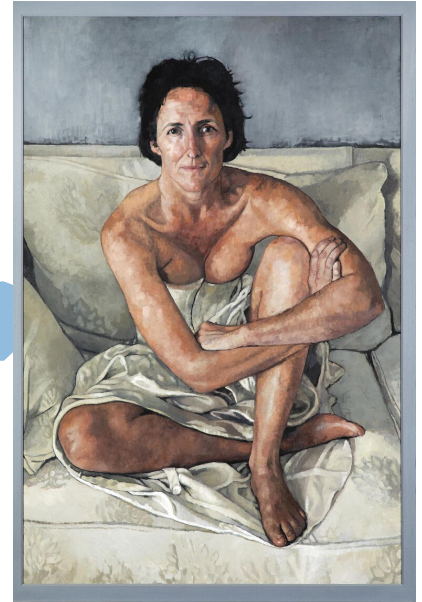
Portrait of Fiona Shaw

KEY FACTS

Who is the artist? Victoria Russell, born in the UK in 1962

When was this portrait made? 2002

What materials is the portrait made of? Oil on canvas



Who does this portrait represent?

Fiona Shaw is an actress who was born and grew up in Cork City. She has acted in and directed many theatrical productions, including the *Harry Potter* franchise where she played Aunt Petunia. Shaw has also played a secret agent in the thriller TV series *Killing Eve*.

How was this portrait made?

This portrait was made in Fiona Shaw's home in London. Making this portrait required a number of sittings every week for three months! The artist took many photographs of Fiona Shaw and worked on it alone in her studio, focusing on making this portrait just right. Reflecting on the creation of this portrait, Fiona Shaw said: "Victoria photographed me in the bath, the kitchen and bed. It was exciting to see which picture she would use for the portrait. I just wish I had brushed my hair!"

Why did the artist make this portrait?

Victoria Russell won the BP Portrait Award in 2000. As part of this prize, she received a commission to produce work for the National Portrait Gallery's contemporary collection. This resulted in making two portraits of Fiona Shaw. Crawford Art Gallery purchased this one in 2002.

LOOK & RESPOND

Do you recognise the person in this portrait?

What is the sitter wearing?

Where do you think this portrait is set?

Why do you think the artist chose this setting?

Can you see any patterns in this portrait?

Do you like this painting? Why/ why not?

CREATE

This portrait features a well-known person. Can you find any other examples of portraits like this in the gallery?

Which famous person would you most like to meet? Make a portrait of them.

Self Portrait and Cat



KEY FACTS

Who is the artist? Patrick Hennessy (1915-1980), born in Cork

When was this portrait made? 1978

What materials is the portrait made of? Oil on canvas

Who does this portrait represent?

Hennessy plays some interesting games in this self-portrait. His image appears among a group of objects and a cat on a shelf, his gaze hidden behind a pair of heavy black sunglasses. Not only that, but his image is in fact painted as part of another object: a photograph on the back of a book about the artist himself! These playful references to other media – books, photography, still life painting – make this self-portrait a fun one to puzzle over!

How was this portrait made?

Hennessy's oil paintings were made, in general, by working from photographs. However, he often introduced other elements and objects that were not taken straight from “real life” or observation so his work cannot be described as fully “photo-realist.”

Why did the artist make this portrait?

This painting was made in Portugal and later in Patrick Hennessy's life. His paintings might be described as an exploration of his imagination; they often feature settings and objects that look familiar and real, with elements that seemed non-realistic and even magical.

LOOK & RESPOND

What objects can you see in this painting?

What do you notice about the subject of this portrait?

What is the cat doing in this portrait?

Can you think of a name for the cat?

What do you think of this portrait's setting / composition?

Do you like this painting? Why / why not?

What do you think the objects in the portrait tell us about the artist?

CREATE

This portrait presents an animal and other objects and references other art forms in playful ways. Can you think of a way to use these ideas in a portrait or painting of your own? Think about how you could use photography, sculpture, or writing in your work, for example.

What do your belongings say about you? Pick some objects that are important to you and make a self-portrait surrounded by them.

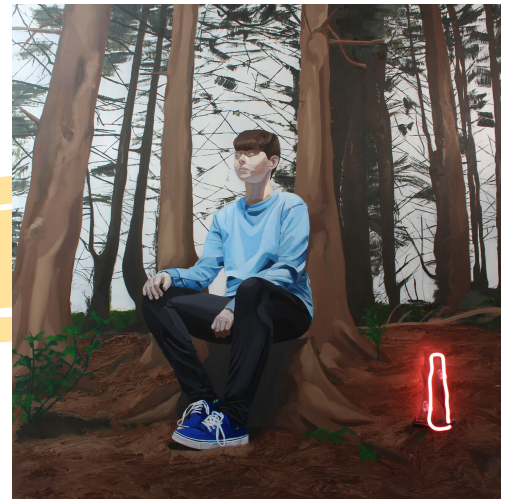
Dylan is ainm dom...

KEY FACTS

Who is the artist? Stephen Doyle (b. 1994), born in Cork

When was this portrait made? 2018

What materials is the portrait made of? Mixed media on board (oil paint and neon on glass)



Who does this portrait represent?

Dylan is a seventeen-year-old from Lucan, County Dublin who happens to identify as transgender. The setting is a park near Dylan's home. This is thought to be the first artwork in the national collection that openly addresses trans identity.

How was this portrait made?

This portrait was made with a combination of materials, or "mixed media". The use of the traditional media of oil paint contrasts with the inclusion of neon, a far more recent invention. The neon could imply a sense of "otherness".

Why did the artist make this portrait?

In his work, Stephen Doyle addresses themes of queer identity and queer culture. He has said that he "hopes that any transgender individual who sees the work will be able to connect with it and know that they belong."

LOOK & RESPOND

How would you describe the sitter?

What can you see in this painting?

What do you notice about the sitter's facial expression?

What kind of clothes is the sitter wearing?

Where do you think this portrait is set?

What age do you think the person in this portrait is?

What do you think of the materials used to make this portrait?

What effect does the use of scale and viewpoint have on the viewer?

What do you think of the title of this work?

CREATE

This portrait places the natural world and technology side by side. Can you think of a way to combine these ideas in a portrait or painting of your own?

What's your favourite outfit? Make a self-portrait of you wearing your favourite clothes.

Elodie

KEY FACTS

Who is the artist? Síobhra O'Reardon Farrell (b.2002)

When was this portrait made? 2019

What materials is the portrait made of? Oil on canvas board



Who does this portrait represent?

This portrait represents a young woman called Elodie. The artist made the decision to remove Elodie's eyes from the piece. She felt that the eyes are the features that usually grab a viewer's attention when looking at a portrait. By removing them, she hoped to draw the viewer in to the full piece.

How was this portrait made?

Instead of using a traditional paintbrush, Síobhra O'Reardon Farrell created her work with a palette knife. Similar to the way in which you would use a knife to spread icing on a cake, the palette knife has been used here in sweeping strokes to create a striking textural effect.

Why did the artist make this portrait?

This piece was created for the Zurich Young Portrait Prize 2019 competition. The contest accepted entries from young people, up to the age of 18, of all abilities, from across the island of Ireland. The portrait is displayed here at the Crawford Art Gallery because it was shortlisted in the competition.

LOOK & RESPOND

What do you think of the colour scheme of this portrait?

What mood is created by this work?

Can you pick out the places where the palette knife has been used?

How would you describe the sitter's expression?

What stands out to you most about the sitter?

What impact does the absence of the eyes have?

Do you like this painting? Why / why not?

CREATE

Create a painting inspired by this one, without using a paintbrush. You could paint with your fingers and toes, with a toothbrush, or using bubble wrap, string, or pieces of cardboard.

Can you recreate the strokes of the palette knife that the artist might have used to create this work?

Do you think that she worked in a fast, energetic manner or in a slow, more controlled way?

Lucy with 3 hands and me holding onto her leg

KEY FACTS

Who is the artist? Salvatore of Lucan (b. 1994), born in Co. Dublin

When was this portrait made? 2019

What materials is the portrait made of? Oil on canvas

Who does this portrait represent?

The portrait represents Salvatore, the artist, and his girlfriend Lucy. Lucy is shown lying on a bed, holding her phone and a hanky, with a third hand resting on her face. The artist is shown at the foot of the bed, grasping Lucy's ankle. He is plugging his phone into the wall.



How was this portrait made?

This portrait was painted using an unusual perspective. Instead of using foreshortening to show that the top part of the bed is further away from the viewer than the bottom, the painting is very flat and the bed looks almost two dimensional. This seems to have been a conscious choice by the artist to add to the odd, slightly unsettling feel of the portrait.

Why did the artist make this portrait?

In this work, Salvatore of Lucan explores the difficulties of relationships and the impact of social media. Although the figures are physically connected by the artist's hand on Lucy's leg, they seem to lack an emotional connection. The light of the artist's phone illuminating his face might suggest that he is more focused on his phone than on her.

LOOK & RESPOND

How would you describe the emotion of this piece?

What is the significance of Lucy's third hand?

Could it be something to do with the idea of our phones now functioning as extra limbs?

Do you find this portrait interesting? Why / why not?

What do you notice about the artist's fingers?

CREATE

Phones and social media are everywhere in today's society. Do you think that this is a good thing or a bad thing? If you were to make a portrait showing yourself using your phone, would you choose to show this in a positive or a negative light? How would you achieve this impression in your painting? Think about what colours or expressions you might use to achieve your desired effect.

Crawford Art Gallery

Aida

KEY FACTS

Who is the artist? Oliver Sheppard (1865 - 1941), born in Cookstown, County Tyrone

When was this portrait made? 1935

What materials is the portrait made of? Marble



Who does this portrait represent?

This is a portrait of Aida Kelly, a great supporter of the arts in the mid twentieth century. Aida was a writer, costume and set designer, and member of the Dublin Grand Opera Society. Despite her talents, Aida had to take on a male pseudonym in order for her work to be published. She was nicknamed "Paddy" by her friends after her most commonly used pen-name.

How was this portrait made?

This portrait is an example of relief sculpture. Relief is a sculptural technique where the sculpted elements remain attached to a solid background of the same material.

Why did the artist make this portrait?

Oliver Sheppard's most famous sculptures are monumental pieces made in bronze. They comment on the political climate of his day, idealising the Irish struggle for independence. But Sheppard did not only make pieces in bronze. He used smaller marble sculptures like this one to express a different mood - something more gentle and intimate.

LOOK & RESPOND

How would you describe the marble that has been used for this piece?
Get close up to see how it glistens in the light!

How would you describe the sitter's expression?

Do you think that this sculpture would be heavy or light?

Do you like this sculpture? Why / why not?

If you were to touch this sculpture, what might its textures feel like?

CREATE

Can you imitate the sitter's pose? Is it a comfortable one?

If you were sitting for a portrait, how might you like to pose?