



ENGLISH HERITAGE  
EDUCATION

KS1-2

KS3

KS4+

## LEARNING PACK

### Painting Our Past: The African Diaspora in England

This pack supports teaching about six newly commissioned portraits of figures from the African diaspora with links to English Heritage sites and whose stories – many of which are not widely known – the charity wants to bring to life. Use these resources to help students explore the fascinating

stories of these individuals, and the people who painted them.



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# Step into England's story

# WELCOME

This Learning Pack has been designed for teachers and educators wanting to explore the portrait exhibition 'Painting Our Past: The African Diaspora in England', whether in the classroom or at home. It includes a variety of materials suited to teaching a range of subjects and key stages, with information about each portrait and artist, plus activity ideas to support continued learning and research.

We know that each class and study group is different, so we have collated our resources into one pack, allowing you to decide which materials are best suited to your needs. Please use the contents page, which has been colour-coded to help you easily locate what you need and view individual sections. All of our activities have clear guidance on the intended use for study so you can adapt them for your desired learning outcomes.

We hope you find this Learning Pack useful. If you would like to bring your group to see any of the portraits while they are on display at one of our sites, please don't hesitate to get in touch with a member of our team either via [bookeducation@english-heritage.org.uk](mailto:bookeducation@english-heritage.org.uk) or on 0370 333 0606.

English Heritage Learning Team

## ICON KEY

The icons below will help you quickly identify the types of activities and information presented.



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# INTRODUCTION

Everything you need to know about the portrait exhibition 'Painting Our Past: The African Diaspora in England'.

# EXHIBITION SUMMARY

PAINTING OUR PAST: THE  
AFRICAN DIASPORA IN  
ENGLAND

KS1–2

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Information about the exhibition, why it's important and where the portraits will be displayed for the duration of their showing.

## WHAT IS THE EXHIBITION?

From 9 June 2021, new **portraits** depicting six historical figures from the **African diaspora** with links to English Heritage properties will be unveiled at six sites for a new nationwide exhibition. 'Painting our Past: The African Diaspora in England' will portray people connected with English Heritage sites and whose stories – many of which are not widely known – the charity now wants to bring to life and share with its visitors. From Roman Britain to the 20th century, the lives of these different individuals span the centuries and their portraits will shed new light on the long history of African people in England. Commissioned by English Heritage, the paintings will be displayed at the forts, abbeys, historic houses and barracks where these individuals lived, visited or worked.

## WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Speaking about the exhibition, Anna Eavis, Curatorial Director at English Heritage, said: 'African figures from the past have played significant roles at some of the historic sites in our care but many of their stories are not very well known. Placing their portraits on the walls of those sites is one way we hope to bring their stories to life and share them with a wider audience. We are also delighted to be working with these brilliant artists and seeing how they engage with the past, with all its complexities, is inspiring.'



Anna Eavis, Curatorial Director  
at English Heritage.

## WHO ARE THE ARTISTS?

English Heritage has commissioned the new portraits from artists who themselves identify as black or mixed heritage. The artists are:

- Elena Onwochei-Garcia
- Clifton Powell
- Glory Samjolly
- Mikéla Henry-Lowe
- Hannah Uzor
- Chloe Cox

'I really enjoyed the historical site trip at Kirby Hall. I've always been a nerd for historical trips. Being in the atmosphere where James Chappell once lived gives the exhibition a unique vibe, because we are submerged into the context rather than reading about it from a textbook.' Glory



The six artists.

## WHO ARE THE SUBJECTS AND WHERE WILL THEY BE DISPLAYED?

The portrait subjects, the historic sites at which they'll be displayed, and the artists who created them are:

- Emperor Septimius Severus (AD 145–211) at Corbridge Roman Town on Hadrian's Wall, Northumberland (Elena Onwochei-Garcia)
- Abbot Hadrian (AD c.630–710) at St Augustine's Abbey, Kent (Clifton Powell)
- James Chappell (c.1648–c.1730) at Kirby Hall, Northamptonshire (Glory Samjolly)
- Dido Belle (1761–1804) at Kenwood, London (Mikéla Henry-Lowe)
- Sarah Forbes Bonetta (1843–80) at Osborne, Isle of Wight (Hannah Uzor)
- Arthur Roberts (1897–1982) at Berwick-upon-Tweed Barracks, Northumberland (Chloe Cox)



Kirby Hall.



# KEY INFORMATION

Details about the six people who have been painted and the artists who painted them, plus definitions of some key words related to the exhibition.

# HISTORICAL SUBJECT PROFILES

DISCOVER NEW STORIES

Below is a brief history of the six figures from the African diaspora who are connected with English Heritage sites, and who were selected to be the subjects of the new portraits.

## SEPTIMIUS SEVERUS (AD 145–211)

The people who travelled to Britain from across the **Roman Empire** were many and diverse. Rome's Empire included areas of northern Africa, and some people from these areas eventually settled in Britain.

The Romans had no concept of race in the modern sense, but **prejudice** and inequality were still very much present in Roman society. The Romans were keen to protect their culture and customs, and could be quite brutal in their treatment of those considered 'foreign' on the basis of their looks or broader culture. However, access to status as a Roman was available to all who were willing and rich enough to achieve it, regardless of their ethnicity and/or skin tone.

Rome's African-born **Emperor**, Septimius Severus (145–211) was born in Leptis Magna (present-day Libya) and rose through the administrative ranks, eventually seizing the throne by force and becoming Emperor in 193, aged 48. He ordered the refurbishment of Hadrian's Wall with a view to securing the province. He travelled to Britain in 208 and ruled the Roman Empire from the province for a brief three-year period, overseeing a merciless **campaign** north of **Hadrian's Wall**. Severus divided Britain into two provinces, *Britannia Superior* (south) and *Britannia Inferior* (north), with capitals at London and York respectively. This prevented too many troops from being concentrated in the hands of a single governor who might have attempted to take power for themselves.

Septimius Severus mounted campaigns against the Maeatae and then the Caledonians deep into modern-day Scotland in 209. He died in 211.



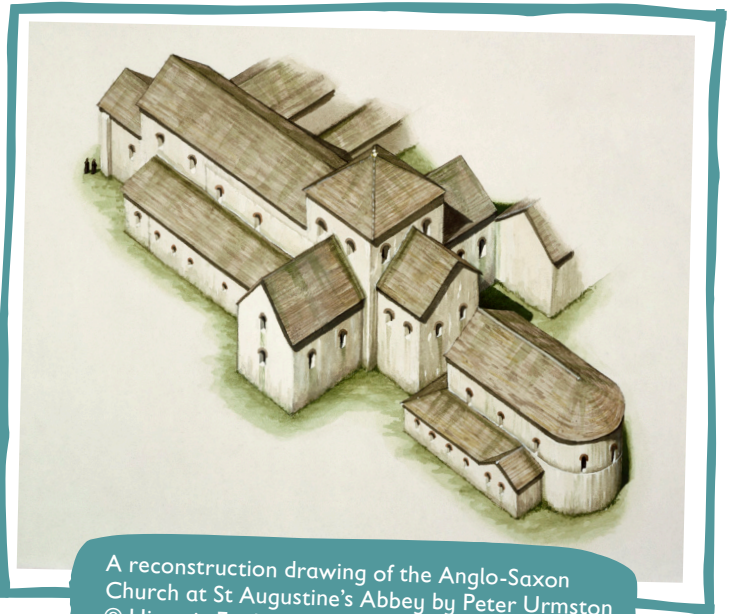
Marble bust of the Emperor Septimius Severus (reign AD 193–211) © The Trustees of the British Museum.



## ABBOT HADRIAN (AD c.630–710)

St Hadrian of Canterbury was born in North Africa in about 630–37 and travelled to Italy – most likely as a **refugee** – in the 640s. He's recorded as being 'very learned in the **scriptures**, experienced in ecclesiastical and monastic administration and a great scholar'.

Hadrian became **abbot** of a **monastery** close to Naples and evidence also suggests he was a trusted counsellor to the **Pope** and the Byzantine Emperor – the two most important people in the Christian world. Although he was offered the chance to become **Archbishop** of Canterbury in 667, Hadrian declined, suggesting his friend, Theodore of Tarsus, instead. He then travelled with Theodore to Canterbury and was appointed abbot of the monastery of St Peter and St Paul (later St Augustine's).



A reconstruction drawing of the Anglo-Saxon Church at St Augustine's Abbey by Peter Urmston © Historic England Photo Library.



The only surviving world map from Anglo-Saxon England showing the three continents of Europe, Asia and Africa, with the Mediterranean Sea in the centre. St Hadrian was from Cyrenaica, which is in modern-day Libya © The British Library Board (Cotton MS Tiberius B V/1 fol 56v).

Together, Hadrian and Theodore founded a well-respected school at Canterbury that attracted many students. One such student was Aldhelm (637–709), who later became Bishop of Sherborne and a **saint**. He called Hadrian a 'respected father and reverend teacher'.

Hadrian made a great impact through his literature and teaching and worked to spread the use of music in church services. By the time of his death in 710, Hadrian had played an important role in developing the **Anglo-Saxon** Church into an intellectual powerhouse of the early medieval world.

## JAMES CHAPPELL (c.1648–c.1730)

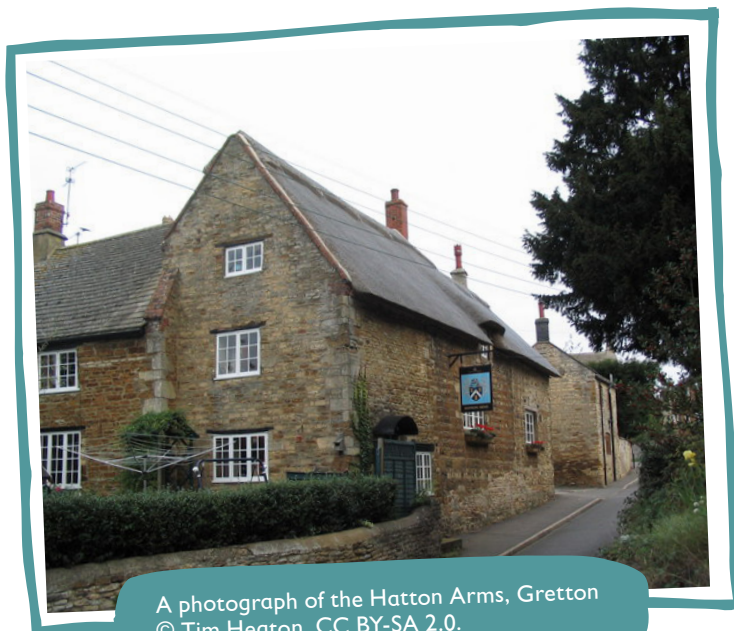
During the Tudor and Stuart periods black servants were seen as status symbols, and their experiences and legal statuses varied enormously. Some lived comfortably, others were put on display as living ornaments and some were enslaved and worked without pay.

James Chappell was taken into Christopher Hatton's service at Kirby Hall in 1663, aged about 15, and went with Hatton's household to Guernsey where Hatton had been appointed **governor** in 1670 (inheriting the governorship and title Baron Hatton from his father Christopher Hatton, First Baron Hatton). It was during this posting that James saved Christopher and his daughters after an explosion at Castle Cornet, which killed Hatton's wife and mother.



Kirby Hall © Historic England Photo Library.

James returned to Kirby Hall with Hatton's household after this, in 1672. On Christopher's death in 1706, he provided for James in his will, stating 'And to my servant James Chappell I give one **annuity** of twenty pounds a year during the term of his life'. James is said to have become the landlord for the local Hatton Arms pub.



A photograph of the Hatton Arms, Gretton  
© Tim Heaton, CC BY-SA 2.0.

By the 18th century, domestic service was the biggest employment sector for both white and black people in Britain. However, it's unlikely that the majority of black servants would have been paid or able to leave their employer voluntarily.

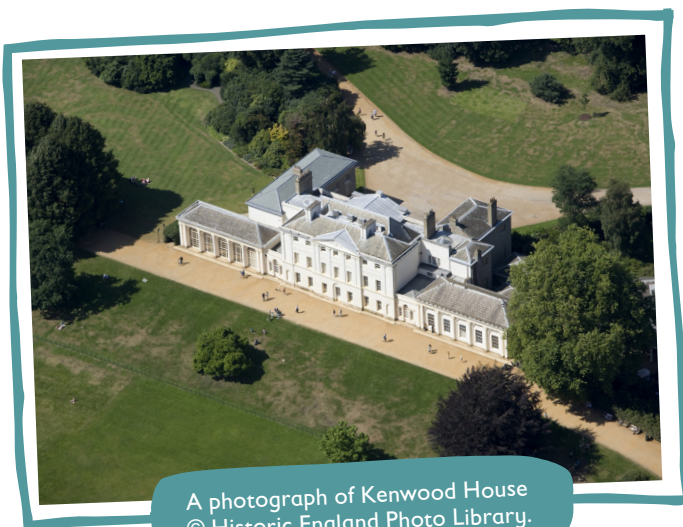
## DIDO BELLE (1761–1804)

Dido Belle was the great-niece of Lord Mansfield, the **Lord Chief Justice**, and lived with the Mansfields at Kenwood. Her father was Sir John Lindsay, nephew of Lord Mansfield and a captain in the **Royal Navy**. Her mother was Maria Belle, a young African woman. Dido was born in June 1761, so Maria and Sir John must have been in each other's company about nine months earlier, in October or November of 1760. At this time Sir John, aboard HMS *Trent*, was patrolling off the coast of Senegal, before returning to Jamaica towards the end of the year. It's reputed that Maria Belle was enslaved on a Spanish galleon that Lindsay captured off the coast of Africa and brought to England.

The first record of Maria is on Dido's baptism entry in 1766. She was not married to Sir John and he is not recorded as Dido's father, but the two must have remained in contact as in 1773 (five years after he eventually married) he gifted Maria some land in Pensacola, Florida where she built a house. The document detailing this states she was in London in 1773 but 'of Pensacola', suggesting she may have crossed the Atlantic several times. Sir John certainly did and he fathered four other children with different mothers before his marriage, all of whom are recorded in baptism records at Port Royal, near Kingston, Jamaica, where the Royal Navy had a base for repairing their ships.



Close-up of Dido from the only known portrait of her at Kenwood in about 1776 © By kind permission of the Earl of Mansfield, Scone Palace, Perth, Scotland.



A photograph of Kenwood House © Historic England Photo Library.

It was unusual in the 1700s for someone of **mixed heritage** with unmarried parents, like Dido, to be accepted into a wealthy British family such as the Mansfields. Although Dido's position in the household is unclear, we know she was treated as a lady rather than a servant. She was taught to read and write, play music, and practise other social skills like **aristocratic** women of her time. She also ran the ornamental dairy and poultry yard at Kenwood, both fashionable pastimes for ladies of the time.

## SARAH FORBES BONETTA (1843–80)

Sarah Forbes Bonetta, originally known by the name Omoba Aina, was a member of the Egbado (known today as Yewa) clan of the Yoruba people from West Africa, in what is now south-west Nigeria.

In 1848, her village, Oke-Odan, was attacked by King Gezo of Dahomey and his army. Her parents were killed in the raid. Orphaned at the age of five, she was held as a slave by King Gezo from 1848.



A photograph of Sarah Forbes Bonetta  
© National Portrait Gallery, London.

Aina was offered as a gift to Queen Victoria by King Gezo in 1850 when a British naval captain, Frederick Forbes of HMS *Bonetta*, visited the King on a diplomatic mission to try to persuade him to abandon slaving. Forbes negotiated the gift giving (a normal part of diplomatic relations) as whilst with the King, he was invited to witness the human sacrifice of a number of captives and feared that Aina would be sacrificed at some point too. She was christened at the Church Mission Society in Badagry along the coast from Dahomey and given the name Sarah Forbes Bonetta after the captain and his ship.

Forbes took Sarah to England where he presented her to Queen Victoria at Windsor Castle later that year. Victoria was impressed by Sarah's intelligence and arranged to have her brought up as her **protégée** within the English middle class. In 1851, after Sarah developed a cough, the Queen sent her to the Church Missionary Society school in Freetown, Sierra Leone, where she remained until she was 12. She then returned to England and was placed with the Revd. Frederick Schoen and his wife, a family of former missionaries living in Gillingham, Kent. During her teenage years Sarah was a regular visitor to the royal court and became friends with the royal children. By the time she reached adulthood she had taken her place in Victorian high society and become a celebrity – as well as part of the contemporary debate about race, slavery and empire.

In 1862, the Queen persuaded Sarah to marry. She was at first reluctant but married James Davies and moved with him to Sierra Leone and then Lagos. They had three children: Victoria, Arthur and Stella. Her daughter Victoria was a goddaughter of Queen Victoria and spent time at Osborne.

‘She was a very intelligent and strong woman. She had already overcome so much since childhood from being orphaned and enslaved and yet still commanded such a presence that compelled the Queen to be personally vested in her affairs. She was also not afraid to speak her mind – she had initially not wanted to marry James Davies and had informed the Queen as such.’ Hannah Uzor



## ARTHUR ROBERTS (1897–1982)

Arthur Roberts was born in Bristol in April 1897 to a West Indian father, David, and English mother, Laura. The family moved to Scotland and aged 20, Arthur enlisted with The King's Own Scottish Borderers (KOSB) and served in the **First World War**.

Most of what we know about Arthur comes from a remarkable discovery of his letters, diaries, memoirs, drawings, photos and other memorabilia, found by a young couple in the attic of a property they bought in 2004.

Arthur grew up in Glasgow, on the banks of the river Clyde. He was working as an engineering **apprentice** at Harland and Wolff shipbuilders when he volunteered to join the army in February 1917. Arthur kept a personal diary during his first year in service, which offers insights into his life as a soldier, including his experiences at the **Battle of Passchendaele**, which he survived despite many casualties in his regiment.

Arthur survived the First World War and returned to Glasgow. He experienced racism during the race riots of 1919 and while at work in the shipyard on occasions. He secured an apprenticeship followed by a successful career as an engineer and then as an electrician. He married Jessie Finnigan in 1956, with whom he had lived for over 20 years. Jessie died a year later. Arthur himself entered a care home in 1979, dying in January 1982.

Arthur's 1917 diary is now kept at the Imperial War Museum.



A photograph of Private Roberts in his uniform, Third Battalion KOSB, 1917  
© Courtesy of the KOSB Museum.

English Heritage has commissioned a series of portraits depicting six historic figures from the African diaspora whose stories have contributed to England's rich history. Each artist has been supported by our curators and historians to creatively portray their subject.

The paintings will be hung at the English Heritage site connected to its subject this summer, alongside a programme of public events.

Learn more about the commissioned artists and their subjects here.

Search 'Painting Our Past' on the English Heritage website for more information on the six artists with links through to the historical subjects who have inspired their portraits.



# ARTIST PROFILES

GET TO KNOW  
THE PAINTERS

Below are brief biographies of the six artists who created the new portraits for English Heritage.

## ELENA ONWOCHEI-GARCIA

Elena Njoabuzia Onwochei-Garcia works in a figurative style with oils, interrogating ideas of race. Currently, her practice explores the expression of racial issues and ideologies through humour, and how they shift over time and with the dynamics of power. Informing and driving her work is her own experience of being a mixed-race woman (Spanish, German and Nigerian). This experience has centred her research around the dynamics between the creator, performer and the audience around the subject. She creates installations of painted portraits and illustrative panels, utilising historic didactic methods and compositional mechanisms to comment on contemporary experiences of racial identity. Her practice is informed by her academic background in History and Art History at Durham University (UK) and La Sapienza (Italy). Onwochei-Garcia was mentored by the figurative artist Luca Morelli at the Academy of Figurative Art, Arts in Rome. Most recently she has been working at the Peggy Guggenheim Collection in Venice. Elena Onwochei-Garcia now lives and works in Cambridge.



Elena created the portrait of the Roman Emperor, Septimius Severus, using oils on canvas.

'I am Elena Onwochei-Garcia, I am an artist. My background is in History and Art History, having read both at university. However, whilst studying I was always drawn to visualising the stories and people I was reading about, perhaps as a way of understanding them.'



## CLIFTON POWELL

Clifton Powell studied at the Jamaica School of Art in Kingston, Jamaica and moved to the UK in the late 1980s. Clifton is a versatile and skilled painter, influenced by the places he's travelled to and the people he has met. Recent areas of exploration in his work include the Wiltshire countryside, wildlife, birds, still lifes and unrest in the world. He is currently working on a painting project titled African Art.

During his time in the UK, Clifton has taken part in numerous exhibitions in London, Bath, Stroud and the West Country, at art galleries, fairs and historical sites including the International Black Art Fair, The House of Emperor Haile Selassie, Bluestone Gallery and Diaspora at Salisbury Arts Centre. Clifton is a mentor and volunteer for Arts Together, a charity-run art group for the elderly in his home county of Wiltshire.



Clifton painted the portrait of the Anglo-Saxon Abbot Hadrian, using acrylics on canvas.

'I am a British artist, born in Jamaica. I am also a singer/composer of music. I am the son of a fisherman who taught me to draw, then I went on to Jamaican art school, before moving to the UK in the 1980s. I enjoy all subjects of art: countryside, black art, unrest and political issues, and portraits of people and animals. I am proud to be part of and represent English Heritage.'



Examples of Clifton's work.



## GLORY SAMJOLLY

Born and raised in London, Glory Samjolly is an Afro-Caribbean and multidisciplinary artist, beginning her artistic journey in Eltham Hill Girls' School and later pursuing a bachelor's degree in Fine Art Painting in 2017. Exploring colonial themes through her latest project, Glory was led to create the social enterprise 'Black Aristocratic Art' in 2019. This enterprise seeks to decolonise what is presented in the mainstream curriculum as 'art history'. Glory was featured in the National Gallery in March 2020, and graduated in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic, having an online degree show. She also exhibited her series 'Dear Archives' in Central Saint Martins in October 2020.



Glory created the portrait of the servant James Chappell, using oils.

'I'm an artist, Afro-Caribbean and born in Britain, entrepreneur, and UAL graduate continuing my practice from home. I have always been artistic and drawn to the arts since I was a toddler. I've spent most of my life growing up in South East London. I went to Eltham Hill Girls' School and did A-levels there. Studying at university gave me the capacity to develop my methodology, such as creating my own canvases, using varnish, different paint thinners and most importantly developing a strong contextual basis.'



## PAINTING OUR PAST

THE AFRICAN DIASPORA  
IN ENGLAND



To watch a film showing the artists speaking about the portraits they've created for the 'Painting Our Past: The African Diaspora in England' exhibition, visit the English Heritage YouTube channel. A further edit can be found on the Kids pages in the Members' area of the English Heritage website.





## MIKÉLA HENRY-LOWE

Mikéla Henry-Lowe is a Jamaican artist based in London whose vibrant portraits celebrate the beauty of black women. Her primary interest is the representation of black women in society. By breaking down her images into patterns and fragments of colour, Mikéla aims to break down the overarching negative image of black women that dominates the media. The array of shapes and colours that make up each portrait captures the colourful personality of the subjects and also of the artist herself.

Mikéla studied at Central Saint Martins and has showcased her work at a number of London galleries. She has also been featured in a number of articles, including an interview feature for *The Artist's Magazine*.



Mikéla created the portrait of Dido Belle, using a mixture of mediums.

‘My name is Mikéla Henry-Lowe and I’m a mixed-media portrait artist. I was born in Jamaica, went to school there until I was ten, then moved to London in 2004. I only did one year in primary. When I got to secondary I already knew I was going to focus on art because I’ve always wanted to be an artist. I then studied for a BA in Fine Art at Central Saint Martins.’

“”



Everything Rose Gold.



Black Rapunzel.



Black Girl with that Pearl Earring.

## HANNAH UZOR

Hannah Uzor, nee Hasiimbwe, was born in Zambia in 1982. As a teenager Hannah was active in the Zambian artistic community before moving to the UK to complete her bachelor's degree in Computing. Largely self-taught, in 2019 Hannah began formal art studies and is undertaking a Fine Art degree course. Hannah enjoys a research-led practice that explores themes related to race and the complexities of the black identity and experience. Hannah is married to a British Nigerian man and they have two children.



Hannah painted the portrait of Sarah Forbes Bonetta, using acrylics and PVA glue.

‘My name is Hannah Uzor, nee Hasiimbwe. I am a British Zambian artist living and working in the UK. I am a figurative painter and filmmaker. I am currently studying Fine Art (Year 2) at Morley College in London and will be starting my master’s in Painting in September. I also run an online art and greeting card store. I use portraiture and video as a tool to highlight the stories of Black individuals originating from the African continent, and the complex relationships they have with Western society and culture.’



Olaudah Equiano.



Don't Touch My Hair – Homage to Diana Ross.

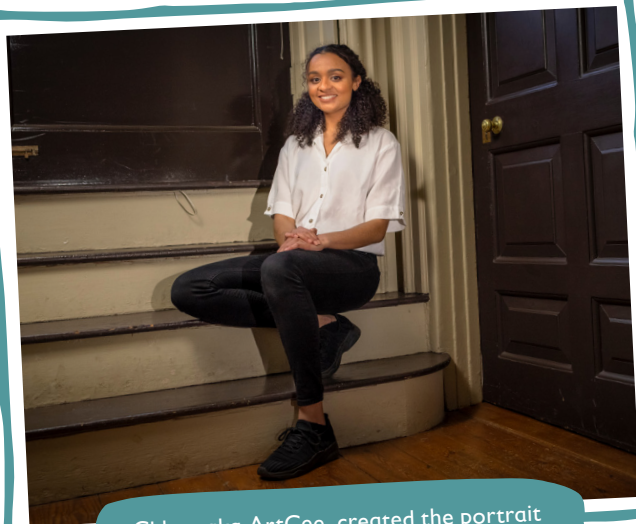


Mum – Portrait of a nurse.

## CHLOE COX

Chloe Cox is a young artist of Caribbean heritage from Birmingham, who goes by the artist name 'Cee' or 'ArtCee'. Currently living and working in the countryside, she uses oil paint on canvas to bring her hyper-realistic portraits to life. Winner of the 2020 SAA Young Artist of the Year Award and SAA Young Portrait Artist of the Year Award, Cee is keen to pursue a career in art and use her work to empower minority ethnic individuals. Her inspirations come from people, skin and light. Her artistic imperative is to represent black and minority ethnic communities as honestly and sympathetically as possible, to increase their sense of belonging in British history, arts and culture.

ArtCee's work has featured in the Art Materials Live event of 2019, as well as online exhibitions run by Pack Midlands, ukisntinnocent and Black British Visual Artists. She has also been commissioned by a member of the UK rapping duo Lotto Boyzz.



Chloe, aka ArtCee, created the portrait of Arthur Roberts, using oils.

'My name is Chloe. I go by the artist pseudonym ArtCee. Born in Birmingham with mixed Caucasian and Caribbean heritage, I'm an oil painter who seeks to diversify traditional portraiture. Determined to bring to light the individuals in our society with lost identities, I intend to tell stories yet untold, represent the underrepresented and breathe life into the time and space in which they've been captured. I've always been "artsy" (hence the pseudonym), but really it all started with paint.'



Grandad.



Girl.



Pride.

KS3

KS4+

# PORTRAITURE

A SUMMARY OF THIS  
ENDURING ART FORM

A brief overview of information  
about portraiture.

A portrait is a representation of a particular person, or sometimes a group.

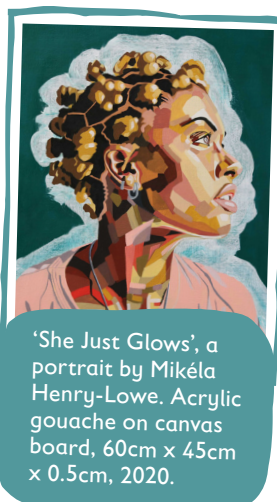
Portraits often include references to aspects of the person's identity. These could be physical, cultural, social or circumstantial. They reflect the unique relationship between the artist, their sitter and the function of the artwork. The viewer themselves also brings their own unique perspective into the mix!

Portraiture may have existed as early as the **Neolithic** period and was certainly present in the ancient worlds of Egypt, Greece and Rome. However, it was during the **Renaissance** that portraiture became much more widespread, particularly in Western countries, and can be seen to be linked to increased interest in the individual within these cultures.

Portraits can be found in a variety of different **media** – they are most commonly paintings but may also be drawings, sculptures, engravings or prints. The invention of photography introduced another medium for capturing a person's likeness and meant that the subject of a portrait no longer had to 'sit' for long periods for their artist, broadening the possibility and audience of the art form.

Throughout history, portraits have been used to show the importance of individuals, highlighting their power, wealth and perceived beauty or other such sought-after qualities. They can contain very specific and personal details, like the individual's body and facial features, as well as more general features that might reflect their character, **virtues** or the values of the time in which they lived, for example their clothing, pose or surrounding props.

Portrait painting continues to thrive today. People and the human form prove infinitely interesting and provide numerous possibilities for expression and representation.



'She Just Glows', a portrait by Mikéla Henry-Lowe. Acrylic gouache on canvas board, 60cm x 45cm x 0.5cm, 2020.

# GLOSSARY

## TRICKY TERMS AND WHAT THEY MEAN

Below is a list of words you might come across while exploring the portraits and the artistic techniques used to create them. Use this Glossary to find out what they mean.

**abbot** – a man who is the head of an abbey or monastery

**African diaspora** – a phrase used to describe the movement all over the world of people from Africa and their descendants, by choice or by force, in modern and pre-modern times

**Anglo-Saxon** – the period between 450 and 1066 when the Anglo-Saxons settled in England. The Norman Conquest in 1066 marks the end of the Anglo-Saxon period.

**annuity** – a fixed sum of money paid to someone each year, typically for the rest of their life

**apprentice** – someone who is learning a trade from a skilled tradesman or organisation, agreeing to work for a lower rate of pay while they train

**archbishop** – the highest-ranking religious officials in England

**aristocratic** – a way to describe people in the upper classes who are usually rich, own large areas of land and often have titles like ‘Earl’ and ‘Countess’

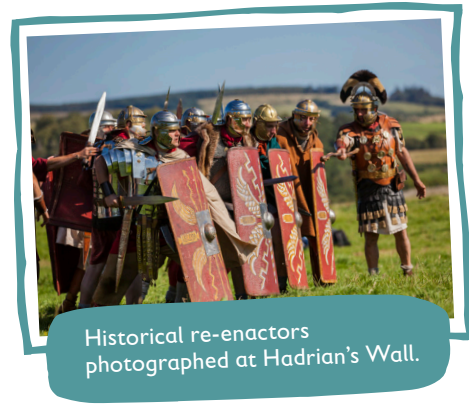
**Battle of Passchendaele** – also known as the Third Battle of Ypres. An offensive launched by British and French forces lasting from 31 July to 6 November 1917. The British took the high ground around Ypres and advanced five miles but suffered 300,000 casualties during the battle, which was fought in often treacherous weather conditions.

**campaign** – going on a mission to achieve a certain goal. Roman army campaigns had the goal of quelling unrest in areas outside the empire if those people were causing trouble inside the empire. They might also try to take control of those areas.

**canvas** – a strong unbleached cloth made from natural materials like hemp, flax or similar yarn. It is often stretched across a wooden frame to provide a smooth surface for painting on to.



A Saxon soldier.



Historical re-enactors photographed at Hadrian's Wall.

**Emperor** – the ruler of the Roman Empire during the imperial period (usually dated 27 BC to AD 476)

**First World War** – a global war between 1914 and 1918 that began in Europe when Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria was assassinated. It was one of the largest wars in history. Over nine million military personnel and seven million civilians died as a result of the war.

Roman territory and controlling movement in and out of the province of Britannia.



Painting of Lord Mansfield by David Martin, c.1775.

**Lord Chief Justice** – the most powerful judge in England, presiding over high-profile legal cases. Lord Mansfield was Lord Chief Justice of the English Court of the King's Bench from 1756 until 1788.



Times placard from August 5 1914 declaring that Britain was at war.

**governor** – an official appointed to govern a town or region

**Hadrian's Wall** – a 73-mile-long wall stretching from Bowness-on-Solway in the west to Wallsend in the east, built on the orders of Emperor Hadrian in AD 122. The wall was the north-west frontier of the Roman Empire for nearly 300 years, defending

**media** – the materials used by an artist to create their artworks

**mixed heritage** – having parents from different ethnic or cultural backgrounds

**monastery** – a building or group of buildings making up the living and work spaces used by monks and nuns

**Neolithic** – (4,000 to 2,400 BC) the new 'Stone Age', a period when the first monuments were built and farming was introduced as people grew crops and raised herds of animals on a larger scale

**pigment** – a coloured material that is soluble or partly soluble in water, which can be used to make coloured paint. In the past, this has included minerals like chalk and even semi-precious stones like lapis lazuli.

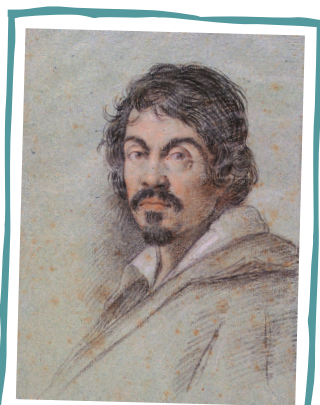
**Pope** – the head of the Catholic Church

**portrait** – a depiction of a person, especially the face or head and shoulders. Portraits can often be paintings, drawings, photographs or engravings.

**prejudice** – a preconceived opinion of people. This could involve unfair dislike of individuals or groups based on their characteristics (such as race or religion).

**protégée** – someone who is guided or trained by an older, influential or more experienced person

**refugee** – a person who has fled their country to escape harm, persecution, war or a natural disaster. They often have to leave quickly with few belongings and are forced to leave loved ones behind.



Chalk portrait of the famous Renaissance artist Caravaggio by Ottavio Leoni, c.1621.

**Renaissance** – the style of art and architecture inspired by ancient Rome, popular in Europe from the 14th century to the early 17th century; the ‘rebirth’ of art and interest in the Classical era

**Roman Empire** – the lands that were ruled by the Roman Emperor

**Royal Navy** – the seaborne branch of the British armed forces tasked with protecting the country from attack, security at sea and being ready to fight in wars

**saint** – a person who is recognised by Christian churches as being particularly holy and close to God. They are usually known for their courage, heroism and exceptional teaching abilities.

**scriptures** – writing or books of a sacred or religious nature

**turpentine** – an oil taken from gum turpentine or pine wood. It is used in mixing paints and varnishes.

**versatile** – the ability to adapt to lots of different situations

**virtues** – behaviour showing a keen understanding of right and wrong; high moral standards

**will** – sometimes called a testament, this is a legal document that sets out how a person wants their property and belongings to be distributed after their death

#### A NOTE ON LANGUAGE

Some of the terms used by individuals in the past to reference people from the African diaspora are derogatory and may cause offense. For example, the term ‘negro’ (as seen in ‘Sources’) is no longer used as it is out of date and inappropriate in today’s language unless reading aloud from a historical document or work of literature. These terms can have a negative impact on individuals and their communities that can still be felt today. You may find it helpful to create a class contract for respectful and reflective discussion.

Within your class, make sure that no one individual or group is expected to be spokesperson(s) for their race, gender or any other group. As with our artists, who themselves identify as black or mixed heritage, you may notice varying use of the terms Black, black, mixed race, minority ethnic, people of colour, mixed heritage, Afro-Caribbean and African-European as they have when speaking about the exhibition and their work. In this pack we’ve reflected their chosen means of expression. This highlights the breadth and evolving nature of language, and the importance of considerate and respectful communication as well as regular reflection and review.

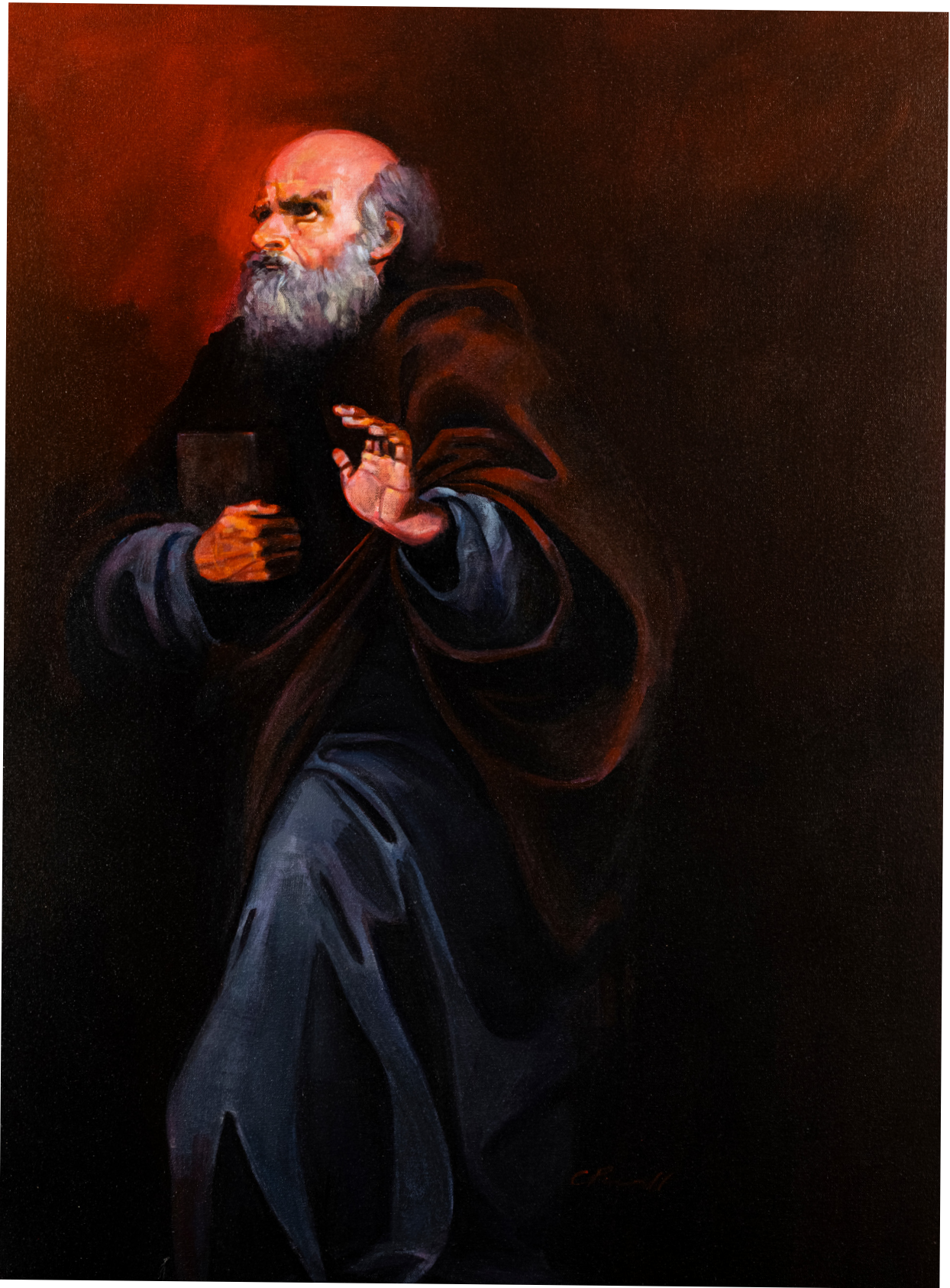


# THE PORTRAITS

Full-page copies of the finished portraits for study in the classroom or at home.

















# ACTIVITIES

Activities for students to do in the classroom or at home to help them get the most out of their learning.

# SELF-LED ACTIVITY

## ANALYSING ARTWORK



### Recommended for

KS2–4 (Art and Design)

### Learning objectives

- Analyse, interpret and evaluate the artworks, using relevant language.
- Reflect on the artworks, using knowledge of the artists and the 'Painting Our Past' exhibition.

### Time to complete

30–60 minutes



Detail of Dido's hands from the portrait by Mikéla Henry-Lowe.



### SUMMARY

This activity presents a useful introduction to studying the portraits and can be approached at a variety of levels depending on the age and ability of the students in your class.

It can be done independently of looking at any other information in the pack but students' understanding, appreciation and the quality of their critique will be enhanced by learning about and hearing from the artists, their backgrounds, approaches and intentions for these pieces.

You may find it interesting to compare students' views 'before' and 'after', having had the additional input from and about the artists themselves, and explored how far insight into the creation of artworks can influence how they are perceived and received.

### SUGGESTED APPROACH

Print off copies of the portraits from pages 25–30. You could do a set for each student or have them working in pairs/small groups on a portrait then rotating.

Use the Teachers' Notes on the next page to guide your students through a three-stage approach to looking at the portraits:

1. Observation and analysis
2. Interpretation
3. Evaluation

Encourage them to read the artist profiles and 'Artists On ...' sections to better appreciate each portrait and to consider when making their assessment.

### MORE LEARNING IDEAS

Encourage students to take on the role of an art critic writing a piece for a newspaper, exhibition brochure or website. They could select one of the portraits, a couple or cover all six. If possible they should consider how their critique will connect with their audience and expand the debate about art.



# ANALYSING ARTWORK

## TEACHERS' NOTES

Print off copies of the portraits from pages 25–30 and get students working individually or in pairs/small groups.

Support students in taking a three-stage approach to exploring the portraits.

### 1. OBSERVE AND ANALYSE

Begin by encouraging your students to make careful observations about what they can see in the portrait in front of them. Ideally they should note these observations and any comments/questions they might inspire in annotations around the edge. You could prompt them by asking what they can observe about:

- The sitter – their facial expression, clothing, their job or activity, their mood
- The sitter's pose – is it casual, formal or something else?
- The physical dimensions of the canvas
- How light and shade have been used
- The composition and how this affects the way they look at the portrait
- The background



Details from Elena's portrait of Septimius Severus.



### 2. INTERPRET

Next, ask students to add a further layer of annotations, building on their observations in the analysis section. What do the things they've identified tell us or what inferences can we make about the sitter (or indeed what the artist is trying to convey)? For example, based on their clothing, what can be inferred about their wealth or status? From their expression, what can be garnered about their personality? Take into account any information about the artists which may have influenced their choices and any other research when doing this.

Continued ...

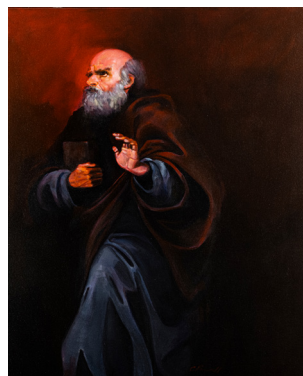
### 3. EVALUATE

Finally, evaluate the artwork. Appreciation of art can be quite subjective but there are some general criteria we can use as benchmarks. For example:

- How does the portrait make you feel? How does it achieve visual and emotional impact?
- How does the portrait show creativity and craftsmanship?
- How does the portrait work in terms of form and proportion?
- How have the colours been used and combined?
- What message does the portrait convey?

Students may wish to establish their own criteria and discuss/debate in groups or as a class the extent to which they feel the portraits 'perform' in relation to these principles.

Although all commissioned as part of the exhibition, these artworks were intended to be dispersed and displayed at the sites they connect to and are independent responses from individual artists. However, you might like to discuss how well you feel they work as a collective and what the power of their combined impact is.



# SELF-LED ACTIVITY

## MEDIUM MATTERS



KS2

KS3

### Recommended for

KS2–3 (Art and Design)

### Learning objectives

- Identify five materials often used by artists for portrait paintings.
- Learn about the different properties of the materials and the impact their characteristics may have on the artwork.

### Time to complete

40–60 minutes



Photograph showing different paintbrushes © Public domain.

### SUMMARY

This activity introduces students to five materials commonly used by artists to create portraits: oil paints, acrylic paints, watercolours, pencil/graphite and pastels.

### SUGGESTED APPROACH

Students should read through the 'Medium Matters' information on pages 36–39 to learn about the key features and properties of each of the five materials. They should understand how these different properties impact on any artwork produced using them.

To demonstrate their learning, students can use the supporting 'Medium Matters' worksheet to discuss, in pairs or small groups, each material according to the identified criteria: colour intensity, drying time, blendability, versatility and robustness. They can then score the material against those criteria; a mark out of five is probably a good measure.

This will give them a useful one-page summary of the different features of each medium; helpful for when thinking about materials to use for their own portraiture.

They could add additional notes for each medium if they like and build on this approach as they encounter other artists' materials and methods, for example ink, digital composition or mixed media.

Or they may like to cut the sheet to make individual cards and play a game of 'Medium Matters' top trumps with a partner!

### MORE LEARNING IDEAS

Building on this activity, and in preparation for 'Perfecting Your Own Portraiture', students could do some research into portraiture as well as different portrait artists, their mediums and techniques. The National Portrait Gallery website is a good place to start. Students may want to use the observation, analysis, interpretation and evaluation techniques they learnt about in the 'Analysing Artwork' activity to help them engage with the artworks they are researching.

# MEDIUM MATTERS

LEARN ABOUT THE PROPERTIES OF FIVE ARTISTS' MATERIALS

Below is a brief summary of five commonly used mediums for creating portrait paintings. Use this information to complete the 'Medium Matters' worksheet.

## OIL PAINT

Oil paint consists of coloured particles of **pigment** suspended in a drying oil. Different drying oils can be used including linseed oil, poppy seed oil, safflower oil and walnut oil. They cannot be mixed with water so can only be diluted with thinning agents such as **turpentine**. This or white spirit is also required when cleaning oil paint-covered brushes!

Oil paints create a solid and vibrant colour. They can be easily blended together, which allows the artist to make lots of different colour variations and be maximally responsive to what's inspiring them, for example the subtleties of light and shade.

Oil paint is slow drying, which means the artist has time to work on their painting and make changes if



Glory Samjolly mixed oil paint for her portrait of James Chappell.

### DID YOU KNOW?

Oil paints are often described as having a 'buttery' consistency.



needed. It's easy to build up layers but the thicker the layers of paint, the longer it takes to dry and harden. Once dried though, oils are generally quite robust and durable.

A strong surface such as a **canvas** is normally required for oil painting.

## ACRYLIC PAINT

Acrylic paint became commercially available in the 1950s after a German chemical company discovered a way of suspending coloured pigment in an acrylic polymer emulsion.

Acrylic paint is similar to oils in terms of the vibrancy of colour that can be achieved, but it differs in that acrylics are water-based and quick drying. This can be an advantage to the artist as it allows them to easily build up layers or redo

something if they make a mistake. However, it does mean the paints are not so easy to blend. Like oils, acrylics are mostly used with a strong surface like a canvas.

Acrylic paint is incredibly **versatile**, making it a popular medium with artists. It also works well in mixed-media projects (where another medium such as charcoal might be used on top of the acrylic or

something such as sand might be incorporated into it). Brushes can be cleaned with soap and water.

### DID YOU KNOW?



Some people say that as acrylics are waterproof they can be gently cleaned with a damp cloth – this isn't something we recommend or will be trying with the National Collection!



Red acrylic paint.



Acrylic gesso on a paintbrush  
© Public domain.

'I used acrylic paint and PVA glue, which are both water-based and less toxic materials than oil paint. I prefer working with acrylic paint primarily for that reason. Acrylic paint does have the advantage of a faster drying time than oil paint.'  
Hannah Uzor



## WATERCOLOUR

Watercolour paints are made of pigment particles suspended in a water-based solution. They don't have the vibrancy of oils or acrylics, instead having a translucent quality, which is good if an artist is trying to convey something emotional or dreamlike. However, this quality can also make it difficult to cover up mistakes.

Watercolour paint dries quickly, with the colours appearing slightly lighter than when they were first applied. It's also easy to rewet, so artists need to be careful not to 'reactivate' their paintings once finished. They need to be sealed with a specialist spray, framed and carefully looked after when displayed.



The watercolour palette of one of English Heritage's reconstruction artists.

### DID YOU KNOW?

Watercolours are very easy to use and move around so great for impromptu outdoor artworks!



Watercolour works best on a specialist paper which gives a better texture and look to the finished piece (standard paper can also tear easily if it gets wet). Watercolours lend themselves to being used for effects such as splattering and work well alongside other media such as pencils and ink.

Watercolour brushes can be cleaned with soap and water.

## PENCIL/GRAPHITE

Most pencils are graphite (a crystalline form of carbon) and are made from graphite powder mixed with a clay binder encased in a protective cover.

### DID YOU KNOW?

Graphite occurs naturally in Britain, Germany, Russia and the USA. Its name stems from the Ancient Greek 'graphein', meaning to write or draw.



Pencils come in different degrees of softness, allowing the artist to create fainter or darker lines on their paper, although the colour remains a metallic grey. They are easy to use and the marks they make, whilst durable, can be quickly erased, making them valuable for quick sketches at the start of a project.

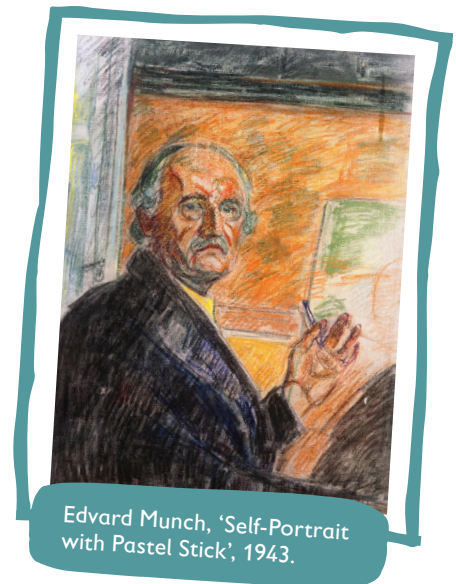
Pencils are fairly cheap to buy and easy to transport.



A close-up image of a graphite pencil.

## PASTELS

A pastel is a stick containing coloured pigment mixed with a binder. Depending on the amount of binder in the stick, pastels can be hard or soft (the harder the stick the more binder generally found in them). Both hard and soft pastels have useful attributes – for example, harder pastels can be used for precise details and softer pastels for blending, normally by the artist with their finger, a blending tool or a soft cloth.



Edvard Munch, 'Self-Portrait with Pastel Stick', 1943.

### DID YOU KNOW?

Pastels must be blended on paper (rather than a palette), so it's important to get it right first time as mistakes are hard to correct!



Harder pastels are commonly made with oils (similar to oil paint), while softer pastels may have chalks added; this can enhance the intensity of colour produced.

Pastels can be very vulnerable and must be handled carefully. It's very easy to accidentally smudge a pastel painting and they therefore need to be fixed with a specialist spray, and ideally framed before going on display.

Why is it important to know about the materials an artist has used?



'It's important to know the materials an artist has used so you can understand how best to care for and conserve the artwork. It's also important to record the artist's intentions for a piece wherever possible so it's not accidentally changed. For example, in Elena's portrait of Septimius Severus, she has chosen to have a matte background but to varnish Severus himself. This gives him a gloss and contributes to the sense of him leaning toward the viewer. Unless this is recorded, it's possible someone looking after the portrait in the future may see this distinction, think the two should be the same and attempt to "restore" gloss where there was never meant to be any! At English Heritage, information such as this is recorded in "condition reports" which are maintained by our collections conservators.' Rachel Turnbull, Senior Collections Conservator.

# MEDIUM MATTERS

SHOW YOUR LEARNING ABOUT THESE DIFFERENT ARTISTS' MEDIUMS

You will need: the 'Medium Matters' information sheet and a pen or pencil.

## 1 OIL

- |                  |                          |             |                          |
|------------------|--------------------------|-------------|--------------------------|
| Colour intensity | <input type="checkbox"/> | Versatility | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Drying time      | <input type="checkbox"/> | Robustness  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Blendability     | <input type="checkbox"/> |             |                          |



## 2 ACRYLIC

- |                  |                          |             |                          |
|------------------|--------------------------|-------------|--------------------------|
| Colour intensity | <input type="checkbox"/> | Versatility | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Drying time      | <input type="checkbox"/> | Robustness  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Blendability     | <input type="checkbox"/> |             |                          |



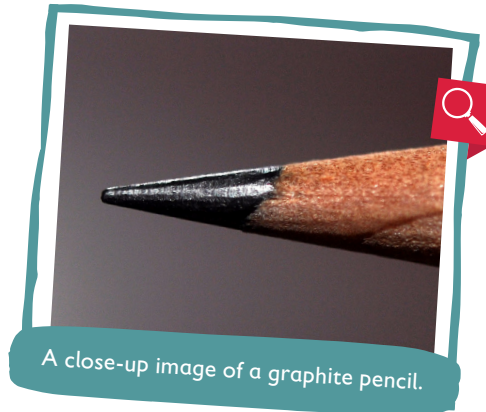
## 3 WATERCOLOUR

- |                  |                          |             |                          |
|------------------|--------------------------|-------------|--------------------------|
| Colour intensity | <input type="checkbox"/> | Versatility | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Drying time      | <input type="checkbox"/> | Robustness  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Blendability     | <input type="checkbox"/> |             |                          |



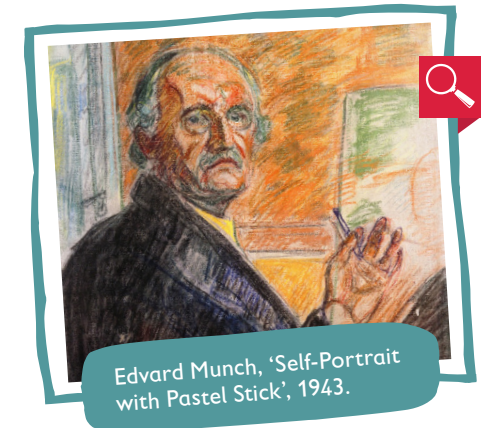
## 4 PENCIL/GRAPHITE

- |                  |                          |             |                          |
|------------------|--------------------------|-------------|--------------------------|
| Colour intensity | <input type="checkbox"/> | Versatility | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Drying time      | <input type="checkbox"/> | Robustness  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Blendability     | <input type="checkbox"/> |             |                          |



## 5 PASTEL

- |                  |                          |             |                          |
|------------------|--------------------------|-------------|--------------------------|
| Colour intensity | <input type="checkbox"/> | Versatility | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Drying time      | <input type="checkbox"/> | Robustness  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Blendability     | <input type="checkbox"/> |             |                          |





# SELF-LED ACTIVITY

## PERFECTING YOUR OWN PORTRAITURE



### Recommended for

KS2–4 (Art and Design, History)

### Learning objectives

- Understand the different stages artists go through when creating a portrait.
- Follow instructions to create your own portrait.
- Be inspired by the artists who produced portraits for the 'Painting Our Past' exhibition.

### Time to complete

Variable, dependent on materials and subject chosen



An early outline sketch of Abbot Hadrian by Clifton Powell.

### SUMMARY

The 'Painting Our Past: The African Diaspora in England' exhibition and the work that the artists have done has helped to bring to life the stories of these six individuals, shedding new light on the long history of African people in England.

It's also presented a fantastic opportunity to learn from a group of talented artists about the process, trials and tribulations of producing a commissioned piece of portraiture.

This activity aims to draw on this insight and provide students with a step-by-step approach to creating their own portraits. It can be adapted to suit every age, stage and ability range, with the appropriate and respective adult input or support where necessary.

### TEACHERS' NOTES

The student sheet on the next page acts as a guide for each stage towards perfecting portraiture.

Students should take inspiration from the six artists involved in the 'Painting Our Past: The African Diaspora in England' exhibition and gain confidence through practising their craft.

Although they are creating unique and personal pieces, students would benefit from the opportunity to share and discuss their ideas at each stage.

The amount of time they can dedicate to this work and the scope of their final piece will depend on the time and support schools can make available.

### MORE LEARNING IDEAS

Organise a formal exhibition of students' portraits, encouraging them to work together to curate how their works are presented. They could support their exhibition by developing artist profiles and statements in a short guidebook for visitors, like those in this pack for the artists involved in the 'Painting Our Past' exhibition. Share your portraits and exhibitions with us [@EHEducation](https://twitter.com/EHEducation).

# PERFECTING YOUR OWN PORTRAITURE

BE INSPIRED BY OUR ARTISTS

Follow these ten steps to develop your own portraits, inspired by the artists involved in the 'Painting Our Past' exhibition.

## 1 INSPIRATION

Visit museums, art galleries and historic sites in person or online to discover different artists and appreciate how pieces 'work' in different spaces. Social media can be a good place to find emerging artists, who in turn may share who's inspired them.

### CHALLENGE TIME!

See who inspires the 'Painting Our Past' artists in the 'Artists On ...' section.



Also, for portraiture in particular, keep observing people – the way they move, speak, gesture, smile, laugh. ... Think about how they hold themselves in different situations, with different people, what different lighting does to their features or what contexts you see as reflecting their character.

'Watching other artists at work also really stimulates me to paint, whether that's visiting a studio, watching "Portrait Artist of the Year" on Sky Arts, or seeing snippets of works in progress online. Having said that, marvelling at other artists' abilities can be as infuriating as it is motivating. It certainly keeps me going though!' Chloe



Artwork on display at Osborne, holiday home of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, on the Isle of Wight.

## 2 EQUIPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT

Get yourself set up with some materials to get started. These don't have to be extensive or very expensive – some different pencils and pens, a sketchpad and rubber will allow you to begin making initial sketches and record observations. Experiment where possible with different materials to get a feel for what you like to work with. Remember you'll achieve different effects based on the medium and technique you use as well as the surface onto which you mark.

Try to establish a place where you can devote yourself to your art. This may be a comfortable chair, or a place for resting your art such as an easel or other tilting surface. You may also need a lamp for adjusting the intensity of light and storage for any tools and materials.

'[In terms of tools I have] my easel. A phone stand to film myself. Sometimes I blend with sponges; they give a smooth and settled texture. To sustain the moist paint on my pallet, I cover the base of the pallet with cling film, place the paints on, then put cling film over the paints. I also work with a daylight lamp, which I started using during quarantine.' Glory



A study sketch of Sarah Forbes Bonetta by Hannah Uzor.

## 3 PRACTICE

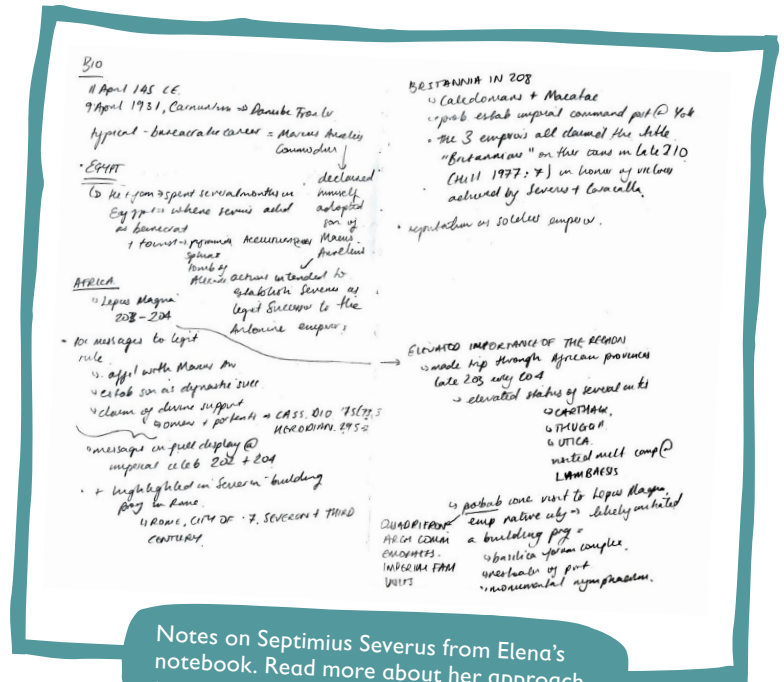
Work on your art and practise different techniques as much as possible. This doesn't have to be a whole piece – it could just be facial features: the eyes, ears, nose and mouth; the way that light catches on parts of these features and the fine tonal techniques for expressing this in the portrait. Explore the differences between drawing from real life and working from a photograph. Keep a sketchbook to record your progress.

'[At art school] we learnt to paint following the academic programme, beginning with the simple form of a circle, then moving to a bowl, to the curve of a bottle's lip, then to shadow and light, bone and muscle structure of the face then finally to the technique of oil painting.' Elena



## 4 SUBJECT AND RESEARCH

When you've found your inspiration and done some practice, choose a subject for your portrait and do some research. You may be interested in a figure from history or you might prefer a contemporary subject. Either way, consider the availability of source material, aim to use a range of sources and keep good notes, clearly recording where you've got information from in case you need to refer back to it.



Notes on Septimius Severus from Elena's notebook. Read more about her approach to research in the 'Artists On ...' section.



'Don't Touch My Hair – Homage to Diana Ross' by Hannah Uzor, showing a more stylised image, possibly influenced by Gustav Klimt.

## 5 STYLE

Decide whether you want to represent your subject in a realistic style or if you want to take a different approach – you may be more concerned with capturing a mood or an emotion, reflecting multiple viewpoints in the same piece or producing something symbolic, abstract or surreal. Your choices might be influenced by the person you've chosen to do a portrait of or the materials and techniques you enjoy using.



'Portrait of Stephen Lawrence' by Hannah Uzor. This is part of a collection of works entitled 'Long Live the Queen!', which records some race-related deaths in the UK since the Queen's coronation in 1953 and 2017.

## 6 SHAPE, COMPOSITION AND LIGHT

Think about how you want to shape and frame your portrait – will it show just the head or the whole body? How will you arrange all the elements within the picture to convey what you want them to? What expression or pose will best achieve the effect you want? From which viewpoint will you draw and how will you sustain the visual interest of the viewer?

The source of light is a particularly important consideration. Depending on its direction, it can flatter and give definition to features or distort and produce dark shadows on the face, giving an eerie feel. In a composition, the way light reflects on one surface and the shadows it creates can have an effect on another. All of this will impact on the complexity of the final image that you as the artist will need to replicate.

‘The posture and drapery [were challenging]. Without a model in the dress of a Roman Emperor it was quite difficult to imagine how his cloak would fall, how the pleats of his sleeves and “skirt” would shift as he leaned forward.’ Elena



A progress photograph from Glory Samjolly's portrait of James Chappell showing her gridded initial image (on the wall on the left) and corresponding grid on the portrait itself.

## 7 STRUCTURE AND PROPORTION

Particularly if you're planning to scale up your initial photographs or sketches, take time to make sure your portrait is proportionally sound; that all the dimensions of the subject and their surroundings fit together and the height, width and depths 'work' accurately and make visual sense. If you want to take a more stylised approach you can be more creative with your use of proportions.

## 8 PERSPECTIVE

Consider how you will establish a sense of perspective in your portrait – how you will create a sense of depth for a 3D effect. You might consider the parts of the portrait that are closer or further away to the viewer in the visual image and reflect that in their respective size. You could make clever use of colour or definition, for example giving ‘distant’ things a lighter touch in terms of colour intensity or a blurrier outline, as you may perceive them in real life.

You might also take this as an opportunity to consider the perspective of the subject of your portrait and if there’s anything notable to represent ‘from their perspective’.



## 9 COLOUR AND TONE

If your portrait is taking inspiration from a historical figure, as in our exhibition, then you may want to use historical references to help you choose your colours. A more modern subject may offer greater freedom in terms of colour palette. Either way, experiment, practising with the materials you’ll be using to make sure they create the effect you want them to. Aim to be complimentary (unless you’re purposefully trying not to for effect!). Remember that colours and their tones are one of your best tools for conveying mood, presence, and for making your desired impact.



‘I spent a bit of time on Photoshop experimenting with the jacket colour and background colours. I found that this olive-green neutral background complemented the burgundy jacket nicely, even though the real colour of the jacket is a light and ashy red colour.’ Glory

## 10 IMPACT AND REACTION

Think about what impact you, as an artist, would like to have through your portrait and the reaction you'd like to provoke from your viewers. If you know where your portrait might be displayed or who's hosting it, consider if that will have any impact on how you want to approach things too – should it complement other pieces in the space or stand out and make a statement?

'[I hope to convey] a human presence. That it feels like the person or people are portraying and communicating emotions and engaging directly with the viewer. It is also important for me to convey some understanding of the perspective of another person. I work to simulate an experience through materials, image and idea.' Elena



### DON'T FORGET! A FRAME AND LABEL

Frames do more than just protect an artwork; they show off the piece and help draw the eye of the viewer to certain elements. They make a suggestion as to the response the viewer should have to the artwork and help establish it within its setting. They can often be beautiful creations in their own right.

A label contains information about an artwork that can be displayed alongside it in an exhibition. It should include your name (and/or artistic pseudonym), the title of your artwork, and the year it was completed. It should also include the medium (or media) used (such as oil on canvas) and its size (normally the height and width in centimetres or inches). If you're looking to sell your work, you might like to include a price at the bottom too!

#### DID YOU KNOW?



In addition to a frame, the exhibition portraits will be glazed with low reflective glass that has UV-blocking properties to protect them from light damage. A backing board will also help create a microclimate for each painting, offering a buffer against significant environmental fluctuations that might cause damage over time.

#### DID YOU KNOW?



In 17th-century Europe the best frame-makers could charge more for their frames than many artists could charge for their paintings!



# SELF-LED ACTIVITY

## WORKING WITH SOURCES



### Recommended for

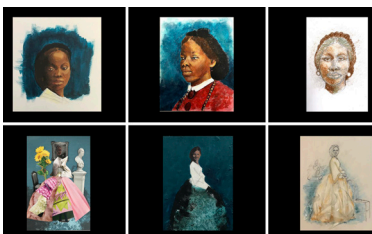
KS2–4 (History, English)

### Learning objectives

- Consider the challenges and opportunities that limited representation in the historical record can present to historical enquiry.
- Assess the value of different types of sources and what inferences can be drawn from them.
- Reflect on the impact that limited or missing representation can have on the overarching historical narrative.

### Time to complete

30–60 minutes



Development images from Hannah Uzor's portrait of Sarah Forbes Bonetta.

### SUMMARY

This activity seeks to make an introduction to some of the source material that the artists were able to use when creating their portraits for the 'Painting Our Past: The African Diaspora in England' exhibition. The sources represent a selection of some of the historical material our artists worked with and introduce some of the challenges and considerations that they have reflected on whilst also bringing their creative intuition to their portraits.

Looking at the sources in this context offers a framework for approaching source-based study with your students as well as being a gateway to inspire further study. It is not and does not aim to be a fully comprehensive study of all the available material.

### SUGGESTED APPROACH

Use the Teachers' Notes to read about a selection of the source material that was used by the artists, some of the challenges that it presented and the creative workarounds found.

Share copies of the sources and encourage your students to analyse them using the student worksheet. The insight provided in the Teachers' Notes should help you to guide and develop their learning.

Discuss their assessments of the source material as a group. Reflect on the implications a lack of representation in the historical narrative may have on how we interpret and understand our past.

### MORE LEARNING IDEAS

Students could use this activity as a framework for exploring other sources. Hopefully they'll feel inspired to find out more about people from the past and this could be a starting point for selecting a subject for their own portraiture. The blue plaques scheme could be one place to begin. Search 'blue plaque stories' on the English Heritage website for information on the celebrated individuals who have lived or worked in London.



# WORKING WITH SOURCES

## TEACHERS' NOTES

A challenge when looking into any historical figure is the availability of source material that may offer insight into that individual. This is particularly the case for individuals such as those from the African diaspora as reflected in the 'Painting Our Past' exhibition, whose representation within the historical record is often limited, if present at all.

So despite being provided with historical information by English Heritage's curators and historians, when it came to understanding these individuals for the purposes of painting a portrait, this presented a particular challenge for Clifton and Glory as there are no known visual references for Abbot Hadrian or James Chappell.

*'The challenge was to bring St Hadrian to life in the correct way, but my own style and creation.'* Clifton

*'... it was impossible for me to have a complete vision without existing references for James Chappell ... I had the information about James Chappell provided to me by English Heritage, but text information could only go so far when shaping the portrait I would paint. I had to rely on my creative intuition for the visual part.'* Glory

Having a visual reference, however, was no guarantee of an objective window into these individuals' lives. As Elena notes, the majority of the images available for Septimius Severus reflected how he wanted to be seen, not necessarily how he actually was seen (physically or metaphorically).

*'To make Septimius seem human I didn't want to just take his pose from his statues. The Roman statues have a very established type, and whilst I think it is interesting that this is how emperors thought they should be visualised, I wanted to focus on Septimius as a person who lived, not as a figurehead.'* Elena

Equally, even where a photograph was available, such as for Sarah Forbes Bonetta, key details were still missing.

*'Since my reference photograph was not in colour, I had to imagine the shade of Sarah's skin. Having an awareness of the people of that region enabled me to adopt a skin tone that was closer to reality.'* Hannah

The visual reference we have for Dido Belle (source 4), whilst perhaps physically 'accurate', is imbued with symbolism that reflects 18th-century attitudes. The portrait is of Dido Belle with her cousin, Lady Elizabeth Murray. It is unique in British art of the 18th century in depicting a mixed-heritage woman and a white woman as near equals. The girls were probably in their late teens when the portrait was painted around 1779, although it was first recorded in the 1796 inventory of Kenwood. The painting was for a long time attributed to Johann Zoffany but was recently reattributed to the Scottish portraitist David Martin.

The portrait was painted on the terrace at Kenwood, with the original view of St Paul's visible in the background. Unlike most paintings of persons of colour from this period, Dido is not presented as a servile figure on the outskirts of the painting. In general the portrait suggests closeness between the two sitters – they share a number of attributes including luxurious silk gowns, costly pearl jewellery and a direct, confident gaze toward the viewer. Lady Elizabeth Murray is also depicted touching her cousin's arm in an affectionate gesture.

However, as Curator Louise Cooling notes, there are subtle differences between the portrayals of the two sitters, which hint at their differing status.

*'While Elizabeth is seated in a genteel fashion, Dido is actively moving across the composition, carrying fruit as if on an errand. Martin's female sitters were usually shown with few adornments other than flowers, like the garland of roses worn by Lady Elizabeth Murray. That Dido is portrayed wearing a silk turban, pearl necklace and earrings makes her unusual in Martin's body of work. These adornments – which suggest wealth – may have been chosen to ensure that Dido's position as her white cousin's equal was understood and that she could not easily be mistaken for a servant. The silk embroidered turban she wears would have been both fashionable and synonymous with the exotic. Draped turbans were first recorded as a widespread fashion in Britain in the late 18th century. The fashion was said to be inspired by a growing interest in and knowledge of the Ottoman Empire and Turkey, as well as increased trade with India for the import of cottons.*

*It has been suggested that Dido's curious gesture – pointing towards her cheek – may be a playful way of drawing attention to her skin colour. However, there are many examples in Martin's work of female sitters shown with a hand close to their faces, often with one extended finger. He used the device to imbue his sitters with a casual grace and to emphasise their upright carriage and slender necks. Dido's gesture in the double portrait could be seen as a youthful, more playful interpretation of this favoured pose.*

*The palette of the double portrait is in keeping with Martin's known work of the 1770s. He favoured a tranquil, pastel-toned palette for his outdoor portraits. Martin also experimented with ways to heighten his subjects' forms. In the double portrait, the pale pink hues of Lady Elizabeth's "English rose" complexion stand out against a background of dark vegetation, while Dido's darker skin tone is shown in contrast to the pale tones of the sky behind. The individuality of each girl's beauty is celebrated, even as Dido is sympathetically but nonetheless distinctly defined as "exotic" and "other".*

While the painting was correctly identified as a portrait of Lady Elizabeth Murray and Dido Elizabeth Belle when it was recorded in the 1796 inventory of Kenwood, by 1898 (the next time the painting can be definitively identified) it was described as 'A lady in a landscape with negress [sic] attendant, Reynolds'. The 1906 inventory, compiled by the same appraiser, similarly records the painting as 'The Lady Elizabeth

Finch Hatton, daughter of 2nd Earl of Mansfield, seated in a landscape, holding a book, attended by a negress [sic]. Zoffany'. Whether by the late 19th century the Murray family no longer knew Dido's identity or whether this information was simply not provided to Mr J. Eyles who compiled the inventories is unclear.



Source 4 – the only known portrait of Dido Belle, showing her with her cousin and close companion, Lady Elizabeth Murray, at Kenwood in about 1776. Kenwood now displays a photographic reproduction while the original can be seen at Scone Palace. © By kind permission of the Earl of Mansfield, Scone Palace, Perth, Scotland.

A lack of direct documentary source material from an individual can mean we're often reduced to learning about people through the mouthpiece of others. For Abbot Hadrian, much of our knowledge comes from the 'father of English history' Bede, an Anglo-Saxon scholar most famous for his *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, one of our best-written sources for early English history. Bede noted that Hadrian came from Africa ('uir natione Afir') and that he was equally proficient in both Latin and Greek. He tells us that he came to England from the 'monastery of Hiridanium not far from Naples in Campania'. This is helpful because we're then able to piece together a broader picture from other sources of information and knowledge of this time to place Hadrian in context. As the historian Michael Wood elaborates:

*'The region of Naples and Campania had very early Christian communities and a very rich religious and cultural life in this time. Naples was also a great centre of scholarship, with rich libraries, such as that of the scribe and scholar Eugippius (who died c.535) a great collector and copyist. Copying of manuscripts of the great North African church fathers, poets and writers was especially active in the Naples region. In short Naples was a massive transmission point in the 6th and 7th centuries, for the learning of North Africa into Italy and through Italy into Western Europe.'*

This helps explain the environment from which Hadrian was coming and the experiences which would have informed his teaching while at the monastery of St Peter and Paul in Canterbury (later known as St Augustine's), helping it become a centre of classical and Mediterranean learning and such an influential school in British history.

Even a less than complimentary source can often offer useful insights into the world in which people were living. For example, Thomas Hutchinson's unflattering description of Dido (source 5) is as much evidence of his prejudice as it is of her actual appearance; however, his account is useful in several ways. It suggests that Dido didn't dine with the family when they were in company; however, she joined the ladies for coffee and afterwards walked arm in arm with one of them, so she was at ease in the family and they were comfortable with her. If the young woman Dido walked with was Lady Elizabeth Murray, Hutchinson's textual description aligns with the painting of the cousins attributed to David Martin (the original now held at Scone Palace), and supports the affectionate relationship portrayed in the painting. Hutchinson's account also provides evidence of Lord Mansfield's fondness for Dido, as well as revealing that others in his circle disapproved of this and that he was aware of it.

Hutchinson's account also reveals that Dido was involved in the running of the dairy at Kenwood. Little evidence relating to the dairy survives from this date; however, Lord Mansfield is known to have kept a herd of Warwickshire longhorn cattle, of which he was very proud, and interested himself in the work of the dairy. Household accounts show that Lord Mansfield employed a dairy maid to undertake the day-to-day work, so while relatively little is known about what Dido did at the dairy, it seems likely her involvement was viewed as a genteel pastime appropriate for a lady – something that was fashionable at this date. Mansfield's fondness for his herd and their produce suggests a personal interest and it may be the dairy was a shared family pastime.

Even a direct source from an individual may only offer one perspective of their character, life and times. For example, Arthur Roberts' diary provides an incredibly valuable first-hand account of his time while on military service in France between February 1917 and March 1918 during the First World War (source 8). As one might expect from a diary entry his writing is personal and raw; as he notes at the outset it's 'a book of facts' but it also gives little specific information beyond his experiences. He doesn't mention anyone else by name, anything of their thoughts or any of their actions that might have impacted on him. We also know from other sources, for example, that there would have been prejudiced attitudes and behaviour towards black men in the military but Roberts makes no mention of this in his entries. Roberts, no doubt, had his reasons for particular inclusions or exclusions, but as Senior Curator Kevin Booth writes:

*'His concerns in his writing are around his own actions, emotions and personal journey. If Arthur did suffer prejudice it has been omitted from his account, but so too have many other aspects of his service that would also have affected him. We therefore cannot know the whole truth of his experience.'*

The type, date and purpose of a source is also important as this can have a bearing on how we might read and interpret the material, not to mention its overall reliability and utility as a window into the past. The Winchelsea ballad (source 3) reflects the testimony of James Chappell himself, albeit as a man in his eighties reflecting back on an experience from his youth, written over 50 years later as a rhyme for the purpose of preserving a notable family tale.

All of these things have significant implications for the way that we write histories and interpret the past.

In addition, as Habib notes (source 10), when it comes to black lives, information may not have made it into the historical record or the true picture may be distorted.

It's therefore important to use a range of sources when conducting historical enquiry and to place them in their wider historical context for the fullest possible understanding. It's important to undertake considered analysis of the sources available and to appreciate all aspects of utility while respecting any limitations associated with their nature, purpose or reliability. In addition, it's important to remember that the historical narrative is dynamic and can be written, debated and revised in light of new evidence or interpretation. With a commitment to research, this will move us towards a more inclusive and representative story of England.

At English Heritage we're committed to telling the story of England in full and know we have much more to do. We'll be continuing to update our outputs as we find out more about rich and diverse stories associated with our sites and collections.

## USING THE SOURCES WITH YOUR STUDENTS

Provide copies of the sources and the 'Using Sources' worksheet for your students. You might want to do this as a standalone activity or as an extension to the 'Analysing Artwork' activity. Students could look at all of the sources or focus on those relating to a particular person. They could do this as individuals, in pairs or small groups. They should use the questions on the worksheet to help them analyse the source(s). They would probably find it helpful to have read the 'Historical Subject Profiles' in advance too.

Once students have completed their source analysis, encourage the group to share and discuss their findings and reflections. Use insight from the Teachers' Notes to guide and shape that discussion. In particular, take time to reflect on Habib's quote in source 10 and what this means for the way we may interpret and understand the past. Discuss why it's important to be representative within the historical narratives that we tell. What are the risks of not doing so?

Further discussion could focus on why it's important for heritage organisations such as English Heritage to tell England's story in full and what heritage organisations could consider to better represent the multitude of stories from the past. This might include consulting with different communities when interpreting our sites or linking to exemplary work.

## A NOTE ON LANGUAGE

Some of the terms used by individuals in the past to reference people from the African diaspora are derogatory and may cause offense. For example, the term 'negro' (as seen in 'Sources') is no longer used as it is out of date and inappropriate in today's language unless reading aloud from a historical document or work of literature. These terms can have a negative impact on individuals and their communities that can still be felt today. You may find it helpful to create a class contract for respectful and reflective discussion.

Within your class, make sure that no one individual or group is expected to be spokesperson(s) for their race, gender or any other group. As with our artists, who themselves identify as black or mixed heritage, you may notice varying use of the terms Black, black, mixed race, minority ethnic, people of colour, mixed heritage, Afro-Caribbean and African-European as they have when speaking about the exhibition and their work. In this pack we've reflected their chosen means of expression. This highlights the breadth and evolving nature of language, and the importance of considerate and respectful communication as well as regular reflection and review.

# USING SOURCES



**Choose** a source and use this worksheet to help you **analyse** it. This will help you make **informed judgements** when using it as part of your historical study.

1. What does the source tell you? What can you learn from it? (Consider also what might be missing.)

.....

.....

2. Who produced the source?

.....

.....

3. Do you know, or can you find out anything about the person that may help you to understand the source better? (This might require some further research.)

.....

.....

4. What were the circumstances of the person(s) who produced the source when it was created? Does that have any bearing on what's contained within the source?

.....

.....

5. When was the source produced? Does this make any difference to how credible you find its content?

.....

.....

6. What is the nature or type of the source: is it an official document, a newspaper, photograph, diary entry, portrait ...? What impact does that source type have on what may be contained within it?

.....

.....

7. Why was the source produced? For what purpose?

.....

.....

8. Do you have any knowledge that you can use to understand the source or place it into context?

.....

.....

9. Is the source reliable? Can you trust what it tells you?

.....

.....

10. How useful is the source? (Remember sources can still be useful, even if they're not completely reliable. You may still learn something important about what people from the past believed from any inaccuracies and biases.)

.....

.....





# SOURCES

Useful historical information to support your studies as well as inspirational words from the artists themselves.

KS3

KS4+

# HISTORICAL SOURCES

PEER INTO THE PAST

A historical source is something that tells us about life in the past, such as a document, a picture or an object. It may be a primary source, from the time, or a secondary source, created later. We've chosen these sources to help you learn more about the six portrait subjects. (See also the sourcework activity on pages 53–54 and the 'A Note on Language' in the Glossary.)

## SOURCE 1

MARBLE BUST OF SEPTIMIUS SEVERUS  
(REIGN AD 193–211)

© The Trustees of the British Museum.



## SOURCE 2

'And forasmuch as both of them [Theodore and Hadrian] were, as has been said before, well-read both in sacred and in secular literature, they gathered a crowd of disciples, and there daily flowed from them rivers of knowledge to water the hearts of their hearers; and, together with the books of holy writ, they also taught them the arts of ecclesiastical poetry, astronomy, and arithmetic. A testimony of which is, that there are still living at this day some of their scholars, who are as well versed in the Greek and Latin tongues as in their own, in which they were born.'

Extract from Bede (673–735), *Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation*, Book IV, chapter II.





## SOURCE 3

13.

Then James Chapple, the Negro.  
So proper and tall,  
On his hands and his knees  
Brought his Lord off the wall,  
Safe into the guard-room,  
Free from danger and harm;  
For the garrison now  
Had got up in alarm,  
And candles were lighted,  
And next they prepare  
To dig in the ruins –  
They hardly knew where.

14.

Then the Dowager Lady  
Was found in her bed;  
She lay there a corpse,  
With a stone on her head.  
And in the next room,  
When they broke the partition,  
They found her two daughters  
In dying condition;  
But both were alive –  
For in bed as they were,  
A beam fell betwixt 'em  
And severed the pair.

15.

So they carried them down  
In great joy to their chief,  
Where he sat in the guard-room  
In silence and grief.  
And guided by Chapple,  
Again returned they,  
To where the poor lady  
His Baroness lay.  
Then the Negro bethought him  
He heard something greet,  
Deep down in the ruins, just  
Under his feet.

16.

And quoth he to the Captain:  
“Dig quickly and see!  
Perhaps 'tis My lady!  
For here she should be.”  
So they worked with a will,  
And in feet barely two,  
They struck on a beam  
That had fallen askew,  
And beneath it a hollow,  
Where, strange to behold,  
Lay asleep and uninjured  
A child three years old!



A section from 'Lord Hatton: A Tale of Castle Cornet in Guernsey', detailing the heroic actions of James Chappell (spelt 'Chapple' in the ballad) in the aftermath of a lightning strike that hit the gunpowder stores at Castle Cornet (official residence of the Governor of Guernsey, Christopher Hatton, for whom James was in service) in 1672. The explosion at Castle Cornet became enshrined in local and family legend and was published in a number of 19th-century books and periodicals. Several of the known publications were written by descendants of Christopher Hatton. This particular ballad was written in 1872 by George James Finch-Hatton, 11th Earl of Winchilsea. Appended to this is a copy of an account of events taken by Joshua Lankart in 1727 from James Chappell himself. At this time he said he was 'about' 82 years of age.

## SOURCE 4



The only known portrait of Dido Belle, showing her with her cousin and close companion, Lady Elizabeth Murray, at Kenwood in about 1776. Kenwood now displays a photographic reproduction while the original can be seen at Scone Palace. © By kind permission of the Earl of Mansfield, Scone Palace, Perth, Scotland.

## SOURCE 5

‘A Black came in after dinner and sat with the ladies, and after coffee, walked with the company in the gardens, one of the young ladies having her arm within the other. She had a very high cap, and her wool was much frizzled in her neck, but not enough to answer the large curls now in fashion. She is neither handsome nor genteel – pert enough ... [Lord Mansfield] calls her Dido, which I suppose is the only name she has. He knows he has been reproached for shewing [sic] a fondness for her – I dare say not criminal ... She is a sort of Superintendent over the dairy, poultry yard, &c, which we visited and she was called upon by my Lord every minute for this thing and that, and shewed [sic] the greatest attention to everything he said.’

Account of Dido (then around 18) from Sir Thomas Hutchinson, an American living in London, who described this encounter with her while dining at Kenwood in 1779.

## SOURCE 6

‘She is a perfect genius; she now speaks English well, and has a great talent for music. ... She is far in advance of any white child of her age, in aptness of learning, and strength of mind and affection.’

Observation of Frederick Forbes, the British naval captain who accepted Sarah as a gift on behalf of Queen Victoria, and with whom she initially stayed on coming to England.



## SOURCE 7

‘Others would say “He is a good man & though you don’t care about him now, will soon learn to love him.” That, I believe, I never could do. I know that the generality of people would say he is rich & your marrying him would at once make you independent, and I say “Am I to barter my peace of mind for money?” No – never!’

Extract from a letter written by Sarah Forbes Bonetta to a family friend on the proposition of marriage to James Davies. Despite Sarah’s misgivings, Queen Victoria approved of the match and they were married on 14 August 1862.



## SOURCE 8

‘I wondered if I was in the thoughts of somebody at that precise moment. Then came a wave of pride. Here was I among men sharing the risks and uncertainties of being in the very front ranks of the empire, against its enemies. My patriotism was strong in my breast then, and as a youth will do I began to dream of what might be. Would a great chance come my way, if so, would I make the best of it. Of course I would, I am a man now, a real man.

Then the tiny grim imp of stern reality slowly inserted his prong of cold reason, and like a flash I saw again our front line and its occupants. Perhaps they too had dreamed, but reality had shattered their castles. Oh my God! Would the supports who would follow in our tracks find me mangled and torn, gazing into the great beyond. Ugh! The thoughts sent the cold sweat from my brow. Oh this waiting is worse than a hundred deaths. Heavens, will the order never come?’

From the memoir of Arthur Roberts, reflecting on the Battle of Pilckem Ridge, 31 July 1917.



## SOURCE 9

‘For all his importance, Hadrian was till recently a poorly studied figure – not least because of the difficulty of finding evidence; but the one certainty is that more is to be discovered.’



Observation by the historian Michael Wood, writing about Abbot Hadrian in 2020.

## SOURCE 10

“That James Chappell’s black historical existence, as well as his heroic service, are apocryphal, is a pointed example of the ethereality of early modern English black people, whose unimportance to, and denial by, traditional history confines them to the desiderata of legend where they flutter uncertainly between cold fact and exotic fiction. Rendered unverifiable by an English documentary culture that disdains to consider them deserving of inscription, they cease to exist in the historical record. If they do appear, they do so shorn of their blackness ... As his ethnicity is masked, and his heroism obscured, so the origins of his enslavement are removed from direct sight ...”



I. Habib, *Black Lives in the English Archives, 1500–1677: Imprints of the Invisible* (2008).



KS1-2

KS3

KS4+

## ARTISTS ON...

HEAR FROM THE EXPERTS

Our artists have kindly shared their thoughts and reflections on the exhibition and their process for creating the portraits.

### ...PORTRAITURE

‘I find people so interesting, I want to understand how they think. Why that way? How do they see and make sense of the world and what makes them, them – I want to understand their subjectivity. For this reason I am interested in portraiture, in trying to capture that being, the sum of its past and personality. For this same reason I find narrative scenes similarly interesting; people don’t exist in isolation and their behaviour and ideas are brought out by their relationships and engagement with others.’ Elena



‘I chose to practise portraiture because I’ve always been someone who drew characters so it’s only natural I moved on to painting portraits. The structure of people’s faces is so interesting to try and make 3D on a 2D surface.’ Mikéla



‘What I love about portraiture is the intrusively intimate nature of scrutinising someone and understanding their features; you get to know them in a way that very few people do and, perhaps, see something in them that they don’t see in themselves.’ Chloe



## ...PRACTICE AND PERSEVERANCE

‘After finishing at university, I interned and then worked at the Peggy Guggenheim Collection in Venice, where I got the opportunity to examine up close the work of modern artists and gained different insights/perspectives about art from the conservators, art handlers, educators, curators and art historians. I began to understand different ways of engaging audiences and layering meaning in art. Now I’m further developing my practice and what I have learnt through my master’s in Fine Art at the Glasgow School of Art.’ Elena



Glory and her mum with her portrait of James Chappell.

‘I spent over 100 hours practising portraiture in my secondary school years, just by pencil sketching, but only began experimenting with oil painting in my A-level years.’ Glory



‘Staying focused on what my end goal was helped me to be where I am today. As well as the support from my mom who never made me feel like choosing art was the wrong thing to do. I definitely learnt things on my own from trial and error, especially when it comes to selling your art online and how to have a social media presence. These are things that you don’t learn from school – you have to do your own research and step out in faith. If you fall that’s OK but if it works it’s the best feeling!’ Mikéla



‘When I finished secondary school, I spent a year in the artistic community in Zambia learning from older artists and observing what life was like being a professional artist. I was able to start earning some money by taking part in exhibitions and accepting commissions at a young age. I did not go to university to study Art, however; I ended up in the UK studying Computing and completing my Computing degree and postgraduate degree in Software Solutions. Though I started pursuing a career different from art when I graduated, I still made an effort to keep my art alive by joining art clubs, making submissions to art competitions, participating in art fairs - I even organised my own solo exhibition! In 2017, I was able to return to practising art full time and I also went back to school in 2019 to get a formal art qualification.’ Hannah





‘I spent many messy weekends as a child at the kitchen table wearing a blue apron, which I remember smelt like dried acrylic paint, glitter and glue. I painted sunsets and night skies because the colours were gorgeous and the results were such an easy win that I wouldn’t necessarily want to throw it away, while my Dad painted something similar next to me.

As I grew older, drawing was where I really exercised my attempts at accuracy. But I always played it “safe”. Stuck to the subjects and techniques I was good at. Then, when I took Fine Art at A-level, my teacher forced me to abandon all safety nets and push myself into new territory. That was when I discovered oil paints ... and I haven’t looked back since.

Though I first imagined becoming an artist, the stereotype of “starving artist” began to gnaw away at me and I wasn’t keen on specialising in something that might be perceived as lacking transferable skills, so, for a long time, I pursued my other creative passion – writing.

With a BA in English Literature with Creative Writing, I continued to paint and draw in my spare time throughout university and beyond. I was very happy with it as a hobby until message after message rolled in from people who’d seen my work on Instagram, telling me to take art more seriously. So, finally, I did. During my gap year, I enjoyed, what felt like, endless time and space for creativity. Painting every day, my skills and techniques grew rapidly in sophistication and I received a few commissions along the way.

Now a freelance artist with a full-time job – a combination which I enjoy tremendously – I am a proud winner of the SAA Young Artist of the Year Award and honoured to be part of this exhibition.’ Chloe



Grandad.



Girl.



Pride.

## ... THE EXHIBITION

‘I use painting as a kind of experimental archaeology; I try to understand the person. Throughout my studies I have always visualised how people in the past looked, moved, spoke and gestured and this exhibition was an opportunity to do just that. But more than that, I wanted to form part of an effort to address the imbalances and holes in history and return the presence and contribution of people of colour to English history. ... Black history in Britain is not just a history of colonialisation, slavery or migration; this means it is not a complete history and I hope this exhibition helps give some indication of that.’  
Elena

‘I’ve enjoyed working on this exhibition. It is good to delve into the history of the unknown to me. I have learnt so many things I would never have studied or [read about].’ Clifton



‘The concept of English Heritage’s exhibition immediately interested me because of my existing interest in Kenwood House where I first saw Dido Belle on display, also because I had set my final year proposal there. So for me, it was like my imagination in my proposal had manifested into reality.’ Glory



‘I wanted the challenge of painting a person of colour from a different time; painting a black woman who wasn’t treated as a slave was a very attractive narrative to focus on. It’s been an exciting and interesting experience working on this exhibition for English Heritage. They provided me with a lot of information about Dido Belle which helped me a lot with how I was going to approach this portrait.’ Mikéla



Mikéla with her portrait of Dido Belle.

‘This exhibition is an extension of my existing practice and I think it is important for bodies such as English Heritage to play a pivotal role in retelling important Black stories to a much wider audience. It is time to tell the complete history and English Heritage is part of the solution.’ Hannah



‘This exhibition summed up my mission as an artist so precisely, it felt like I could have written the commission brief myself. It’s an honour to bring colour and life to a minority ethnic individual whose story, until recently, lay piled and caked up in dust in an attic. Knowing that my art now plays a small part in pulling another member of the Black community to the forefront of our history is all I need to keep picking up my paintbrush time after time again.’ Chloe



## ... THE SUBJECTS

‘I was drawn to Severus because of the parallels with my own mixed-heritage status (Nigerian, Spanish and German), and this made me reflect on how people might imagine someone like us to look. I wanted to go beyond painting Rome’s African Emperor, to portray a complex individual by paying attention to his personality and how he chose to be seen in his coins, statues and architecture. Historically black people have had little control over their portrayal. Severus embodied and altered the image of the Roman Empire.’ Elena



Clifton with his portrait of Abbot Hadrian.

‘I sense [St Hadrian’s] presence, so this gives me inspiration to paint him. I feel I need to bring him to life ... he brings me back to his time. He has captivated me with his spiritual presence and I feel him near, and while painting, I played Gregorian chants, as in a monastery setting.’ Clifton



‘I wanted to paint Dido Belle because a lot of my portraits are of black women wearing head wraps representing black culture, but Dido’s purpose isn’t cultural. It was most likely to cover her hair because at the time many didn’t know what to do with curly hair. I think it’s amazing that I’ve been given the opportunity to paint a black woman who experienced growing up in an aristocratic family, because most depictions of black women in Georgian Britain were of slaves.’ Mikéla



‘During research I came across Sarah Forbes Bonetta in David Olusoga’s book *Black and British*. I was drawn to Sarah’s story because of her multi-layered identity and the parallels I could see in my own family, particularly for my children, who share Sarah’s Nigerian heritage.’ Hannah



## ...RESEARCH



'[After some initial reading I focused on coins] – an important source for distinguishing the kind of Severus I painted. ... I started with an awareness that the coins would give the nearest impression of how he looked. Imperial portraits are significant as they reveal Septimius's concept of his role as emperor and his ambitions for his empire and family as they evolved. I understood that the "young military soldier" type, his earlier coin, gave the most idiosyncratic representation of him. I then collected together as many images of this coin type as I could and identified consistencies in features across these coins, then used these to sketch a side profile of these features that would inform the features of his face front on.

I wanted to get close to what physically made Septimius identifiable. I gathered together images of statues of Septimius in the round which had been identified by historians as particularly good/standard types. Being that I wanted to voice Septimius's self-representation I researched coins which were unique, the most minted or those that marked achievements, inclinations and characters, for example his favouring of Carthage, his extensive military campaigning, the influence of his wife, her family and his military backing on his rise to power. Severus used eight different portrait types [in his coinage]. I directly reference two of these (soldier type and Antoninus Pius type – painted in the armrests seen in the images).



Whilst giving attention to Septimius's self-representation, ultimately the portrait varies from these concerns as it represents Septimius as a person, a sum of his culture, context, personality and achievements. I wanted to define him in a way that comes as close as possible to how the Romans would have seen him or rather understood the image of himself that he was putting out there. I wanted to create a mood in the portrait, so went to look at portraits by artists that conveyed a character/expression similar to that of Severus.' Elena

## ... THE PROCESS

‘Once I have begun to understand [things from my research] I turn to deciding on the form that the artwork will take. Led by characteristics of the person or the narrative, I begin a selection process of images/film that emote that character. Meanwhile, I will be looking back at art history, to the work of other artists to think about the style and composition.’ Elena

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‘It took me five to six weeks to complete the painting, sketching and study first, then on the painting.’ Clifton

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‘It took me just over three weeks to complete my portrait. My process is very synonymous to a methodology that predates the 18th century. I find a model, but instead of doing a still life drawing, I photograph them in the exact position I want to paint them. Then I scale up a printed photograph using the geometric scale factoring method to make sure the underlying drawing is proportionately accurate.’ Glory

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Glory's portrait of James Chappell in progress.

‘Finding out that I would be painting a 17th-century Afro-European with no visual reference, I had to create my own reference. The next stage was photographing my model in the way that I would want to paint him, setting the lighting angles, clothing and posture of the model. The third stage was to draw a scaled-up outline of my chosen photograph using geometry. This is to make sure the portrait is proportionately accurate. Once the drawing was complete, I started blocking out the background and objects with dry oils, only blending with turpentine.’ Glory

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An early sketch of Dido Belle from Mikéla.

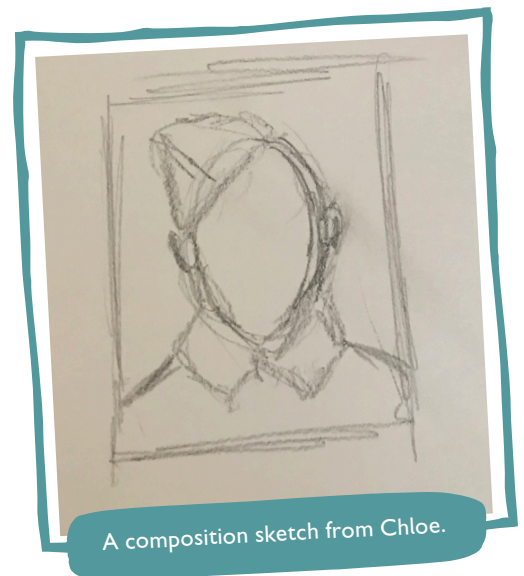
‘I’ll sketch out a simple outline of the subject then give the canvas a wash of colour to get rid of the white background of the canvas. The colour depends on the undertone of the subject, so if they are warm-toned I will usually use some type of yellow. If they have a more red-based skin tone I’ll use umbers or siennas. The next step is to block in the colours. I always work on the background first then work my way towards the middle. If I’m painting in oils I work in thin layers which build over time to create the realistic illusion I’m trying to achieve. If acrylic, layering isn’t required – it’s more like painting the colours like when you’re laying down bricks so they are just placed next to each other.’ Mikéla



‘With a portrait, having photographic references is the starting point of studying the physical make-up of the character’s face. Additional elements, such as the clothes that the character is adorned in and the overall colour palette of the painting, are determined from historical material in order to add to the narrative of the individual depicted in the portrait. Clothing is a great signifier of various things, including time, status and class ...’ Hannah



‘Where possible, I take lots of photos – high-quality photos. For me, the strength of the painting begins with the strength of the photos because my own personal strength as an artist is to wave away all fanciful notions of what I think something should look like, and to focus on what I see. If there are shades of blue in skin tone, I will paint them. I then prime my canvases in non-white gesso, usually grey, because colours can look a bit luminous on a white surface which is definitely not the effect I want for a portrait. Then I grid up my drawing and paint!’ Chloe



A composition sketch from Chloe.

## ... INFLUENCES



Detail from self-portrait of Diego Velázquez in Las Meninas, 1656 © Public domain.

‘Velázquez and Holbein have always been points of reference for the ways in which their portraits have so much emotive power and seem to capture the essence of the person; they seem to engage the viewer in quite an intimate moment. But I have also been drawn to the surface texture and line of Miró, Paolo Uccello and Paula Rego. I have always really appreciated the work of Miró, for how he created and incorporated a visual vocabulary, something I have been working to develop in my own work.’ Elena



‘I am influenced by the Italian Renaissance.’ Clifton



A portrait of Henry VIII by Hans Holbein, after 1537 © Public domain.

‘The Renaissance. I am greatly influenced by galleries like Tate Britain, the National Gallery, Thyssen-Bornemisza, Kenwood House and more museums or historical sites that display portraiture. Contemporary artists like Harmonia Rosales, Elizabeth Colomba, Kehinde Wiley, Fabiola Jean-Louis and a new digital artist named Kyesone all explore representation within art history.’ Glory



‘[My influences are] black women/black people. My portraits are of black women because I’ve always noticed that there weren’t enough positive representations of black women in society and on social media.’ Mikéla



The Thyssen-Bornemisza National Museum in Madrid, Spain © CC0 1.0 Universal public domain dedication.

‘Kerry James Marshall, Yinka Shonibare, Njideka Akunyili-Crosby and Gustav Klimt.’  
Hannah



‘Traditional portraiture fascinates me, as does light. I have many artistic favourites, from Caravaggio and Rembrandt to living, breathing traditional portrait artists like Cesar Santos. My aim is to be able to paint from life without a grid, just as they did before cameras were around. And I intend to practise and practise drawing live sitters this year.’ Chloe



## ...INSPIRATION

‘Ideas for works often come whilst reading historical studies; I find that histories provide stories that help clarify contemporary events. Historians work to understand people and the dynamics which set events and ideas in motion. Film and dance provide inspiration for visualising a composition and gesture.’ Elena



‘I study media, news, history books for topics.’  
Clifton



‘Contemporary artists who criticise colonial art through their practice, and useful archives that delve into the untold stories of Afro-European pioneers and aristocrats. These kinds of people don’t hang on famous gallery walls, but are rather kept hidden from the public, or privately collected.’ Glory





'Self-Portrait with Two Circles' by Rembrandt (c.1665–69), on display at Kenwood in London. Rembrandt made roughly 80 self-portraits throughout his life and they record his changing features over four decades, from ambitious young artist, to successful painter, to the aged, troubled master of his late years.

'Everyday life and the way people present themselves on social media platforms. I also take inspiration from the processes of other artists.' Mikéla

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'I'm often inspired by photographs – usually on Instagram – and it used to be very common for me to approach a photographer online and ask if I could paint their image. Nowadays, I try to work from my own photos, because this offers much more control over the composition and I can attain the level of detail I want for the painting. That doesn't stop me from being inspired by Instagram though.' Chloe

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## ...CHALLENGES

'There were a few challenges. One was choosing how to paint James Chappell, considering how young my model appeared to be as my first model cancelled on me. Also, my model's afro is really big in real life, and very well kempt. I was painting James Chappell in the latter years of his life, as a landlord and free from the service of the Hattons. Chappell's attire would have been different when he was a servant of the Hattons from when he became landlord of the Hatton Arms pub later on in his life.' Glory

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'Since my reference photograph was not in colour, I had to imagine the shade of Sarah's skin. Having an awareness of the people of that region enabled me to adopt a skin tone that was closer to reality. In addition, not having a model to use to get an accurate posture, I used myself as a model to overcome this, particularly because of the regal manner in which I wanted her to be presented.' Hannah

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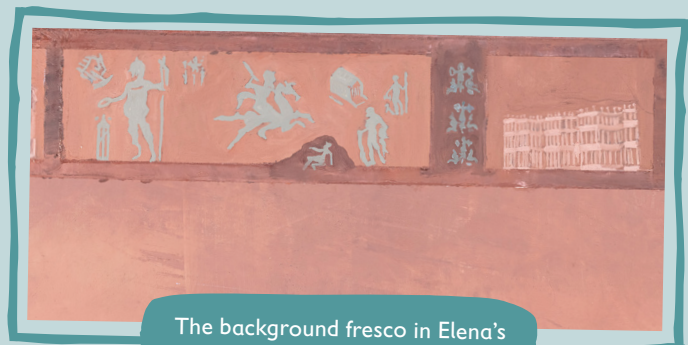


‘To make Septimius seem human I didn’t want to just take his pose from his statues. The Roman statues have a very established type, and whilst I think it is interesting that this is how emperors thought they should be visualised, I wanted to focus on Septimius as a person who lived, not as a figurehead. So when deciding on posture I was mindful of an impression that I had of the emperor as somebody who was in constant movement in his mind and body. I came across busts of the emperor which showed him tilted leaning forward. This posture recalled how the emperor was quick to act, was enquiring, and good at forecasting the future. So this bust formed the foundation for his clothing and the positioning of the rest of his body, which had to fit around this posture. The only part of the composition which was modelled were the hands, which were modelled by my Dad.



The Berlin Tondo, Altes Museum, Berlin © CC0 1.0 Universal public domain dedication.

Severus’s skin colour was an interesting challenge. I was aware that he has been described as Rome’s black emperor. This is perhaps a contemporary perspective. ... In line with my approach, which was to represent Severus as Romans would have seen him and how he chose to represent himself, I settled on the colours pictured in the Berlin Tondo.



The background fresco in Elena’s portrait of Septimius Severus.

Following this emphasis on cultural behaviour, I was interested in how Septimius seemed to make a significant effort to adopt Roman culture, to the extent of adopting himself into the Antonine dynasty, whilst a lot of reading seemed to emphasise the African and Syrian influences during his reign. I think his representation in his coins (Carthage, Hercules and Bacchus) demonstrate that synthesis. Through the fresco in the background I wanted to symbolically portray both his Roman heritage and his African background.

Making the face seem human [was also a challenge]. At one point in the painting process I was really struggling to get the life into his face; it just seemed to feel like a drawing or cartoon. I often work from film and so I resorted to watching Libyan dramas on YouTube, so I could get an idea of how people from Severus’s area (2,000 years on) speak, move and gesture.’ Elena

## ... MATERIALS



‘The work is painted in oils. Oil was applied onto a layer of liquin and linseed oil mixture for Septimius’s figure, face and chair. This was a technique I was taught to use at the Academy, which makes it easier to move oil across the canvas surface and speeds up drying so I could paint each day on a dry surface. It also builds up thin layers of paint and allows you to see the layers below. For the background I wanted to simulate the texture of frescoes and so chose oils with the thickest texture and left them on card for a while to make them even thicker; they were then scraped directly onto the canvas with a stripping knife. There are two layers of this on the canvas. To simulate the look of paint painted on plaster I thinned my oil paint with turpentine and brushed it over (for the bottom section).’ Elena

‘I always try to use Winsor & Newton supplies (finance allowing) as I find them the best quality. Also I paint in acrylic and I have found that their paints cover the canvas well and evenly, as do their brushes.’ Clifton

‘[The materials I used were] my MDF board, gesso primer and Winsor & Newton oil paints. Also Gamvar’s Gamblin Gloss varnish for a sheen finish, giving the ashy colours some depth. I use turpentine to clean and blend with instead of linseed oil, because I have found over the years that using linseed oil often leaves my swatches gloopy and too smooth to work with. Turpentine dries the paint in good time, in order for me to begin my next layer.’ Glory

‘The main materials I use are oils, acrylics, gloss paint and gold leaf.’ Mikéla

‘The advantage of oils with a slower drying time helps when making subtle changes to facial features. I therefore use a slow drying medium to mitigate this. The additional layer of fabric is organza cloth, which I dipped in fabric before finally overlaying it on the canvas.’ Hannah

## ... COMPOSITION



'In general the idea was that the body expressed his personality, his being, how he would have moved/gestured, whilst the background was supposed to represent his self-representation, his life, and how Corbridge fits into the narrative of Roman history. I wanted to capture Severus as if in a moment of discussion, as if he is dialoguing with us directly. Originally his left hand held a scroll; however, I was advised by the curator that by this point wax tablets were much more common and the scrolls carved in his statues are perhaps more symbolic.

When I was thinking of his expression, he is described as having "eyes that look deep and searching, sometime also appear brooding and abstracted". His character seemed to be made of contrasts, and he seemed hard to pin down. I wanted to convey this, so whilst sketching I depicted the shadowed part of his face with an angry, serious expression and the other side with a slight smile (the cheek lifted). Through the painting process the sharp distinction between the two was reduced, hopefully, to create an expression which is hard to decipher.

[In terms of pose] I wanted to portray an image of the Septimius Britons would have encountered on his campaign. In his early sixties he was already afflicted by gout in his legs, which meant he was likely carried whilst travelling around Britain for his campaign. When thinking about the stylisation and the colouring for the portrait I wanted to reference Roman visual culture and so with the support of the curator and historian researched frescoes; we particularly looked at the frescoes at Dura-Europos. I created mood boards of colours, and was struck by how bright and colourful the decoration was. The Romans seemed to bring as much light and colour into their work as possible, so for this reason I went against a dark background, which is my usual preference, and chose a rusty red-ochre colour, which features in some of the British Roman sites.



Elena establishing form.

In terms of his physicality, Septimius is described as being "small" but "physically powerful". I wanted to reflect that in his body, but particularly in his hands. His right hand casually covers his knee; initially this was intended to highlight that the body was tilted or twisted forwards towards us. Then I thought it seemed particularly significant given the gout he suffered in his legs, which impeded him throughout his campaign in Britain. Herodian emphasises that he was a born administrator, a man of great energy, quick to understand a problem and act on it. For this reason I wanted him to be leaning forward.' Elena

‘This is a popular portraiture composition for the 17th century and is still quite a popular composition because of its simplicity, having the model in the centre of the painting’ Glory

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‘I was free to interpret how and when Chappell would have been painted. I could have painted him as a servant, but there was not enough information to determine the kind of role he had as a servant, except he was favoured a great deal, and became a legend for saving Christopher Hatton from repercussions of a lightning explosion. I decided to paint him in the latter years of his life, with a more stoic and integral stance, the kind of man who would look back at his life and be proud.’ Glory

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## ... COLOUR PALETTE

‘Studying the frescoes of Dura-Europos and other Roman frescoes, I wanted to use brighter colours. I settled on a reddish ochre as this is used in British Roman reconstruction builds. For the clothing I was directed by the customs of dress for Roman emperors and by what I had read about Severus’s minimalism and simplicity in dress.’ Elena

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‘The rustic colour of the painting and frame are in keeping with the era and settings.’ Clifton

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Hannah with her portrait of Sarah Forbes Bonetta at Osborne.

‘I took a lot of inspiration from paintings of the 19th century in adopting a muted palette. In addition, I wanted to create a sharp contrast between the background and Sarah so that the audience is focused on her image and not “distracted” by the background.’ Hannah

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## ... WHAT THEY HOPE TO CONVEY

'I hope to give a rich and rounded impression of this figure – to highlight his existence and thus the existence of different types of British history, other than the one we are familiar with. [I hope people will take away an] enriched impression of British history and black history. To have a rounded impression of this emperor, to be incentivised to find out more about him and others' Elena



'I hope I have created a face for the name, catching the feel and history surrounding St Hadrian.' Clifton



'[I would like people to take away] that there is not enough representation of African Europeans in historical galleries or textbooks. ... History as it is taught spends a great deal of time remembering historical African figures in Europe as either slaves, servants, abolitionists, or quite frankly irrelevant.' Glory



'Black women are not one single thing. They are a collective, they come in different sizes, shapes and colours as well as possessing different talents and personalities, and for me to represent all these beautiful things I have to be absorbed in the patterns I see in images to perceive a better understanding.' Mikéla



Mikéla with her portrait of Dido Belle.

‘It is important to show the world the breadth of the Black experience and to destroy the damaging stereotypes. Black history has been told from a single perspective but there are many more stories to tell. The narrative that has previously existed is damaging to the young and future generations of Black people. There is a wealth of Black experience that is yet to be shared with a wider audience, and so many unsung heroes and impactful legacies.’ Hannah

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A painting of Olaudah Equiano by Hannah Uzor.

‘It’s time to rediscover history from a different perspective. Sarah’s life is just one example of how there are hidden histories yet to be explored that are extremely relevant and important in a multicultural society.’ Hannah

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‘It’s important for me to convey the individual. I want someone to look at my paintings and really believe there’s a story, a history and a unique person behind all of them. Another important influence on my work is our archaic idea of “the arts”. When I picture an artist, I don’t immediately picture a young minority ethnic girl painting minority ethnic people. Our stereotypes of what artists are and what artists paint are still very old-fashioned, gendered and lacking diversity. It’s important for me to help change that by bringing faces to gallery walls that wouldn’t normally get the chance and by empowering the disenfranchised to feel a sense of belonging in British history, arts and culture.’ Chloe

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Chloe Cox with her portrait of Arthur Roberts.

## ... THE JOY OF ART

‘When I create a work I am always working to capture somebody in the midst of an action; for this reason I often screenshot images from film for my portraits. I think it is because then they seem at their most human. When we are always doing something, that is when we are least aware or concerned to pose/posture ourselves and hide away in posturing.’ Elena



‘I am an art mentor for a charity called Arts Together, which teaches art to the elderly. This is so rewarding and enjoyable, proving you are never too old to learn art.’ Clifton



‘Art is like a second voice to me, which often speaks louder than I do, most clearly because I am an introvert. I like to express my thought processes and ideas about the world through my craft. It’s important for me to convey my opinions this way.’ Glory



‘I paint because it’s the one creative pursuit that I’m confident I can lose myself in every time; it’s like knowing you can return to a good dream. My favourite moment is when you realise you’ve caught someone’s likeness, but you can’t exactly pinpoint which brushstroke did it. (Which is daunting because you have to restrain yourself from fiddling with the piece in case you ruin it.) Often, it comes from capturing something of them that’s so slight – an expression or wisp of hair – that really brings them to life.’ Chloe

