

PORTRAIT PAINTINGS OF EU CITIZENS BY UK ARTISTS

A Portrait of Europe



I M (O) S
FOUNDATION



The EU portraits project was organised by the IMOS Foundation.

Telephone: 01797 363099

enquiries@IMOSfoundation.org

www.IMOSfoundation.org



The EU Portrait project was funded by:

IMOS
FOUNDATION

THE ROGER
DE HAAN
CHARITABLE TRUST

University of
Kent

50
1965-2015
THE 50th
EUROPEAN
UNIVERSITY

Contents

ii-iv Introduction

EU Countries

1	Italy	15	Lithuania
2	Belgium	16	Portugal
3	Luxembourg	17	UK
4	Croatia	18	Spain
5	Latvia	19	Hungary
6	Ireland	20	Bulgaria
7	Finland	21	Germany
8	Cyprus	22	Czech Republic
9	The Netherlands	23	France
10	Poland	24	Malta
11	Romania	25	Greece
12	Sweden	26	Estonia
13	Slovenia	27	Austria
14	Denmark	28	Slovakia

Creative Director

29	Briony Kapoor
----	---------------

Artists

29	Bowsa
30	Sue Edwards
31	Rebecca Fontaine-Wolf
32	Victoria Fontaine-Wolf
33	David Fowler
34	Michael Frith
35	Clare Haward
36	Paula MacArthur
37	Nick Martin
38	Rosie O'Driscoll
39	Ryan Orme
40	Elena Priestley
41	Maria Priestley
42	Dan Whiteson
44	Bernice Wilson

Introduction

The IMOS Foundation is a small arts charity based in the South East of the United Kingdom. It is well-placed geographically to welcome visitors from mainland Europe and one of its aims is to foster friendly relationships with citizens of other EU countries.

In 2012 the charity decided to send gifted UK artists to each of the twenty eight countries of the Union. Their brief was to find a European from that country and paint their portrait. They were given a guide as to gender and age then asked to work simply with someone whose face caught their eye and who was amenable to the project. Fifteen artists took up the challenge and The IMOS Foundation is proud to present their collected work: **A Portrait of Europe: Euro Stars**. As far as we can ascertain, the last time something similar was attempted was in 1493, for a document known as The Nuremberg Chronicle.

This project is a unique “grass roots” collaboration by European artists and people who are outside political, celebrity, business and government circles. It demonstrates European fellow feeling in action and the result is an extraordinary exhibition which tethers the grand notion of a greater Europe to its people. Seen together the portraits are surprisingly homogenous; it is difficult to identify the different nationalities.

The subjects are, then, not typical but in a sense representative in their randomness. They don't look alike but they have some important things in common. For the most part they seem comfortable in casual dress and the breadth in their prosperity (which is considerable) isn't obvious suggesting that all enjoy a reasonable basic standard of living. The preponderance of asymmetrical features and idiosyncratic expressions suggests that individuality is a key feature and perhaps a driving force in the history of the region.

Although each portrait is individual, the exhibition as a whole emphasises commonality rather than disparity. It draws attention to the ordinary experience of being European, rather than the tortuous political processes that have brought us formal Union. In a world of over seven billion people the 500 million Europeans in the EU represent only 7% of the human population. We are the guardians of a tradition and of a contemporary civilisation that has done more than any other to promote the rule of law, humanitarian values and the rights of the individual. We are serious about the education of the young, the care of the elderly, the health of each one of us and freedom of choice for our citizens.

Visitors to the collection can see in the subjects humour, kindness, ambition, tenderness, fatigue, determination, insouciance, learning, good health, a sense of fashion, a love of architecture and landscape as well as many other qualities treasured by European society. Many of these evident and specified expressions are not only European but also universal values and by becoming closer to each other within Europe we can't help but come closer to each other in the wider world as well.

European identity has been slow, however, to take shape. Some member states have been able to develop and build on their commonality while preserving their rich and varied cultural diversity but others – including the British – have appeared reluctant to bond with their continental fellows. We routinely underestimate how far our own culture has been shaped by interaction with the great intellectual and cultural movements of mainland Europe: the Renaissance, the Enlightenment, Romanticism and Modernism. We tend to ignore the extent to which we share with our European partners a set of liberal humanitarian values, a norm of non-lethal justice and a model of entwined public and private sectors, and how important all this is to our sense of identity.

Of course, many Britons are emphatically committed to their European identity and this exhibition could be described as a kind of billet-doux to our European compatriots, a demonstration of openness, amity and warm curiosity. The IMOS Foundation plans to exhibit the portraits in many – perhaps all – of the member countries. One aim is to show and to create a record of how Europeans appear at the beginning of the twenty first century. We also hope it will help nurture a sense of emotional allegiance and shared identity among Europeans, expanding fellow-feeling to the edges of the community.

A Portrait of Europe: Euro Stars has been made possible by the talent and idealism of the artists involved. Without exception they believed in the idea and did it for love and for adventure rather than for money. They are artists of all ages and include many already widely recognised for their gifts and in receipt of prestigious awards. The younger participants are also exceptionally good and seem sure to make their mark on the national and on the international art scene.

The IMOS Foundation is a registered charity located on Romney Marsh. It is responsible for bringing art to the community in and around the main town of New Romney. There has already been a successful programme of wall painting in public areas of the town and a sculpture park is developing work by work. The charity has an associated Artist in Residence Programme and a European Union Programme. The IMOS Foundation has four trustees and is supported by private donations as well as by the local councils and others such as the Roger de Haan Trust and the University of Kent at Canterbury. This independent project has been quietly encouraged by the National Portrait Galleries of the UK and by the European Union as well.

Briony Kapoor 2013/2014
Creative Director, IMOS Foundation

Map of the European Union



The IMOS Foundation is now considering commissioning a series of portraits on a larger scale for example, the Commonwealth. Would European artists inevitably display in such paintings common European values that are *their* common European values? Ought we to ask non-European artists to reveal Europeans? Could there really be any difference in showing European values rather than human ones? The questions are endless and the answers significant. If you would like to add to the conversation please email: enquiries@imosfoundation.org

Italy

Artist: Nick Martin Title: Portrait of Federica Enrico Oil on panel 59cm x 86cm



A summer evening perhaps: shadows lengthening and a sense of softness and melting show us a still moment of life when the action and dynamic and noise and smell and tension of the city are arrested for a while. A gradually darkening blue sky absorbs both light and heat yet allows us to inhabit the world of which the subject herself is a focus. She stands in possession of the whole life of her city. The woman is strong and handsome and quite unconcerned with the viewer. Her wide open features both disguised and revealed by a developed painterly technique are further powered by the most wonderful hair. It is thick, curling auburn hair painted in a myriad of colours by a wizard. This work laid down in layers of small brushstrokes, apparently every one of them in a slightly different shade of colour, reveals more and more of itself with looking. Notice the perspex street sign and the pale purple shadow of a domed building on the classical facade opposite, itself shown in a soft yellowish hue. The quality of paint on canvas, applied in those brief dabs, is nevertheless languorous, malleable, tactile in its appeal like an ice-cream sculpture. As though the artist has steadied his arm barely in time for the brush to reach the canvas, before it started to slowly drip into curious patterns on the studio floor, like ice-cream from its cone or like a hot day reaching its end.

Gavin MacDonald

Belgium

Artist: V. Fontaine-Wolf Title: Portrait of Blaise Beaume Oil on canvas 76cm x 61cm

At first glance, the softest of studies in grey. Only at first glance. Instantly you note the asymmetric lattice across the background. It *seems* to sit within the room. A steel mesh that works across and down the picture plane like black slashes cut into the canvas itself. If the mesh further suggests a web, then the subject of the portrait is surely spider not fly. What could be cuddlier than a dove grey cardigan? Yet this one looks as solid as armour plate, and as formal as a summons to court. The owner is not, as tradition



demands, remotely donnish or avuncular. Mark him, now, turning to attend. He turns towards *you*, and certainly there is, in this man's gaze, a weighing of balances. A sense of being appraised, as the expert jeweller might examine a stone for its flaw. It's nothing personal. Breathe again, for you have not been found wanting, or not just yet. Now note the cut of his lip, the furrow of concentration (a permanent tense) above the bridge of the nose. And, most of all look him in the eye. He is, after all, looking directly into yours. This man whose mind, once made-up, will not easily be un-made. Knowing his own mind, he would be minded to put yours to the test. *"If you're going to eat dolphin-friendly tuna,"* he asks, in a surprisingly soft voice, *"why not tuna-friendly dolphin?"* Be careful of this steely man. This hawk in dove's clothing. Beyond his window, a softer world of stone, glass and concrete.

Gavin MacDonald

Luxembourg

Artist: Elena Priestley Title: Portrait of Carlo Back Oil on canvas 90cm x 60cm

Late 20th century prosperity has changed our expectations of life, reshaping what it is to get old. We live longer, staying healthier. In the picture we see a man holding his own against advancing age, his brows still dark for all his whitened hair and moustache. The green foliage in the background is like a dash of assertive life standing out against indeterminate greys, the overtone of a stormy sky in the top left a ghost of what may be held at bay while we prosper. He is relaxed even in apparent interruption, and in control, holding his bike firmly, but



letting it lean gently against him, not needing its support. His clothes are comfortable ordinary things, his open necked shirt and casual jacket like a welcomed stepping down from the forced formality of his working life. Most important of all there is his choice of cycling, possibly for leisure, possibly for health, possibly as part of a desire to be environmentally responsible, the choice of a sustainable life following the gift of sustained vigour.

Paul Brasington

Croatia

Artist: Michael Frith Title: Portrait of Nina Acrylic on canvas 84cm x 59cm

The subject of this painting is unusual in art – most portraits of women are of the young and beautiful or else flattering images of the wealthy and powerful – rarely do they show working women in middle age. Feminists complain that women become invisible as they age and this portrait reminds us of the underlying truth of this observation – and what a loss it is to characterful portraiture. The artist takes the face with its imperfections full on, the body covered by that universal symbol of service – the apron. The facial tones have a raw quality but are



played to show a convincing three dimensional viewpoint. The details chosen to emphasise the character of the sitter, the straggly hair, the weathered skin somehow only serve to strengthen the person portrayed. She faces a working life with warmth, practicality and humour unwittingly offering us the best underpinning to everyday life in Europe. The artist successfully displays the endurance of the sitter by fluid perceptive brushstrokes to produce a sympathetic but not patronising portrait.

Patricia McMath

Latvia

Artist: R. Fontaine-Wolf Title: Ilze Strazdina and Son Mixed media 90cm x 80cm

Circles rhyme across and within this lovely portrait. The circle of the mother's face, beaming up at the viewer, as if to say 'Look what I've got here!'; the understated but ample curve of her breast; the long round sweep of back, shoulders, elbows, and hands that provide the sheltering whole – a womblike whole, if one wishes – for the baby in her arms, and (in another perfect round) the delicate cricket ball of his head. Maternal too, in their different ways, are the colours – drips of cream, washes of rust – that disrupt the scene.

Milk and blood, plenitude and pain. The mother's shoulder seems turned protectively against the dark ochre shadow, splashed on the wall behind her, most of the threat of that association robbed by her own serene, green, confident gaze. One feels she must be looking either at the father of the baby, or at her own mother, for the depth of these feelings to be communicated. But it's unclear just how much of this is being transmitted to the bundle of joy himself, who looks like more like a person of consequence than the little handful he (literally) is. Brisk hands – painted briskly – seem to roll back his sleeves in an adult gesture of impatience, of the desire to begin on a task of importance. His own green eyes slide coolly sideways away from his mother with a forbearance that suggests independence of mind will not be lacking in the little fellow.



Gavin MacDonald

Ireland

Artist: B. Wilson Title: Portrait of Patrick Brocklebank Oil on canvas 80cm x 80cm

There is much competence in the execution of this painting. To achieve realism of the skin through tonal blending that leaves little or no evident brush marks requires a deft hand and skilled use of paint. We are given an altogether elegant modelling



of the flesh. This delicate technique passed from generation to generation since the Renaissance is an admirable skill yet the initial reaction to this painting could be ambiguous. It has a strange impact for reasons difficult to pin down. It may be due to the scale of the piece. A large, almost disembodied head without the context of background detail makes it a little intimidating – to use the vernacular – too 'in your face'. Perhaps seeing a little more of the shoulders would have shifted the viewpoint sufficiently to have given a better overall perspective. Slightly less bright colours could have added to the viewer's ability to relate to the subject. This is a work of considerable strength but perhaps not for the traditionalist or the overly sensitive. The issue of scale and colour is presumably integral to the point of the artist who is using this method to get at a particular truth. She leaves her audience to approach that secret as they will.

Christine Hopwood

Finland

Artist: Dan Whiteson Title: Portrait of Jukka Acrylic on canvas 80cm x 60cm

An impressive painting of an adult man troubled by his existence but seeming in appearance still young enough to work his way through whatever his problems appear to him to be. They are of an existential nature judging by his gaze into the far distance. A gaze one feels that may actually be directed either somewhere within his own mind or else somewhere so far off as to be outside the natural world thus having an almost Biblical

resonance. Another interpretation might be that the eyes reflect the wastes of the frozen North and cannot distinguish that from some devastating interior climate. They are expanded by a strange glowing light, light that might generally be found in icicles. The disturbing power of the expression is odd in a painting marked by colourful streaks of paint and a robust, almost errant, line that intuition suggests ought to be showing us a less troubled world. Indeed the paint work bursts with a joy that the subject seems unable to reach. A mature painting by a gifted young artist.



Briony Kapoor

Cyprus

Artist: C. Haward Title: Portrait of Soteroula Georgiades Oil on linen 80cm x 60cm

It might seem a picture of ease, a woman sitting with a pet cat, the cat accepting her embrace, but there is an underlying tension, an uneasy feeling about enclosure. A bracelet sits loosely on her wrist, a thin scarf around her neck: these are nothing remarkable in themselves, but they take on an allusive significance as visual echoes of the main business of the portrait. There's a lesser hoop too, the fall of her hair continuous with the neckline of her T shirt,



framing her face. At the outset our eyes are drawn to that face and then slide to the cat's head, areas where the painting becomes more attentive to detail, but then are pulled away by the curve of her arm behind the cat, caressing and supporting but also restraining, the cat apparently accepting her embrace but not quite relaxed. This curving movement is arrested by the point where her left hand presses on her right arm, completing the enclosure, given no detailed emphasis in the brushwork, but still forming a kind of knot tying in the just-visible tip of the cat's paw. This, then, is a willed relaxation, as she sits slightly twisted in her garden chair.

Paul Brasington

Netherlands

Artist: D. Whiteson Title: Portrait of Marre van Dantzig Acrylic on canvas 80cm x 60cm

A friendly face engages with the viewer. Hands leaf through the pages of an opened book. Behind our subject are shelves of more coloured books which, like that held towards us have (with one exception) no titles. On two shelves over our subject's shoulder is the hint of a flat green landscape in which a solitary cow is grazing. The lively intelligence, the books and the landscape are our clues for this picture also perhaps the ring on the forefinger of the right hand and the wedding finger of the left. The composition is elegant, cropped like a photo. This seems an elegant woman, who despite the hints of grey, is comfortable in her appearance, easy, without obvious make-up and a fringe that suggests she keeps in touch with her younger self. Have we the viewer caught her by surprise, or is she about to read from her book? Like with the grazing cow, we can only learn so much and then we are left to ponder. The painter has delivered a colourful and compassionate study of the pleasures of literature. The hands in particular are well painted and the direct gaze transfers (one feels) the confidence of all that written wisdom. It is a happy picture and that is no small achievement.

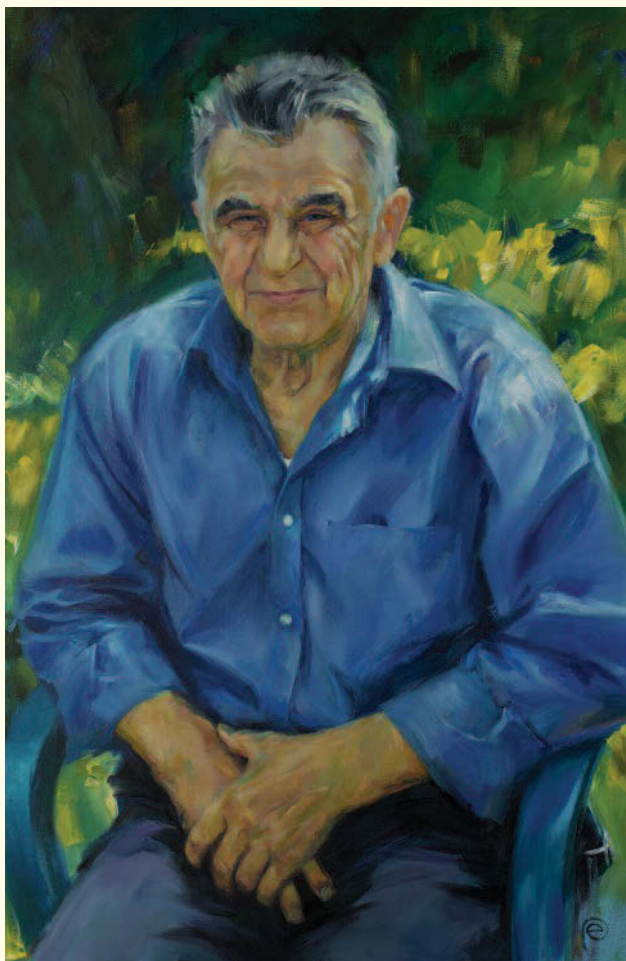


Jonathan Hills

Poland

Artist: Elena Priestley Title: Portrait of Piotr Gretkiewicz Oil on canvas 90cm x 60cm

A fine painterly portrait beautifully observed in a bold and confident hand. The modelling of the face and hands is nicely considered and very expressive. The shirt is full of form and light; and, as a consequence of that full of life and flesh. Though the subject definitely takes centre stage here, the undefined, complimentary background provides further interest and gives a direct and 'en plein air' feel to the work, which makes it quite fresh and exciting. The paint not only conveys the age of the subject well, but also his intelligence, masculinity and even an element of vigour. The face is particularly



engaging with every fold and line marking the years that have engraved it while there is a definite hint of a twinkle in the eye. It is a portrait full of warmth and sensitivity. I think this is a particularly accomplished work by an artist who understands their medium well and has a truthful yet sensitive approach. She has revealed a European of whom we might all be proud.

Christine Hopwood

Romania

Artist: Ryan Kai Orme Title: Portrait of Florin Oil on canvas 76cm x 61cm

A young man with a baseball cap looks into the distance. He looks unshaven and has a discoloured left eye. Is this a bruise or the remains of make-up? This is a dramatic and unsettling picture. It is delivered with the most limited palate, strong graphic patterns in black and white and a gaze that seems to defy a clear direction. And yet the face portrayed has humanity and a sensitivity that ask for understanding. Is this a victim or an aggressor? Do his



fashionable clothes suggest transatlantic chic or a more dangerous tribe? Some of the world's greatest portraits leave more questions than they answer and this simple picture of a pale face and a jet black costume will never answer as many questions as it poses. The artist has taken pleasure in the collection of simple curves. The edges of clothes, the facial hair and the nose, all are concisely drawn and this draughtsmanship gives the portrait an authority without being too judgemental. The greys that appear in the shadows of the skin are equally accomplished and add to a layer of subtlety that comes from careful scrutiny and is delivered with panache.

Jonathan Hills

Sweden

Artist: Susan Edwards Title: Portrait of Ulrika Ericson Oil on canvas 86cm x 66cm

This glorious painting is in a grand old style with no smart modern moves. The girl who sat for the portrait is unapologetically feminine, pretty and dressed in accordance with that state. One of the larger canvases in the exhibition has been filled with her presence painted in delicate shades with a masterly command of oil paint by the artist. The more you look the more you see here. Layers of paint and intricate manoeuvres in the display and in the



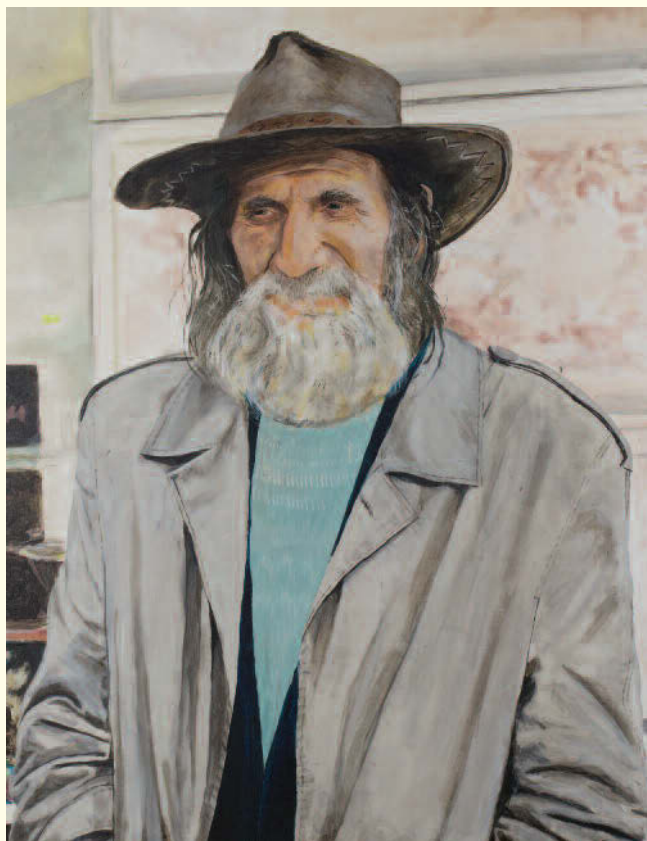
shading, show us people more complex and rewarding as we explore them than they may at first appear. By people I mean both the sitter and the artist. The former looks a trifle anxiously towards an uncertain future her arm raised to play with her hair as women in the tension of youth are wont to do. She is set by the latter against a background of cliffs, streams and trees in shades washed out and hauntingly beautiful. In depicting this natural continuity the artist cleverly reminds us of the certainty of the changes that time will bring to her subject notwithstanding her being just now poised in the desire of life. It is not clear whether this is intended or unconsciously rendered by an artist working in her prime.

Briony Kapoor

Slovenia

Artist: Bowsa Title: Portrait of Luka Perdvic Acrylic on canvas 90cm x 70cm

This portrait despite an immediate appeal, is somewhat lacking in punch and has an almost unfinished feel. There are some good strong parts, the nose and eyes are particularly impressive and expressive (respectively) for instance. The fedora/mac combo is intriguing, as indeed is the ill-kempt hair and beard; one's curiosity is definitely piqued with the desire to know more



about the subject. He comes across as an intellectual but appears to lack material wealth. The coat is well modelled but sits a little uncomfortably over the less well modelled shirt. The background around the head is distracting possibly because the sharp lines of the window dissect the hat. It is not clear whether too much detail or too little is the problem there. The background might be relevant to the subject providing context for those in the know. For others however it doesn't necessarily work though there is certainly skill with the paint. The portrait has a distinctive presence. It cannot be denied that the artist has revealed a remarkable character.

Christine Hopwood

Denmark

Artist: R. O'Driscoll Title: Portrait of Eva Gammelkær Acrylic on canvas 76cm x 60cm

Now, I would really like to meet this woman. Mature, with grey hair and a flamboyant pair of earrings, her blue eyes twinkle out from behind a pair of large spectacles. She is not afraid of being contrary, dramatic and somewhat spectacular. Perhaps she is involved in the theatre. Comedy, I might suggest, as there is an amused and ironic air to her expression. The portrait is executed without fear of that most difficult of items: the human skin. Here we see a



range of colours if we look closely. Her eyes are carefully made up and she has lipstick on but standing back we just get a sense of someone who has liked the sun all her life for she has an almost olive complexion (and before you consider this leads to a stereotype of a particular kind of European, may I say that you are completely off the mark!). She is not a perfectionist as her hair is somewhat untidy. She is set off by a plain background, which, although textured, could just be a flat, perhaps panelled pale green wall, emphasising her black clothes. Her face takes up almost the full canvas, her character dominating but not in an overpowering fashion, her expression is friendly. I think she has beautiful eyes and they are wonderfully depicted.

Diana Crampton

Lithuania

Artist: David Fowler Title: Portrait of Saule Voluckyte Oil on canvas 86cm x 66cm

A fresh-faced blonde with a peaches-and-cream complexion looks at us discerningly as we may look at her. The expression is only semi-smiling but the eyes are full of humour and intelligence. Skin tones on both face and breast are quietly but carefully revealed in many soft shades that repay a closer look. The sharpest shadows are in her hair, perhaps her colour is out of a bottle, yet the hair is well-depicted and attractive. The lips are



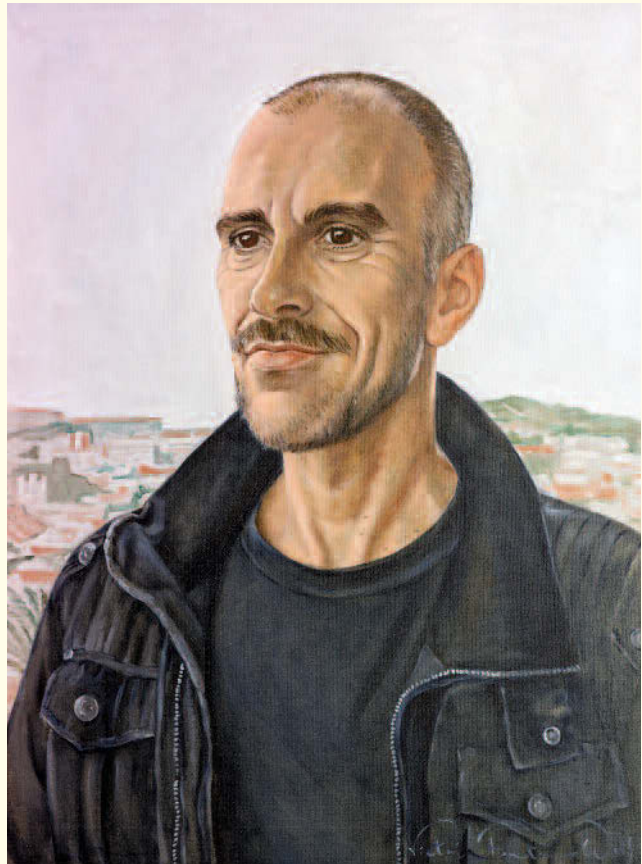
highlighted, recently glossed. On a canvas which is painted in fine pale blues and that gives a flattish Fresco-like impression, the eyes are relatively piercing with make-up well applied. The background is textured while in the lower part of the painting the darker blue satin of the woman's dress dominates. The glossy material is well rendered, the shine depicted by varied hues and the weight of the cloth apparent. The portrait is nevertheless static. The woman may have sat for this for a long time, yet she is undaunted and her figure gives the sense of marked social confidence which generally comes with a certain maturity or with something of a position in the world. What can we deduce about European identity from this portrait? Perhaps she is welcoming us to a soirée or to a celebration of the union in some significant European city? There is some indication that she has earned the status she enjoys and that she would guard it with determination.

Diana Crampton

Portugal

Artist: Victoria Fontaine-Wolf Title: Portrait of Sergio Oil on canvas 80cm x 60cm

This portrait stands out against a quiet background. The head is in three quarter profile so that the man looks away from the viewer into an apparently empty prospect. The severity of the contrast between the head and the background reminds one of a wood cut or perhaps a medal. The body is cut off at the upper chest is dark and clothed in a working man's attire. Though there are colours in the skin tones, from a distance the immediate impression is close to a monotone. The facial shadows are achieved by using flesh tones of



varied hues. The head seems elongated. One is struck by the sense of isolation conveyed by the cadaverous structure of the skull and the dark sunken eyes. The background gives some clue and context so one assumes that this is a southern European face though not filled with the joy that one associates with the Mediterranean. Its intensity recalls the sombly clad clergy, saints and martyrs so prominent in Iberian painting of the 16th and 17th century. In the simplicity of the figure's arrangement on the canvas there is a sense of a life hard lived that contrasts with the possibility of warmer softer lives hinted at in the background.

Patricia McMath

UK

Artist: Clare Haward Title: Portrait of Peter Wilding Oil on linen 80cm x 60cm

This is a subtle portrait in muted tones carefully graded and placed to enhance a full length figure. The subject is backed into a three dimensional triangle formed by the walls and floor. We are aware of a small table and the chair in which he sits but neither have any prominence. They fade into the background. The face is delineated by its colour relationship with its surroundings. It is placed against a soft white wall so that its blurred outlines form a convincing face. The bright white shirt, casually open necked, lifts the face with its flesh tones into prominence against the long body

length which fills the lower half of the picture. The subject wears a formal suit but the all-important shirt suggests someone relaxed within his official role. The extended legs and arms ending in clasped hands form an almost defensive distancing from the viewer but the portrait does not convey withdrawal, but rather a detachment on a well-founded sense of security. The colours and the placing of the brushwork support the characterisation of the sitter. They too are confident and telling. There is something very English about the message of this picture, he sits calm and securely backed into his island looking somewhat sceptically and pragmatically at the world.



Patricia McMath

Spain

Artist: Bernice Wilson Title: Portrait of Mariola de Burgos Oil on canvas 80cm x 80cm

At first sight, the word “glamour” comes to mind. A strong young face, almost air-brushed in its smoothness, is half turned so that a cascade of blond hair drops forward in



luxurious waves, caressing her cheek and half obscuring one eye. Her features are solid, almost sculptural, amplified by heavy make-up: dark eye shadow, false lashes and a crescent of glossed eyebrow. Her smiling mouth flashes good teeth in less than a perfect arc at the viewer. In a bold style and with the principle colours reduced to three the artist seems to have given us an almost commercial portrait. This is deceptive as the skin tones are by contrast in many varied hues. The subject has, it seems, few of the scars of life imprinted on her, not many wrinkles, twinkles or character lines to tell us who she is and how she lives her life. Yet there is ambiguity in the figure; a surface come-hither boldness combined, oddly, with some residual demureness. She is holding a deliberate and seductive pose. The bright green material of her dress is stretched over her bosom as she is caught demonstrating a figure that leads us to suppose her hands and fingers, her legs and feet are also intentionally angled in some way.

Compilation Review

Hungary

Artist: Michael Frith Title: Portrait of Klaudia Pinter Acrylic on canvas 83cm x 60cm

A portrait can seek to express the living complexity of its subject, or it can acknowledge the inadequacy of the form. Here the face must say as much as can be said. It's a strong face, only partially reshaped by the severity of her glasses, pushed high on her nose. The lenses seem weak, hardly distorting the lines of her face beneath, but they put up a barrier, something to hide behind, de-emphasising the beauty of her eyes where the fall of light and shade is most carefully worked. Our eyes are drawn instead to the fullness of her reddened mouth,

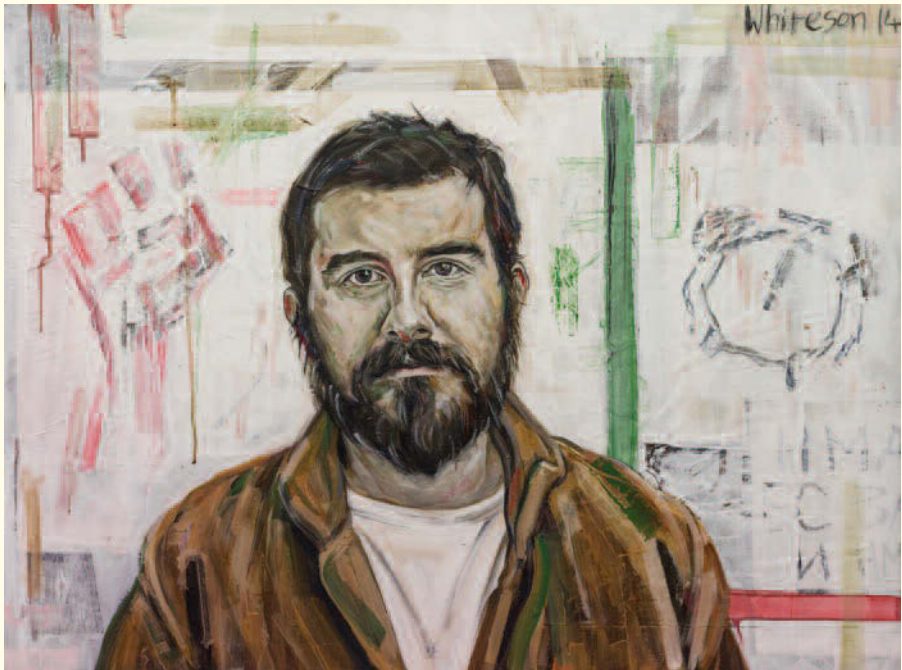
nearly smiling, but restrained like so much about her. The red is picked up on the neckline of her polo neck, a clearer line than the strong shape of her dimpled jaw, but mirroring that strength as your eyes move down, doing so again in the V picked out in a simple brush stroke. It's the last detail, the adjacent tress of long brown hair leeching into a streak of fabric, itself then bleeding off the canvas, a gesture to the fullness of her presence which has not been painted.



Paul Brasington

Bulgaria

Artist: Dan Whiteson Title: Portrait of Ivalyo Dinev Acrylic on canvas 60cm x 80cm



Looking the viewer straight in the eye, this work shows a physically quite vulnerable man whose force of mind is nevertheless compelling. Those direct brown eyes inhabit an unkempt, moustached and bearded face, surrounded by spiky ruffled hair. The touches of red colour – cheeks, lips, edges of an ear – are picked up in the red bars of the background structure. In the same way greens from that background take the eye back to the man's clothing. This background, a window-like structure, showing old notices and graffiti, with the suggestion of lettering, adds mystery. Who is he? His face tells us little – not smiling and evidently distrustful – is he waiting for someone or for something to happen? For the viewer to speak or to speak himself? Some tension is palpable. The man has a contained power apparently derived from his will. The artist is clearly fascinated with the face, painting it with care and respect. In contrast he captures the brown jacket and scruffy T-shirt with careless skill paying it scant attention. This is a haunting image leaving unspoken thoughts and unanswered questions. It would not be surprising to conclude that there is considerable pain behind the image presented.

Compilation Review

Germany

Artist: V. Fontaine-Wolf Title: A Professor from Munich Oil on canvas 80cm x 60cm

This striking portrait captures the essence of a certain type of European intellectual. The clues start with the apparently informal but nevertheless carefully chosen clothes. The wide brimmed anarchist hat is both dashing and subversive, the loosely knotted scarf recalls student bohemianism and the coat is in that essentially mittel European colour – loden green. This outfit could have been worn at any time since the nineteenth century. The face looks at the viewer with intelligent and somewhat sceptical blue eyes. The



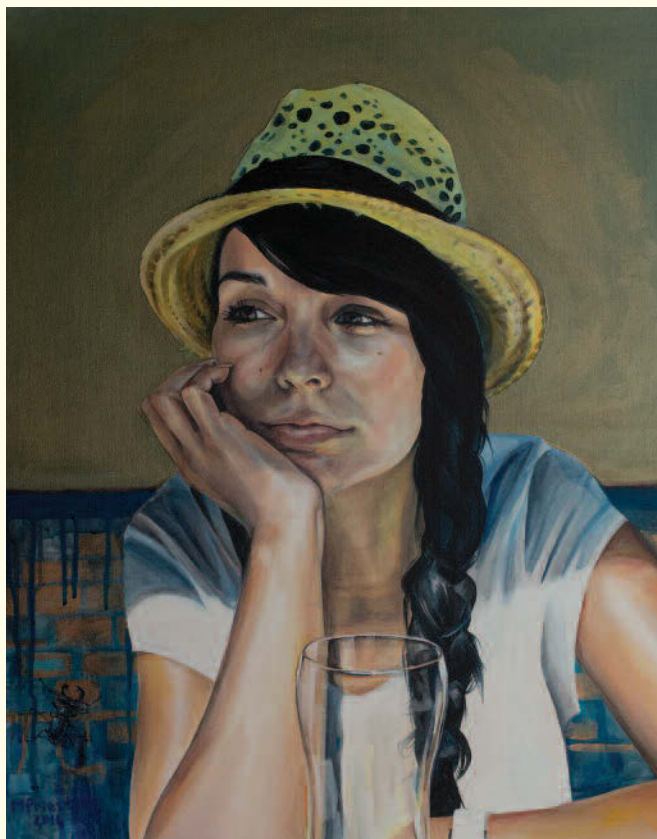
artist has captured the urban nature of a life conducted in a traditional European way. One could imagine meeting this man in the cafes, galleries and university seminar rooms of a long thriving cultural centre. This conception is enhanced by the choice of background. The heavy baroque architectural detail places the man in context. The artist's choice of colours for the strong skin tones, veering towards reds and yellows, focusses the viewer towards the face as these colours contrast with the greens and blues of the clothes. The features are strongly drawn which enables them to project forward from the background detail which recedes by the use of paler greyer hues. This lively portrait successfully embodies both the person portrayed and the idea he represents.

Patricia McMath

Czech Republic

Artist: M. Priestley Title: Portrait of Tereza Cermakova Acrylic on canvas 76cm x 60cm

What strikes one immediately about this painting is its eloquence. It definitely sparks the imagination to see the semi-abstracted dripping background with a stag beetle to the lower left. It is a hot day – the girl is dressed for it with her T-shirt and hat – and the shadows are crisp because of the strong sunlight. The subject has finished a drink and is relaxing with a thoughtful expression. About what is she pondering in this particular place?

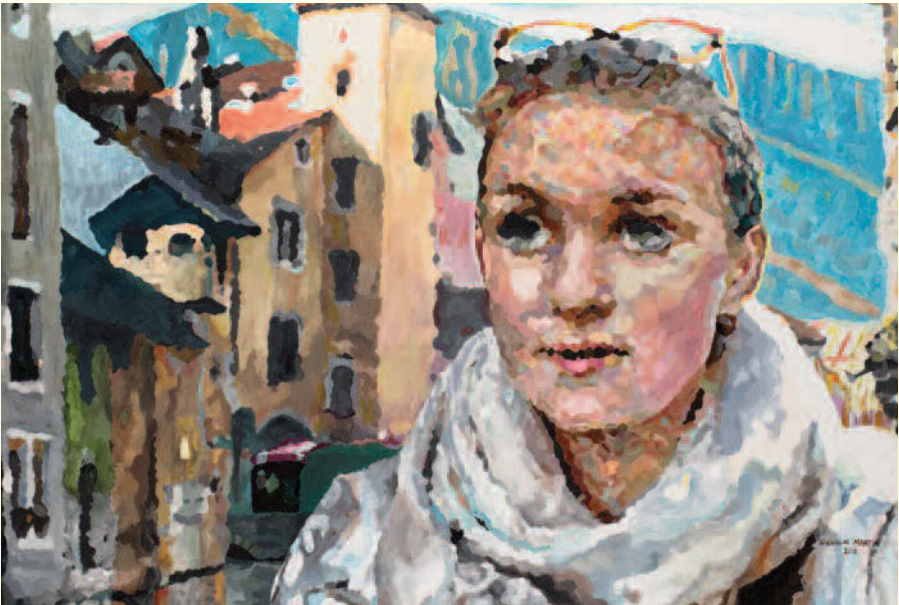


She, a young woman whiling away the time in quiet contemplation, is described in a competent fashion with painterly handling of the flesh. There is also harmony in the balance of colour between the subject and her background. The hair is a little awkward in places and might have been more finely worked. The perspective is curious at the girl's right shoulder causing the head and hand to seem slightly too large for the body – yet the face is arresting and draws the eye repeatedly. It seems likely that this is a painting by a young, emerging artist who has yet to reach their full potential. It is contemporary in its approach and more than a little enigmatic – a delightful piece of storytelling and a delightful work.

Christine Hopwood

France

Artist: Nick Martin Title: Portrait of Maud Ardhuin Oil on panel 59cm x 86cm



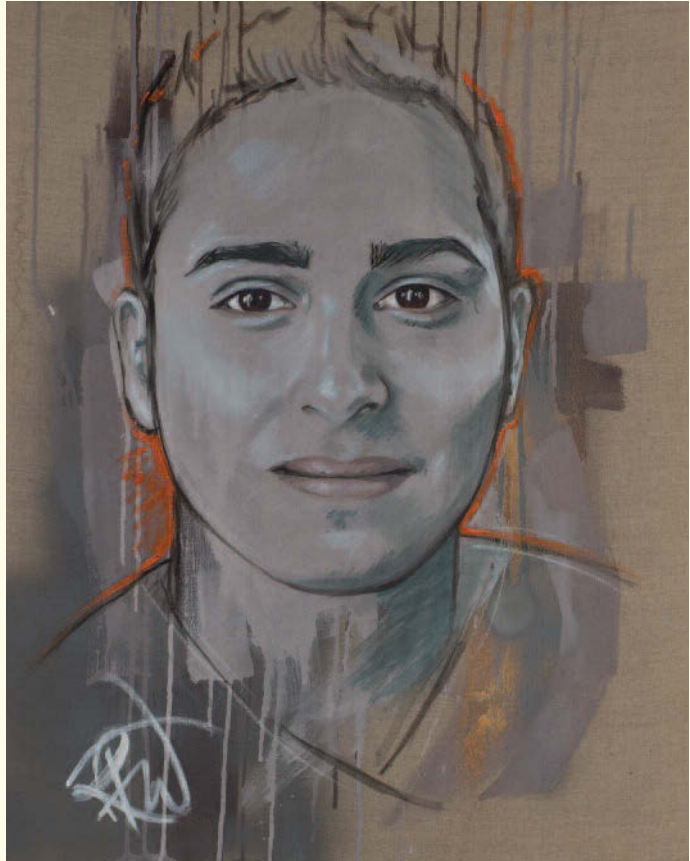
There is almost an element of painting-by-numbers, that fantastic game for young children, in this evocation of a young woman in a mountain village. However, looking at her head and upper torso we may also be reminded of the artist Seurat, the Pointilliste. The canvas is more or less divided into two parts, the portrait which is the subject and the village. The village forms the backdrop but it is actually at the left hand side of the painting. So the sketchily depicted mountains behind both make instead another formal background for both person and village. Step back and the colours meld, although perhaps more successfully in the architecture of the village, but isn't this the point: to juxtapose the style for the person to the style of the housing? The houses have those tonalities of the Mediterranean, ochre and green shutters. The sunlight falls on the roofs and on a square tower in the village. Our subject on the right is dressed in a white jumper with roll neck. It looks like warm clothing. Her hair is kept back with glasses, but they are not sunglasses. We are not sure what season it is. Is she a skier? Her gaze continues out of the painting, looking into the distance. Perhaps she is wondering if the sun is melting the snows.

Diana Crampton

Malta

Artist: R. Fontaine Wolf Title: Portrait of Douglas Gatt Mixed media 76cm x 61cm

This stylish work executed in a limited range of colour shows a young man of some beauty gazing towards us with the innocence of untroubled hope. His features are regular, his eyes and lips are full and there is promise in his future. Sparing with her brush strokes and apparently relaxed in composition, the artist displays a deft touch that demonstrates skill and confidence. There



is clarity in the open spaces and painterly experience in the simplicity. A modern and fashionable look to the painting echoes some of the more creative and light-hearted periods of history. It allows us a simple pleasure that slips happily away from some of the grimmer aspects of our world. It opens up to us the gift of optimism. We can admire, feel friendly and share in a safe utopian moment that does not descend into sentimentality. Nor is there any attempt to try to manipulate belief. An artist of considerable charm whom we can cherish as much as we do her unknown sitter.

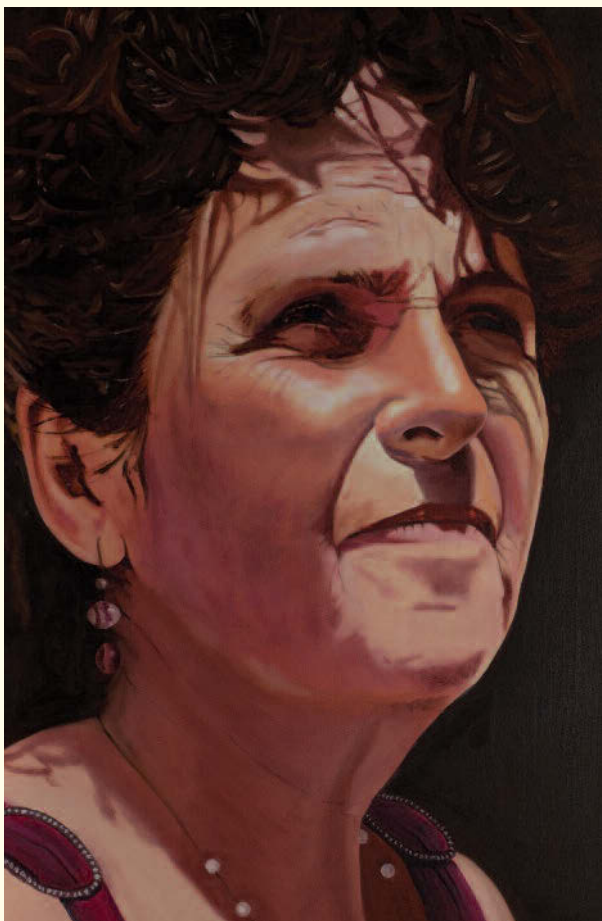
Briony Kapoor

Greece

Artist: P. MacArthur Title: Portrait of Despina Papadakis Oil on canvas 76cm x 61cm

Staring at the sun. The full heat of a Mediterranean afternoon. At a time when the human impulse is to search out shade, to sink gratefully into siesta, she holds her head alert and upwards. There is no protecting hand raised above the brow, no sunglasses acting as shield. She seems not to notice the freed strands of hair that dance about her eyes. Eyes which, as though themselves forged in intense heat, cannot register discomfort, recognising in this sunlight nothing that can hurt or burn. Round those eyes, the lines are few, and they barely crinkle against the light. But there is nothing reckless in this facing off against the heat of the day. Only control and

poise and determination. A gemlike clarity, a concentration of energies. Whatever is tenacious and adamant in the gaze, is matched in the determined set of the mouth, and in the sharp, angular planes of the cheekbones. The painter finds an analogue for this quality of concentration in the luminosity of the face. It is a face which, in its concentration of powers, is one from which the harsh light seems to recoil as though chastened. As though Sol himself has today met his match.



Gavin MacDonald

Estonia

Artist: Dan Whiteson Title: Portrait of Imant Pihlik Acrylic on canvas 80cm x 60cm

This is a highly painterly and highly coloured depiction of a man who appears most humorous, looking straight out of the canvas at us. There is an almost Cubist air to the highly textured background with Expressionist elements in the boldly coloured face. The paint has been put on thickly, probably with a palette knife. The background is predominantly blue, but a sort of halo of white surrounds the actual face of this man. The flesh of his head is outlined in shades of blue and green, his nose has a contrasting coloured outline too. His red jumper is also outlined. It is said that there are no



lines in nature, so this outlining trumpets its artistic effect and importance. Indeed, it is definitely a painting of lines: the forehead, the surroundings of his eyes, the character lines round his mouth, the line of his chin. These are all depicted in contrasting colour shadings. Picked out and emphasizing the contours of his face and the lines a repetition of white takes our eye back and forth to the background. The whites of his eyes are, perhaps, the only uniform part of the face, setting off the blue, where there is also a white hint, a twinkle. The whole painting radiates his infectious good nature. He is pleased to be painted, not shy.

Diana Crampton

Austria

Artist: Susan Edwards **Title:** The Art Collector **Oil on canvas 81cm x 71cm**

You can't miss the hands, enlarged by foreshortening, animated by a gesture we can't determine, bracketing spatially but also in the intensity of the brushwork the similarly textured, animated face. Perhaps the subject is holding forth, perhaps about the object beneath his hands, which at first glance looks



like an ancient book on a lectern, but on closer regard reveals itself as an elaborate gilt frame (though we can't see what it frames). His mouth is closed, silent, unrevealing too, but all the energy of the picture is in the overwrought skin tones, the purples in particular picking up from the rich purple and gold of the abstract background: purple and gold, the tones of classical authority and opulence, perhaps conjured by those hands from the unseen picture, the elaboration of the frame suggesting a life wealthy enough to commission and own expensive art. And yet his jumper hangs loosely on him, casually, his relationship to this wealth uncertain, drawing us back to the animation of his face and hands, a vitality beyond the context.

Paul Brasington

Slovakia

Artist: Elena Priestley Title: Portrait of Bozena Ciernikova Oil on canvas 90cm x 60cm

This painting is in three familiar colours, red, green and yellow. Not only are the colours well balanced but they augment an altogether excellent composition. The central figure is of a woman of middle age seated at a rustic table. She is shown at full length and posed in quite a difficult diagonal.

The central line of the body forms a cross with an opposing diagonal of light from the upper left. The light is coming from an inviting pathway leading deeper into a garden or woodland. The suggested rural idyll is contrasted by an expression of anxiety on the subject's face. It is possibly caused by pain in her neck for her head is held at a rather stiff angle and one notices a medical



collar supporting the neck in this somewhat awkward position. The overall impression is of a normal woman coping with one of life's problems and leading a simple but not impoverished life in a relatively tranquil quarter of the continent. On the basics of colour, composition, draughtsmanship and the more difficult narrative, expression and moral it is difficult to fault this as a portrait. The artist moreover distinguishes herself by being absolutely absent from the painting.

Briony Kapoor

Creative Director

Briony Kapoor

About the Creative Director:

Beginning with a gallery in Covent Garden, Central London, Briony Kapoor has worked with the arts all her life. She set up the IMOS Foundation in about 2008. I am proud of what the artists involved have achieved since, she says, the portraits are a rather spectacular set of paintings. The Foundation hopes to display them to the widest possible audience. Her feelings about and the reasons for the project are made clear in the Introduction at the beginning of the catalogue.



Artists (in alphabetical order)

Bowsa

No photo available

About the artist: Long term digital artist turned underground painter.

About the subject: He stood there in a wrinkled raincoat among the books, leather hat faded from the sun. His ear was bandaged up, his suit was mismatched, his shoes were old, and his beard was long. He was perfect – he wore his poverty with pride. I approached him and with the help of a friendly stall-owner called Emonej, I explained what I was trying to do. Not only did he agree to pose, he was happy about it! I snapped away hungrily with both cameras. The long two days image fast was over.

About the EU experience: Slovenia was a country with very mixed feelings about the EU. It reminded me in many ways of England in this sense. All of our identities are complex, and shall remain so whatever system of government we have. I do not know why we find this so easy to forget...

Susan Edwards

About the artist: Susan

Edwards has been painting commissioned portraiture for over five decades, and is well known for her society portraits. Her own inherent distinctive colour palette gives her work an authority which is now in its full maturity. Sue works directly and intuitively from the sitter to establish the pose and likeness of her subject. She

uses vigorous and gestural brush strokes directly onto the canvas establishing, after one sitting, the essential draughtsmanship and composition which underpins the painting. Sue's portraits are in collections internationally. She also paints landscapes and seascapes en plein air.



About the subject 1: I arrived at the prestigious address. After 40 minutes my sitter was thoroughly enjoying himself, and thankfully, waived the ban on photos. When I showed him the oil sketch much to my delight, he pronounced it good. I celebrated by going that evening for three euros to The Vienna State Opera's Madame Butterfly. Standing only of course, but the best acoustics in the theatre!

About the subject 2: My second assignment was a complete cultural contrast. I travelled to rural north Sweden, to a small town called Soleftea. I was told to expect minus 20 degrees, the norm for November. The family lived in an inherited wooden home, the old parts of the house hinting at the life of the grandparents before central heating. The head of the house hunts and farms the land. His working Elk hounds greeted us peaceably and we ate a rich thick stew of Elk. Ulrika, came down to the first sitting in the dress which her mother wore when she married. She is planning to leave Sweden as soon as she can to escape from the cold!

About the subject 3: Saule clearly remembers the day Lithuanian independence was regained in 1991. It changed everything. Foreign travel was possible at last. Her mother remembers being able to visit Paris, walking in a dream down the Champs-Elysees. The gateway to Western technological and scientific ideas had finally opened. Another artist completed this portrait for me in the end, see page 34.

About the EU experience: Portraiture always brings insights into the sitter's character. EU Portrait Project provided me with the opportunity to experience the hospitality of the host nation and to explore and depict the connection between the sitter and their identity on canvas. I relished the challenge!

Rebecca Fontaine-Wolf

About the artist: Rebecca has exhibited widely including at the Royal College of Art, The V&A, The Mall Galleries and Cork Street. In 2011 she was singled out amongst thousands to appear on the BBC2 show 'Show me the Monet' culminating in an exhibition held at the RCA's Henry Moore Gallery. In recent years she has become one of the youngest Council members of the Society of women artists, has had her work featured on the cover of Art of England magazine and has won the Winsor & Newton Young artists Award and The Catherine



Petitgas Award. Her work has been exhibited alongside works by Turner Prize winner Grayson Perry, Dinos Chapman, Bob and Roberta Smith, Chantal Joffe and Billy Childish. "To me images have an almost mystical power. They seem to be able to suspend time, to capture a moment of beauty and crystallise it. In the image ordinary people can be turned into icons that encapsulate all their beauty whilst erasing any trace of the banal or negative. The use of images allows me to toy with the void between fantasy and reality. My work gives expression to, and attempts to reconcile, this void through exploring the ways in which dreams and reality can turn into one another."

About the EU experience: I consider myself to be a true European, with an English mother and a German/Yugoslavian father I was raised between England and Germany and attended the European school in Munich which allowed me to live each day in a truly international environment. Every day I would hear all European languages spoken and experience each culture's particularities, customs and habits. I feel privileged to have grown up in such a multicultural environment and am proud to be a part of Europe's rich cultural heritage.

Victoria Fontaine-Wolf

About the artist: Victoria Fontaine-Wolf studied at Folkestone School of Art and Brighton College of Art obtaining a B.A. in Art and Design. She has travelled all over the world as well as spending seven years in Australia and twenty in Germany variously painting portraits, nudes, murals, giving art lessons and illustrations for books and magazines. In 2003 she moved back to England. Her work has been exhibited in numerous prestigious galleries.



About the subject 1: I'd arranged to meet a possible portrait subject in a cafe in the centre of Munich. I arrived at Orleans's Platz a bit early. A stately gentleman emerged from the underground and I accosted him, telling him about the European Portrait Project. This portrait is the result. Unfortunately I put his contact details in such a safe place I managed to lose them! I know he is a retired Professor but I can't remember his name.

About the subject 2: I looked up the map and trudged through the rain asking various natives the way. I finished up in front of a large Brasserie in the museum quarter but I was in the wrong place. I was meant to meet my subject at the Bozar. Despite the delay, we got on well, I sketched him and I'm pleased with the portrait.

About the subject 3: See page 38 – About the subject 1 – for details

About the EU experience: I'm English but I also see myself as European, the best part of my childhood was the year my family spent in Spain when I was nine. We also often went on holiday to France. I've spent time in Holland and Italy and lived for 18 years in Germany where I felt at home.

Michael Frith

About the artist: I enjoyed a strong drawing background to my art education. A life class of 10 hours every Wednesday at St Albans Art School was of huge significance. This ability was recognised by national newspapers. I was engaged to illustrate a wide range of subjects for many Fleet Street titles including the Sunday Times, for whom I have a contract to make a portrait every week. My career as an illustrator has enabled me to fund my own projects and further my endeavours as a painter.



About the subject 1: My first trip was to Budapest. An exciting city in many ways. I was relieved to discover the people were very open and approachable. The sitter really chose herself in a way. I stayed at a wonderful hotel/arts club named 'The Brody House'. One of the receptionists fitted the criteria the brief had requested. Like most I met she was English speaking and very keen to be part of this special project.

About the subject 2: The second trip was to the city of Zagreb in Croatia. The demands of the brief this time proved a bit more tricky. I was to find an older woman of moderate means. I elected to approach people randomly in the street. Armed with my camera and confidence from Budapest I asked several women if they would like to pose for a portrait. What was I thinking? The responses understandably were frosty and very suspicious. I repaired to a restaurant for luncheon. I was received by a most charming Maître d'. He spoke English, unlike the flustered potential subjects in the city's main square. He introduced me to my waitress who spoke no English, saying he would help if needs be. She was absolutely perfect for the demographic required. It was explained to her what was required she could not have been more helpful. Consequently I also had the most wonderful lunch.

About the EU experience: This project has made me look harder to find authenticity when travelling. I want to carry on visiting other EU countries and make a personal record. I shall send a drawn postcard to Briony from every visit.

David Fowler

About the artist: After studying fine art at Ashington college, completing my foundation at Bletchley and a degree in Leicester, I set off to discover Edinburgh. This is where it all changed for me: I met a group of Polish students, including Maggie, who I later married. They had come for the Fringe Festival during their summer holidays. They had a flat in Nicolaus Copernicus' walled town of Toruń, so we hitch-hiked over. Thereafter we spent a few years in Poland, Finland, Kendal, York and finally Durham. During this time we bought the corner of a field in Poland with a lovely view.



About the subject: I joined the EU Portraits project quite late in the process and so I took over the Lithuanian sitter from another artist, Sue Edwards. You may read about her original contact on page 30. I was delighted to join in and do feel the value of being European and interacting with others in this wonderful way. I am hoping to help arrange the exhibition in Poland where I think it will be very well received.

About the EU experience: Over the last three years my wife and I self-built our house. Now my studio is fitted out and I've got the chance to do what I wanted to do all along. The European Union for me is ideal. I've found my place in it. This is sometimes a surprise to the people moving west or the people here who are building a new modern future. For me it is the most natural thing in the world being a European and I love it. There is an open invitation to the other artists from the project to come and visit.

Clare Haward

About the artist: Clare Haward has been working as a professional artist, based in London and Israel for the past five years. She has undertaken painting residencies in Berlin, Cyprus and Italy and has exhibited in several group shows in London and Tel Aviv. She was shortlisted for the prestigious Threadneedle Prize for Figurative Art in 2012. She is currently studying under Israel Hershberg at the renowned Jerusalem Studio School, and her interests lie in figurative painting and landscape. Her work is held in private collections in the UK, USA, Canada, Cyprus, Italy and Israel.



About the subject 1: Soteroula Georgiades is a Cypriot woman living near Paphos in Cyprus. With her husband she runs a small pottery. I spent a morning with Soteroula, drinking tea with herbs from her beautifully well-kept garden. She is a warm and generous person.

About the EU experience 1: I first visited Cyprus in 2008 when I undertook a Postgraduate Diploma in Fine Art at the Cyprus College of Art, a uniquely creative environment where artists of all disciplines are encouraged to explore their creativity and learn new skills. I have returned as an Artist in Residence to the college on two occasions since then, and always find the place to be an inspiration and the dedication of the artists located there to be extremely impressive.

About the subject 2: I met Peter Wilding at his office in Westminster, Central London. He was gracious and generous with his time. Peter has a tremendous amount of energy and I wanted to try to capture this in the portrait.

About the EU experience 2: I have lived in London most of my life and feel it is part of Europe. I am glad to see Peter has the same passion. He clearly has a positive view of the future of the UK within the European Union

Paula MacArthur

About the artist: Paula MacArthur lives on the Kent-Sussex border and works from her studio in Rye. She enjoyed early success as a portrait painter winning the John Player Portrait Award at the age of 21. She then continued her training at The Royal Academy Schools winning the Royal Academy Painting Prize in her final year and on completing her studies, was one of the prize winners at the John Moores Painting Biennial in Liverpool. After a significant break from exhibiting to bring up her two children Paula has returned to full time artistic practice. Her focus has now

moved away from portraiture to large scale, intensely colourful, painterly still life. Her recent work has been included in exhibitions around the UK including The Perfect Nude 2012, The Open West 2013 & Crash Open 2013. Paula has recently exhibited her jewel paintings in a solo show at 60 Threadneedle Street in the City of London.



About the subject: Despina runs a small gallery in Matala, Crete where she sells her husband's ceramics. On the wall is a small portrait of her husband at work sent by an artist who had met him whilst on holiday there. Despina has now been the subject of a portrait. She was rather pleased about the idea.

About the EU experience: I find the idea of bringing together this random group of distant strangers from around the European Union intriguing. These portraits will interact with one another and suggest relationships across borders and invite narratives from the viewer which are at once personal and universal.

Nick Martin

About the artist: I have been a figurative artist since leaving college. I am now concentrating on portraits. My first artistic opportunity took me to Brighton from Edinburgh where I was as Artist in Residence at the Royal Pavilion. Since then I have had many exhibitions including at the Royal Festival Hall London, South East Arts Towner Gallery, Quay Arts on the Isle of Wight and more recently work included in the Royal Society of Portrait Painters on the Mall, London. I was trained at Edinburgh College of Art.



About the subject 1: I enjoyed meeting both women in their home towns. Maud was very positive and as a student at the 6th Form College in Annecy she was delighted to be painted and is a lover of art. We met through an old French friend of mine in a cafe and had a coffee in glorious November sunshine outdoors where I photographed and drew Maud.

About the subject 2: I loved painting Federica who was like a Fellini leading lady – a larger than life character. I love Dawn French and she had a similar sort of humour – mixed with a look of the young Sophia Loren. She also studied in Edinburgh as a student and so we had some good reminiscences about living there. She too is an art lover and was excited by the project.

About the EU experience: As a Scottish Italian, I have my feet firmly placed in the EU. I love travelling and have two sons who are half German. I also love languages and think it important to be able to communicate with our European neighbours. I firmly believe us to be part of Europe!

Rosie O'Driscoll

About the artist: Rosie was born in 1989 in Kent, and completed a BA in Fine Art at Winchester School of Art in 2010. She is currently living and working in London. She has had exhibitions in London, Bath, Winchester, Hastings and elsewhere.

About the subject: I met Eva at her apartment, a beautiful open plan space full of the very clear almost bluish light that seems typical of the city. She was interested and welcoming and tolerated my less-than-flattering sketches with quiet amusement. With a bold style and lively eyes she was a lot of fun to paint and a wonderful subject for a Danish portrait.



About the EU experience:

In many ways Copenhagen is the picture of a prosperous and cosmopolitan European capital, to the extent that it was often difficult to find a Danish national. I spent afternoons and evenings wandering between coffee houses and bars sketching an incomprehensible assortment of locals, tourists and students. In a tiny and bewilderingly anachronistic, smoke-filled bar I met three oldish ladies seated round a candlelit table who immediately forbade me from drawing any of them in case it “ended up on facebook”. They graciously told me I could draw the only other occupant of the bar instead, a man in a huge coat and wide brimmed hat who sat and smoked silently in the opposite corner. I did as I was told: the man turned out to be Norwegian. Copenhagen has a unique anomaly in the Free Town, Cristiania, a self-governing community. The colourful jumble of old military buildings and houses built from an amazing assortment of reclaimed materials is scattered with galleries, music venues and cafes. As you leave, you pass under a wooden arch inscribed with the words, “You are now entering the EU”.

Ryan Orme

About the artist: Ryan Kai Orme is from Bristol and best known for his distinctive and colourful murals, to be found all around the world. As well as the street-art movement Ryan also practices fine art. He studied at UWE, Bristol and graduated in 2009 with a first. His fine art practice combines painting and sculpture, using rich imagery and contrasting scale to explore the metaphysical landscapes we all inhabit. He is now working on some new pieces from his studio in North London.



About the subject 1: I went to Lisbon, Portugal to find my first subject. I spent a day walking around in the autumn rain until I cut my losses and headed for a bar. I sat next to a guy who had walked out on his job with no other work prospects on the horizon. We compared our tales of woe in a funny mix of languages and hand gestures. I decided that his bad news was worse than mine so bought him another beer... and that was how I met my first subject! Unfortunately the demands of other work meant another artist completed his portrait from my original material, page 32.

About the subject 2: I wasn't so much surprised as pleased to find the people I met in Romania to be nice, welcoming, contemporary, interesting, hardworking and creative people. Most of the young people had little interest in moving to the UK, least of all to "live it up" on £56.80 per week. Bucharest has got a picturesque old town, a modern centre, and it sprawls out with wide avenues lined with trees and communist-era architecture.

About the EU experience: Finding a suitable subject was surprisingly challenging, but this is what made the project so interesting. This helped to push me out of my comfort zone, and lead me into some great adventures, adventures which let me truly engage with the people and cultures of the cities I visited.

Elena Priestley

About the artist: My

Grandmother inspired me to draw. I attended art school at twelve and went on to college and a five year degree.

I worked as a graphic designer, industrial designer, advertising specialist and an illustrator for various companies. Privately I have been engaged in a number of artistic projects including painting murals in the local area, completing commissions for portraits and taking part in international workshops.

About the subject 1: In

Luxembourg we were lucky with the weather and visited a summer fair. There was

an orchestra on bicycles, a bearded man under a huge yellow umbrella on a 3 wheeler selling home-made beer and lots of people around. My eye caught one man's face several times; the contrast between the colour of his hair, eyebrows and moustache was striking. He had a bicycle – of course – he was a charming man and a real Luxemburger, a civil servant for the Ministry of Health.

About the subject 2: Peter lives in a small village not far from Wroslaw, Poland. His life has been interesting, rich with events and very hard at times. Life, which did not affect his kind and caring personality. A very shy, gentle man but with a glint in his eye. One can only try to express all this in the painting.

About the subject 3: Slovakia impressed us from the first landscape we saw. There were mountains, vast views and villages with huge cherry trees. People seemed to be very close to nature. Slovakia is not one of the richest countries but we really loved its natural beauty and its open-hearted citizens.

About the EU experience: We had a special "mission" and it was improvisation from the beginning to the end. We travelled by car through Europe and received an amazing impression of regional cultures united by an enjoyable ease of progress.



Maria Priestley

About the artist: I have loved drawing and painting for as long as I can remember. Despite this, I have spent the last three years of my life studying Biological Anthropology at Durham University. Having spent a majority of my short life in education, I have come to appreciate that art can be an excellent method of procrastination. Not only does it distract me from the mundane realities of studying, but it also allows me to create something satisfying in the process. I have noticed that some of my best paintings get



visited by small insects like beetles or spiders while I'm working on them. The current portrait had at least two insects crawl over it; I'm hoping that this is a good omen. Either that or my room has a bug problem!

About the subject: Our time in Prague began with a visit to a small restaurant not far from the city centre. It was a wonderful sunny day and there were two people enjoying some drinks at a table outside the restaurant. One face immediately caught our eye – a beautiful young woman with a striking appearance and a warm smile. She became part of the dreamy atmosphere which defined my first impressions of Prague, and so she had to be painted!

About the EU experience: I thoroughly enjoyed our trip to Europe. It was wonderful to see some new places, cultures and people and to engage in artistic pursuits outside the realm of ordinary life in England. The many exciting and unfamiliar aspects of our journey have stimulated my imagination and broadened my understanding of the world. I feel that this kind of rejuvenation is vital for any person, and especially to an artist. I am very grateful for being given the opportunity to take part in this excellent project.

Dan Whiteson

About the artist: Dan Whiteson is a young painter and life drawing tutor from London. Often focusing on those overlooked by society, he paints pictures full of character, expressed emotion and narrative. His paintings begin with conversations and note-taking, and end with expressive, bold representations of the sitter. Through talking with, listening to and understanding his subjects, he strives not to paint just a physical likeness but an emotional one.

About the subject 1: Day two of my three-day stay here in Amsterdam and I begin it still without a subject. There are many suitable subjects. However, none of the women I meet really inspires and I still don't feel as if I've found *the one*. Salvation, and a huge sigh of relief, came in the form of a beautiful little bookshop on the corner of a quiet street. As soon as I walked through the door, it felt right.

About the subject 2: Woke up with rather a fuzzy head after the previous night's exploits in a dingy time-warp of a Soviet-era bar. When we arrived at Otto's family home we were introduced to his step-father. I have never seen such an incredible face. I hope the warmth I feel for Estonia is expressed in my portrait of Imant.

About the subject 3: Jukka, I was told, was half-Finnish and half-Sami, a perfect compromise. Initially quite closed off and remote, he seemed a little suspicious of me and the project but he had a remarkable look and aura about him. It is easy for me to forget that having your portrait drawn or painted is rather an intimate, alien thing to most people. His finely defined, angular features stood out, as did the wonderful opposites of his big, icy blue eyes and fiery ginger beard. I also felt he acted as a perfect representation of my experience of the country. Cold, hostile, unforgiving environments softened by the warmth and kindness of its extraordinary inhabitants. Blues, greys and greens of the outside world giving way to the yellows, browns, oranges and reds of open fires and wood cabins inside.

About the subject 4: As the poorest European member state, I was expecting to be confronted by some poverty but not to the extent that I saw. Nor was I prepared for the sight of Bulgarians protesting in front of the imposing main university building. Alongside the noise and passion of the crowd all ages and backgrounds were represented united behind a forceful, yet peaceful, show of discontent. I explained the project to them and wondered



whether they might be able to introduce me to someone who would be willing to be the subject of my painting. I was escorted through the eerily dark, empty corridors; doorways framed with propaganda, hand-written slogans and tired looking flags to meet the man chosen by the students to represent them and their cause; the man I was to paint. He was a prized poet, Balkan historian, and a publisher of magazines on the Balkan region. I felt Ivalyo could make for a compelling portrait. I thought he reflected perfectly the state of the Bulgarian nation that I experienced during my brief stay there. Poor, battered and bruised but by no means down and out. A portrait of anger and sadness, yes but also of hope, determination and the strength of the human spirit.

About the EU experience: Reflecting on my travels for this project it becomes clear that what will really stick with me are memories of the people I met. On each visit I had the good fortune to bump into extraordinary people who made for extraordinary moments. There were bookshops, chilled out coffeehouses and snooty fashion shops in Amsterdam, drinking sessions in Soviet-era bars, the horrors of Paterei prison and the delights of Viljandi Folk Festival in Estonia, then to the Northern lights and hiking in snowstorms to forest parties in Lapland followed by anti-governmental protests, 'occupied' universities and tours of mountains from anarchists in Bulgaria. What I will remember are the people who took me there or let me in or helped me to get there. I was made to feel welcome wherever I went whatever language was spoken and whoever it was that was there. I think what this has confirmed to me is that if you reach out and try to make a human connection more often than not it will lead to something special. Put simply, I think that any way in which we can draw people closer together should be something to be encouraged and to be celebrated.

Dan Whiteson travelled with **Dan Barron** who filmed the visit to Estonia

Dan Barron

I'm 27 and live in south east London. I've been making films as a hobby for about 5 years. I found Estonia to be a really interesting country. It has been through so many dramatic changes in its recent history. As Imant said "In Soviet times, things were so different, it is near impossible to explain it to anyone who didn't experience it". However we were able to share stories and spend a great afternoon together.



Bernice Wilson

About the artist: Bernice is a recent Fine Art graduate from Central Saint Martin's, establishing herself as a painter with a specific interest in portraiture. She is fascinated by identity: what makes us who we are: personality, belonging, nationality ... perhaps more so now because of the imminent independence referendum in her home country of Scotland. Her recent work has included a series of self-portraits in an attempt to examine her own identity and work for a charity project raising money for children living in poverty: "50 children:50 artists".



About the subject 1: In true Irish fashion the public of Dublin were magic and on my search I ended up in a recommended bar where I bravely introduced myself to a group of three gents. It turned out I was in good company – a band member; a writer, cartoonist and painter; and a photographer. I explained my mission and invited them to participate, be committed to canvas! Patrick the photographer was great, and a deal was struck, although I warned him not to scrutinise my source material too closely, I was a painter not a photographer after all!

About the subject 2: My Spanish is a bit rusty so when I went to Granada a friend living locally helped me on my mission. We visited Mariola at one of her dance studios, who it turned out was a well-known local. She spoke very little English, so it was good I had an interpreter! Mariola was excited to hear about the project and at the prospect of being painted. She was very interested in the overall concept and is looking forward to seeing the complete exhibition.

About the EU experience: The opportunity to be part of this EU portrait project is exciting; to explore the notion of "identity" across nations... what will we discover? Can we really tell a person's national identity from their portrait alone? Do stereotypes hold true or do we live in such a diverse multicultural world now that it's no longer possible – if it ever was – to tell a person's country of origin from their facial features...



