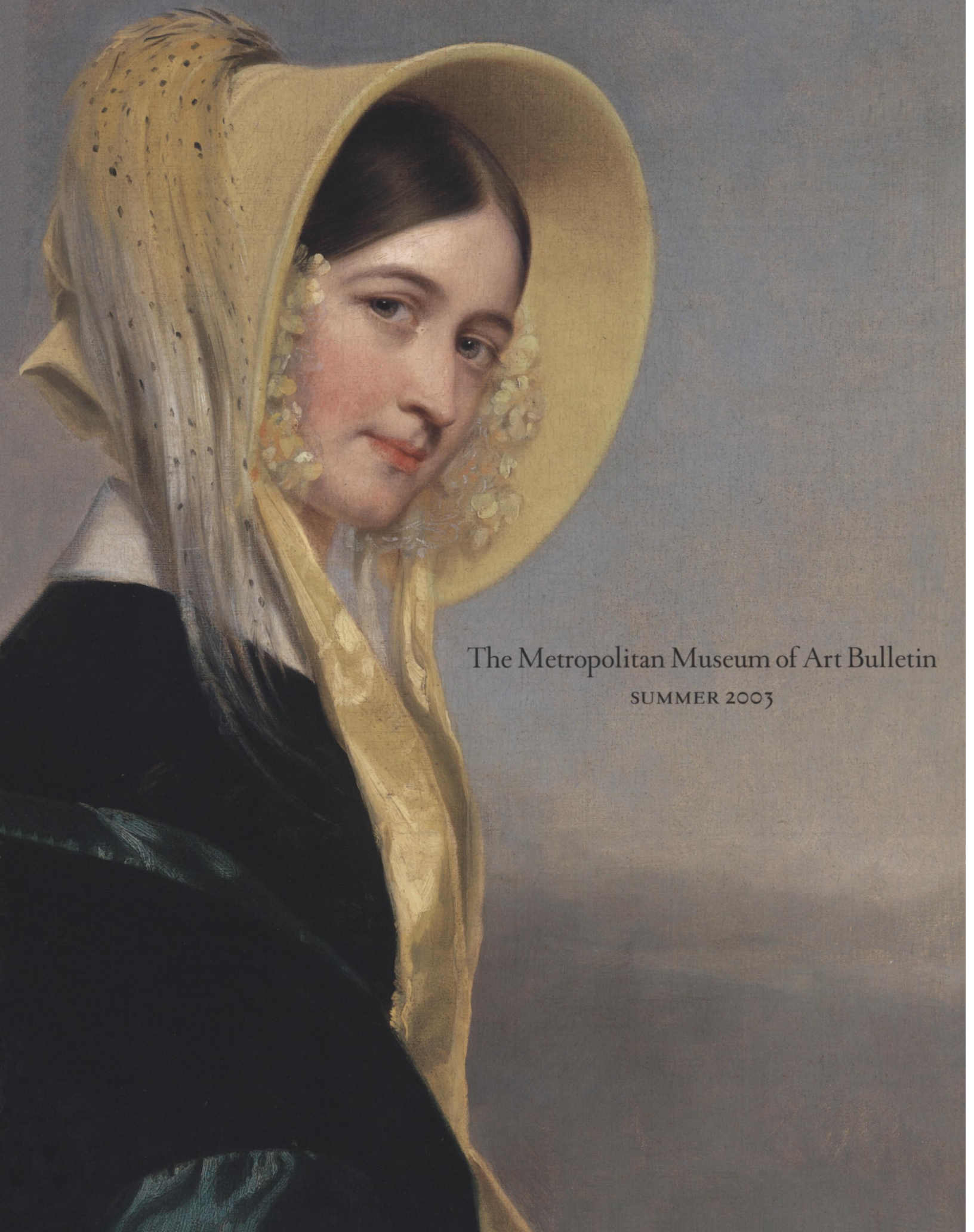

The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin

SUMMER 2003

Faces of a New Nation

American Portraits of the 18th and Early 19th Centuries

Carrie Rebora Barratt

THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

The usual method of studying historical American portraiture neatly splits the material into categories of colonial, federal, and antebellum works, thus dividing the context for their production according to the nation's political state. This *Bulletin*, written by Carrie Rebora Barratt, curator of American paintings and sculpture, presents early American portraiture as an unbroken time line, ranging from the first limners to arrive on these shores to the highly professional artists who ran their businesses in the country's major cities just before the Civil War. The aesthetic and cultural information contained in these often deceptively simple portraits reveals not only the dominant strains in portraiture but also the general values of a nation across a span of nearly 150 years. These are the faces of a new republic.

As in England, portraiture was the major genre of artistic production in late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century America, and the Metropolitan's comprehensive collection includes a great number of the artists active during the period. The pictures selected for this volume are all of the highest quality available in the era in which they were created. Each is the work of a skilled artist, executing for a compliant or demanding patron a picture that expresses an individual personality, as well as the sitter's time and place.

The first historical American portrait acquired by the Metropolitan was John Trumbull's handsome bust-length likeness of Alexander Hamilton, a gift from Henry G. Marquand in 1881. Marquand's gift was not only generous but timely, falling midway between the centennial celebrations of the nation's birth in 1876 and the inauguration of George Washington in 1789. These events reinvigorated the cultish adoration of our first president and generated a vigorous market for early American paintings—characterized by skyrocketing prices and an incipient if short-lived trade in forgeries, especially of colonial portraits. In 1897 the Metropolitan accepted its first portrait of Washington, the esteemed full-length by Charles Willson Peale (see fig. 18), the gift of Collis P. Huntington. Within the next three decades the Museum added works by Smibert, Copley, Blackburn, and others. This burgeoning collection provided impetus for the opening of the Museum's American Wing in 1924. The Metropolitan's early American portraits are now hung throughout the Wing, in period rooms that suggest the original, personal purpose of the images, and galleries, where they impart the beginning passages in the history of American painting.

Philippe de Montebello

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Front cover: Detail, GEORGE P. A. HEALY, *Euphemia White Van Rensselaer* (see fig. 37). *Inside front cover:* Detail, JOHN SINGLETON COPLEY, *Joseph Sherburne* (see fig. 12). *Opposite:* Detail, SAMUEL F. B. MORSE, *Susan Walker Morse (The Muse)* (see fig. 36)

Faces of a New Nation: American Portraits of the 18th and Early 19th Centuries

In British colonial New York in late spring 1754, a portraitist new to town took out the following advertisement in the *Gazette* and the *Weekly Post-Boy*:

> Lawrence Kilburn, Limner, just arrived from London with Capt. Miller, hereby acquaints all Gentlemen and Ladies inclined to favour him in having their pictures drawn, that he don't doubt of pleasing them in taking a true Likeness, and finishing the Drapery in a proper Manner, as also in the Choice of Attitudes, suitable to each Person's Age and Sex, and giving agreeable Satisfaction, as he has heretofore done to Gentlemen and Ladies in London. He may at present be apply'd to at his Lodgings, at Mr. Bogart's near the New Printing-Office in Beaver-Street.

Among the earliest painters to set up shop in New York—then a far cry from the sophisticated cultural center it would become by the mid-nineteenth century—Kilburn offered his prospective community of wary clients precisely what he knew they would want. He offered them more than a portrait; he promised pleasing truths, that is, renditions of reality suited to their gender, maturity, and affluence. Then as now, such matters were left not solely to the province of individual desire, but rather they were defined by social codes of morality and manners. How could Kilburn, just off the boat, know what was appropriate in New York? He presented the credential of having satisfied ladies and gentlemen in London, patrons of wealth and taste who allowed him to define the integrity of their likenesses through a careful balance of costume, pose, and gesture. And then he waited—but not for long—for the New Yorkers who came to his studio not merely for a portrait but for a likeness that was, to them, a pleasing version of their self-image.

The appearance of truth would become the guiding principle in American portraiture for the next fifty years. In this way British colonial and early national portraiture in this country differed little from that of other Western societies, in which artists undertook a likeness not so much for the art of painting but rather as an assignment devoted to the astute depiction of people of a particular time and place. Kilburn, for instance, made up for mere competence in painterly skills with extraordinary savvy as a portraitist. He gained prestigious commissions because he understood the rationale for those commissions. He shared this trait with the other artists discussed in this volume who also knew that the essence of portraiture is the desire of the client. Agreeable representation differs from pictorial accuracy. A likeness—whether painted or drawn, sculpted or photographed—embodies notions of vanity, personality, character, occupation, hobbies, politics, social standing, economic status, religious affiliation, stylishness, health, age, and more. At face value, a portrait surely implies that a person can be known by what he or she looks like. Portraits become surrogates for their sitters and, at times, surrogates for entire societies. Yet, more often than not, perceptions of beauty, or lack thereof, are as thin as skin or the canvas upon which they are represented.

A portrait presents a person through the agency of an artist. It can depict more than a single reality, a specific time and place, and a unique person. We gaze at portraits—people looking at people—transfixed by the need to enhance our knowledge of the sitters, seeking out traits that not only tell us something of the individual but also something about the past—perhaps something about ourselves. The danger here involves taking historical and cultural information and then searching for that information in the portrait. Reading portraits is a historically bound act that begins with the image and moves outward from the formal evidence. Really seeing the likeness in a historical portrait requires intense observation followed by learning about the subject and the artist. The story unfolds from the point at which their lives converge, usually at the sitting.

Opposite: Detail, Gilbert Stuart, *Louis-Marie, Vicomte de Noailles* (see fig. 21)

1. Attributed to Gerrit Duyckinck (1660–ca. 1712)
Portrait of a Lady, ca. 1710
Oil on wood, 41 1/4 x 32 3/4 in. (104.8 x 83.2 cm)
Gift of Edgar William and Bernice Chrysler Garbisch, 1972 (1972.263.1)
For this pose Duyckinck turned to an unknown print source that he had used at least three times, a practice that may have made his sitters more comfortable among their peers and eased their apprehension at having their portraits painted.

When documentary support is scant, as in the case of this country's earliest painters, such as Gerrit Duyckinck (1660–ca. 1712) and Pieter Vanderlyn (ca. 1687–1778), the portraits remain tantalizingly elusive. Both of these artists came to portraiture through craft professions, a situation that shows not only in the surfaces of their pictures but also in the way the artists conducted their businesses. Duyckinck's portrait clients were a small percentage of the same people of means who visited his glazing shop for decorative etched and painted windows. Just as he referred to British pattern books and templates for adorning glass, he looked to prints as his guide for embellishing portraits. Duyckinck's *Portrait of a Lady* (fig. 1) is filled with the evocative vocabulary of opulence in the real and suggestive props that define the sitter's person. Precisely painted pieces of jewelry mark her individuality, while the fanciful wrapping gown and surrounding billowy yardage evoke her luxurious situation. The sitter's reality and her social position are conveyed by a fabric fantasy.

The selling point for Duyckinck's likenesses, as for Vanderlyn's in the next generation, might have been an offer to render the real you, only better. A house painter, straight out of the Dutch navy, who arrived in Kingston, New York, via Curaçao in 1718, Vanderlyn augmented his work on facades and storefronts with portraits derived from the best British tableaus. His *Young Lady with a Rose* (fig. 2) masquerades as Louise, duchess of Portsmouth, by Sir Peter Lely (1618–1680), but she is now nervous rather than gracious. Wearing her own necklace and ring, she strikes a pose boldly proclaiming her beauty with the bloom between her large thumb and forefinger on the right hand, while fidgeting with her left. As with Duyckinck's pictures, Vanderlyn's true subject is the dilemma of representation in a colonial society. Both artists wielded conventional devices from the mother

2. Pieter Vanderlyn (ca. 1687–1778)
Young Lady with a Rose, 1732
Oil on canvas, 32½ x 27 in. (82.6 x 68.6 cm)
Gift of Edgar William and Bernice Chrysler Garbisch, 1962 (62.256.1)

Vanderlyn also derived his poses from English mezzotints. The gravity of this portrayal is enhanced by the young woman's self-conscious hand gestures.

3. John Smibert (Scottish, 1688–1751)
Francis Brinley, 1729
Oil on canvas, 50 x 39¼ in. (127 x 99.7 cm)
Rogers Fund, 1962 (62.79.1)

Brinley's interlocking, plump fingers rest on his large belly, a tour de force of compositional and technical accomplishment for Smibert.

4. John Smibert
Mrs. Francis Brinley and Her Son Francis, 1729
Oil on canvas, 50 x 39¼ in. (127 x 99.7 cm)
Rogers Fund, 1962 (62.79.2)

The sprig of orange blossoms that Mrs. Brinley holds delicately between her thumb and forefinger is rich in symbolic meaning: white for purity, fruit for fertility, and the rare orange tree, from which it was plucked, for great wealth.

country, but are not convincing in their deployment of them: their talents as craftsmen do not translate smoothly into oil on canvas, and their sitters are not fully prepared to play the roles in which they are cast.

The conspicuous tension between source and subject in early American portraiture originates in the strain of colonial life. Those striving for independence still relied on the influence of the governing body, even as they altered behaviors and beliefs. The hardest habits to break involved imported goods, and just how desperately those goods from England were wanted in America is abundantly clear. As soon as there were enough funds and market conditions sufficient to support it, the business of English imports to the American colonies boomed. Beginning in the 1720s, it accelerated during the 1740s, and by midcentury New England was the mother country's largest market.

Portraits were in demand and portrait painters became part of the wave of imports. Portraiture played a large role in the burgeoning materialism of American life for two crucial reasons. First, portraits were among the rare luxury goods that could be made locally—the sitter needed to be near the painter—and, second, they provided evidence of ownership of material goods difficult or expensive to import. Portraits showed people with expensive goods, and whether or not the sitters actually owned the items was of less importance than whether or not they lived the life suggested by them. Certain markers of wealth and status—for instance, fine cloth, porcelain, rare flowers, exotic pets—had their desired effect in a portrait, and, apparently, there was no stigma attached to being shown with virtually unobtainable things you did not possess. Surely, almost as important as a connection to a resourceful merchant or importer was access to a portraitist who could bestow such possessions.

The Scottish émigré painter John Smibert (1688–1751) encouraged his American patrons to take full advantage of the persuasive power of a portrait. London-trained and well-traveled, Smibert introduced the concept of professional portraiture to the Eastern seaboard. He arrived in 1728 at Newport in the entourage of George Berkeley, the renowned philosopher who intended to establish a college for Native Americans in Bermuda. Berkeley's plan failed, and Smibert moved to Boston. There, he swiftly captivated clients, like Mr. and Mrs. Francis Brinley (figs. 3, 4), with a slightly old-world brand of portraiture. Rather than offer high-style likenesses, Smibert looked to the work of Sir Godfrey Kneller (1646 or 1649–1723) and Sir Peter Lely—then more than a decade behind the times in London—as likely to please the wealthy and stylish but cautious colonists. For his portrait he sat Francis Brinley on a rare Queen Anne armchair with an extraordinary back cabriole leg and contrived a setting that provided a glimpse of the vast, freshly harvested Brinley acreage at Dachet House, Roxbury, and a distant view of Beacon Hill, Boston, featuring King's Chapel and Old South Church. Never mind that such a chair never existed, that the portrait was painted in the late spring rather than at harvest time, and that it would take more than a clear day to span visually the four-mile distance from Brinley's home to Boston. Smibert's ability to conquer such implausibilities—not to mention the sheer brio of enhancing his subject's self-satisfied demeanor with a highly complicated interlacing of hands cupped over a broad belly—caused Brinley to commission from the artist five portraits in a month. The opportunities may have arisen, in part, with the birth of baby Francis in early 1729, an occasion heralded in Mrs. Brinley's portrait by the simultaneously blooming and fruit-bearing orange tree, an allusion to his mother's fecundity and purity.

In houses filled with imported fixtures of every sort—silver hardware, painted-glass domes, elaborate carvings, looking glasses with ebony surrounds, walls painted with flora and fauna, tapestries, and carpets—portraits were suitable for imported frames, which could be purchased from the artist. Smibert's ability to please his patrons matched his capacity for successfully doing business in America. He made his studio a place to see and be seen, with a sitting room, gallery, and artists' supply shop all under one roof. Here he painted portraits, exhibited his own work, as well as European pictures from his collection, and sold fine imported canvases, picture frames, brushes, and paints.

5. Robert Feke (ca. 1708–ca. 1751)
Tench Francis, 1746
Oil on canvas, 49 x 39 in. (124.5 x 99.1 cm)
Maria DeWitt Jesup Fund, 1934 (34.153)

In the hands alone—the left foreshortened and tucked neatly into his coat as a proper gentlemanly trait and the right outstretched as correct for an orator—Feke reveals much about Francis, who was, from 1741 until his death, attorney general of Pennsylvania.

Smibert's ascendancy in Boston inspired both artists and clients, thereby facilitating the career of a native talent, Robert Feke (ca. 1708–ca. 1751). The son of an Oyster Bay, Long Island, minister and blacksmith, Feke chose portraiture as his profession and traveled in pursuit of commissions from those who may have heard of Smibert but would not go to Boston for a sitting. Feke's mobility, skill, and his reportedly engaging manner made his career. He was, explained one sitter, "the most extraordinary genius I ever knew. . . . The man had exactly the phizz of a painter, having a long pale face, sharp nose, large eyes with which he looked upon you stedfastly [sic], long curled black hair, a delicate white hand, and long fingers." Feke dazzled colonists in Newport, Philadelphia, and Boston with his elegant, thinly painted, geometrically organized compositions, and, like Smibert, he won favor by arranging for imported carved and gilded Rococo frames to complete his professional package. For Tench Francis of Philadelphia (fig. 5), Feke executed an image of an accomplished gentleman, stylish but not ostentatious, handsome but not inordinately dashing. Feke knew the ways to combine the real and the ideal to create an authentic biographical representation: despite the concocted background, we can be sure that this is Francis because of the finger missing from his right hand.

By the time of Smibert's and Feke's near simultaneous deaths in 1751, each major city boasted at least one clever, resourceful portraitist, including Kilburn (1720–1775) in New York, John Wollaston (active 1733–67) in New York and Philadelphia, Jeremiah Theus (1716–1774) in Charleston, and Joseph Blackburn (active 1752–ca. 1778) in Boston. That Kilburn could advertise his talents so boldly

upon his arrival indicates portraiture was no longer a tentative colonial experiment but a professional trade.

Kilburn shrewdly jumped from his own offer of "pictures drawn" to get right to the heart of the matter, which involved "Drapery," a "Choice of Attitudes," and an assessment of the sitter's age, gender, and station in life. Like Duyckinck and Vanderlyn, Kilburn lured portrait clients with crafts. A lovely painted box he had made attracted the attention of city squire Abraham Beekman, who soon commissioned an entire series of family likenesses for parlors and hallways in his city and country homes. The effect of such an array of pictures in their custom Rococo frames must have been grand, as visitors to these splendid New York colonial houses were greeted by a veritable family tree. Young and old, each member was individualized by glistening silk clothing, shimmering jewelry, medals, and coiffures à la mode, to complement appropriate gestures and facial expressions. Kilburn's *Portrait of a Lady* (fig. 6) is striking in this way: a conventional, agreeable image with just the right bits of flash in the meticulously rendered bouquet, double-strand pearl necklace, and exceptional triple-drop earrings of emeralds surrounded by tiny diamonds. Perhaps the most striking element is the smallest: a bracelet miniature showing clearly a portrait of a woman in an early-eighteenth-century gown. In this minute passage Kilburn paid tribute to the sitter's allegiance to the female line of her family and perhaps homage to a revered grandmother.

For a brief period Kilburn vied for commissions with Wollaston, who arrived in New York about five years before him. It would not be surprising to learn that these portraitists had known each other in London, where, it is speculated, both painted drapery on other artists' portraits before setting out for the colonies. Within about ten years Wollaston moved from New York to Philadelphia with periodic respites in smaller cities in Maryland and Virginia. He sailed for India in 1759, reportedly made a fortune working for the British East India Company, and returned to America in 1767, only to depart quickly for London. (From then on there is no sign of him there or elsewhere.) As many as 300 portraits date from Wollaston's American career, an exorbitant number that gives pause; but the consistently formulaic look of his pictures confirms that he worked quickly and with little time-consuming customization. His almond-eyed sitters, with their deliberate gazes and their Rococo accoutrements, appear to be members of the same extended provincial family. Wollaston's portrait of the prominent West Indian merchant William Axtell (1720–1795) (fig. 7) is more individual than most: stylized but emphatic and with a balance struck between the man's clothing and the landscape setting. Axtell commissioned the portrait for the larger of his two New York homes, his country place, Melrose Hall, in Flatbush, Long Island, where he resided with his wife, Margaret Deypeyster, who is said to have haunted the place for years after her death.

Wollaston's quick 1767 departure occurred from Charleston, where any ambitions to return to painting portraits in a new venue would have been thwarted by the popularity of the Swiss-born Jeremiah Theus. The first portraitist of any significant talent in Charleston, he brought to that city precisely the professionalism that ensured Kilburn's success in New York. Theus understood British studio practice and informed his subjects that they need not bother with many tedious sittings; it was perfectly acceptable for him to later paint their bodies and their clothing. After he finished their faces, he treated them to a cache of English and French prints, from which they selected some of the most lavish costumes and sophisticated poses seen in colonial America. Other portraitists followed his practice, but none so extravagantly as Theus, who made his working methods commensurate with the staggering wealth of that city's gentry in the years just preceding the revolution. Charleston was fourth among American cities in terms of population, but first by a wide margin in terms of affluence. Its richest citizens, like Mr. and Mrs. John Dart (figs. 8, 9), not only had more disposable income than most Americans, but they also enjoyed a relatively fluid society in which refinements in manners, clothing, education, as well as the benefits of travel, could cause an upward surge in social status. Thus portraiture was at a premium and a gifted artist

6. Lawrence Kilburn (or Kilbrunn; English, 1720–1775; active in America 1754–75)
Portrait of a Lady, 1764
Oil on canvas, 30 x 25 in. (76.2 x 63.5 cm)
Maria DeWitt Jesup Fund, 2002 (2002.259)

The sitter wears on a bracelet a tiny portrait miniature of a woman in early-eighteenth-century dress that may honor her grandmother.

7. John Wollaston (English, active 1733–67)
William Axtell, ca. 1749–52
Oil on canvas, 50 x 40 in. (127 x 101.6 cm)
Gift of Clarence Dillon, 1976 (1976.23.1)

Axtell had a house at 221 Broadway in the city and a country estate, Melrose Hall, in Flatbush, Long Island, but the elaborate landscape in his portrait is pure fantasy. Rather than recording a specific locale, it indicates that he was a large landowner.

like Theus responded with a high-key palette and sumptuous compositions, so pleasing his clients that even those who went abroad returned home for their likenesses. If there is a bland aspect to Theus's faces, it is the result of his decision to avoid character studies in favor of a uniform charm that captivated an entire generation of Charlestonians.

Meanwhile, in Boston, America's largest city, the British-trained Joseph Blackburn picked up where Smibert left off, taking commissions from the same families. Blackburn convinced his clients that the late Baroque Knelleresque compositions favored by Smibert were passé and introduced them to the pleasures of the Rococo. Blackburn had tried out his light palette, deft touch, attention to decorative details, and superb ability as a drapery painter (probably his profession before he left London) in Bermuda as early as 1752, prior to bringing his talents to New England two years later. Until the early 1760s he was the painter who could transform a Boston maiden into a goddess or a Newport girl, like Mary Sylvester, into a comely shepherdess (fig. 10). Such richness of imagery, along with a precise rendering of the face, brought an aspect of seductiveness to American portraiture. The conceit Blackburn employed for Miss Sylvester was common abroad but astonishing in the colonies: the gentle shepherdess tends a lamb, who signifies innocence, while the rest of her obedient flock grazes in the distance, a passage that suggests the young woman's discipline and virtue. In England this allegorical convention found resonance in real life as young ladies dressed as shepherdesses for masquerades, while Mary Sylvester's fancy-dress ball takes place within her picture.

Blackburn's clandestine departure from Boston before 1764, at the height of his powers, might be understood in the context of his peripatetic career. However, the reason usually given is the rising talent of John Singleton Copley (1738–1815). This painter assimilated all that Boston had to offer an aspiring artist: Smibert's portraits and his collection, Blackburn's glossy, allegorically laden compositions, a shrewd understanding of the marketplace (this gained, at least in part, from his Irish-immigrant, tobacconist parents), and a knowledge of British portraiture remarkable for a young man who before his teens rarely strayed from his home near Boston's Long Wharf. During the late 1740s Copley's stepfather, the dancing instructor, French teacher, schoolmaster, painter, and printmaker Peter Pelham, further enlightened him in the ways a gentleman should organize his business and cultivate a clientele. In the ensuing years Copley turned a career as a portraitist into the most lucrative artistic venture attempted in the American colonies.

Copley had not only the right mentoring but, more importantly, an extraordinary gift as a painter. Where others had conveyed the sheen of silk satin, Copley rendered gleaming mahogany, crystalline, water-filled glasses, delicate skin, peach fuzz, iridescent pearls, and dense wool jackets. Such skill has caused him to be invoked as the progenitor of American realist painting, and yet Copley was actually following his predecessors: he surrounded his sitters with costumes, fruits, flowers, furniture, and pets that they coveted. He worked from prints, as had Kilburn and Theus, but with breathtaking results.

Added to Copley's technical proficiency was his keen understanding of the complex protocol of portrait practice. He brilliantly cultivated his clients as he painted them, creating not just a portrait but a diverting and pleasant experience. Copley is now thought of as the chief proponent in America of "self-fashioning," a scholarly term coined for the interaction between artist and patron to determine the look of a likeness. As he moved his studio from place to place, progressively closer to the high-class neighborhood of his clients, Copley devised a studio with an anteroom, where his subjects would be shown portfolios of prints, from which they would choose different poses and costumes. One imagines Mary Sherburne Bowers (fig. 11) and her new husband, Jerathmael, leafing through the sheets with the artist until they became delighted by James McArdell's mezzotint after Sir Joshua Reynolds's portrait of Lady Caroline Russell of just a few years before. While some clients took a costume from one print, a chair from another, and a setting from another, Mary Bowers seized upon Reynolds's image

8. Jeremiah Theus (Swiss, 1716–1774)
John Dart, ca. 1772–74
Oil on canvas, 30 x 25 in. (76.2 x 63.5 cm)
Gift of Edgar William and Bernice Chrysler Garbisch, 1967 (67.268.1)

John Dart's cheeks are tinged with rouge, an accepted practice among the most fashionable gentlemen at the time. The elegant gold-embroidered coat and waistcoat are typical of styles of the 1760s and may have been copied by Theus from a print.

9. Jeremiah Theus
Mrs. John Dart, ca. 1772–74
Oil on canvas, 30 x 25 in. (76.2 x 63.5 cm)
Gift of Edgar William and Bernice Chrysler Garbisch, 1967 (67.268.2)

Henrietta Sommers was twenty-two years old when she married John Dart in 1772, and this portrait celebrating their union suggests that she was a woman of sophistication and grace. The ermine-trimmed robe is more often seen in pictures of English nobility than on an American bride.

10. Joseph Blackburn (English, active 1752–ca. 1778)
Mary Sylvester, 1754
Oil on canvas, 49 3/4 x 40 in. (126.4 x 101. 6 cm)
Gift of Sylvester Dering, 1916 (16.68.2)

Blackburn derived his idea of a poetic shepherdess from portraits by Thomas Hudson and other fashionable English artists.

in its entirety. In her portrait she became an anglicized sultana, in an uncorseted caftan and woven belt inspired by the current British rage for *turquerie*. She also acquired the precious King Charles spaniel, the camelback settee, and the lush park setting, all of which—especially the risqué dress—would have been difficult if not impossible to purchase in Boston.

Copley created a similarly exotic image for Mary Bowers's father, Joseph Sherburne (fig. 12), a merchant active in the East India trade and a landholder. Sherburne opted for a likeness more in keeping with his life and shared, with fifteen other Boston gentlemen painted by Copley, the desire to be shown in leisurewear. Although an accurate portrayal of the velvet turban and silk banyan that elite men wore at home, the portrait is nevertheless a daring depiction of a businessman in informal garb. Strict rules of protocol attended gentlemen's clothing, and the wearing of the loose cap over a shaved head and the unstructured T-shape robe was confined to the most private rooms of the house—or to a portrait. So beautiful was Copley's work that his lavish depictions of his clients in dishabille were displayed in the public spaces of their homes.

Copley completed over 350 paintings before he left for England in 1775, a departure prompted by his family's loyalist sympathies and by a nearly lifelong desire to make the trip. His immediate good fortune in London convinced him to stay for the rest of his life. Copley landed there fifteen years after the Philadelphia portraitist and history painter Benjamin West (1738–1820), who had long since established a studio, as well as ties to the Royal Academy—of which he would become president—and had begun to attract American students. Although Copley and West were not intimate friends in London, West's encouragement played a major role in Copley's decision to risk family and career and travel such great a distance. Copley was also encouraged by Matthew Pratt (1734–1805), a Philadelphia portraitist and friend of West's who was on his way home from London in 1771, when he met Copley in New York. Copley continually sought reassurances that his talents would be appreciated abroad, and he treasured the advice of the more worldly Pratt.

Pratt had the right family connections to become an artist: his father, a goldsmith, introduced him to potential clients; his uncle, Philadelphia artist James Claypoole (1720–1786), taught him to paint; his cousin Elizabeth Shewell was engaged to marry West, and he served as her escort across the Atlantic in 1764. Lest anyone think he had come to study under West, who was four years his junior, he immediately formulated an entirely self-serving composition featuring West's circle, *The American School* (fig. 13). In 1766 Pratt displayed the picture at the Spring Gardens Exhibition of the Incorporated Society of Artists of Great Britain. In it Pratt portrayed himself in a highly desirable, although not entirely suitable, place: he is the painter seated at the easel, a position of advanced status that separates him from the boys drawing from antique casts under West's tutelage. The situation is misleading in terms of the strict academic method of teaching. While Pratt could claim to be a painter, based upon his professional work in Philadelphia, he had not taken the proper course abroad.

Pratt's five-year experience in London prepared him to return to Philadelphia a more urbane, articulate, and intelligent painter. There, he succeeded in attracting a clientele eager to patronize a London-trained artist, but he was not without competition. By the early 1770s Philadelphians had their choice of four accomplished portraitists. As the colonial economy continued to inflate for the richest population, commissions for portraits kept pace—between 1750 and 1775 nearly four times as many were painted in America as in the previous fifty years—making it possible for many artists to work in the same city. Those suspicious of foreign influence could patronize William Williams (1727–1791), a portraitist from Bristol, England, who had given West some early lessons. In Philadelphia Williams supplemented his modest painting business by instructing children in drawing, playing musical instruments, acting, and other courtly accomplishments. It is possible that his sophisticated interests contributed to his ability to portray his sitters as correctly dressed and seemingly virtuous (fig. 14). The lad in this highly artificial tableau

11. John Singleton Copley (1738–1815)
Mrs. Jerathmael Bowers, ca. 1763
Oil on canvas, 49 7/8 x 39 3/4 in. (126.7 x 101 cm)
Rogers Fund, 1915 (15.128)

Mary Sherburne Bowers's pet, an extraordinary King Charles spaniel, was just as fashionable as her Turkish-style wrapping gown. Both the dog and the garment were stylish in England but virtually unavailable in America, except in a portrait setting.

12. John Singleton Copley
Joseph Sherburne, ca. 1767–70
Oil on canvas, 50 x 40 in. (127 x 101.6 cm)
Amelia B. Lazarus Fund, 1923 (23.143)

The "five-o'clock shadow" on Sherburne's head indicates that, like all proper colonial gentlemen, he wore a wig when not at home in his velvet turban and silk gown.

13. Matthew Pratt (1734–1805)
The American School, 1765
Oil on canvas, 36 x 50¼ in. (91.4 x 127.6 cm)
Gift of Samuel P. Avery, 1897 (97.29.3)

Pratt, seated at his easel, and his teacher and friend Benjamin West, standing at the far left, hold paintbrushes, indicating their degree of artistic accomplishment.

stands as if on stage, acting out the drama of his life with oversized props. He is placed between a distinct foreground fringe and background vista that aim at creating the maximum theatrical effect.

Philadelphians could also sit for Henry Benbridge (1743–1812), a local artist who had traveled abroad and may have been in West's studio at the same time as Pratt. Benbridge visited Rome in 1765, where he studied the works of Pompeo Batoni and Raphael Mengs, and he possibly received instruction from these masters before stopping off for a few months in London on his way back to Philadelphia. The work he executed soon after his return to America (fig. 15)—characterized by a rich palette and a tendency to place his subject against a lush classical landscape—has aspects of dash and graceful informality. Within the next few years Benbridge tried to

14. William Williams (born in England, 1727–1791)
Portrait of a Boy, Probably of the Crossfield Family, ca. 1770–75
Oil on canvas, 52 1/4 x 35 3/4 in. (134.7 x 90.8 cm)
Victor Wilbour Memorial Fund, 1965 (65.34)

The equipment for the elite game of battledore and shuttlecock, the predecessor of badminton, was usually imported from England to America. This young man holds an inordinately large shuttlecock, or birdie, as if preparing to serve to his opponent.

incorporate elements from the work of Philadelphia's greatest painter of the day, Charles Willson Peale (1741–1827), whose keen competition eventually contributed to Benbridge's departure for Charleston, where he had arrived in 1772, just in time to assume the mantle of the aging Theus. Benbridge's worldly credentials and florid palette suited that city's well-traveled connoisseurs perfectly, and he painted there with aplomb for nearly two decades.

The consummate gentleman-artist of the American Enlightenment, Peale was also an inventor, a writer, a museum director, a political activist, and, with three wives, father of sixteen children (said by some to have been raised with an iron hand). Born in Maryland, he began his career in Annapolis and had his eyes opened to art on a trip to Boston in 1765. He fled to that city to escape creditors and as a bonus received a vision of what portrait painting could be. Visits to Smibert's old studio and Copley's new one taught him not only better ways of painting but stronger formulations of character and expression for his own portraits. He returned to Annapolis, where his newly acquired skills impressed local patrons so much that they funded his trip to London in 1767. Peale studied with West for two years and was perhaps the only American student in London who stuck with his American master, rejecting the more fashionable, painterly English work. His Maryland clients welcomed him home. They cherished his solid modeling and meticulously drawn costumes, as did his Philadelphia patrons to such an extent that Peale settled there permanently in 1776.

15. Henry Benbridge (1743–1812)
Portrait of a Gentleman, ca. 1770–72
Oil on canvas, 49¼ x 39½ in. (125.1 x 100.3 cm)
Morris K. Jesup Fund, Maria DeWitt Jesup Fund, and Louis V. Bell Fund, 1969 (69.202)

This gentleman's elegant suit suggests that he had taken the grand tour, for it was considered essential that American men purchase a red ensemble while in Italy.

Peale pleased forthright, conservative merchants like Samuel Mifflin (fig. 16) with his conventional, well-developed, no-nonsense approach to portraiture. In 1777, when he sat for Peale, Mifflin was at the end of his term as president of the court of common pleas in Philadelphia and about to accept a post as colonel in command of three battalions in northern New Jersey. He was depicted by Peale as a relaxed civilian, comfortable and self-satisfied with no need for frivolity in his life or his portrait. The presentation of his wife, Rebecca Edgell Mifflin (fig. 17), is equally frank, with Mrs. Mifflin taking the serious responsibility for the moral education of her granddaughter. The two study a well-known book, *Emblems, for the Entertainment and Improvement of Youth* (London, 1735), specifically the page illustrating CONJUGAL CONCORD / FELIAL [sic] LOVE / LOVE OF VIRT[UE] / DUTY TO [?]. The child, her grandmother's namesake, points to the symbol for "FELIAL LOVE," a passage of portraiture in which Peale, who had no need for subtlety in his work, employed perfectly transparent iconography.

Patrons so enjoyed the candor of Peale's work that he won the extremely prestigious commission for a full-length portrait of George Washington for the meeting room of the Supreme Executive Council of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. Peale conceived a grand image, elegant and informal, commanding and heroic, that portrayed the victorious general at the site of his recent triumph at Princeton. (It is now in the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia.) Reportedly the most accurate portrayal of Washington's physique—small head relative to large body, pear-shaped torso, and skinny legs were the general's own, not deficiencies in artistic rendering—the image was repeated eleven times, as well as in several half-length versions, most of which were purchased by prestigious friends of Washington's or governmental bodies in America and Europe. One of the full-length versions (fig. 18) was probably painted for Martha Washington, who may have requested that the Princeton setting be replaced with Trenton, New Jersey, the scene of Washington's famous Christmas-night raid on the British. The crossing-the-Delaware victory, which came on the heels of a number of near-crushing defeats, revived the esprit de corps of the American troops.

Peale worked steadily in America throughout the Revolutionary War, a time when an artist with a commission to paint the commander in chief had the advantage over his colleagues. Other members of the Peale family also thrived on their connection to Washington, especially Charles's brother James, who made reduced-size copies of the grand portrait, and his son Rembrandt, who had been with his father during the first sitting. Rembrandt continued to paint the first president well into the nineteenth century, while his father dedicated more and more of his time to running the family's natural history museum. The Peales' main rival in the thriving business of portraying Washington was John Trumbull (1756–1843). The Harvard-educated son of the governor of Connecticut, he was quickly promoted from adjutant in the First Connecticut Regiment to Washington's second aide-de-camp. Trumbull eventually rose to the rank of colonel under Generals Horatio Gates and Benedict Arnold, but he resigned from service on a point of honor, the alleged misdating of his commission papers.

Freed from military service, Trumbull took up painting in earnest and traveled to London. There, with remarkable dispatch, he executed from memory a small full-length likeness of Washington (fig. 19), achieving the distinction of painting the first portrait of the general in Europe. That picture, some say, contributed to charges of treason brought against Trumbull, for which he was imprisoned eight months in London. The portrait revealed Washington's current position near West Point, also the site of Benedict Arnold's notorious betrayal of the commander. Trumbull's colleagues Copley and West provided Trumbull's bail. This controversial portrait of Washington was neither confiscated nor burned but instead became a sensation. Mezzotint reproductions brought Trumbull's resolute manner and significant artistic talents to a wider audience. Those oblivious to the picture's military intrigue saw a superb image of a military officer at the site of battle about to mount his steed, an alternative to

16. Charles Willson Peale (1741–1827)
Samuel Mifflin, 1777–80
Oil on canvas, 49 7/8 x 39 3/4 in. (126.7 x 101 cm)
Egleston Fund, 1922 (22.153.1)

Mifflin commissioned his and his wife's portraits in 1777, but they were not completed for at least three years. In July 1780 the artist complained: "I will finish your pictures amediately [sic] after I receive my first payment."

17. Charles Willson Peale
Mrs. Samuel Mifflin and Her Granddaughter Rebecca Mifflin Francis, 1777–80
Oil on canvas, 50⅛ x 40¼ in. (127.3 x 102.2 cm)
Egleston Fund, 1922 (22.153.2)

So often the clothing seen in portraits is imaginary or derived from prints, but it is known that Mrs. Mifflin wore her own dress for this portrait. The quilted blue satin underskirt is now in the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

Left
18. Charles Willson Peale
George Washington, ca. 1779–81
Oil on canvas, 95 x 61¾ in. (241.3 x 156.8 cm)
Gift of Collis P. Huntington, 1897 (97.33)

Washington's blue sash indicates his high rank in the military. Officers of lesser rank wore pink or green. Such sashes were discontinued in June 1780, at about the time Peale was working on this picture.

Right
19. John Trumbull (1756–1843)
George Washington, 1780
Oil on canvas, 36 x 28 in. (91.4 x 71.1 cm)
Bequest of Charles Allen Munn, 1924
(24.109.88)

In Trumbull's image Washington stands on the bank of the Hudson River with West Point Academy—indicated by the red and white banner—just across the water.

the formal equestrian portrait with the subject sitting proudly in the saddle. The success of this image peaked while Trumbull was exiled in the Netherlands and back in America. Upon his return to England in 1783, he embarked on a course of study of history painting with Benjamin West that would lead to his greatest triumph, his scenes of the American Revolution. These included pictures such as *The Death of General Warren at the Battle of Bunker's Hill,* 1786, and *The Death of General Montgomery in the Attack on Quebec,* 1786 (both Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven). Trumbull made history painting his lifelong project, eventually achieving his goal of providing scenes for the United States Capitol Rotunda.

Trumbull and Gilbert Stuart (1755–1828), the artist most famous for painting Washington, crossed paths in West's studio and became friends. Stuart had studied with the wandering Scottish painter Cosmo Alexander in Stuart's hometown, Newport, Rhode Island, and followed his teacher to Edinburgh, only to be stranded there upon Alexander's death. It took him two years to make his way back to America and about eighteen months to decide to return to London. At first, Stuart earned money as a church organist and lived in wretched circumstances, before landing destitute on West's doorstep in 1777. He accepted West's kindness and advice but sought artistic models in the honed urbanity of Thomas Gainsborough and Joshua Reynolds and in the striking modernity of George Romney and Henry Raeburn. Restless by nature, Stuart left London for Dublin at the peak of his popularity (and the height of his debts). There he lived the high life for about five years, painting

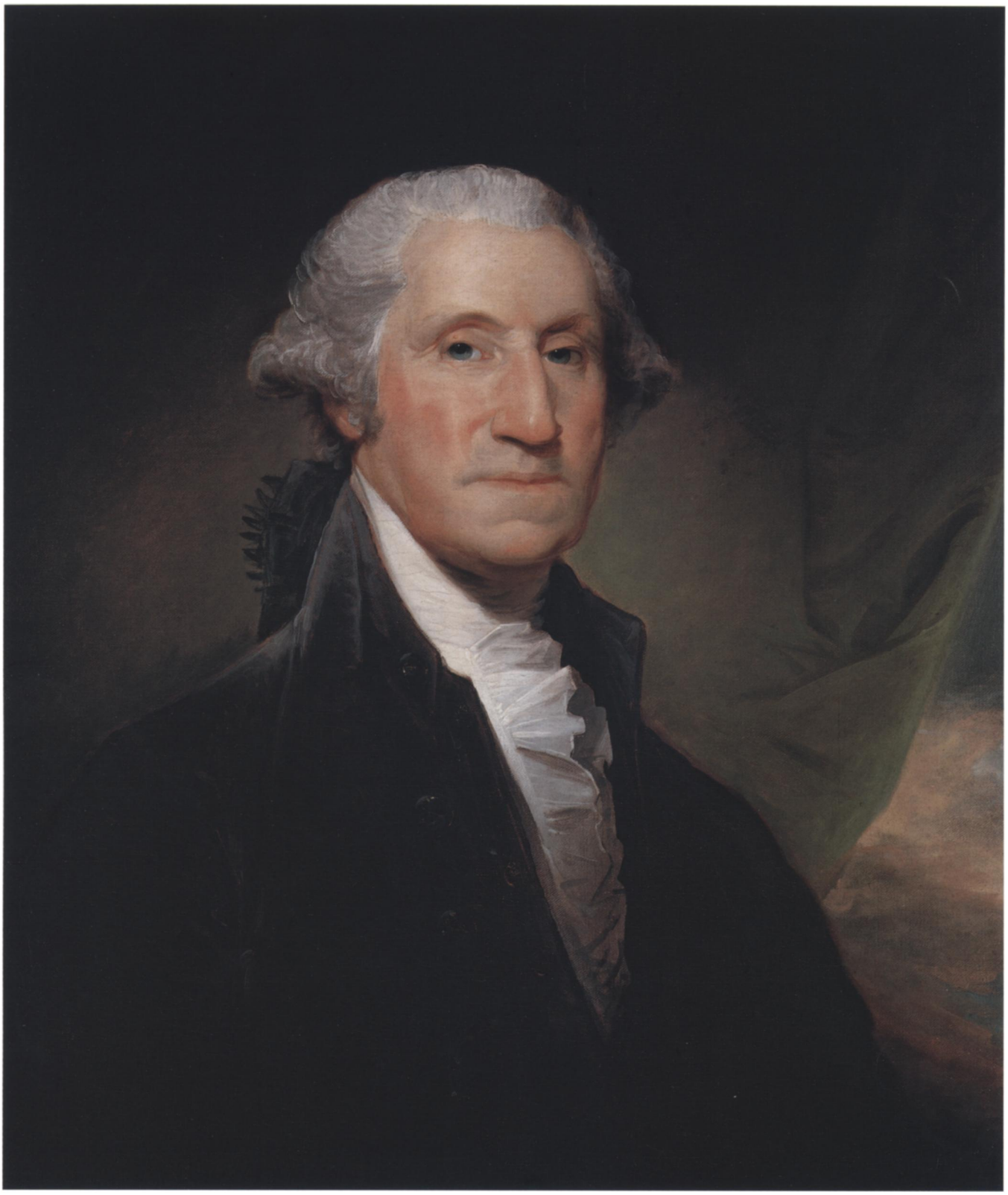
notable figures and diverting them during sittings with his entertaining stories and commanding presence. He is said to have told his Irish companions that he would stay just a short time, for he was soon going home to paint the new president of the United States. In 1793 he went from Dublin to New York, where he shrewdly obtained portrait commissions from political figures like John Jay and Robert R. Livingston, who recommended him to Washington. Within a year he was on his way to Philadelphia for a sitting with the president.

Stuart painted Washington in several poses: facing left, facing right, seated, standing, and on the battlefield. His first sittings with the president in about March 1795 were dedicated to those portraits known as the Vaughan type, so-called because one of the first examples (National Gallery of Art, Washington) was commissioned by John Vaughan as a gift for his father, Samuel, a London merchant and close friend of Washington's. There may be as many as eighteen versions of this picture, including the one known as the Gibbs-Channing-Avery portrait (fig. 20), so-called for its succession of owners. The image appears naturalistic although the overall impression is monumental. Stuart conveys the looseness of Washington's flesh, the unruliness of his wig—pulled back into a jagged ribbon—and the crumpled fabric of his coat, while capturing the president's direct and intense gaze. Stuart usually seduced his sitters into animation with conversation, but struggled to engage the president. One of the artist's confidants later recounted that "when [Washington] sat to Stuart—as the latter has often said—an apathy seemed to seize him, and a vacuity seemed to spread over his countenance most appalling to the painter." In spite of Stuart's aggravation, Washington became the artist's frequent subject over the remaining thirty years of his career.

Stuart much preferred sittings, or standings as the case may be, with others, including those clients he obtained as a direct result of his sessions with Washington. One of his finest portraits from this period is that of a friend of the president's, Louis-Marie, vicomte de Noailles (fig. 21), who sympathized with the American cause during the Revolution. He represented the French at General Cornwallis's decisive surrender at Yorktown and received further distinction for his active role in the events leading to the demise of the ancien régime. Noailles was in Paris in 1791 to witness the fall of the monarchy. Fearful of the coming reign of terror, he fled to England and then to Philadelphia, where he renewed his friendship with Washington and commissioned from Stuart a rare, small full-length portrait. Stuart may have remembered Trumbull's small full-length of Washington (see fig. 19) or simply worked in the same tradition, depicting a horse brigade assembling in the distance as the calm and confident leader watches from above. Stuart made this formula his own with masterful execution and a complex composition that features the dashing officer in perfectly rendered colonel's uniform, a memento-mori still life of skeleton, thistle, and serpent, and a collapsed narrative structure that places Noailles in two places at once, at the front of the brigade and at the top of a mountain.

Stuart won favor for his expert technique, which he learned in London and astutely modified depending upon where and whom he was painting. Because he chose to work in major cities—after London, Dublin, New York, and Philadelphia he went on to Washington and Boston—he found clients desirous of spirited and stylish tableaus. There was, by the late eighteenth century, a place in America for the fine art of painting. That place was the city. In the outlying rural areas patrons shunned flashy brushwork and subtle expressions, preferring instead boldly colored and directly presented likenesses. Ralph Earl (1751–1801) adapted to these circumstances, painting hundreds of portraits of Connecticut's aristocracy and setting the pace for his regional competitors, such as Reuben Moulthrop (1763–1814) and Rufus Hathaway (1770–1822).

Earl made a name early on with a fairly perceptive, if awkwardly proportioned, likeness of the local statesman Roger Sherman (Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven), a portrait that would have sent crowds of sitters to his New Haven studio if not for poor timing and Earl's politics. A vehement loyalist, Earl fled to England in 1776 at the outbreak of the war, leaving his wife and children behind.



20. Gilbert Stuart (1755–1828)
George Washington, 1795
Oil on canvas, 30 1/4 x 25 1/4 in. (76.8 x 64.1 cm)
Rogers Fund, 1907 (07.160)

Stuart's remarkable image of the first president balances humanity with dignity and elegance with probity.

21. Gilbert Stuart
Louis-Marie, Vicomte de Noailles, 1798
Oil on canvas, 50 x 40 in. (127 x 101.6 cm)
Purchase, Henry R. Luce Gift, Elihu Root Jr. Bequest, Rogers Fund, Maria DeWitt Jesup Fund, Morris K. Jesup Fund and Charles and Anita Blatt Gift, 1970 (1970.262)

In this complex portrait Louis-Marie, vicomte de Noailles, wears the elegant uniform of a colonel in the Chasseurs à Cheval d'Alsace with a nonregulation Polish-style karabela *saber.*

He settled in the country, venturing into London for exhibitions at the Royal Academy and other galleries. Ten years of painting in England removed the hard edges from Earl's figures, lightened his intense palette, and softened his backgrounds. Yet, his provincial technique was not gone; it was only lying dormant to resurface when Earl revived his career in Connecticut in 1788. For Elijah Boardman (fig. 22), a prosperous dry-goods merchant from New Milford, Earl used his crisp American technique to execute a modified version of an English-style portrait. Boardman was as worldly a client as Earl would find in rural Connecticut, an elite shopkeeper whose inventory included fine cloth, pork, beef, butter, cheese, grain, tallow, furs, and other luxury items imported from Europe, the Far East, and the West Indies. As stylish as the goods he purveyed, Boardman unabashedly shows his viewer his lavish imported stock, his fine counting desk, his leather-bound books, and his best sales tool, himself. This dapper and handsome young man in a very fashionable cadogan wig and exquisite gold-trimmed suit with a tiny stickpin—a modest flash of jewelry—would seem able to get for his customers their heart's desire. For Elijah's lovely sister Esther (fig. 23), Earl employed a bit of the soft brushwork he learned abroad, placing the fashionably dressed young woman against a specific but idealized view of New Milford.

The local gentry of the Connecticut River Valley were affluent, well-educated leaders in business and politics, as well as major land owners, both in the surrounding area and in the Western Reserve (land along Lake Erie in northeast Ohio retained by Connecticut in 1786). Their paradoxical preference for the comparatively naïve presentation of their sophisticated tastes is revealed in their portraits and accounts for the rise of Moulthrop and Hathaway. These virtually untrained painters found a following in clients eager to display their cultured habits in the most unpretentious way. Moulthrop was making wax relief portraits and painting as a sideline when he encountered the patrons Mr. and Mrs. Job Perit (figs. 24, 25). He knew to use English prints as the basis for portraits, as he had used them to create his tiny paraffin historic personages and vignettes, which included scenes of gory beheadings and murders. He referred to less sensational prints to create fancy French coiffures and the best English gentlemen's suits, and committed them to canvas with a severely limited palette and unmodulated surfaces—a technique that must have been what his clients preferred.

Hathaway's achievement in this regard is even more extreme. A decorator or ship's carver who was training to become a surgeon, he painted portraits for only about five years in the early 1790s. His masterpiece, the so-called *Lady with Her Pets* (fig. 26), is a surprisingly complex work. It may have been an engagement portrait for the sitter, Molly Wales Fobes of Raynham, Massachusetts, who married the Reverend Elijah Leonard on May 13, 1792. Her high-style coiffure is the same worn by her Connecticut "neighbors" Esther Boardman and Sarah Perit (see figs. 23, 25). The array of fauna carried contemporary connotations of beauty, discipline, poise, and loyalty, in short, the precise virtues sought in a bride.

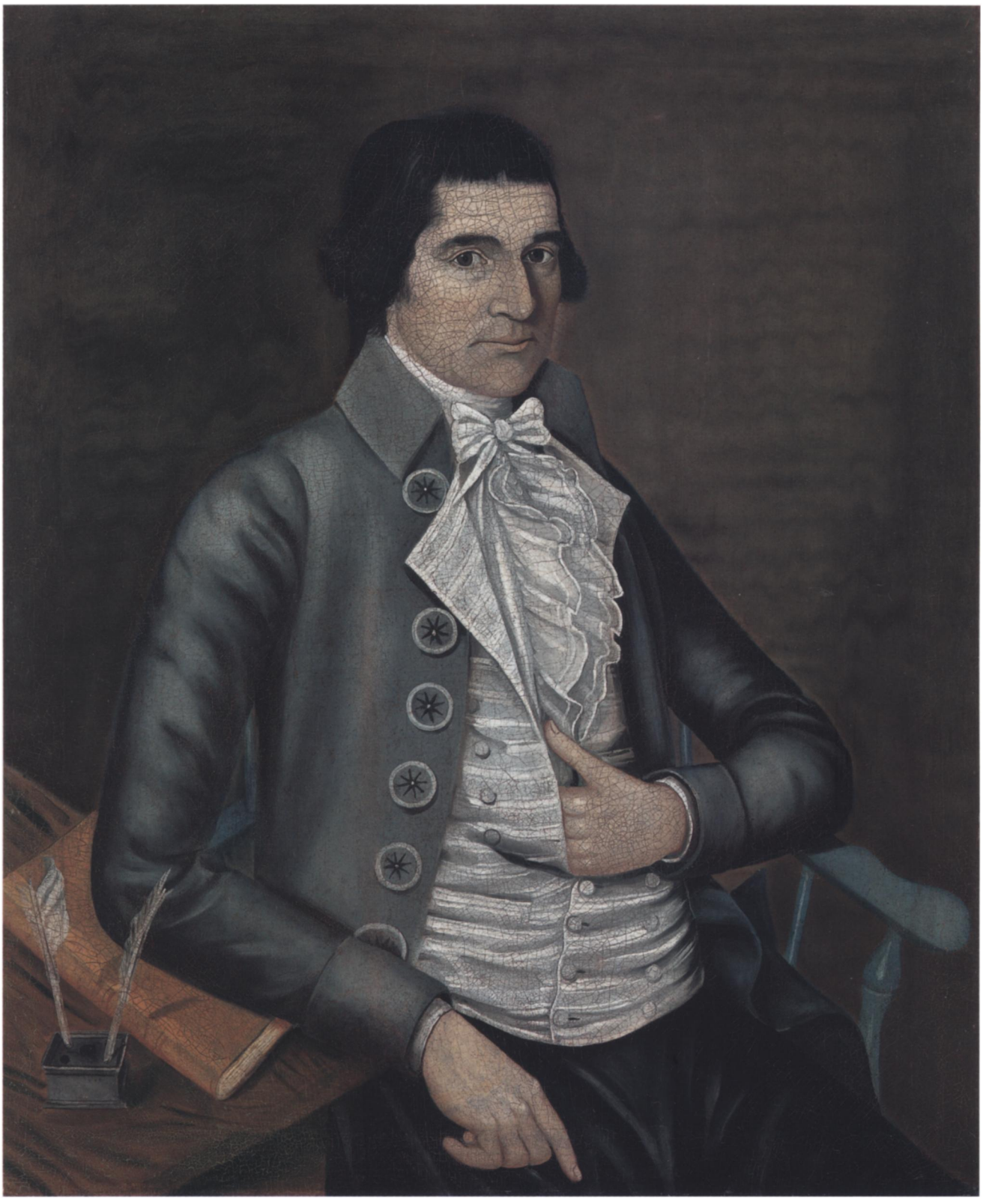
The perfection of rural derivations of high-style European portraiture might also have been the fate of John Vanderlyn (1775–1852), grandson of Pieter mentioned above, if that had suited his temperament. Instead, Vanderlyn propelled himself beyond the artistic borders of Kingston, New York, by formulating his own academic education. Since there were no classical statues available in the vicinity, he drew those figures from prints after Charles Le Brun's *Passions* (published 1702). Then, in 1792, he bought a ticket to New York. There it was his good fortune to find portraits by Stuart to copy, including that of the statesman Aaron Burr. Burr saw Vanderlyn's copy and decided to make the young artist his protégé. He not only arranged for him to study with Stuart in Philadelphia but also sent him to Paris, thus making Vanderlyn the first American painter to pursue foreign studies outside of England. He trained under François-André Vincent, a pupil of Jacques-Louis David. Vanderlyn followed a rigorous program, beginning with drawing from the antique and the nude and graduating to oil on canvas, which all but obliterated his previous manner. The work he completed upon his return to New York in 1801, such as his elegant, finely rendered

22. Ralph Earl (1751–1801)
Elijah Boardman, 1789
Oil on canvas, 83 x 51 in. (210.8 x 129.5 cm)
Bequest of Susan W. Tyler, 1979 (1979.395)

A businessman and a scholar, Boardman displays his inventory of fabrics, including one bolt unfurled to reveal a British tax stamp—proof that he imported fine textiles for his customers.

23. Ralph Earl
Esther Boardman, 1789
Oil on canvas, 42½ x 32 in. (108 x 81.3 cm)
Gift of Edith and Henry Noss, 1991 (1991.338)

Stylish women of the late eighteenth century like Esther Boardman, the sister of Elijah, accentuated the attractive paleness of their faces with eyebrows made from mouse skin.



24. Reuben Moulthrop (1763–1814)
Job Perit, 1790
Oil on canvas, 36 1/8 x 29 3/4 in. (91.8 x 75.6 cm)
Gift of Edgar William and Bernice Chrysler Garbisch, 1965 (65.254.1)

This portrait of Job Perit bears a rare signature and date by the artist on the back. Moulthrop also recorded Perit's age as thirty-eight when he sat for his portrait in 1790.

25. Reuben Moulthrop
Sarah Sanford Perit, 1790
Oil on canvas, 36¼ x 29¾ in. (92.1 x 75.6 cm)
Gift of Edgar William and Bernice Chrysler Garbisch, 1957 (65.254.2)

Sarah Stanford Perit wears a miniature portrait of her five-year-old daughter Elizabeth on a black silk cord that is long enough to allow the jewel to be tucked inside the waistband of her gown.

portrait of Mrs. Marinus Willett and her son (fig. 27), shows that Vanderlyn had achieved a style in line with the tenets of contemporary European Neoclassicism at its purest. The figures are lit from the side, set in an unadorned space, and the characterization is restrained. The obvious French manner of his portraits attracted so much attention from New York's francophile elite that Vanderlyn decided to return to Paris in 1803 for further study. He obtained a commission to pay his way—he was to paint copies of old masters for New York's recently founded American Academy of the Fine Arts. Rather than sharpen his skills as a portraitist, he branched off into history painting, which brought him limited fame abroad but failed him in America. His *Panorama of the Palace and Gardens of Versailles,* now at the Museum, is a triumph of early-nineteenth-century artistic showmanship and ingenuity, but was unappreciated by Vanderlyn's patrons.

Vanderlyn was not alone in his dream to go beyond the realm of portraiture. Most artists who studied abroad, in England or France, returned home inflated with new talent and fresh ambition only to be disheartened when patrons failed to respond with proper enthusiasm. Rembrandt Peale (1778–1860) was groomed by his father, Charles, to be an overachiever. He grew up in Philadelphia, where he exhibited his portraits very early in his career, worked on his family's various museum and gallery enterprises, and exhumed mastodon bones. The prehistoric skeletons became his ticket to London, as he and his brother Rubens took the specimens on a transatlantic tour. The tour was unsuccessful and left Rembrandt time to study from the antique under West in London at the Royal Academy. This experience improved his skills, but he found little immediate use for them upon his return home, as he was drawn back into his father's museum business. After several more years spent in Europe purchasing portraits of famous men for the Peale museum, Rembrandt struck out on his own with study trips to Paris in 1808 and 1809. A studio near the Louvre and commissions from prominent Frenchmen, including Jacques-Louis David (a portrait, now in the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia), helped him break free from the conventions of British eighteenth-century portraiture he had learned and was forced to maintain at the pleasure of his father. Peale deployed his French technique slowly and rather idiosyncratically over time, first by using a resplendent palette and rendering each of his sitters with warm, flushed facial tones. Not until the 1820s, when his father was aged, did his work become fully developed. The portrait of his youngest children, Emma Clara and Michael Angelo (fig. 28), shows Peale's ability to manipulate strong light and emphasize textures while controlling an opulent palette and attaining a convincing likeness. His clients appreciated the curious mix of cultural influences in his work, hallmarked by peculiar conventions of his own: decorative ears, puffy faces, and upturned lips. Never satisfied, Peale charted grand schemes to challenge himself and relieve the burden of portraiture. He continued to run the museum, painted an enormous allegorical tableau on the subject of death, and made lecture tours flogging his abundant pairs of portraits of Martha and George Washington. Peale unabashedly promoted himself as the only artist then alive to have actually met Washington, whose popularity had swelled to mythic proportions by the 1820s.

At the polar opposite of perpetually frustrated portraitists like Vanderlyn and Peale were those who thrived on "making faces," as the punster Stuart once put it. The flamboyant, extremely convivial painter John Wesley Jarvis (1780–1840), for example, attracted clients and students with his winning ways and rarely complained about his profession. English by birth but raised in America from the age of six, Jarvis learned engraving in Philadelphia and in 1801 set up a studio in New York, where he offered every kind of portrait: paintings, engravings, drawings, miniatures, and silhouettes on glass and in gold leaf on paper. When work in the city was slow, he traveled south. A commission to paint a series of full-length portraits of the heroes of the War of 1812 so increased his business that he hired apprentices and by the 1820s reportedly booked up to six sittings a day. He painted Andrew Jackson at least seven

26. Rufus Hathaway (1770–1822)
Lady with Her Pets (Molly Wales Fobes), 1790
Oil on canvas, 34¼ x 32 in. (87 x 81.3 cm)
Gift of Edgar William and Bernice Chrysler Garbisch, 1963 (63.201.1)

Despite its simple appearance, this is a sophisticated portrait. The French hérisson *("hedgehog") coiffure and imported fan reveal the artist's attempt to create a high-style image for his client.*

27. John Vanderlyn (1775–1852)
Mrs. Marinus Willett and Her Son Marinus Jr., ca. 1802
Oil on canvas, 36 7/8 x 28 1/8 in. (93.7 x 71.4 cm)
Bequest of George Willett Van Nest, 1916 (17.87.2)

Vanderlyn strove for refined simplicity and elegance in the portraits he produced in New York just after his Paris training.

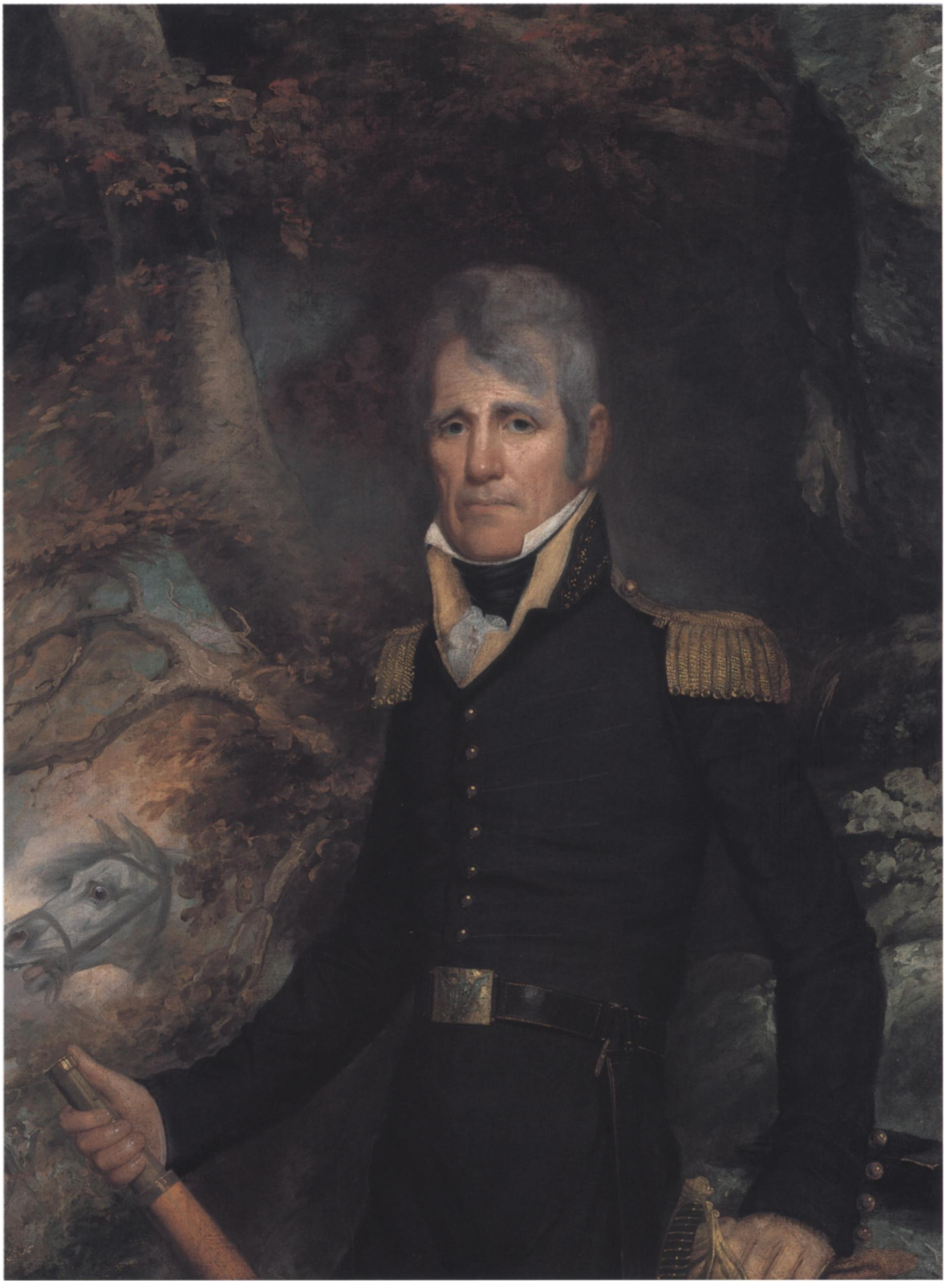
times, during his term as president and earlier (fig. 29). The Museum's picture shows the general fresh from his tremendous victory at the Battle of New Orleans (1815). With Jackson's sharp figure against a romantic landscape background, the likeness epitomizes precisely the spirited quality that attracted sitters to Jarvis's studio.

Jarvis flourished as a portraitist in an era when there were plenty of commissions and turned his talent into a venture that was part business and part entertainment; this combination had been the key to Copley's success forty years earlier, but it now played out against the backdrop of the growing, cosmopolitan city of New York. Copley had longed for an assistant, not only because it would have lessened the workload but also because it was standard practice for a professional portraitist. Jarvis's lively studio abounded with young painters, each of whom had a legacy of attracting clients not only with fine skills but also with their charming and amusing personalities. His most famous protégé, Henry Inman (1801–1846), was just as affable as his master. Jarvis and Inman worked together in such perfect harmony that their clients agreeably accepted the dual authorship.

By the 1820s, portrait painting was a bona fide vocation in America, no longer related to craft traditions or considered the colonial franchise of an English profession. Jarvis's assistants, especially Inman, went off on their own. Inman opened his own studio on Vesey Street in 1822, enchanting his clients, including the little ones, like seven-year-old Janet Halleck Drake (fig. 30), with his good nature

28. Rembrandt Peale (1778–1860)
Michael Angelo and Emma Clara Peale, ca. 1826
Oil on canvas, 30 x 25 in. (76.2 x 63.5 cm)
Purchase, Dodge Fund, Dale T. Johnson Fund, and The Douglass Foundation, The Overbrook Foundation, Mr. and Mrs. Max N. Berry, Barbara G. Fleischman, Mrs. Daniel Fraad, Mr. and Mrs. Peter Lunder, Mr. and Mrs. Frank Martucci, and Erving and Joyce Wolf Gifts, 2001 (2001.151)

Peale's resplendent palette for this portrait of his children invokes the examples of the Baroque masters whom he had studied on his European trips.



29. John Wesley Jarvis (English, 1780–1840)
General Andrew Jackson, ca. 1819
Oil on canvas, 48½ x 36 in. (123.2 x 91.4 cm)
Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1964 (64.8)

Jarvis's highly successful likeness of Jackson elicited requests for replicas and praise from the major general's friends. One said to Jackson: "I have just been to see Jarvis' portrait of you. It is inimitable."

and funny stories. Inman imagined the daughter of the late poet Joseph Rodman Drake as a wood nymph, perched on a rock in the forest, and added a top hat as a whimsical narrative element. Within about a year of completing this portrait, Inman took on his own apprentice, the miniature painter Thomas Seir Cummings, thus continuing the business model that worked so well for Jarvis.

The professionalism of portraiture in an increasingly commercial city was behind the invention of the duo of Samuel Lovett Waldo (1783–1861) and William Jewett (1792–1874). Waldo, the elder of the two, painted portraits in Connecticut and in Charleston on his own before returning home to New York in 1809. Overwhelmed by commissions, he took Jewett as his apprentice, and they soon became partners in a business that lasted well into the 1850s. The arrangement was simple, and clients were pleased by the explicitness of the deal: Waldo painted the heads and hands, and Jewett filled in the rest. What their work may sometimes have lacked in flair, it made up for in swiftness of execution and solidly appealing likenesses. They no doubt satisfied the desire of the city's new mercantile elite eager for richly colored, highly legible, essentially handsome pictures. The group portrait that Waldo and Jewett turned out for the leather- and hide-merchant Shepherd Knapp and his wife, Catherine Louisa Kumbel, of their four sons (fig. 31) is just such an image, although more ambitious than most. The artists employed a slightly *retardataire* mode, evoking the influence of Copley and of English late-eighteenth-century images in which boys wear up-to-date clothing but are enveloped in an environment of fabric that suggests the lavish site of their upbringing—without specific reference to the décor of their home. These little gentlemen, ensconced in an atmosphere of subtle refinement, might be British royalty but are, instead, American merchant princes.

Philadelphia's answer to Jarvis and to Waldo and Jewett was Thomas Sully (1783–1872), an extremely charming, amazingly prolific, and superbly talented portraitist. The son of English actors, who took their show on the road to Virginia when their son was eleven, Sully veered away from thespianism toward painting almost immediately, but the dramatic spirit remained with him. So did his English heritage: only a year's training in London in 1809 earned him the coveted appellation of the American Lawrence. Sully painted more than 2,500 portraits during his long career and cornered the Philadelphia market for decades. His reputation as a fine painter with a beautiful palette and as a charismatic gentleman with a deep admiration for women gained him entry into many parlors, not least of which belonged to Queen Victoria (figs. 32, 33). Sully's task, to paint the regent for the Philadelphia board room of the Society of the Sons of Saint George (a benevolent organization to aid indigent British in America), differed from those of his ambitious English colleagues vying for royal favor or for governmental commissions in 1838, the coronation year. His ingenious and unorthodox rendition of a state portrait features the eighteen-year-old queen's literal and physical ascendance in a stair-climbing pose that emphasizes her femininity and her strength. He completed his oil study in five sittings with Queen Victoria at Buckingham Palace, in addition to a few royally sanctioned sessions using as her surrogate his own daughter, Blanche, who donned the coronation robes at the royal dressmakers so that her father could paint them. Impatient with the commission because it took so long to complete and disarmed by the remarkable situation in which it placed him, Sully modestly confessed that "I should be gratified if I were able to give an idea of the sweet tone of voice and gentle manner of Queen Victoria." In his final, full-length image, painted in Philadelphia in the fall and winter of 1838–39, he conveyed much more. The first image of the queen in America, it delighted viewers, catapulted the already famous Sully to greater celebrity, and became an indicator of the big business that portraiture had become. The picture caused the first legal action of artistic copyright when the portrait's owner challenged Sully's right to replicate the image for his own gain.

While Sully had little competition in Philadelphia, he stimulated the art market by participating in exhibitions at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts and in a partnership in James

30. Henry Inman (1801–1846)
Janet Halleck Drake, 1825
Oil on canvas, 29 3/4 x 24 3/4 in. (75.6 x 62.9 cm)
Purchase, Gift of Edgar William and Bernice Chrysler Garbisch, by exchange, 1996
(1996.348)

The highly romantic composition Inman selected for this little girl's portrait invokes something of the spirit of the poetry of her late father, the artist's friend Joseph Rodman Drake.

31. Samuel Lovett Waldo (1783–1861)
William Jewett (1792–1874)
The Knapp Children, ca. 1833–34
Oil on canvas, 70 x 57 1/2 in. (177.8 x 146.1 cm)
Gift of Mrs. John Knapp Hollins, in memory of her husband, 1959 (59.114)

Waldo and Jewett, the prolific portrait team, depicted the four charming sons of wealthy New Yorker Shepherd Knapp as an evocation of the stages of aristocratic childhood.

32. Thomas Sully (1783–1872)
Queen Victoria, 1838
Oil on canvas, 36 x 28 3/8 in. (91.4 x 72.1 cm)
Bequest of Francis T. S. Darley, 1914 (14.126.1)

Sully carried this canvas with him to the queen's sitting room in Buckingham Palace five times in 1838. He drew the regalia of the Order of the Garter—her armband and the collar—at the lower right. The inscription indicates that the picture was "painted from life."

Right
33. Thomas Sully
Queen Victoria, 1838
Oil on canvas, 94 x 58 in. (238.8 x 147.3 cm)
Lent by Mrs. Arthur A. Houghton Jr.

Queen Victoria took pleasure in being painted by an American. She inquired: "Am I in the position you require, Mr. Sully?"

34. John Neagle (1796–1865)
John Haviland, 1828
Oil on canvas, 33 x 26 in. (83.8 x 66 cm)
The Alfred N. Punnett Endowment Fund, 1938 (38.82)

The architect of buildings in several revival styles, from Greek to Egyptian, Haviland rests his hand on a volume of The Antiquities of Athens *(1825–30), by James Stuart and Nicholas Revett.*

Earle's gallery, one of the first in that city. Strong communities of artists emerged in Philadelphia and New York by the late 1820s in direct response to the increased demand for pictures and were guided carefully by the cities' mature painters. Sully encouraged his colleagues and kept notes on techniques to share with younger artists, like his son-in-law John Neagle (1796–1865). Sully's influence pervaded Philadelphia portraits of the day, as is clearly seen in Neagle's of the English architect John Haviland (fig. 34). Haviland sat for the artist during the construction of the building shown in a drawing at the lower right, the Eastern State Penitentiary (1823–29), Philadelphia, which later brought him international fame.

In New York Samuel F. B. Morse (1791–1872) galvanized the corps of artists. He arrived in the city in 1824, bearing credentials of education from Phillips Academy, Yale College, and the Royal Academy, London. A man with a mission, he swiftly landed the most coveted commission in town, to paint a full-length portrait of the Marquis de Lafayette (City Hall, New York), who was then on his triumphal tour of America. Anyone else so new and gifted might have antagonized his peers, but Morse bolstered his position by creating collegial bonds between painters. He hosted gatherings in his studio, which were the seeds of a sketching club that became the National Academy of Design, the most important art school in America. As president of the academy, Morse played an influential role in the training of young artists while guiding his own artistic development. His likeness of Governor De Witt Clinton (fig. 35), who was known as Magnus Apollo in the classical republican parlance of the day, shows what Morse thought portraiture could accomplish. He judiciously orchestrated all of the usual parts of a formulaic bust-length image to represent the great prowess of Clinton, a formidable, headstrong politician. Clinton had just proposed a canal to link the Hudson River to the Great Lakes, which would change commerce in New York forever. For this portrait Morse devised wallpaper decorated with the letter C surrounded by stars as a heroic backdrop, and he made Clinton's body a monumental black mass to set off his aged, jowled face, conveyed by the loose application of paint. The work is traditional but with a potent edge keyed to Morse's ambition to become involved with grand public projects.

As compulsive as he was talented, Morse challenged himself again and again, always looking for the next big project that would fulfill his creative and intellectual spirit. He painted immense historical tableaus and traveled in Europe. While seeking to satisfy his artistic ambitions, he pondered the greater goal of human communication—beyond any message that painting could impart—and began experiments in electromagnetism. They led to his invention of the telegraph, a system that transmitted a code—the Morse code. Then, while continuing his search for new ways to convey ideas, he met Louis-Jacques-Mandé Daguerre and became intrigued by the connection of science and art in the medium that would become photography. Morse brought the daguerreotype to America, and his experiments took time away from portrait painting. Furthermore, he accepted a post as the first professor of the literature of the arts of design at the new New York University in 1836. That year, he painted his last major work, an extremely complex portrait that captures his frustrations and hopes (fig. 36). He posed his beautiful daughter, Susan Walker Morse, as an allegory of the creative process. In the manner of many painters who had portrayed women drawing, he showed Susan with pencil in hand; but while those artists had evoked the polite pastime of sketching, Morse summoned the demons embedded in the blank page. It is a portrait of melancholy that baffled contemporary critics, who, although lavish in their formal descriptions of the picture, were at a loss to unravel its deeper significance.

Perhaps the central irony in the story of American portraiture is that one of its most masterful practitioners introduced the medium that would threaten to put him and his colleagues out of business. Even with someone as assiduous as Morse pushing the technology, it would be a while before the nascent medium of photography would make portrait painting unfashionable. But by the early 1840s, when the first examples tantalized consumers

35. Samuel F. B. Morse (1791–1872)
De Witt Clinton, 1826
Oil on canvas, 30 x 25 1/8 in. (76.2 x 63.8 cm)
Rogers Fund, 1909 (09.18)

Morse depicted the background of this portrait as custom-designed wallpaper appropriate to his illustrious client: the pattern features arrangements of red-on-red stars that circle the letter C.

with the prospect of exact likenesses, portrait painters changed the way they worked. Little by little, their commissions dried up, not only as a result of the competition of the photographic likeness, but because American patrons were traveling more, having their portraits painted abroad, and branching out to collect landscapes, marine scenes, and narrative pictures by both American and European artists. The portraitist George P. A. Healy (1813–1894) almost abandoned America for Europe, where he made a spectacular living painting grand, old-fashioned likenesses for clients in London and Paris. A commission from the Citizen King Louis-Philippe for several images of himself, along with a set of portraits of every United States president, kept Healy in business long after the advent of photography. His technical virtuosity, honed in the Paris studios of Antoine-Jean Gros and Thomas Couture and alongside Franz Xavier Winterhalter in Louis-Philippe's court, made him a favorite of Americans on the grand tour. His stunning portrait of the American heiress Euphemia White Van Rensselaer (fig. 37), was painted in Paris, where she surely purchased the ensemble of watered-silk skirt and velvet jacket. Healy made a studio production into a souvenir of her visit months earlier to the Claudian aqueduct on the Roman Campagna and confirmed for others who saw the picture the incomparable, seductive beauty of a painted likeness.

The Irish painter Charles Cromwell Ingham (1796–1863) maintained a thriving business throughout the 1840s, mainly through his knack for turning urban ladies into fair maidens with a delicate flick of his brush. So polished were Ingham's canvases that his technique was called into question by other painters in New York who had never seen such sophistication. Reports that he used layers of glazes to create a porcelain finish, a technique long

36. Samuel F. B. Morse
Susan Walker Morse (The Muse), ca. 1836–37
Oil on canvas, 73 3/4 x 57 5/8 in. (187.3 x 146.4 cm)
Bequest of Herbert L. Pratt, 1945 (45.62.1)

While working on this portrait of his daughter, Morse used an adjacent studio to conduct experiments with the electromagnetic telegraph. Frustrated by his lack of financial success as an artist, Morse eventually abandoned painting for science.

37. George P. A. Healy (1813–1894)
Euphemia White Van Rensselaer, 1842
Oil on canvas, 45 3/4 x 35 1/4 in. (116.2 x 89.5 cm)
Bequest of Cornelia Cruger, 1923 (23.102)

The artist lavished attention on Miss Van Rensselaer's black velvet jacket, satin-lined velvet stole, watered-silk skirt, and stylish bonnet. She is at the height of fashion.

38. Charles Cromwell Ingham
(born in Ireland, 1796–1863)
The Flower Girl, 1846
Oil on canvas, 36 x 28 7/8 in. (91.4 x 73.3 cm)
Gift of William Church Osborn, 1902 (02.7.1)

One of the earliest portrayals in America of a street vendor, this picture was probably painted by the artist as an exhibition piece to display his talents as a portrait and flower painter.

employed in Europe, caused more sitters to call, especially women, who looked to him for the transformative powers of paint. His exquisite picture *The Flower Girl* (fig. 38), which he executed for a show at the National Academy of Design in 1847, advertised his talents as a colorist and as a mastermind of creative portrayal. His subject is a street vendor who offers rare blooms, unavailable on the streets of New York. In her right hand she holds a potted fuchsia, a gesture emblematic of the goddess Flora, who gave Juno the flower that enabled her to conceive Mars. The gesture begs inquiry into just what it is that the girl is selling. In the tradition of portraitlike images of street vendors, such a direct and erotic appeal is not uncommon, and yet through Ingham's careful brush the idea is strikingly provocative.

At midcentury the competition between portrait painters and photographers remained rooted in a search for a desirable appearance. Portraiture was still based on truth, but it was now complicated by the mighty forces of technology and commerce that drastically altered concepts of pictorial accuracy. One wonders if the great photographer Mathew B. Brady (1823–1896), captured on canvas by Charles Loring Elliott (1812–1868, fig. 39) did not also record a wet-plate image of the painter. Elliott was heading toward the end of his career, while Brady had his greatest triumphs ahead of him. The former's image of the latter eschews most of the bright coloring and soft modeling that characterized his practice for the previous twenty years. Here, a flash of light in the center of Brady's forehead, a monochrome palette, and extreme crispness of detail in the photographer's bespectacled and serious face acknowledged the new look of portraiture, at least for a time. Soon the two media would exist side by side, satisfying different purposes and different desires as complex as human beings themselves.

39. Charles Loring Elliott (1812–1868)
Mathew B. Brady, 1857
Oil on canvas, 24 x 20 in. (61 x 50.8 cm)
Gift of the Friends of Mathew Brady, 1896
(96.240)

Brady loaned this portrait to an exhibition of works by American artists at the Metropolitan in 1895. He died soon thereafter, and a group of his friends purchased it for the Museum.

NOTES

p. 11 "white hand, and long fingers" Carl Bridenbaugh, ed., *Gentleman's Progress: The Itinerarium of Dr. Alexander Hamilton, 1774* (1948), p. 102.

p. 30 "appalling to the painter" William T. Whitley, *Gilbert Stuart* (1932), p. 98.

p. 38 "making faces" quoted in William Dunlap, *History of the Rise and Progress of the Arts of Design,* vol. 1 (1834), pp. 189–90.

p. 45 "gentle manner of Queen Victoria" Thomas Sully's Journal, entry for March 22, 1838 (Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia).

p. 46 "you require, Mr. Sully?" Sully's Journal, entry for March 22, 1838.

SUGGESTED READING

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Opposite: Detail, MATTHEW PRATT, *The American School* (see fig. 13)
Back cover: Detail, SAMUEL F. B. MORSE, *De Witt Clinton* (see fig. 35)

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