The Edgar P. Richardson Symposium: Gilbert Stuart

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16 April 2005 • 11:00 am–5:00 pm
East Building, Auditorium

Named in honor of Edgar P. Richardson (1902–1985), this symposium pays tribute to Mr. Richardson’s significant contributions to the field of American art. During his career, he distinguished himself as a scholar, as a director of both the Detroit Institute of Art and the H. F. du Pont Winterthur Museum, as a co-founder of the Archives of American Art, as a president and board member of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, and as a commissioner of the Smithsonian’s National Portrait Gallery from 1966 until 1979.

Mr. Richardson invigorated the study of American art through exhibitions and such publications as his Painting in America: The Story of Four Hundred Fifty Years (1956), and also by giving other scholars the tools to follow in his footsteps. Above all, he sought to inspire, arguing, “The serious, critical study of American art is required…to enable us to understand ourselves as a people.”

The Edgar P. Richardson Symposium was established at the National Portrait Gallery with the generous support of Mr. Richardson’s longtime friend and fellow former National Portrait Gallery commissioner, Mr. Robert L. McNeil Jr.

The symposium is jointly organized by the National Portrait Gallery and the National Gallery of Art.

This program is free and open to the public. Seating is available on a first-come, first-served basis. The East Building of the National Gallery of Art is located at Fourth Street and Constitution Avenue NW, Washington.

Morning session
11:00 am
The Politics of Portraiture
Chair: Ellen G. Miles, curator of painting and sculpture, National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution
Stuart and the London Art World of the 1780s
Alex Kidson, curator of British art, Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool
Who Are All These People?
Society and Leadership in Gilbert Stuart’s World
Joanne B. Freeman, professor of history, Yale University
Original Copies: Gilbert Stuart’s Companion Portraits of Thomas Jefferson and James Madison
Linda J. Docherty, associate professor of art history, Bowdoin College
Break
12:45–2:00 pm

Afternoon session
2:00 pm
The Cultural Context
Chair: Carrie Rebora Barratt, curator of American paintings and sculpture, The Metropolitan Museum of Art
A Lecture on Heads, or Stuart and Physiognomy
Wendy Bellion, assistant professor, department of art history, University of Delaware
Gilbert Stuart’s Wit
Susan Rather, associate professor of art history, department of art and art history, University of Texas
My Pencil is Bolder than Yours: Gilbert Stuart, the Poets, and the Question of Representational Power
David S. Shields, editor, Early American Literature and McClintock Professor of Southern Letters, University of South Carolina
Panel discussion to follow with speakers and William Pressly, professor of art history, University of Maryland and Damie Stillman, John W. Shirley Professor Emeritus of Art History, University of Delaware.

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