

Arts review: Part C

Virtual Tour

MIRROR MIRROR

Self-portraits by women artists



The art show I chose to review took place at the National Portrait Gallery. I attended the virtual tour showing self portraits of women on the 15th January 2021. The virtual tour allowed you to view an array of female self portraits as well as the relevant descriptors. I have visited a few art galleries in the past including the Tate modern, the national gallery and the national portrait gallery. The most similar show I have been to, related to the viewing I most recently chose, was the 2015 exhibition of Audrey Hepburn, again at the National Portrait Gallery. This showing had no self portraits however there were portraits and the focus on one woman is similar to the focus of this current shows on self-portraits of women.

On the national portrait gallery website there was a variety of shows to choose from however, I opted for this gallery as throughout my own learning journey I drew my own features and so I felt the self portrait theme would be both interesting and of relevance to my Arts challenge.

I really enjoyed how the variety in presentation for self portraits shown. For example, there were many traditional oil painting styled portraits, however, there were also other styles including photographs. A particular portrait that caught my eye was that of Ithell Colquhoun, this is because it stood out in the gallery as one of the only ink portraits. In my Arts Challenge it was very similar to the style of Schiele. Another portrait I particularly enjoyed was that of Maggi Hambling as her portrait, unlike the others, incorporated much more than just herself. There appears to be animals and tea sets. I also liked how

Virtual exhibition tour

Instructions:-

- click on image to view portrait at larger scale
 - click on caption next to portrait in order to read it
 - click on continue or go back buttons to proceed through the exhibition
 - not all portraits can be displayed due to copyright restrictions
- go back | [continue tour](#)

Ithell Colquhoun

1 portrait matching '6486'



Mirror Mirror - Portrait 2

MIRROR MIRROR

Self-portraits by women artists

Angelica Kauffmann (1741-1807)
c.1770-5
Oil on canvas, 737 x 610mm (29 x 24")
National Portrait Gallery, London (NPG 430)

Angelica Kauffmann was born in Switzerland. She was equally talented as a musician and as an artist. Her mother died when she was sixteen and her father (also an artist) taught her and travelled with her to Italy, where she was permitted to copy paintings in a private room in the Uffizi. In her book *The Obstacle Race: The fortunes of women painters and their work* (1979) Germaine Greer called her a 'marvellous hybrid: free from the overwhelming influence of any single master'.

In 1762 Kauffmann was accepted as a member of the Accademia del Disegno, Florence, and in 1763 she went to Rome, where she became friends with the German historian and art critic Johann Winckelmann (1717-68), making her name with her portrait of him in 1764. She came to London in 1766 and two years later became a founder member of the Royal Academy of Arts (the only other female member was Mary Moser). Kauffmann painted Sir Joshua

explanations to give hindsight to all of the portraits.

the
viewing
had text

Something that I did not enjoy as much in the showing was that some of the text with the portraits, although helpful, was very long and I felt did not add so much to the gallery. However, that may be just personal preference.

I would recommend the "Mirror Mirror" virtual gallery as it offers a very similar experience to what you would get from physically attending the national portrait gallery. Especially in times of COVID-19 when everything is shut, it is an extremely good option if you are looking to attend an art show. The only potential downfall is that some portraits can not be displayed online for copyright reasons and so compared to seeing the show physically, you may miss out on some art pieces. However, it is no more than 2-4 pieces that are like this and so you do not miss much.

From this Arts show I learnt that a self portrait is not always necessarily just an image you create of yourself in pencil or paint etc. It can be done with other mediums for example, photography and ink. I also learnt that a self portrait does not only have to be your face, but it can also include things you like and so it may be better to think of a self portrait as a reflection of yourself. Most importantly, I would say that this arts' show, showed the importance in creating art for yourself. Throughout completing my arts challenge I thought that the best work I could produce would be the work most realistic, which is true to a extent. However, in 'Mirror Mirror' I saw that you can create art in your own form and have it be just as good and end up in amazing galleries like this National Portrait one.