

AGE OF ENLIGHTENMENT



1

John Nost Sartorius (1759–1828)

England

***Captain O'Kelly's 'Eclipse'* 1780**

oil on canvas
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, gift of Moss Davis, 1933

The undefeated racehorse Eclipse (1764–1789) was the subject of many sporting portraits. Although admired for his powerful physique, the chestnut stallion was famously temperamental, and his jockey Jack Oakley was respected for his ability to handle the bad-tempered winner. Oakley appears sanguine, in a scarlet jacket, black felt cap with a soft brim, buckskin breeches, cuffs and neckcloth and black 'highlow' boots.

2

Thomas Gainsborough (1727–1788)

England

***George Lavington, Bishop of Exeter (1684–1762)* circa 1760**

oil on canvas
Mackelvie Trust Collection
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, purchased 1960

Clothing became a more expressive component in Thomas Gainsborough's portraits after he settled in Bath in 1759. Although famously amiable, George Lavington, chaplain to King George I, was a formidable foe to Methodists and Catholics. The severe style of his Anglican episcopal garb, which harks back to the 16th century, is tempered by its freely painted diaphanous quality and the delicate bows at his wrists.

3

Thomas Gainsborough (1727–1788)

England

***Portrait of John Sparrowe Esq (1690–1762)* 1755–58**

oil on canvas
Mackelvie Trust Collection
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, purchased 1956
Conserved 2017

Thomas Gainsborough was immersed in the world of fashion: born in the wool town of Sudbury, Suffolk, to a weaver, he later lived in the stylish town of Bath, painting society portraits that are valued today by fashion historians. This portrait shows the bailiff John Sparrowe at his desk, wearing an understated grey wool frock coat and breeches with white linen. The green velvet cloth on the wall may reference Sparrowe's illustrious namesake Sir John Sparrowe, who was 'Knight of the Green Cloth' in the reign of James II (1685–88).

4

Attributed to John R Smith (1751–1812)

England

***Portrait of Mr John Fowler (circa 1739–1806)* 1770s**

oil on canvas
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, gift of Mr Timothy Hughes, 1998

Attired in sober black and white but in garments of the finest quality, the restrained opulence in these portraits of Mr and Mrs Fowler (see 4) may reflect the forced suppression of their identities for much of their lives. Members of the Catholic faith, then outlawed in England, it was not until the 1770s that the couple could legally enjoy certain freedoms, on condition of discretion. Eventually they were able to own property, send their children to Catholic education, and be buried in a Catholic plot.

5

Attributed to John R Smith (1752–1812)

England

***Portrait of Mrs Martha Fowler (1743–1817)* 1770s**

oil on canvas
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, gift of Mr Timothy Hughes, 1998

Of Dutch Catholic descent, Martha Fowler née Haslin inherited a fortune from her brother John Haslin, an enslaver and wealthy plantation owner in the West Indies. Mrs Fowler in turn passed her legacy to her surviving children. Her older son, Dr Richard Fowler (1765–1863), became a pioneer in mental health care, a champion of progressive causes and founder of the Salisbury Museum.

6

Joseph Nollekens the Elder (1702–1748)

Flanders

***At the Fair* circa 1735**

oil on copper
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, purchased 2003

From the 1720s the delightful grounds of Wanstead Manor in Essex hosted an annual fair, with acrobatics, puppet plays, art stalls, ribbons, toys and confectionary. Flemish genre painter Josef Frans Nollekens lived in London, where, despite his documented fears of being unmasked as a Catholic, he popularised the *fête champêtre*, or country party scene associated with his famous Flemish colleague Antoine Watteau (1684–1721), which glorified elegant social elites at leisure in rural settings.

7

William Hodges (1744–1797)

England, New Zealand, India

***Landscape* 1780s**

oil on panel
Mackelvie Trust Collection
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki

Trained first as a painter of theatrical sets and later of landscape scenes, William Hodges made his name travelling with Captain Cook on his second voyage to the South Pacific (1772–75), but he also travelled to India and Russia. Hodges perceived the people and scenery he encountered through the Neoclassical lens of his time, sometimes with generic results: thought to be a view in India, this landscape could easily be in Italy.

8

Julius Ibbetson (1759–1817)

England

***A Rustic Scene with Sheep and Shepherds* 1800s–10s**

oil on canvas
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, gift of Mrs A M MacNeill, 1962

Wool production grew into a huge industry in medieval Britain and textiles continued to be the backbone of British wealth for centuries, particularly in the north of England. In this idyllic scene, painted by Yorkshire artist Julius Ibbetson during a visit to the nearby Lake District, rustic figures nonchalantly herd a small troupe of sheep along a rural track, a nostalgic vision which harks back to an era before modern textile mills and controversial foreign wool imports.

9

Allan Ramsay (1713–1784)

Scotland

***Portrait of a Man* circa 1750**

oil on canvas
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, purchased with assistance from the Friends of the Auckland Art Gallery, 1976

This suave portrait depicting a youth on the threshold of adulthood is an unostentatious example of Allan Ramsay's Italian and French-influenced style from his early London period. The Scottish painter's skill at informal naturalism is evident in the uniform smoothness of surface, its adroit use of highlights to suggest sheen and the subtle tinctures of the subject's flesh.

10

Circle of Louis Ferdinand Elle the Elder (1612–1689) and Younger (1648–1717)

France

***Court Portrait of a Lady* circa 1675**

oil on canvas
Mackelvie Trust Collection
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, purchased 2018

The high costs of fashion at the French court of Louis XIV propelled efforts to develop a national lace industry in the 1660s, the fruits of which can be seen in the Alençon lace trimming this low-cut gown. The woman's identity has long been a mystery, but it could be the 'first lady' of the French court, the Marquise of Montespan, Françoise-Athénaïs de Rochechouart de Mortemart (1640–1707). A contemporary of Louise de Kérouaille (see 12), Madame de Montespan was the celebrated mistress of King Louis XIV, with whom she had seven children. She is remembered in fashion history for introducing a looser style of gown at court for her frequent pregnancies.

AGE OF ENLIGHTENMENT



11

Joseph Wright of Derby (1734–1797)

England

Portrait of the Hon Mrs Charlotte Boyle-Walsingham (1738–1790) circa 1762

oil on canvas
Mackelvie Trust Collection
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, purchased 1956

Painted when Joseph Wright was still a relative nobody, this exquisite portrait has long been recognised as a tour de force of observation. The daughter of a wealthy Welsh parliamentarian, in 1759 Charlotte Boyle married the Hon Captain Robert Boyle MP (1736–1780) and quickly became part of a glittering circle of 18th-century talents, including the novelist Fanny Burney (1753–1840), who noted Charlotte's 'genius and fondness for painting'. Blighted by tragedy, Charlotte lost her sister, father, husband and son early, leaving her independently rich before her premature death at age 52.

12

Henri Gascard (1635–1701)

France, England, Italy

Louise de Kérouaille, Duchess of Portsmouth (1649–1734) circa 1670

oil on canvas
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, gifted in memory of Mr and Mrs Joseph James Craig of Auckland by their children, 1952

Louise de Kérouaille's portrait in French court attire marks her arrival in England as lady-in-waiting to Queen Catherine. Her iridescent bodice and skirt is brocade lamé – silk woven with metallic threads. Lace was one of the most sought-after fabrics in this period, and the *gros point de Venise* lace on Louise's dress was extremely expensive, probably paid for by King Louis XIV. Wearing tasselled earrings and necklace, her beloved King Charles spaniel is shown in the latest Italian trends.

13

Unknown artist

France

Head of a Boy 1760–85

oil on canvas
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, gift of Cécile Kruyfhoof, Belgium, 2023

This enchanting painting of a pink-cheeked child wearing a frilled white collar and loose-fitting velvet jacket is not a specific portrait, but represents an ideal of childhood which developed in 18th-century France. The 1762 novel *Émile; or On Education* by philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778) revolutionised thinking about early childhood development, advocating for children to spend their formative years living close to nature, away from the corrupting and restraining effects of society.

14

René-Louis Chrétien (1867–1945)

France

Le Gibier 1930s

oil on canvas
Mackelvie Trust Collection
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki

A handful of gleaming onions and a freshly killed rabbit await the attentions of an unseen cook, arranged beside the glazed ceramic *marmite* in which they will be stewed. French nostalgia for rustic still lifes by Jean-Baptiste Chardin (1699–1779) peaked during times of crisis and dearth. Relying on the unifying appeal of the French culinary tradition, René-Louis Chrétien painted numerous pastiches of Chardin's work like this when France was under threat from Germany.

15

Jacopo Amigoni (circa 1682–1752)

Italy

Bacchanals I 1730s

oil on canvas
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, gift of Sir George Grey, 1887

Originally from Naples, the Rococo painter Jacopo Amigoni produced numerous sets of decorative pictures for grand houses across Europe, catering to the 18th century's insatiable fascination with antiquity and its reputed hedonism. Mythological subjects, such as this autumnal scene of drunken *putti* participating in the grape harvest, reflected their owners' sophisticated knowledge of the classics – and perhaps also hinted at their decadent fantasies.

16

Jacopo Amigoni (circa 1682–1752)

Italy

Bacchanals II 1730s

oil on canvas
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, gift of Sir George Grey, 1887

The use of garlands – living strands of flowers and foliage – to pay tribute to and beautify people or deities predates jewellery, and can be found across time and cultures. Ephemeral beautiful, they reflect the transience of the seasonal rituals they honour and relate to notions of mortality. In this allegorical scene of Summer, *putti* drape floral swags around a carved herm and a living goat, symbols of rampant fertility.

17

Henry Raeburn (1756–1823)

Scotland

Portrait of David Cowan circa 1823

oil on canvas
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, bequest of the Barbara Coughlan Estate, 2009

Aged about 15, David Cowan assumes the grown-up demeanour appropriate for a formal sitting with Scotland's most eminent portraitist. He wears an adult suit with cravat, standing collar and most likely a tailcoat. At this age he may well have been on the brink of entering a Scottish university, which at this time accepted students from the age of 15 and imposed no entrance exams.

18

Henry Raeburn (1756–1823)

Scotland

Portrait of General Henry Wynyard (1761–1838) circa 1812

oil on canvas
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, bequest of John Lawford, 2023 Conserved 2023

Probably commissioned to mark Henry Wynyard's promotion to the exalted rank of Commander-in-Chief, Scotland in July 1812, this portrait shows the celebrated veteran of the French Revolutionary Wars resplendent in a scarlet tunic, trimmed with the gilded cords worn by officers to distinguish special and senior appointments. Henry Raeburn's brush renders these details in a cursory, almost abstract manner, allowing the strong lighting to dramatise the 'bling' of the Regency military regalia.

19

Henry Raeburn (1756–1823)

Scotland

Master James Hay 1790–96

oil on canvas
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, purchased 1974

James Hay's father was George Hay, of the banking firm Hunter and Hay of Madras. This superb portrait shows the freshness for which Henry Raeburn, who always worked directly from life, was renowned. Hay's clothing reflects Enlightenment ideas about child development. His ruffled collar suggests he is graduating from the soft 'skeleton suit' worn by boys to a style more closely resembling menswear, which still allows freedom to play.

20

Michael Dahl (1659–1743)

Sweden, England

King George I (1660–1727) circa 1714

oil on canvas
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, gift of His Excellency the Governor General, Sir Willoughby Norrie, 1957

To prevent a Catholic succession upon the death of Queen Anne in 1714, the German soldier-prince George Louis of Hanover was made king of England. Michael Dahl, who was Swedish and Catholic, struggled to gain the new monarch's trust. Dahl nevertheless painted him several times, in soldier guise. In this version, George wears a cuirass with the blue sash of the Most Noble Order of the Garter, partially covered by an ermine-lined blue robe.

21

William Beechey (1753–1839)

England

Miss Windham (1812–1888) 1828

oil on canvas
Auckland Art Gallery Toi o Tāmaki, purchased with assistance from the Friends of the Auckland Art Gallery, 1976

At ease in a rocky cave setting, the recently engaged Miss Maria Christina Windham appears as a dreamy figure of mystery and inspiration. A feminine equivalent of the Byronic ideal of the wild Romantic, her raven curls are puckish, her velvet coat dangerously undone and her flimsy white muslin gown unstructured, revealing an informally raised knee.