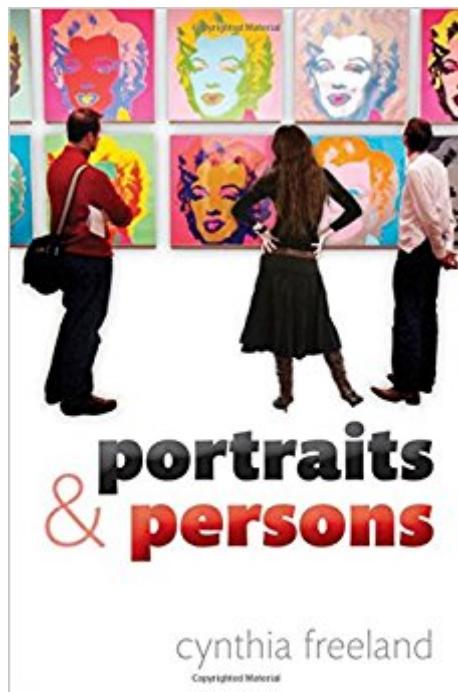


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Portraits And Persons



Synopsis

In *Portraits and Persons*, one of our leading philosophers of art illuminates the fascinating and fundamental questions posed by this enduring art form. Cynthia Freeland's discussion is remarkably free-wheeling. For example, in considering the simple question of whether one can have a portrait of an animal, she ranges from Descartes and Darwin to William Wegman's "May Ray" and David Hockney's dachshunds, and she sheds light on such issues as whether or not animals possess soul, mind, or individuality of character. Indeed, throughout the book, Freeland addresses a whole host of fascinating philosophical problems posed by the art of portraiture. How exactly have artists through the ages managed to depict the inner state of the subject being portrayed? Is it in fact possible for an artist to capture someone's individual "air," their unique aura? And how has science been used to help in this quest? Featuring more than fifty halftones, this is an exhilarating philosophical exploration of portraiture that highlights its important contribution to the complex evolving discourse about human nature.

Book Information

Hardcover: 256 pages

Publisher: Oxford University Press; 1 edition (August 13, 2010)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0199234981

ISBN-13: 978-0199234981

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 1 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.6 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.1 out of 5 stars 4 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #121,906 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #21 in Books > Arts & Photography > History & Criticism > Themes > Portraits #23 in Books > Arts & Photography > Painting > Portraits #242 in Books > Textbooks > Humanities > Art History

Customer Reviews

It is an informative and stimulating read. Susie Hodge, Artist Admirably straightforward, cogent, and thought-provoking. It is what good philosophical writing should be. Charles Saumarez Smith, Literary Review

Cynthia Freeland is Professor of Philosophy at the University of Houston, Texas. She has published widely on topics in the philosophy of art and film, including *But is It Art?*

I found this book very interesting, as a portrait photographer. It's more of an intellectual look at the process of portraiture than an artistic look. It was for me a very hard read but I will go back and reread chapters to gain further understanding. It looks at portraits from a very different perspective, and questions what is a portrait, and what makes a image a portrait. It considers DNA scans as portraits as well as old style paintings and photography, if done with certain characteristics.

necessary purchase

The author brings up a lot of philosophical points about what makes a portrait a portrait, and who we are as people, but most of these points depend upon definitions that she makes up herself. For example, she states her definition of a portrait, then uses that to argue what portraits are. Thus coupled with the fact that she basically says that experts in this field missed something important makes her seem arrogant. This book was stale and boring, and being forced to read it for college only made it that much more of a chore to read. Thus book offers a thought process regarding portraits, but if your like me you won't find it all that interesting (and sometimes even obvious)

text book for college

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