



Constable Portraits

Martin Gayford, Anne Lyles

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'I've always thought that it was completely loopy for people to go on about portrait painters, English portrait painters, and not to have Constable among them.' Lucian Freud, 2002 Published to coincide with the first ever exhibition dedicated to Constable's portraits, this book will present new scholarship and argue that many of these unexplored paintings are worthy of close attention, both for their contribution to the history of portraiture and for the insights they bring to a painter of international acclaim. Constable's sitters make up a 'Jane Austen' world, belonging to the middle and upper ranks of early-nineteenth century provincial society: clergymen and their wives, landed gentry and families wealthy from trade. A number of previously unknown works are featured in this delightful book, including family members, close friends and children, as well as commissioned portraits. Collectively, they provide a fascinating insight into the period. This book and exhibition seek to vindicate the view of Lucian Freud that Constable belongs an important tradition of British portraiture, to bring Constable's portraits back to the fore, and give them the critical acclaim that they deserve. Published to accompany the exhibition *Constable Portraits: The Painter and His Circle* at the National Portrait Gallery, London, 5 March - 14 June 2009, and at Compton Verney, Warwickshire, 27 June - 6 September 2009.

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