

Artist & Empire

25 November 2015 – 10 April 2016

Room 4

Power Dressing

Large Print Guide



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4 Power Dressing

Like history painting, grand portraiture promoted Empire by depicting its principal actors. British sitters sat for large, full-length portraits celebrating their roles on the imperial stage, suitably costumed and projecting an aura of power. In many other cultures, the European tradition of elite portraiture was alien, and arrived with colonisation.

Large-scale, formal portraiture was introduced to India when the East India Company's Governor-General in Bengal, Warren Hastings (1732–1818), promoted the exchange of portraits instead of gifts such as robes (khilat) from a ruler's wardrobe, traditionally presented in return for tribute. Visiting painters adapted to the taste of their first Indian sitters, emphasising their dress and court rituals, while white Indophiles signalled Orientalist sympathies and their own status by wearing Indian court costume themselves. Native American costume was presented and worn by British soldiers, diplomats or administrators admitted into kinship with indigenous peoples. Colonised individuals adopted Western clothing, modified it, resisted it, or knowingly played to Western expectations by retaining their own.

Trans-cultural cross-dressing appears in many colonial and imperial portraits, embodying the sitters' careers, travels and interests, and identification or confrontation with other

cultures. Not fashion but self-fashioning, it represents the adaptive, hybrid aspects of its wearer's experiences between homeland, colony and imperial centre.

Work captions and labels
Clockwise from right of wall text

Gilbert Stuart 1755–1828

Thayendanegea (Joseph Brant)

1785

Oil paint on canvas

Thayendanegea, a Mohawk warrior, linguist and diplomat, worked for the British as an interpreter and during the American Revolution led Native Americans serving with the British as part of the Six Nations Confederacy. Visiting London in 1775, he was lionised socially, elected a Freemason and presented at court. After the Revolution, in 1785, he returned, to request compensation for previous assistance. The American-born Stuart painted his portrait that year. Thayendanegea was renowned for varying his costume for a metropolitan audience, sometimes dressing 'Indian', English, or a mixture of the two.

The British Museum, London. X53188

Yousuf Karsh 1908–2002

**John Buchan, Lord Tweedsmuir,
Governor-General of Canada**

1937

Photograph, silver gelatin print on paper

A photograph by Karsh of Buchan as 'Eagle Face, chief of the Blood Indians', wearing a headdress, was illustrated in the latter's autobiography, **Memory Hold the Door**, published after his death in 1940. The headdress displayed nearby was given in recognition for both his support of First Nation cultural traditions and his own work as a writer of popular novels such as **The Thirty-Nine Steps**.

Scottish National Portrait Gallery, Edinburgh. X55223

Showcase

Alfred Dufty 1856–1924

and Francis Herbert Dufty 1846–1910

Ratu Seru Cakobau 1873–6

Photograph, albumen print on paper

In 1874 Fiji became a British colony, with Cakobau its most important chief after the paramount chief, Queen Victoria. Cakobau's Tongan-style barkcloth topped with a white European shirt and a smoked-barkcloth head-wrapper connote his high status. The Dufty brothers were based in Levuka on the east coast of Ovalau.

Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology,
University of Cambridge. X53674

Showcase

Unknown photographer, Fiji

Adi Kuila, Daughter of Cakobau

c.1873–4

Photograph, glass positive film

Members of Cakobau's family and other Fijian aristocrats were depicted in cartes-de-visite and portrait photographs. This image shows Cakobau's daughter Adi Kuila in a combination of tapa (barkcloth) and European dress.

Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology,
University of Cambridge. X53675

Showcase

Julia Margaret Cameron 1815–1879

Déjatch Alámayou, King Theodore's Son

1868

Photograph, albumen print from wet collodion glass
negative

The mournful subject of this portrait is the orphaned son of king Theodore of Abyssinia. Following his father's suicide when the British seized Magdala (in present-day Ethiopia), the prince was brought to England and given an English education. Cameron presents him as an exotic figure hybridised by a European shirt.

Wilson Centre for Photography. X55848

Anonymous Artist

Lieutenant John Caldwell

c.1780

Oil paint on canvas

Caldwell served in the King's Regiment of Foot during and after the American Revolution, when (as he spoke several indigenous languages) he negotiated with Native American allies. In 1780 he attended a 'war council' in the Ohio Valley where he was adopted as an 'elected chief'.

On such occasions, clothing was exchanged, resulting in the outfit Caldwell wears in this portrait, which also records his adoption into the Ojibwa people and naming as 'Apatto' (Runner). Caldwell displayed the portrait at his Irish seat surrounded by his collection of Native American objects, some shown in the picture and still surviving today (Canadian Museum of History, Ottawa).

Private collection. X58406

Augustus John 1878–1961

Colonel T.E. Lawrence

1919

Oil paint on canvas

Tate. Presented by the Duke of Westminster 1920 N03566

The Emir Feisal

1919

Oil paint on canvas

Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. Presented by Mr and Mrs Eric Kennington in accordance with the wishes of Colonel T.E. Lawrence, 1936. X52884

TE Lawrence's identity as 'Lawrence of Arabia' relates to the role he played in driving the Arab revolt in the Hejaz (in present-day Saudi Arabia) during the First World War. Augustus John painted him at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 when Lawrence accompanied the Emir Feisal (shown on the right) as his special aide. Their friendship is expressed through their dress. Both wear a **keffiyeh** (head cloth) held in place by a double **agal** (corded braid). Lawrence admired his portrait, jokingly referring to it as 'the rebellious' or 'wrathful' one, but was deterred from buying it because of the asking price.

Edward Onslow Ford 1852–1901

Major-General Charles George Gordon Riding a Camel

c.1890

Bronze

This bronze statuette represents the Gordon Chatham Memorial commissioned by the Royal Engineers. Gordon was a fine camel rider, hence Onslow Ford's idea of portraying him during his final ride in the Sudanese desert. He wears uniform, medals and an Egyptian fez alluding to his previous posting. A later casting of the full-scale memorial was unveiled in Charing Cross Road and installed in Khartoum. It was returned to England after Sudan's independence in 1956 and now stands in Gordon's School, Woking.

Richard Black, London Medal Company Ltd. X53607

Joshua Reynolds 1723–1792

Captain John Foote

1761–5

Oil paint on canvas

John Foote was a sea captain in the service of the East India Company. In Reynolds's portrait, he wears clothing and fabrics brought from India; an embroidered muslin surcoat (**jama**), sash (**patka**), shawl and turban (**pagri**). All these have survived (York Museums Trust).

York Museums Trust (York Art Gallery). Purchased with the aid of a grant from the Art Fund, 1950. X52649

James Wales 1747–1795

**Madhav Rao Narayan the Maratha Peshwa,
with Nana Fadnavis and Attendants**

1792

Oil paint on canvas

Large-scale, grand manner portraiture was not part of Indian tradition until the East India Company began encouraging its allies and client princes to sit for pictures (at their own expense), as records or to be exchanged as gifts.

This painting was commissioned from Scottish-born James Wales by the Maratha Peshwa, Madhav Rao II, who had signed a treaty with the Company in 1790. The 18-year-old Peshwa appears with his chief minister and court servants. Wales adapted his style to his sitters' preference for detail, focusing on costume and the object-based court protocols that the British had to learn.

Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland

X52789

Carlo Marochetti 1805–1867

Princess Gouramma of Coorg

c.1852–6

Marble, painted in watercolour, gilded

Gouramma was the daughter of the deposed Raja of Coorg. She arrived in England aged ten, and became Queen Victoria's protégée. She was baptised in the chapel of Buckingham Palace, where she lived, which explains the prominent cross around her neck.

The Queen commissioned Marochetti to make this bust shortly after Gouramma's arrival in England. She presented Prince Albert with the sculpture on Christmas Day 1855. Marochetti asked William Henry Millais to paint it in watercolour to make it truer to life.

Lent by Her Majesty The Queen. X52771

Carlo Marochetti 1805–1867

The Maharaja Duleep Singh

c.1850–6

Marble, painted in watercolour, gilded

Duleep Singh was the youngest son of the founder of the Sikh Empire. When the Punjab was annexed in 1849, he was forced to relinquish all claims to the territory for himself and his successors. In return he retained the title of Maharaja and a pension on condition that he remain loyal to the British government. Duleep Singh was separated from his mother, 'anglicised', and moved to England, where Queen Victoria took a special interest in him. She commissioned his bust for Prince Albert, but rejected the tinted version, as Marochetti intended it, finding the sculpture 'entirely spoilt, by being coloured'.

Private collection. X58389

John Singer Sargent 1856–1925

Sir Frank Swettenham

1904

Oil paint on canvas

This portrait was painted at the end of Swettenham's tenure as High Commissioner for the Malay States and Governor of the Straits Settlements (Singapore, Malacca, Dinding and Penang Island). The Straits Association had commissioned a portrait for the colony of Malaya (now at the Singapore History Gallery), and this replica was painted by Sargent for Swettenham himself. It adapts royal portraiture to a colonial subject. Rebecca West commented: 'Sargent's treatment of Swettenham's face... reveals the painter's doubt as to whether the man is quite a gentleman'.

National Portrait Gallery, London. X25292

James Sant 1820–1916

Captain Colin Mackenzie

c.1842

Oil paint on canvas

Mackenzie led the defence of Kabul fort during the first Afghan War (1838–1842). He attended the conference at which the British envoy was killed by the Afghan chief, Muhammad Akbar Khan, and was taken hostage by the latter before being saved by the 'Army of Retribution'. A fine linguist, he earned his captor's trust and was sent on secret missions as his emissary to the British. Mackenzie's Afghan dress was a gift from Akbar Khan himself. He sports it like a prize and a testament to his negotiating skills in Sant's flamboyant portrait.

The Council of the National Army Museum. X19231

Anthony van Dyck 1599–1641

William Feilding, 1st Earl of Denbigh

c.1635–6

Oil paint on canvas

Van Dyck's portrait of William Feilding (c.1582–1643) with an Indian attendant commemorates the trip of the first English nobleman to travel to India and Persia. Feilding visited the court of the Mughal Emperor in 1631, travelling on to Persia in 1632. His return laden with jewels made a lasting impression on his contemporaries, and helped shape the notion of the nabob.

Feilding's opulent dress combines both European and Oriental elements. He is wearing Indian rose silk **pajamas** (trousers) and **kurta** (loose tunic), but the latter is akin to a doublet. His shoes and shirt are Western.

The National Gallery, London.

Presented by Count Antoine Seilern, 1945. X25313

Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger 1561/2–1636

Captain Thomas Lee

1594

Oil paint on canvas

Thomas Lee served in the English colonial forces in Ireland. His bare legs evoke the dress of an Irish foot soldier, while his costume highlights his privileged origins. The portrait was painted in London during a trip Thomas Lee made in an attempt to be endorsed as chief negotiator with the Irish. As a childhood friend of the rebellious Hugh O'Neill, Lee had been the key mediator between him and the official commissioners. The picture which claims Thomas's allegiance to Elizabeth I, was commissioned by his relation Sir Henry Lee, one of the Queen's favourites.

Tate. Purchased with assistance from the Friends of the Tate Gallery, the Art Fund and the Pilgrim Trust 1980. T03028

After R Hotz dates unknown

Maharaja Pratap Singh Bah Ju Deo of Orchha

c.1925

Photograph overlaid with pigment on paper

Photography was taken up enthusiastically in India, especially for portraiture. This example borrows from Western grand manner portraiture while drawing on the Indian tradition of miniature painting. It shows the Maharaja of Orchha wearing the British Order of the Star of India and a turban embellished with feathers. The photograph has been enlarged and overlaid with paint, and the Maharaja's beard exaggerated.

Yves Cywie Collection. X56045

Showcase

Kainaiwa Artist

War Bonnet

c.1936

Eagle feathers, cloth and glass

Kainaiwa leader, Shot-on-both-Sides, presented this headdress to John Buchan. See Karsh's photograph nearby.

Russell-Cotes Art Gallery and Museum, Bournemouth.
X52601

Restored with the help of donations from Hon Edward Buchan and other descendants of John Buchan, Lord Tweedsmuir, and members of the John Buchan Society.