

a guided tour
of Pollock House
by Shauna McMullan

**I GLADLY
STRAINED
MY EYES TO
FOLLOW
YOU**

— Entrance Hall

UNKNOWN LADY

dates unknown

Karen Cornfield, House Manager, Pollok House

Is that a fly on her nose?
It's not meant to be there.
There's meant to be a story,
The person behind the face.

This portrait of a woman was painted by a man.
We know about him, not about her.

"He had a name and was born on a date. He came from a country and was born in a place. He painted things that were typical of the time. He went to a city and another country. His work is exhibited among the work of other men. His most famous work is a painting."

(But, not this one.)

When was she born and where did she live?
Where did she travel and what did she see?
Where can we see her life's work?
What was her passion?
What did she love?

Separated from her story,
Captured in a frame,
Hung upon a wall,
To be remembered without a name.

— Silver Corridor

ANNE MARIE CHARLOTTE CORDAY

1768 – 1793

Dr. Sarah Tripp, artist

Moods did not settle upon her face. When I arrived (when I first saw her) this was the case – no mood. The mood was aloft, light, hovering: undecided! What I felt (I think) was a mood that was anxious; the mood itself was ill at ease and could not touch her (these) features. Why? Moods latch on in a moment of vulnerability and her face (this face) was defended by a remote power. Anne Marie Charlotte – daughter of a blacksmith, Ha! She looked nothing like her mother, Ha! She was a Solicitor, a Family Mediator, a Diplomat, Ha! And, in the end an Orator. Anne Marie Charlotte was to be approached slant: she was a great listener, the first good listener. A speaker too, holding

— The Landing

UNKNOWN

dates unknown

Kate Davis, artist

Untitled
Unasked
Unspoken
Unkempt
Unaccustomed
Unseen
Unsteady
Unnecessary
Unwilling
Unemployed
Unwise
Undressed
Ungovernable
Unsound
Unhealthy
Unflappable
Unlucky
Unmarked
Unpretentious
Unsightly
Unprincipled
Unable
Unnatural
Unwritten
Unbending
Unreasonable
Unsettled
Unstable
Unaware
Uncommunicative
Unwholesome
Unsaid
Untapped
Unbecoming
Unarmed
Untold
Unattached
Unwell
Unstuck
Unashamed
Unknown

the curiosity of an audience, their attention clung to her exceptional kindness. Heavens! I loved her voice. She was not to be painted any other way. This slim likeness was all she allowed. Imagine her as courage; imagine her as grim austerity before foolish affection; imagine her as Adrienne Rich; imagine her as Elvira Shatayev. Her ear is lovely, don't you think? See her coy profile forever and ever. Her power never fades. Sit up! She enters your room. She is sober, she is reckless, her moral purpose is neither transparent nor received. Heavens! She turns my cheek red. Anne Marie Charlotte's head is the size and weight of a wonderful book. Her brow is a lake. I learn her facial gestures off by heart. Don't turn away, don't turn towards. Her lashes are even more sensuous than her mouth. Her chin is even more tender than her nape. I am always at 90 degrees to her. This is how we think our thoughts together, her ideas always analytical and slant, mine always aspiring. She is a fact of my intelligence. Ripples of excitement fan around her language. Perhaps she is my future. Yours in reverie.

— *Silver Corridor*

CAROLINE NORTON

1808 – 1877

*Jennie MacLeod, Pollok House volunteer,
retired head teacher*

Your face portrays a calm, peaceful, typical society lady, a hint of European genes, large dark eyes looking with longing into the distance. Is this the look you showed to survive in society?

Yet

You were an abused, battered wife, married at nineteen to a violent, cruel husband. You left him, but could not take your children, or sue, as married ladies did not exist in law then.

You were rejected by your 'friend' Prime Minister Lord Melbourne, who visited you two or three times a week when your husband was not at home. After separation, your husband took Lord Melbourne to court, but again you couldn't defend yourself in law. Although the case was dismissed your reputation never recovered.

Devastated by Lord Melbourne withdrawing his 'friendship' and realising you could not sue for access to your children you wrote to Queen Victoria. She refused your request. (A copy of this letter is in Pollok library).

Ostracised, criticised and mocked by society you became a 'scandalous' woman. You attended all male dinner parties and eventually took influential parliamentary lovers. In 1874 for three months you were the second wife of Sir William Stirling Maxwell, Baronet of Pollok, a loyal and adoring friend of many years.

But

You were a poet, an acclaimed pamphlet writer, an author, and you changed the law for separated wives forever. You professed to believe in the innate superiority of men but fought for justice for mothers.

Appropriately, Sir William inherited the Baroncy through his MOTHER. His GRAND DAUGHTER became the Baronet of Pollok.

Caroline Norton "I SALUTE AND HONOUR YOU", for starting this change with help from your gentlemen friends!!

— *Morning Room*

INFANTA DONA MARIA ANNA

1606 – 1646

Kirsty Leonard, artist

Maria,

What is the history of our correspondence?

What surfaces, what interfaces between us? What punctuations, dispersals, flowings over and through, uniformings and reformings has your face performed in order to become the pixels that spread its lighted likeness onto mine?

Your eyes,
the painter's eyes,
the palette,
the canvas,
the wall,
all of the walls,
the probable shrouded cycles of storage,
the stretches and pulls of oil paint that make cracks,
the photographer's eyes,
the camera's eye,
the computer,
the email,
the screen.

The anti-glare coating on my laptop is eroded in the spot over your eyes; your gaze reaches mine minus one filmy remove.

But in spite of – or because of – this assembly of lenses, I cannot make sense of your face. We do not correspond.

We say that we can read an expression. Perhaps it is a cliché, but I cannot read yours. Or maybe I read too well. When I try, I identify such a proliferation of expressions so as to efface their meanings. Can you feel amusement, sadness, indifference, boredom, anger, scepticism, relief, impatience, pity, tiredness, sympathy, serenity and contempt all at once? Probably. But I still don't know you.

How different is my attempt at decoding the expressions on your face to the labelling of the imagined feelings of an object? Is the impulse to make it signify similar to the heavy-handed gesture that further encumbers the forgotten skeleton of a building with disgruntledness; or a table top, already maligned by work and leaning elbows, with fatigue?

Your face supports nothing; not even its own expressions. For this, I admire you.

ISABELLA DE BOURBON

1602 – 1644

Moyna Flannigan, artist

One tends to be stared at, as one is a Queen. Their Queen. One stares back but at no one in particular. It wouldn't do to engage. The middle distance is preferable. If one appears to be looking one isn't. One is present and absent all at once. That is the desired effect.

Not my idea, mon Dieu. Queens do not have ideas. Ideas are dangerous and can result in exile, being sent to the tower, or quite literally, losing one's head.

One is a symbol. One simply stands and is looked at. They crowd in, get closer and peer. What lovely skin, like porcelain, not a blemish. All the usual clichés. By Jove they would love to find a flaw. Then one would seem like them. One isn't. One is locked away behind a carapace.

They can be unkind. It's not so much the staring but what they say. Not a classic beauty. No. Lips like a red snapper. Well! A Queen has feelings. A Queen

protests! Impossible. They would think their Queen mad. And we know what happens to a mad Queen.

Queen Isabella dreams of cutting loose, of opening the door and letting her true self float in. She is tired of pressing her lips shut. She is not a thing. She is Isabella.

ISABELLA CLARA EUGENIA

1566 – 1633

Laura Edbrook, writer

Late asceticism summoned and set pietistic lines and folds that now cut deep into the stratigraphy of your face. Upturned borders, cavernous brow, principled hollows are detectable traces of now, Isabella, now. A long and perilous life wound you up as a royal, barefooted. A Poor Clare, where simple is sufficient, bliss is within and the frugal is plenty.

Your oblique pupils darken and rest upon suspicion; flesh descends; pursed lips tighten so tight that the corners curl, withholding a misery of renunciation and silence. This depository evidence breaches promise and discloses how new sacramental aspects choke out the Golden Age of peace, progression and patronage that you so admirably advanced. Is this your spiritual transformation?

I see you in the Morning Room, a portrait of stern womanhood set in oil and mundane antiquity. Any real geological identification of emotion or context is crippled by the portrait's nature of singular testimony. What truth is in a viewer's excavation of the self-representation of one real person? The viewer appears indifferent. Me, methodically ruthless, not knowing of what you hoped and feared for or of how you might collapse internally. You, only seeking confirmation, cover your eyes with index finger and thumb and say, "This is not my story".

ANN CHRISTIAN STIRLING-MAXWELL

1871 – 1937

Dr. Fiona Dean, artist / researcher

Blink...
And you might not see me
Soft, pale parchment holds my downward
glance
Focus, fixed.

(Blink)

October 9, 1914. Antwerp, Belgium
Dead
From wounds received in action
Our home
Now
A hospital
In Handel, Hollin and Widor played by me
I will remember you
Aymer
My brother.

(Blink)

April 22, 1930. Azure blue skies
Sun
Rose complexion
An heirloom train of Brussels rose point
lace
A miniature portrait of you
My pearl necklace
Tradition abandoned in the bouquet of deep
pink and white rhododendrons
And posies of primulas, cultivated and
cared for by me
To you
My Anne.

(Blink)

April 5th 1937. Pollok House.
John
Is not here.
Tributes of madonna lily, clove carnations,
mullein, red primrose, anemone, scarlet
lychnis
And sunflower to the women of the Royal
Samaritan Hospital.
Mountain and loch, moor and woodland
Dwell in our gentle voice
That laid strangers to ease
Loneliness now.
I am gone.

This is where 'the days of (wo)man are but
as grass
For (s)he flourisheth as a flower of the field
For as soon as the wind goeth over it
It is gone
And the place thereof shall know it no
more'.*

Blink...
And you might not see me.

*Adapted from Psalm 103. homo quasi herba dies eius
sicut flos agri sic florebit; quia spiritus pertransiit eum
et non subsistet et non cognoscet eum ultra locus eius.

A version of this was described by Gavin Maxwell,
nephew of Ann, in *The House of Elrig* 1965.

MRS SALISBURY

1692–1724

Jenny Brownrigg, curator and writer.

Sarah Pridden or
Priddon, alias Mrs
Salisbury or Sally
Salisbury, (b. Shrewsbury,
d. London.

‘Many are the reports
spread abroad,
celebrating that Piece of
Contradiction, SALLY
SALISBURY.’ [1]

*‘Her Birth,
Parentage,
and earliest
Years.*

*Her first
Elopement
and Re-
turn.*

*She is put
to a Seam-
stress.*

*The Acci-
dent that
made her
run away
from thence.*

*Of her sel-
ling Oran-
ges, about
the Play-
house.*

*The Vul-
gar Report
of
her sel-
ling Pears,
selling
Matches,
contradicted.*

*Falls in
Love with
a Colonel.*

*Follows him
to the
Bath.*

*Where she
dances*

ANN CHRISTIAN STIRLING-MAXWELL

1871 – 1937

Sam Ainsley, artist

Women who read are dangerous, are they not? can you guess from my gentle, solemn, well-bred face what it is that I am reading? Well, you will not guess, for it is Mary Wollstonecraft’s “Vindication of the Rights of Women”. She believed women must be educated equally with the men. The book was published one hundred years ago when she was 33, the same age I am now but she died aged only 38 after giving birth to the woman who wrote Frankenstein, Mary Shelley.

The man painting this portrait does not know what I am reading and hasn’t asked; my husband will not be interested.

I think I also have a book in me, I really do; but even now I have to write in secret. I am not taken seriously as a potential writer, I am even mocked by my family when I try to discuss the ideas that whirl around my mind; there is no encouragement to begin, let alone to continue. I am aware I live a privileged life and I try to hide my frustrations with the boredom, the endless visits, the tea and cakes, I truly do. Does my sadness show? I hope not.

— *Corridor outside Dining Room*

LADY ARABELLA STUART

1575 – 1615

Clara Ursitti, artist

We see her through a mosaic of cracks, imprisoned in a frame, she is so far away.

Listening eyes like blue waters, the depth of the Mariana Trench. Eyes calmed by feeling too much sadness. Confident, penetrating eyes planted on a face too young, hiding a cauldron of emotions. Distant eyes that glisten with a plan, a scheme, if you look closely. One eye is bigger than the other, with perfectly symmetrical eyebrows that echo the shape of the crease in her lids .

A doll’s mouth that will not open to eat, to speak or breathe. Not smiling, but not sad or angry. Just there, existing, not doing much. A hint of a smirk on the side of the face that houses the smaller eye. If you look at it too long it disappears.

Carrot coloured hair that will not be controlled.

for a Smock.

*And there-
by becomes
the Admi-
ration of
the Officer.*

*Sally, for-
saken by
her Lover.*

*Returns
solitary to
London.*

*Stript by
her Mother.*

*Of her be-
coming
the
fair Book-
seller.*

*Her good
Fortune,
with a
Dutch-
Man.*

*She is kept
by the Off-
icer.*

*A Skirmish
for Sally.*

*She is turn'd off
by her Lover.*

*Name
of Salisbury
from her
Love.*

*Of her go-
ing to Mo-
ther Wise-
bourns.*

*Her old
Mother's
Abounded
Charity.*

*Frighted
by a Spirit
call'd Con-
caption.*

*Acquires
the Malady.*

Stylised flames that run out of the frame and transform into a halo.

Rosy cheeks that are constantly blushing, it must be very warm and clammy. The fire is on. Or maybe it is the fire within her. Alabaster skin that betrays her privilege. A privilege she is all too aware of but can't seem to find the courage to change, or perhaps the will. An accordion of ruffles hide the hickey on her neck. A word she heard from friends in the new world.

— *Main Corridor*

ANNE OF AUSTRIA

1549–1580

Dr. Victoria Horne, art historian

The Spanish court painter Alonso Sánchez Coello completed this portrait of Anne of Austria in c.1570, following her marriage to King Philip II of Spain. The subject's aristocratically pale face is particularly striking against the dark, sumptuous fabric of her robes. The face is full and unlined with youthful pink blooms along the cheekbones. Bolstered by an unyielding ruff her face appears soft, nearly translucent. It implies the feminine virtues of serenity and poise. The young Queen gazes out through deep hooded eyes and, although impassive, good humour is suggested in her expression.

Historical records tend to emphasise three things about Anne: her charm, her fecundity, and her skill with a needle. These characteristics were fundamental to an early modern feminine ideal. This was an era in which women's bodies were used as political instruments to preserve and strengthen the power of a European ruling class as it generated vast colonial expansions. In this marriage economy women were considered vessels for producing heirs and consolidating noble alliances. Anne's fertility is thus reinforced through the gestures of the portrait in which her left, un-gloved hand appears to cradle her lower abdomen. While the flawless white pearl dangling from her headpiece symbolises the young woman's purity.

The Habsburgs consolidated their dynasty through intermarriage (Anne's husband, Philip, was also her uncle). Historians now agree that this practice led to serious health issues and the eventual termination of the line. Of Anne and Philip's five children, only one survived until adulthood and succeeded his father as Philip III of Spain.

Goes to
Kensing-
ton.

Acquires
a new Lo-
ver.

Sally's
Adven-
tures with
a young
Russian
Lord, and
how she
serv'd him
at last.

Sally's
Revenge.

Her gen-
tleness.

Sally like
Proteus.

Falls out
with and
leaves her
Patroness.

Her Ad-
venture in
Green-
wich Park.

How she
Serv'd the
Lord C
at New-
Market.

How she
was play'd
upon,
by
Nicolini.

Caught
under a
Bush.

Frequents
Hemp-
sted
Wells.

Mr. B
exhausted
by her.

— *Staircase*

MAIRE THERESA OF AUSTRIA

1638-1683

Laura González, artist

These were other times.

Marie Theresa of Austria was still María Teresa de España, of the House of Habsburg. She is painted by Charles Beaubrun in 1659, the year before she marries her cousin Louis XIV, the Sun King, and becomes Queen of France.

Here, her face shines, white, pink and red before she is eclipsed by a bright star. She had almost no political influence in the French court or government.

These are other times.

Velázquez had already painted her aged 14, a child, but the face here reveals what it is to become a woman in the 17th century. Her eyes are heavy, half shut, as if homing in on you, but softly, with care. She was to have six children, only one of whom would survive into adulthood. She does not know this yet. Her mouth curled upwards, she is already disposed to her duty: to deliver an heir and live in the shadow in order to end a 24-year war.

On the 7th June 1660, shortly after this painting, she will go to the Isle of Pheasants, still a joint Franco-Spanish territory, to be given to her husband. It will be her grandson who becomes King of Spain.

She died painfully on the 30th July 1683, age 44, from an abscess in her arm and none of this can be read in her face. Upon her death, her husband remarked: 'this is the first chagrin which she has given me.'

— *Family room*

LADY ANNE MAXWELL MACDONALD

1906 - 2011

Adele Patrick

I was around the age you are when I made a startling discovery. In all my looking over the decades at the pantheon of landed women caught by art history (where wealth is frequently marked by the depiction of attentive servants or enslaved people) I had never identified with 'The Duchess', always her subjects.

*Her Kind-
ness to him
since.*

*Generously
treated by
the noble.*

*Her Be-
haviour to
her Bene-
factor.*

*Her Assu-
rance is
her Assi-
Stance.*

*She allures a
noble
Youth.*

*Clouds ri-
sing about
her.*

*Her la-
mentable
Downfall.' [2]*

*'But, like a' Comet, her
blaze was Bright, but of
no continuance; Scare had
she appear'd like the Sun;
before she disappears like a
Meteor...' [3]*

Footnotes:
[1] p.3, *Authentic Memoirs
of the Life, Intrigues
and Adventures of the
Celebrated Sally Salisbury*,
1723, by Capt. Charles
Walker.

[2] *Comments from
the side margins, 'The
Genuine History of Mrs
Sarah Prydden, Usually
Called, Sally Salisbury, and
Her Gallants. Regularly
Containing, the real
Story of her Life', printed
for Andrew Moor, 1723.
Reproduction from British
Library, Gale ECCO Print
Editions.*

[3] P41, *Ibid.*

How might it feel to be entitled, to stare out into the room, into the world with consummate self-possession? Approximating manhood?

You are not waited on here or adorned with jewels or the forms of 'feminine excess' that on the poor are still so pathologically loathed, so how can I read off your own strident inheritance of patrilineal conviction? I can hear your voice, read the letter you are penning. Is it the skin, the hooded eyes, the hairline, the teeth, that semaphore gun rooms, servants quarters, bell pulls, a retinue of 50 to service a family? Your interpolating gaze evokes paradoxical feelings.

Yours after all is a woman's name nestled amongst the Sirs, Field Marshalls, Viscounts, Major Generals and Earls, one of the 6 women amongst the regiment of 140 men given the Freedom of the City. A rare, garlanded woman acknowledged by the City Fathers and now by women searching for heroines hidden from history.

You evince an elusive unorthodoxy, caught in the act of decisive and yet casual largesse, giving a gift; to imagine this house, vista, walled garden as our own. Your mouth enunciates: To give land means to have owned land.

— *Music room*

SAINT RUFINA

270–287 AD

Elaine Ang, artist

it was snowing heavily and you asked if i wanted to go for a walk in the park. when we got there, you threw your face in the snow. long enough for it to hurt. the skin on your face becomes blotchy and red. i breathed air on your cheeks like they were cold window panes. i relate to you like everything from this weather. the cold, a necessary climate for me to stay angry and hopeful. it is a fidelity, long enough to hurt. i've long been intrigued by the plant, honesty *lunaria annua*. it's not just simply honesty but an aristocratic honesty. its foliage makes it indistinguishable from a commoner in its first year but only when it flowers, does it show its true colours and noble lineage. they are pretty much indistinguishable, but from her mole, we know Avril Lavigne's been replaced by her body-double, Melissa. it's a difficult thing to know but when you lie, there are some essential facial expressions that give it away. the fact you rub piles cream under your eyes tells me we can fix this. you say when this bloody weather gets better, let's get ourselves out to

that party at that undisclosed location. i can trust you to have a good time. it's an intoxicating atmosphere and our faces move closer and closer together. your stubble will scrape off the soft face of the person you want to get close to. but by rubbing sandpaper to your own face, the prickly edges will get rounded down. sitting at a round table is better than a square. Saint Rufina will give her life, to throw down an image of Venus. hardly did she know, that it was hers. i'm trying to remember the way I looked when i'm living the best time of my life. and the only way to know is to read my horoscope. it says *the friend you had as a child will come back into your life. not the actual friend but as a subtle reminder of a song.* her music's changed but the way they are demanding consistency from her and the way i am demanding consistency from you is unsustainable. we have all been pigeonholed in such a way that any projection otherwise cannot be true. and the only way to come to the truth is to take a stab at the infinite space held apart by the face of Dorian Gray. prosopagnosia, is a condition of face blindness, where the ability to recognize even one's own face becomes impaired. Rufina will split the Red Sea and walk into this party. her face brushes along my cheek as she crosses the dancefloor, to the console and plays a song. my face feels red hot when I hear it. sk8er boi is blasting through the speakers. she said Jesus had told her to do it. the people are ecstatic, and it soon gets chaotic. our bodies move closer and closer together. we make eye contact. long enough for me to forget my name.

— *Print room*

LADY ANNA MARIA STIRLING MAXWELL

1826 – 1874

Shauna McMullan, artist

Your dress caught in the fire. It was the 21st Nov. 1874, one hundred and forty- four years ago.

How are you surrounded, by whom and by what?
Circles and lines, some seen, some not.

It begins with the line of gold that circles your face – a line that traces your eyebrows, upper and lower eyelashes, runs down through your centre parting along the right-hand side of your nose and outlines the sharp edge of your hairline. It's extended slightly with the gold chain sat heavy on your chest and all of this is drawn out by the sheen from your golden hair.

You fell forward and burnt your hand badly.

The gold turns to black in the form of a frame that's tone, weight, scale and craftsmanship vie for our attention, competing with your image.

Your hand had to be amputated.

Situated and fixed as you are here, next to the door, in the print room, between the library and music room, the circles ripple out, connecting you, and this house, with women who have lived and moved across the length and breadth of Europe. I doubt you ever imagined the company you would come to keep? Jeanne came from Paris, Anne Marie from Lignières, Isabella from Fontainebleau and Dona Maria and Marie Theresa both from Madrid. There's Elizabeth from Glasgow, Anne from Edinburgh and Anna Maria from Monimail in Fife. Sally from Shrewsbury, Arabella from Hackney and Caroline from London. Rufina came from Seville and Anne from Cigales, not forgetting Isabella Clara Eugenia from Segovia.

You died 17 days later on the 8th Dec.

We see neither of your hands here. Both are hidden from our view. As is the small gold circle on your left-hand ring finger, pressing lightly on your vena amoris, ending in a line running directly to your beating heart.

— *Library*

HANNAH ANN STIRLING

1816 – 1843

Stephanie Smith, artist

An unopened book

Who are you, Hannah Ann Stirling?
A framed female head. With written words to define you: Daughter. Sister. Unmarried.

Yet I see:
The sheen on your skin (perspiration?)
Flush on your cheeks,
Shine on the tip of your nose.
Your pinkish white neck and décolleté.
Coiffured curls at odds with your solid, fresh face.
Just after some brisk pursuit, perhaps? - then constrained - by having to be (com)posed?
(Is that a dark blue sky and hill behind you or simply a cold wall and a chair?)

You appear detached, reserved, self-conscious even. But your pensive mood and averted gaze embody a hint of defiance. You won't look. Giving

nothing away. But you do, just. Are you hiding gritted teeth? Silent, but as the poet says, often a silent face has voice and words. I'm looking and I'm listening. What is it you say? "Must I sit?"

Would I have paid you so much notice or given you my time without having been asked to survey your face? Would I have even looked at you at all? There is a connection now though, isn't there? Whether we wanted it or not.

Where you hang seems key. You are here in a library of closed books, caged and shut away. Books that no-one reads.

These books, your face: contained, withheld.

— Silver Corridor

MANON JEANNE ROLAND

1754 – 1793

Siân Reynolds, historian & translator

Framed like a cameo, this portrait shows a young woman in 18th-century dress, with a frilled cap over her curly brown hair. She has perfect, unmarked skin, large eyes, and a serious, rather steadfast expression.

All the signs are that this was painted well after the death of the subject, in the post-Revolutionary years when there was a cult of Madame Roland as a victim of the Terror, who said as she went to the guillotine: 'O Liberty, what crimes are committed in thy name'. The words are entirely in character for this enthusiastic revolutionary, the political wife of a minister, who shared the fate of the Girondins.

The portrait, though, is idealized, and based on no image from her lifetime. As a teenager, Marie-Jeanne (aka Manon) Phlipon described herself as having 'a rather large mouth', a 'voluptuous chin', and a high-coloured complexion. 'My eyes are not big, grey-brown, but they have an open, frank gaze and are crowned with eyebrows as dark as my hair... My nose used to trouble me, I thought it was too big at the end'. She usually wore her brown hair in a jockey-cut with a plait. The most true-to-life surviving image of her is a miniature in the Archives Nationales in Paris, showing her with loose, very dark hair, and wearing a muslin gown. Owned by a man who loved her, it isn't flattering – she does indeed have a wide mouth and a large nose – but it is attractive and romantic.

Our picture is perhaps an early example of the airbrushed celebrity portrait.

— Entrance Hall

ELIZABETH MAXWELL OF KEIR

1793 – 1822

Christine Borland, artist

Her cheeks are like yon crimson gem

In the eighteen hundreds, a quarter of deaths in Scotland were caused by tuberculosis.

Her lips are like yon cherries ripe

Two-fifths of all deaths in Glasgow were due to respiratory diseases.

Her hair is like the curling mist

Other diseases constituting major causes of death were; typhus, scarletina, whooping cough, smallpox and measles.

She's stately like yon youthful ash

Overcrowding was a marked feature of life for the urban poor with twelve to sixteen people to a room not uncommon in the poorer parts of Glasgow.

Her breath is like the fragrant breeze

Sparkling or dilated eyes, rosy cheeks and red lips were common in tuberculosis patients—characteristics caused by frequent low-grade fever.

But it's not her air, her form, her face,

Tho' matching beauty's fabled queen;

'Tis the mind that shines in ev'ry grace,

An' chiefly in her roguish een

Statistical information from the National Records of Scotland, poem extracts from; *The Lass of Cessnock Banks* by Robert Burns, 1780. Robert Burns died, age 37, in 1796. Elizabeth Maxwell of Keir died, age 29, in 1822. After death, depending on the position of the body, as the heart stops beating and blood retreats from the extremities, the face will take on a pale, waxy, bloodless appearance known as Pallor Mortis.

I GLADLY STRAINED MY EYES TO FOLLOW YOU

a guided tour of Pollok House

Scheduled tours: **2pm daily**

20 April - 7 May 2018

Included in the exhibition **CABINET INTERVENTIONS** part of
Glasgow International 2018

Further information: cabinetinterventions.org

I gladly strained my eyes to follow you, takes the form of a guided tour of Pollok House focusing on a selection of portraits of women from the houses' historically significant collection of art and artefacts. McMullan invited writers, artists, academics and Pollok House staff to respond to individual portraits. Their reflections, thoughts, provocations and questions make up the content of this text and tour.

With contributions by Sam Ainsley, Elaine Ang, Christine Borland, Jenny Brownrigg, Karen Cornfield, Kate Davis, Fiona Dean, Laura Edbrook, Moyna Flannigan, Laura González, Victoria Horne, Kirsty Leonard, Jennie MacLeod, Shauna McMullan, Adele Patrick, Siân Reynolds, Stephanie Smith, Sarah Tripp and Clara Ursitti.

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