



Portraits and Persons

By Cynthia Freeland

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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.

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Review

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

About the Author

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?*

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