

Chapter 1 : G.B.S., a full length portrait | Open Library

*G.B.S.: a Full Length Portrait by Hesketh Pearson and a great selection of similar Used, New and Collectible Books available now at [blog.quintoapp.com](http://blog.quintoapp.com)*

I was reminded of this by a compelling exhibition staged earlier this year at the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam. Entitled *High Society*, its subject was the full-length portrait in Western painting, from Lucas Cranach, whose paired portraits of Henry the Pious, Duke of Saxony, and his bride, Catherine of Mecklenburg, painted in 1533, are arguably the first examples of the genre, to Kees van Dongen, whose depiction of Anna, Comtesse Mathieu de Noailles, as a pearl-wreathed wraith standing tall in a darkened room, was created more than four centuries later, in *High Society* at the Rijksmuseum, 8 March-3 June. I love an exhibition that makes me reflect upon works of art I think I am familiar with, that makes me see them in a new way, and *High Society* certainly did that. In fact, it has made me rethink, and in a sense re-see any number of my favourite full-length portraits – and by no means just the ones that the exhibition actually included – by helping me to understand that the tradition they embody does indeed amount to a tellable story within the larger story of art. It is a tale that begins, like so many, with a power struggle: In the Western art tradition, full-length portraiture actually begins not with painting but with sculpture: Think of those great warrior figures, the Riace bronzes, dredged up from the coastal waters of Calabria; think of the Apollo Belvedere. Vatican City, Museo Pio-Clementino. Photo Scala, Florence. Of course, such objects lie well outside the scope of any exhibition devoted to painted full-length portraits, but they are the essential background context to the genre, which first came into existence precisely in order to glorify European rulers and aristocrats: Sculpture is the medium to which many of the early full-length portraits aspired, because sculpture was associated with divinity, power and even a kind of immortality, qualities to which those who commissioned such portraits were implicitly laying claim. Oil on oak panel. Petworth House and Park, West Sussex. The composition is peculiarly airless, occupied by the full-frontal bulk of the monarch, who gazes out at his posterity with steely self-assurance, like a god come down to earth. Holbein has made a king look like a statue, but not just any statue: Henry persuaded Holbein to paint his prospective bride, Christina of Denmark, in full length: He wanted to size her up, and needed to see her life-size to do so. The courtship, unsurprisingly, came to nothing. Such experiments aside, for a century and more the full-length portrait remained the preserve of monarchs and aristocrats keen to assert their power. Titian brought new psychological depth to the genre in his portrayals of Charles V and, later, Philip II, presenting them less as gods than as modern versions of the hero-kings of classical antiquity: One hundred years later, Van Dyck in turn would impart a new theatrical flourish to the full-length in his portraits of Charles I and his court, posing the king and his wife Henrietta Maria beneath swags of windswept drapery that both aggrandise and, with hindsight, peculiarly diminish them: Swathed in what must be at least square metres of fleur-de-lis ermine, the king stands before us, elbow out-thrust, a gesture which, according to deportment manuals of the time, signalled the god-given right of the high-born to elbow their way through any crowd of commoners. The rest of the picture is a maelstrom of silk and damask and tassels of gold, collectively embodying the resurgence of the French textile industry – and, by implication, all French industry – under the reign of the Sun King. All this might make the full-length portrait sound like a rather serious, humourless genre of painting, but in fact the opposite is the case; because, like most theoretically high forms of art, it has been subject to all sorts of subtle parody and distortion over the centuries. When Napoleon commissioned Jacques-Louis David to paint his own full-length portrait, more than years and one rather large revolution after Rigaud had painted Louis XIV, he surely had that earlier image of the Sun King at the forefront of his mind. Whereas Louis is depicted in an imaginary throne room, doing absolutely nothing except look good, David shows Napoleon in his study, working with a nearly inhuman dedication. The candles behind him are guttering. The midnight oil was burned long ago: Napoleon has bags under his eyes. This, the portrait insists, is what leadership looks like, after and all that. The new emperor of a new France might be a Corsican from nowhere, but he has worked his way to the top and he deserves to be there. Being Dutch, and burghers rather than aristocrats, they must have greatly enjoyed taking on the airs and graces of those who had

tried and failed to conquer them. Thrusting their elbows out at those whose elbows they had blunted, dressed in all their finery and lace, standing or sitting at tables that groan with Dutch cheese, beef and fish, they occupy a genre that they know full well had never been meant for the likes of them. But it was their country now and they could do what they liked. They had earned their money, and if they wanted to spend it on paintings that made them look like princes, who was to stop them? Many of my favourite parodies of the grand-manner portrait were created in England during the 18th century. The 17th century marked the beginning of the end of absolutism, a loosening of social bonds that would increasingly be reflected in a widening clientele for the full-length portrait and a growing tendency on the part of artists to treat what had been the great genre of absolutist power with something less than utter respect. The knowing diminution or dilution of the genre proceeded apace in the 18th century, although often in such a way as to make more of people who once like the burghers of Amsterdam a century earlier might never have dreamed of finding themselves depicted in such style. Many of my favourite parodies of the grand-manner portrait were created in England during the 18th century. As the 18th century gave way to the 19th, and European society became more and more permissive, almost anyone with enough money and vanity or pretension might dare to have themselves painted in full length. It was a development that reached its apogee at the turn of the 20th century, by which time the most accomplished painters of full-length portraits the likes of John Singer Sargent, or William Orpen, or Giovanni Boldini might well earn the price of a townhouse in Paris or London by painting a single picture. The more scandal surrounding the sitter, the more publicity the painter would get, and the higher his price next time around. From *High Society* at the Rijksmuseum, 8 March-3 June. Then suddenly, around the time of the First World War, the full-length portrait loses its energy and begins to fade from view. There were a number of reasons for this. For one thing, the carnage of the most appalling conflict in human history made luxury and decadence seem like the last things anyone should be flaunting. For another, the growing strength of avant-garde ideas about what art should be namely, against institutions, against the rich, the nouveau riche and the bourgeois alike; edgy, experimental and independent drove most serious artists away from portraiture altogether. Having exhausted this particular subplot, you might say, the story of art moved on; and so it was that the full-length portrait began to die the slow death that it is still, today, slowly dying. But it was fun, or at least very interesting, while it lasted. Privacy Policy Related feature.

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In Gear , Photo Basics , Portrait by Chris Mazarella July 29, 13 Comments One of the most important things to consider when shooting portraits is selecting a lens with an appropriate focal length. Wide to Normal Focal Lengths mm Wide lenses are typically a bad choice for shooting portraits. This photo was taken with a 24mm lens at f5. Wide angle lenses should only be used for portraits when your space demands it unless you are trying to intentionally produce a distorted effect for artistic purposes. Wide angle lenses can also diminish the potential for pleasing background bokeh because of the ample amount of depth of field they provide. Even though this photo was taken at a relatively fast aperture of f5. The wide angle of view also requires that your background be quite large relative to your subject. The angle of view describes a lenses viewing capacity, while the field of view describes the maximum viewing angle of your complete camera set-up. Throughout this article, keep an eye on how the background and foreground change in each photo as the focal length increases. All camera settings were the same in each shot, as was the exact position of the model in the field. This focal range allows you to step back from your subject giving them the space they need to loosen up and feel more comfortable in front of the camera. This photo was taken at mm with all other settings remaining the same as in the first example. The model is laying in the same spot as before yet the composition has changed dramatically. Using a longer focal length required that I take a few steps back which brought more foreground into the shot. The birch trees are now framing her nicely, and the tree line in the distance has softened, making the model pop out of the scene more. This blurred effect can be particularly useful when trying to mask any unsightly elements in the background. The other obvious improvement here is the compressed features of the model. The narrow angle of view is also responsible for making the trees appear closer to the subject. Not everyone will want to achieve the compressed effect of a telephoto lens. A documentarian for instance may prefer to shoot with a 35mm or 50mm prime lens to give a more realistic depiction of their subject, whereas a fashion photographer will generally opt for the flattering effects that compression has on a model. They require a lot of distance between you and the subject, which can be problematic in the studio but often beneficial in an outdoor setting. In this situation the model is a comfortable fifteen feet from the camera. On a full frame camera, a mm lens will reduce the angle of view down to about This can offer several advantages when shooting portraits. One obvious benefit of a narrower angle of view is that its much easier to find a pleasing backdrop for your shot. Notice how much more background is exposed in the first photoâ€”the 24mm shotâ€”versus the portrait taken at mm. Once again we can see the flattering effect of increased compression which is even more pronounced at mm. While you could reduce the distortion effect of your wide angle lens by stepping back from your subject a bit and cropping the photo in post, zooming in before the shot will spare your pixels. You will also achieve a shallower depth of field with the telephoto lens, creating a pleasing effect to both the foreground and the background. I like to incorporate a blurred foreground in portraits to create an added sense of depth. I was able to do so in this photo by laying in the grass, exposing the dandelions between the camera and subject. Another way to achieve this, is by shooting down a fence line or wall, creating a gradient of sharpness. While the model is in sharp focus in each of these shots, the contrast of soft to sharp focus at longer focal lengths calls more attention to the subject. The surroundings transform to a soft periphery of color, and the focus stays on the model. There are many good options out there for portrait lenses. A more versatile option is a mm f2. This lens works well for shooting both groups and individuals. My personal favorite however is the mm f2. Hopefully these tips and images will help you decide the best lens for your tastes and circumstances. About the Author Chris Mazarella Chris Mazarella is an educated photographer who writes on a couple of his own websites, one of which being ForestForward. While Forest Forward showcases his wildlife and nature photography he also shoots product photography, and weddings.

### Chapter 3 : lighting - How do I light a full length portrait? - Photography Stack Exchange

*G.B.S., a full length portrait by Hesketh Pearson, , Harper edition, in English - 4th ed.*

Published in How To I recently accepted an assignment that involved three long days of portrait shooting. What the client wanted was fairly simple and straightforward: Combine that with a fast-paced shoot full of long days and overtired subjectsâ€“Well, even the simplest tasks can become daunting. I did a test shoot a few days prior to taking my studio on location in order to make sure I could get exactly what I wanted. To begin building a bright white background, I know I will want a lot of distance between subject and background. This allows you to do something I feel is very important: Layers allow you to light the background totally independently from the subject. This is helpful to spot any stray light from the background that might be spilling over onto the subject. Not only does this provide a firm surface on which the subject can stand rather than staining, wrinkling and ripping the paper itself but it also creates a fairly reflective surface that will pick up highlights from the bright background and help keep the floor from becoming too dark. The other reason flags are great is that they also block extraneous background light from reflecting off of the white paper and into the camera. Big black flags help to minimize the chance for flare; I just made my flags do double duty, flagging both the subject and my camera. So, to that end I only used three lightsâ€“two on the background, one for the key. What kind of key light is perfect for flattering subjects, remaining flexible and still showing shape? A large, soft light source, positioned just right. In my case, that was a large Octabank with a white diffusion front, positioned about eight feet from the subject at a degree angle to camera right. A harder source has the tendency to make stronger, darker shadows, and that can make for enhanced skin textureâ€“which brings out wrinkles and lines and blemishes. By positioning the light at 45 degrees it creates enough shadow definition to not only show pleasing shape, but it can also have a bit of a slimming effect. If you need to thin a subject, in general try split lightingâ€“from the sideâ€“to create a pleasing shadow-based optical illusion. I also added a touch of gold via a zip-in panel inside the main light to warm it up just a bit. A little warmth never hurts a portrait. But, just a tiny bit. Too much fill flattens the scene and makes things look boring. Another way to add shape to a subjectâ€“especially a person photographed on a white backgroundâ€“is to position those two black flags on either side of the subject in such a way as to create negative fill. Not all portraits require a smiling, happy, energetic subject, but this assignment did, and that meant I would have to be as much of a performer and entertainer, as photographer. Talk to them, and find a connection. I also needed variety from subject to subject, so I used a bit of a cheat sheet: It also helped to be able to show the subject what we were trying to achieve. Lastly, to be sure that I could capture the perfect moment with each subject, I shot a lot. And then I shot some more. In the end I made hundreds of portraits of each person, in multiple poses and multiple outfits. But one thing remained constant: I removed as many variables as possible, so that I could concentrate on connecting with the subject and capturing a great moment. The background, the lighting and the posing were all designed to remain consistent and professional in order to maximize my chances of repeated portrait success. Leave a Comment You must be logged in to post a comment.

### Chapter 4 : Composition for full-length portraits

*G.B.S., a full length portrait 6 editions. By Hesketh Pearson. Go to the editions section to read or download ebooks. G.B.S., a full length portrait.*

### Chapter 5 : G.B.S., a full length portrait, (Book, ) [blog.quintoapp.com]

*Here is little that is new or fresh. It has all been said before, by Henderson and Harris and by Shaw himself. But as it is actually about three fourths Shaw himself, it is inevitably interesting reading, and Pearson's contribution is a careful, honest, unbiased job. Until the ""grand old boy of.*

### Chapter 6 : Best Focal Length for Portraits | Improve Photography

*Full body portraits involve a lot more work than when you are photographing just the head and the shoulders.. Why? Because when you incorporate the full body in your imagery, you have to focus on posing your model, choosing the right lens, the right camera angle, use more light and spend more time setting things up.*

### Chapter 7 : G.B.S., a full length portrait ( edition) | Open Library

*Composition for full-length portraits - step back! A comment in the article on a simple lighting setup for the family formal photos, asked why I recommended that a photographer should step back rather than zoom wide when photographing a group.*

### Chapter 8 : Assignment Breakdown: Full-Length Portraits - Digital Photo Magazine

*Discovered by Philip Mould, the BBC historian and art dealer, the painting - thought to be the earliest full-length portrait of the Queen - is now going up on display for the first time.*

### Chapter 9 : The changing role of full-length portraits | Christie's

*Full length portraits. A heart free of sadness A mind free of worry A life full of gladness A body free of illness A spirit full of blessings A day filled with Love.*