

# PHILIP MOULD

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## & COMPANY

**PRESS RELEASE October 2013**



## WARTS AND ALL

### The Portrait Miniatures of Samuel Cooper (1609-1672)

A major loan exhibition dedicated to the first internationally celebrated British artist, Samuel Cooper, will go display at the **Philip Mould gallery from 13 November – 7 December 2013 (Preview Tuesday, 12 November)**. Known to his contemporaries as ‘the prince of limners’ or ‘Vandyck in little’.

Lenders to the exhibition include Royal Collection Trust, The Duke of Buccleuch, Castle Howard, Burghley House, The Ashmolean Museum, the Victoria and Albert Museum and the National Portrait Gallery. The exhibition takes its name from the Duke of Buccleuch’s iconic unfinished portrait of Oliver Cromwell, which, for the first time, will be hung alongside Sir Peter Lely’s identical portrait of Cromwell [on loan from Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery]. The death mask of

Oliver Cromwell will also be loaned from Warwick Castle to allow visitors to compare his features to Cooper's *ad vivum* sketch and subsequent portraits. As the exhibition will conclusively show, it is to Cooper that Oliver Cromwell is believed to have made clear his desire to be painted 'warts and all'.

This ambitious exhibition has been curated by Emma Rutherford, portrait miniature specialist to Philip Mould & Co, who has succeeded in securing loans from across the country to make this an outstanding show and give visitors a rare opportunity to glimpse these significant portraits together. Most have not been seen together since leaving Cooper's studio in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century.

The curator, Emma Rutherford, says "visitors to the exhibition will be able to visually follow Cooper's career in the same way that we are able to read Pepys diary. Over a career that lasted almost fifty years, Cooper painted hopeful Cavaliers and triumphant Roundheads, humble puritans and, finally, the court of the 'Merry Monarch'. Following over fifty key works by this irrepressibly talented and adaptable artist, it is impossible to imagine charting this significant period of British history without these memorable private images."

Little is known of the artist; however the material that does exist is in letters and diary entries from sitters, or at least hopeful ones illustrating his popularity. Most note his popularity and in particular how difficult it was to secure an appointment, let alone a sitting. On 2 January 1661/2 the celebrated diarist, Samuel Pepys had been expected to be introduced to Cooper "*I went forth by appointment to meet with Mr. Grant, who promised to bring me acquainted with Cooper, the great limner in little, but they deceived me.*" It wasn't until seven years later that he was able to visit Cooper's studio and finally commission a portrait of his wife. 16 July, 1668 Pepys records "*Thence to Cooper's and saw his advance on my wife's picture which will indeed be very fine.*"

Cooper held a fascinating status during a troubled period of British history. He worked for the Court of Charles I and then Oliver Cromwell who was reluctant to follow any royal habits or promote any form of idolatry. However, he soon realised that he needed to have his likeness painted and it was to Cooper he turned not just for himself, but also to capture his entire family. With the death of Cromwell on 3 September 1658, political events moved swiftly and Charles II returned to London May 1660. Having heard of Cooper's artistic ability, within days of returning to London, the monarch lost no time in giving him his patronage.

Philip Mould adds '*We are overwhelmed by the generosity of the many lenders whose willingness to lend will allow us graphically express how the British born Samuel Cooper is one of the greatest portrait painters in European art history.*'

In addition to the trio of Oliver Cromwell related pieces highlights of the exhibition include a portrait of Mrs Cromwell and their daughter. Cromwell commissioned Cooper to paint his entire family in or before 1650.

On loan from the Fondation Custodia, Paris is Cooper's portrait of Margaret Lemon, Van Dyck's mistress, dressed as a young (male) cavalier c.1635. The existence of this miniature infers that Van Dyck and Cooper enjoyed a relationship that was close enough to trust him to paint her. Van Dyck and Lemon are known to have had quite a tempestuous relationship. It is said that in a fit of jealous rage she tried to bite off his thumb to prevent him from ever painting again. The relationship was broken off by 1639.

Portrait of Elizabeth Cecil, Countess of Devonshire (1620-89), from Burghley House and the collection of the Marquis of Exeter is the earliest known dated portrait by Samuel Cooper and was painted in 1642 indicating Cromwell's tight links with Charles I and the royal circle.

Particularly rare are Cooper's sketches – in fact less than six are known to have survived. On loan from the Ashmolean museum is a sketch of the handsome youth Thomas Alcock from 1655.

A treasure resulting from Cooper's relationship with Charles II and his household is a portrait of James Scott, Duke of Monmouth and Buccleuch 1649-83, who was Charles II's illegitimate son. This treasure is still in the family and on loan from the Duke of Buccleuch.

Also on display will be works by Samuel Cooper's peers and his uncle and teacher John Hoskins.

**End**

## **Notes to the Editor**

**Emma Rutherford** is a freelance art historian specialising in portrait miniatures and silhouettes. She set up the Portrait Miniature Department at Phillip's Auctioneers. After the amalgamation of Phillips and Bonhams she became Departmental Director. During her time in the auction world, she sourced and handled the Albion Collection, the highest grossing collection of portrait miniatures ever to come to the market. She has also curated the family collection of portrait miniatures, entitled Heirs and Graces, at Harewood House in Yorkshire.

Emma has recently completed her first book, entitled "Silhouette; the Art of the Shadow," which is now available from bookstores. Emma recently curated the 'Secret Faces' exhibition at Philip Mould & Co, an important exhibition of rarely seen portrait miniatures from public and private collections.

**Philip Mould & Co** is a leading specialist dealer in British art and Old Master Paintings – and the world's leading authority on British Portraiture. Based in Dover Street in the heart of London's fashionable art market, the gallery offers a large selection of fine paintings for sale, from Tudor and Jacobean panel pictures to 18th century landscapes, as well as works by Old Masters such as Titian and Van Dyck, and antique portrait miniatures. Exhibitions are regularly held in the gallery, which

feature loans from national and international institutions as well as works owned by Philip Mould Co.

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