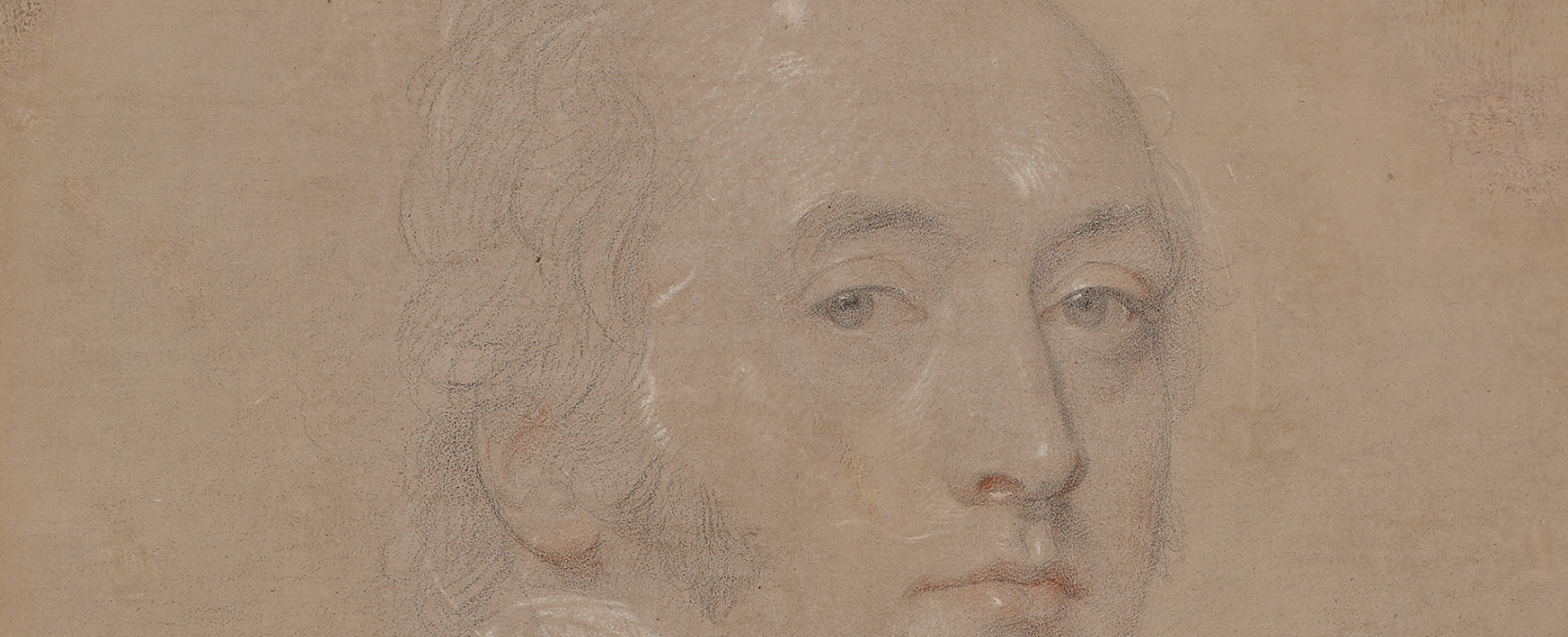




SIR THOMAS LAWRENE PRA (1769-1830)

Self-portrait

c. 1825

Black, red and white chalk on unlined, prepared canvas

25 x 20 in. (63.5 x 50.8 cm) (canvas size)

18 1/8 x 15 1/4 in. (46 x 39 cm) (framed aperture size)

PROVENANCE

The artist's sale, Christie's, London, 19 June 1830 (day three), lot 412 (sale day and lot number in chalk on the reverse '3-412') (bt. 'Hutchinson' £32.11);

Matthew Hutchinson, acquired from the above, by whom sold;

Christie's, 22 February 1861, lot 57;

William Hamilton, 11th Duke of Hamilton and 8th Duke of Brandon (1811–1863), acquired from the above;

Barons Durrieu, France, and thence by descent, until sold;

Giuquello, Paris, 19 June 2026, lot 136;

Philip Mould & Company, acquired from the above.

LITERATURE

R.S. Gower, *Sir Thomas Lawrence*, London, 1900, p. 142

W. Armstrong, *Lawrence*, London, 1913, p. 184

K. Garlick, 'A Catalogue of the Paintings, Drawings and Pastels of Sir Thomas Lawrence', *The Walpole Society*, XXXIX, 1964, p. 233

A.C. Albinson, P. Funnell, L. Peltz (eds.), *Thomas Lawrence: Regency Power and Brilliance*, London and New Haven, 2010, p. 178.

PHILIP MOULD

& COMPANY



This recently discovered self-portrait was drawn by Thomas Lawrence at the peak of his career and demonstrates his exceptional talents as a draughtsman.

Celebrated for his ability to fuse glamour and intense characterisation, Lawrence was one of the most accomplished painters in Europe in the early nineteenth century. His portraits were distinctive for their dramatic lighting and sparkling romance and came to define the Regency age. Nearly everyone of consequence, from actors to royalty, sat to Lawrence, and his influence can be traced through the successive generations of artists who came after.

Admired for their sensitivity and immediacy, Lawrence's chalk drawings on canvas have always held a coveted status within his oeuvre. Indeed, when a group of eighteen examples, including the present work, were included in his posthumous sale in 1830, the catalogue asserted: 'It may be safely affirmed that, in their kind, they have never surpassed, if indeed they have been equalled.'^[1] Lawrence was working in this medium by the late 1790s and one of his best-preserved examples from this period is the portrait of William Lock the Younger (1767-1847).^[2] He later returned to this technique when he was commissioned to portray the allied leaders who defeated Napoleon for the Prince Regent, later King George IV (1763-1830). Although the latter group of chalk drawings were intended to serve as visual guides for the execution of larger oil portraits, the absence in most cases of corresponding finished paintings suggests that Lawrence's chalk drawings were regarded as finished works. Whether the present work was produced in preparation for a larger work is unknown, although the absence of any related portrait in oils suggests this was unlikely.

Whilst a number of self-portrait drawings and oils dating from Lawrence's early life and career survive (fig. 1), the present work is one of just two recorded examples from his later years.^[3] The most famous is the unfinished self-portrait in the Royal Academy collection (fig. 2), which has in the past been linked to the present work on the basis that they both show the artist at a similar age and were clearly undertaken

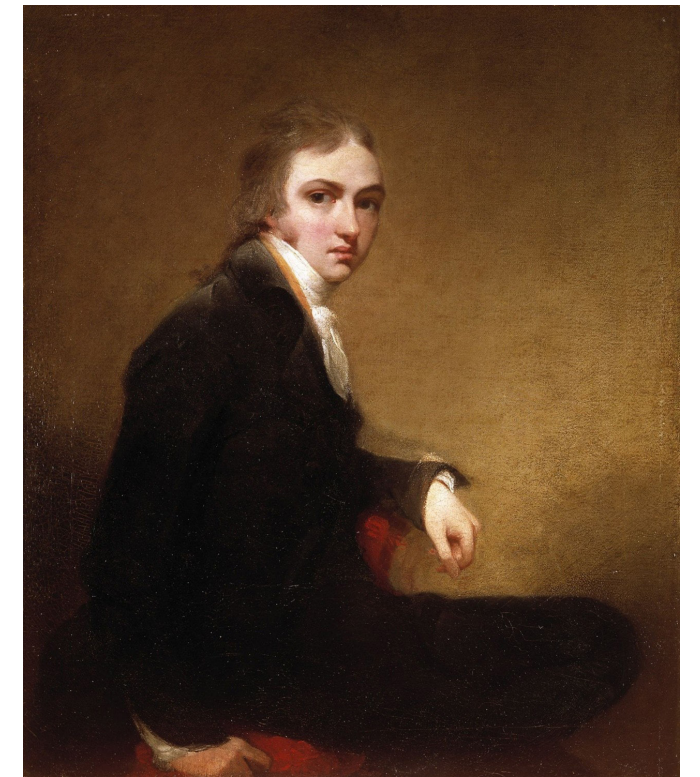


Fig. 1 | Sir Thomas Lawrence, *Self-portrait*, c. 1787-8. Berger Collection, Denver Art Museum.

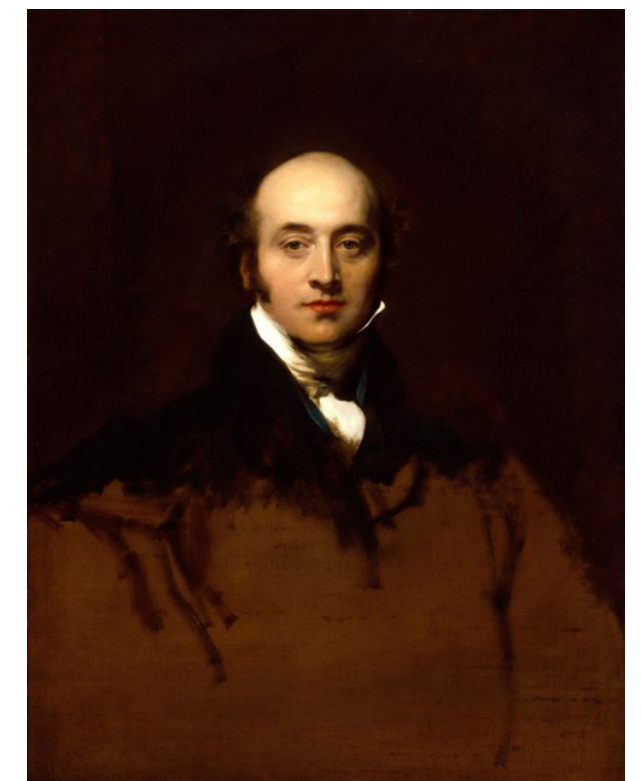
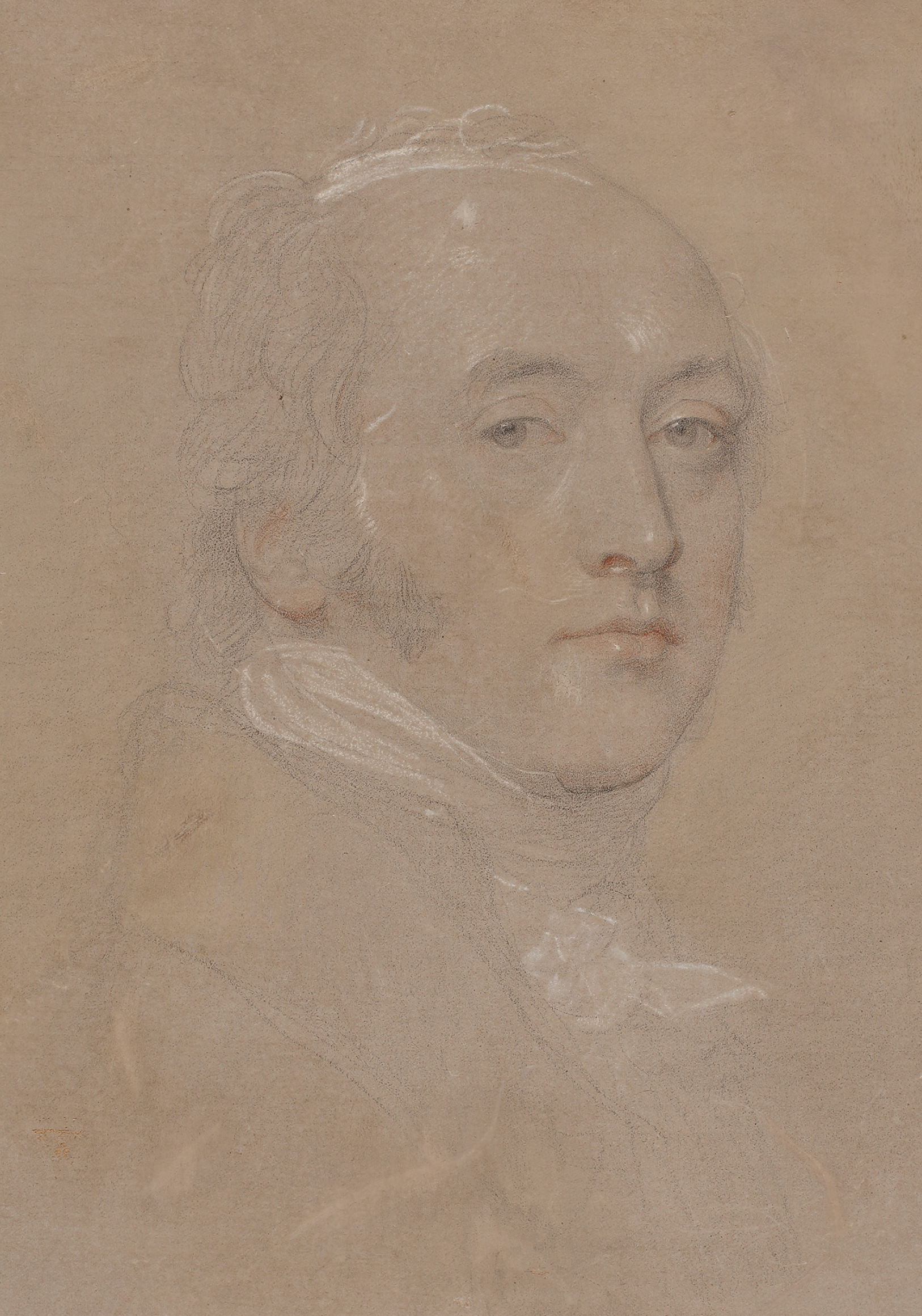


Fig. 2 | Sir Thomas Lawrence, *Self-portrait*, c. 1825. Royal Academy of Arts, London.



around the same time. The Royal Academy portrait, however, projects a different characterisation, with the artist shown full-face in a more assertive manner. The present work, by comparison, is more restrained, with a subtlety more closely aligned with Lawrence's more demure society portraits. This is, perhaps, a more accurate reflection of his character, as he was known to be more reluctant to paint himself as his reputation grew. At the height of his career, his likeness was certainly in demand, and it is known that in 1828 Lawrence promised to send a self-portrait to the Florence Academy, although there is no evidence to suggest one was ever sent. Whilst it is not impossible that the present work relates to that commission, its relatively small scale and modest appearance suggest that it was unlikely to have been intended for presentation.

The present work was drawn on a piece of canvas pinned onto a panel for support. The pin holes remain visible around the edges, and it has remained unlined and unstretched since it left the artist's studio. After Lawrence's death, it was sold in his posthumous sale (the sale day and lot number are still visible on the reverse) and acquired by the prolific collector Matthew Hutchinson. He later sold it at auction in 1861, where William Hamilton, 11th Duke of Hamilton and 8th Duke of Brandon, purchased it. Soon afterwards, the work appears to have passed into the collection of the Barons Durrieu, a prominent French family whose elevated status stemmed from the distinguished military career of Antoine Simon Durrieu, a general who served in the Napoleonic Wars.

Recently repatriated, the present work is an exceptionally rare survival from the hand of Britain's greatest Regency painter.

[1] Catalogue of the Remaining Part of the Valuable Collection of Modern Drawings... The Property of Sir Thomas Lawrence... Which Will Be Sold by Auction, by Mr Christie... On Thursday the 17th June, and the Two Following Days (Christie's, London, 1830). Quoted in A.C. Albinson, P. Funnell, L. Peltz (eds.), *Thomas Lawrence: Regency Power and Brilliance*, (London and New Haven, 2010), p. 178.

[2] Private collection.

[3] For the self-portrait drawings see K. Garlick, 'A Catalogue of the Paintings, Drawings and Pastels of Sir Thomas Lawrence', *The Walpole Society*, XXXIX, 1964, pp. 232-3, cats. 1-6.