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The respective merits of sculpture and painting have been discussed for centuries, but for the purposes of this display, we have focussed on the relationship between the two media by looking at likenesses in two and three dimensions. We have chosen to concentrate on portraits of an actor/manager and a sculptor - David Garrick and François Louis Roubiliac - who were friends and collaborators in the mid-eighteenth century. This provides an opportunity to compare and contrast their faces and the ways in which they have been portrayed in different media, allowing the viewer to consider whether a sculpted bust or a painted portrait has the greater impact and also if one idiom is best suited to capturing a sitter’s appearance and personality than the other.

Portraiture in the eighteenth century was a flourishing art form and the nobility - still the main source of artistic patronage at the time - had begun to acquire a new taste for busts and figures in clay, wax and plaster and asked ‘to have their busts done that way, rather than sit for their pictures’.1 Whilst the popularity of the bust was indicative of the general resurgence of sculpture in this period, what was it about the novelty of a three-dimensional portrait that suddenly made the bust seem so modern and so appealing? Previously sculpture had mainly been used for memorials and had thus been considered as the domain of the dead and not of the living. In comparison to a painted portrait, however, it was recognised that the portrait bust offered ‘real presence’.2 A bust was therefore a three-dimensional record of the way the sitter looked, as well as revealing something of their persona. For the viewer, it provided a sense of being in the sitter’s physical presence while allowing for the kind of close scrutiny not usually possible in polite company. And although a bust was nearly always monochrome - marble, clay or terracotta - it offered an alternative version of reality to a painted portrait which might well have been in colour but was always going to be flat and bounded by the confines of a frame.

For the sitter, any portrait (whether modelled, carved or painted) helped reinforce their social position; whatever rank had been held in life was, in theory, recorded for posterity. So whilst a patron might not always have been concerned about the ‘fine art’ qualities of a commission, they did care about the way they were portrayed and who the maker was and by the mid-eighteenth century they had a growing number of famous sculptors to whom they could turn. Besides the established native names, there was also a steady influx of sculptors from the continent who had been arriving since the start of the century, attracted by a wealthy elite with an increasing desire to spend. One such sculptor was Roubiliac (1702?-62), who was born in Lyon but was in London by 1730 having trained in Dresden.

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and Paris. Quickly acknowledged by his peers as an inventive and independent sculptor, Roubiliac gained a reputation for ‘the marvellous characterisation of [his] busts’.3 Whilst he had a number of aristocratic patrons, Roubiliac’s originality and style seemed mostly popular to the newly emerging ‘middling’ class clients who, having worked their way to the top, also wanted a record of themselves, their prosperity and their achievements.

With demand for portraiture burgeoning in London, Roubiliac entered an increasingly professional and competitive field. For the successful artist, renown and money offered the possibility for social mobility. Accepted by their clients (to a certain extent) within the higher echelons of society, artists might also copy their betters by having their own portrait made - as indeed Roubiliac did on a number of occasions at the end of his career. Arriving at that point, however, entailed considerable effort, combining capitalist enterprise and entrepreneurship. It wasn’t sufficient to run a studio on the ability to capture a likeness (a skill, after all, which many possessed) but business acumen, a sensitivity to rank and hierarchy, verbal ingenuity, personal charm and authority were all major requirements.4 Publicity was also a vital factor to success. Organised, public exhibitions of contemporary art did not exist until the 1760s, and the way to make a name was via personal contact, nepotism, patronage, determination and a disposition for self-promotion (or ‘puffs’) in the press.

In early work like his statue of ‘Handel’ (1738), which was radical in representing a famous living person in a relaxed demeanour, Roubiliac demonstrated he had a style that could attract attention. However he also showed very quickly an ineffable talent for being in the right place at the right time. One of the earliest contacts he made in London was Sir Edward Walpole (son of the then Prime Minister)5 and he aligned himself to potentially beneficial groups such as the Huguenot population in London, the Freemasons, the Royal Society and the Sublime Society of Beefsteaks. In George Vertue’s notebooks (which provide a valuable behind-the-scenes commentary on the art and artists of the period) we also have various glimpses of Roubiliac at Slaughter’s Coffee-house which was close to his studio on St. Martin’s Lane, ‘a rendezvous of persons of all languages and nations, gentry, artists and others’6 where he met other artists including William Hogarth, Colley Cibber, Peter Scheemakers, Francis Hayman, Thomas Hudson, Hubert Grevelot, John Harrison and Joseph Wilton amongst others. As well as providing an important social venue, groups from ‘Old Slaughter’s’ planned the all-important Grant Tour of Italy and it also offered them a discursive arena from which the St Martin’s Lane Academy was formed (an early attempt by artists to galvanise themselves into a school of art).
From this artistic circle lifelong friendships and rivalries were forged and reciprocal works of art were made and exchanged as 'a sort of cement of friendship'. Hence Wilton sculpted Roubiliac’s bust and Roubiliac modelled Wilton (the resulting plaster is in the Royal Academy). Hogarth’s bust in terracotta by Roubiliac famously modelled Hogarth’s alter ego (his favourite dog, Trump) as well. Hogarth is said to have painted his friend’s portrait in return and Thomas Hudson may have done the same in exchange for a mantelpiece carved by Roubiliac though neither of these portraits have survived. The intimate bonds between these friends meant that each maker had more opportunity to study the subject’s face on a regular basis and added more insight to the sitter’s personality than was usual for the busy portraitist with a number of sittings in any one day.

Besides other sculptors and painters, Roubiliac also established valuable links with writers, publishers, thinkers and professional figures from the opera and the theatre. Jonathan Tyers commissioned his ‘Handel’ for the pleasure gardens at Vauzhall, where Roubiliac largely established his name, and he had already made busts of the Italian opera singers Farinelli and Senesino before they both left England in 1737. Within theatrical circles, however, it was with David Garrick that Roubiliac seems to have had a particular affinity. Like Roubiliac, Garrick’s family originated in France although the actor was descended from Huguenots and the sculptor from Catholics. Both men became famous for their depictions of other people and excelled in their respective trades, rising from relatively lowly beginnings, via equally dubious professions, to quasi-gentrification. Despite his success, however, Roubiliac died penniless (probably because, as his accounts show, payments came slowly and materials and labour were expensive), but Garrick was able to buy a fine home in Hampton-on-Thames, its frontage designed by Robert Adam, with grounds by Capability Brown and a temple to Shakespeare that had been built especially to house the marble monument by Roubiliac (1758) which is now in The British Museum.

From his debut in Ipswich, Garrick rose through the ranks to become manager of the Theatre Royal Drury Lane, becoming particularly famous for portraying Shakespearean roles, revitalising interest in the playwright and helping turn him into a national hero. Garrick was also a major patron of the arts in his own right and even went on his own Grand Tour. He commissioned many works in which he figures (as himself or in character) and it is likely that he was more often portrayed in his lifetime than any of his contemporaries except the reigning monarch. As a result, there are numerous painted portraits of him by Reynolds, Gainsborough, Hogarth and Zoffany, as well as Roubiliac’s bronze relief (in the Garrick Club) and a bust. Legend also has it that when Garrick commissioned the Shakespeare monument, he also proposed - if not actually posed for - the composition, which was
intended to show the moment of divine inspiration, as the words ran through the playwright’s head before being committed to the page.

Roubiliac shared Garrick’s interest in Shakespeare. We know he owned several busts, models, moulds and figures in different materials all relating to Shakespeare (listed in the sale after his death) in addition to the maquettes now in the V&A and in the Rolger Library. For the portrayal of Shakespeare’s face, Roubiliac initially turned to the portrait (c.1600-10) attributed to John Taylor (d.1651) and called the ‘Chandos’ portrait after the Duke who previously owned it. This was already a well-known image in the eighteenth century and still remains the only likeness of the Bard which seems to have been taken from life. Via his network of connections, Roubiliac was able to borrow the original painting from the 3rd Duke of Chandos so that his friend Joshua Reynolds could copy it; something of a painter himself, Roubiliac also painted a version which still survives. Despite his research, the end result seems to owe more to Roubiliac’s earlier terracotta bust of Shakespeare which is ‘Van Dykian elegance’ and illustrated ‘that none of the traditional portraits of the dramatist satisfied Roubiliac as a true account of genius, for he has greatly ennobled the head’. Indeed there was already some doubt regarding the authenticity of the ‘Chandos’ portrait in Roubiliac’s time (which persists today), though it was anyway quite acceptable for a sculptor or a painter to take licence with an historical figure’s appearance; more than verisimilitude, it was important to give a posthumous portrait a look appropriate to what was widely known or accepted about the subject’s character and accomplishments; capturing a fully-founded individual was not necessary at this point.

The challenge was to strike the right balance and still create something that could be easily reproduced in print or plaster and which could then be disseminated. The personality of a sitter was therefore reduced to a major trait - probably the quality for which the person was already best known. Realising the limitations of the genre, even Joshua Reynolds suggested sticking to a dominant characteristic and subordinating general ideas to a particular quality ‘with the confidence of being understood’. A portrait - whether in paint or clay - could never encapsulate a sitter’s entire personality and it simply wasn’t possible to portray a complex, ‘three-dimensional’ image of a person in the way that literature came to do. Whatever might be missing from the work had to be brought to it by the viewer for completion.

The clarity of Roubiliac’s characteristic style of modelling allows close examination of a sitter’s face, which is appropriate for a subject like Garrick who was accustomed to projecting a personality. The apparent realism of the Garrick bust also suited what was then regarded as his ‘natural’ style of acting and his mobile, expressive features. Today we might think he looks handsome if rather vacant. His
overall features are rather mask-like and we might interpret this as the actor’s blank page on which any character might be imposed suggesting ‘that even when sitting Garrick was also acting’. When Roubiliac was painted by Andrea Soldi for the second time, he was depicted at work on this bust. In what amounts to a kind of double portrait, the creative energy contained in the face of the sculptor chimes with what we know of Garrick’s genius, drive and ambition. We can therefore see the painting as a testament to their working relationship and friendship, their professional regard and respective successes, as well as to the sculptor taking on something of the actor’s greater fame and appeal.

Likewise when Adrien Carpentiers painted portraits of Roubiliac twice, in exactly the same pose and around 1760-61, the sculptor is shown modelling the Shakespeare maquette. Indeed when we compare them now, there is a striking similarity between all the three-quarter length paintings of Roubiliac by Soldi and Carpentiers. The compositions and poses are more or less the same, as is the style of dress; one almost begins to wonder if indeed the painters looked to each other’s portraits rather than to the man himself. In each we also see the sculptor at work, portrayed not as a gentleman but as an artisan, surrounded by tools. In much the same way as Roubiliac had tried to reveal Shakespeare’s private moment of inspiration, the painters try to capture the creative process on canvas and the co-ordination between the sculptor’s eye and hand. Indeed, Roubiliac’s engagement with the work in progress seems more mental than physical, as he views his work with intensely staring eyes and upraised eyebrows set into a thin, drawn face. In the Carpentiers, his rather crazed look is echoed by the pronounced eye he is carving out for Shakespeare - a reference perhaps to contemporary accounts of Garrick’s ‘speaking eye’ whose ‘bright and penetrating ray, Does Shakespear’s [sic] meaning to my soul convey’ and the perception of the eyes as vehicles for channelling creative genius in the fine and the dramatic arts. The patron of the Shakespeare monument, David Garrick, is an implied, ghostly presence. In addition, there is also a discernible parallel between the figures of Shakespeare and Roubiliac. Carpentiers appears to equate the art of writing with that of sculpting; furnished with their respective tools, a pen and a spatula.

Since we know that Roubiliac had financial troubles towards the end of his life, the gaunt face we see in the painted portraits might well be accurate. Moreover, we know the print made after the Soldi portrait was considered a good likeness by his peers. In the marble bust which is now attributed to Wilton, Roubiliac again wears his sculptor’s working garb. In its history, this bust has previously been known as a portrait of Voltaire and also as Martin Folkes (an antiquary of man of science who was Roubiliac’s friend and patron) and until the 1970s it was thought to be a self-portrait of the sculptor (largely because his family had always considered it so) though this has now been
discredited.\textsuperscript{20} We are reminded then, that a portrait does not guarantee perpetuity for the sitter; names are forgotten and titles and attributions can be slippery things.

It was comparison with the portraits by Soldi and Carpentiers, that led to the identification of the marble bust as Roubiliac (though not conclusively so)\textsuperscript{21} and it has also been regarded as having a good family-likeness.\textsuperscript{22} Soldi and Carpentiers represent somebody who was rather care-worn. However in three dimensions Roubiliac has a wider, fleshier face which gives the impression of a much healthier man and he is portrayed similarly in the pastel-portrait attributed to Vispré. Such conclusions are entirely subjective and we do not know the extent to which the individual painter’s style affected the way Roubiliac was portrayed or indeed how much Wilton chose to flatter his friend. Judging by their portraits of Roubiliac they not only had the ability to capture something of their sitter’s appearance but also the qualities of specific sculptures.

A portrait in any idiom has its limitations and we might regard it as primarily one dimensional rather than either two or three.

The portraits Soldi and Carpentiers produced are perhaps the closest encounter we can have with the persona and appearance of Roubiliac, though the closeness of their relationship with Roubiliac is not documented. In fact we know very little about the Flemish-born Carpentiers, though Soldi is better documented.\textsuperscript{23} Born in Florence, he was praised by Vertue for his ‘superior merit’ but was more ‘willing to be thought a Count or Marquis, rather than an excellent painter’.\textsuperscript{24} He was subsequently imprisoned in Fleet Street prison for debt and his funeral in 1771 had to be paid for by Sir Joshua Reynolds. But we also have to bear in mind that the encounters the portraits offer are mediated; the portrait is not a ‘window’ onto and into the past, but a highly-contrived stage set. We might describe the paintings by Soldi or Carpentiers as ‘a behind-the-scenes view’ of the artist in his studio: here is the sculptor appropriately dressed, cuffs undone so as not to restrict the dramatic flourish of his movements, with his tools close at hand. Yet when Carpentiers painted his portrait, the Shakespeare model was no longer a work-in-progress, because the marble monument for which it would have formed an initial design had been completed four years earlier. The portraits are therefore a form of artifice, and remind us that the act of making is itself something of a performance.\textsuperscript{25}

Unfortunately we do not know who originally commissioned the portraits of Roubiliac, whether it was the sculptor himself, or Garrick, or an unknown third party. They may not have even been produced as a result of a formal commission between artist and patron, but undertaken as speculations by Soldi and Carpentiers who were both émigré painters and perhaps keen to trade on the reputation

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of their fellow artist and émigré in the currency of their own profession - the painted portrait. We can only speculate as to where the portraits would have been displayed and for whom. Where did Vertue see Soldi’s ‘very light and airy’ portrait of Roubiliac in the urban topography of London? Did he see it in the painter’s studio, the sculptor’s house, or elsewhere? London was the mushrooming metropolis where these first and second generation émigrés based their professional careers; the backdrop to all these portraits was a city teeming with objects and opportunities. Hence we can understand the portraits shown here (the painted and the sculpted) as a testament to the shared inspiration of Garrick and Roubiliac and the roles they played in the shaping of the modern capital.27

6 Esdaile, (1928), p.47.
10 Ibid., pp.35-36.
12 See I. Mackintosh & M. Risdell, *The Face and Figure of Shakespeare*, London, 2009.
15 Shawe-Taylor (1990), p.32.
17 Ibid.
21 Ibid.
26 ‘Vertue III’, p.159.