

50 BRITISH ARTISTS

YOU SHOULD KNOW



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Lucinda Hawksley

Prestel
Munich · London · New York

To my godson, Samuel Hurst

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Banksy, *Stamps*, see page 152

JMW Turner, *Rain, Steam and Speed*, see page 52

John Everett Millais, *Ophelia*, see pages 66–67

Frontispiece: Detail of Joseph Wright of Derby, *The Orrery*, see page 40

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INTRODUCTION

Choosing just fifty artists to represent the history of British art is a Herculean task; the artists who made it into the final list are not the only masters in their field, but they are all groundbreaking, fascinating figures whose lives and work have changed the course of art history. Each artist in this book is also representative of many other superb artists with whom they have worked alongside or in competition.

A turbulent and exciting history that spans thousands of years has given British artists a rich seam to plunder for inspiration. The Celts, Angles, Saxons, Vikings, ancient Romans and Druids are just a few of the varied groups of people who have influenced the development of British art. From Nicholas Hilliard's laudatory portraits of Queen Elizabeth I to Banksy's wittily irreverent portrait of Queen Elizabeth II, *50 British Artists You Should Know* is not just the history of British art, it is the history of Britain itself.

The landscape of the British Isles reflects the British people's artistic nature: white horses and fertile giants carved into chalky hills, Celtic crosses, the magnificence of stone and wood circles, such as those at Stonehenge and Avebury, the skilled artists and craftsmen who created towers, castles and baronial homes — all reflect the generations of artists and artisans who have made this collection of islands their home.

Despite this long tradition of artistry, however, for many centuries British fine art was an amalgamation of influences from elsewhere in Europe. For hundreds of years, the greatest names in British art were those of Dutch, German, French and Italian painters who learned their craft in their own countries and then made their homes — and fortunes — in Britain. Artists such as German-born Hans Holbein the Younger and Flemish-speaking Anthony van Dyck dominated the British art world for decades. Foreign artists were appointed painters to the royal court and received all the most lucrative commissions. During the first Elizabethan age, however, British artists suddenly began to come into their own and a new and exciting period of British painting was born. It was a long and arduous journey, but with the founding of the Royal Academy under King George III, Britain finally had an artistic academy to rival those of Paris, Antwerp and Rome.

Throughout the centuries, ships have brought people of all cultures to the British Isles, enriching the already diverse indigenous cultures of Scotland, Ireland, Wales and England. British art reflects all these influences, especially during the most recent centuries when this small collection of islands has welcomed people from all over the world. In the 20th and 21st centuries, the British art scene has flourished and developed in more exciting ways than could possibly have been envisaged when Joshua Reynolds proudly accepted the role of First President of the Royal Academy in 1768.

Ever since around 1600 when Nicholas Hilliard wrote, in *A Treatise Concerning the Art of Limning*, ‘of all things, the perfection is to imitate the face of mankind’, British portrait painters have sought to recreate the faces of the British people. Hilliard flattered his queen and her courtiers in the same way that Joshua Reynolds would seek to create an idealised race of heroic, stoic men and beautiful, maternal women. At the same time as Reynolds was performing his painterly style of plastic surgery, his satiric contemporary, William Hogarth, sought to show the world his sitters as they truly looked. In the 19th century, John Everett Millais sought to recapture the realism he felt was lacking in contemporary British portraiture while his friendly rival Frederic, Lord Leighton produced paintings of beautifully formed men and women who seemed to hail from a modern Mount Olympus. In the 20th century, Barbara Hepworth created an entirely new style of sculptural portrait, an ‘abstract vision of beauty’. Several decades later Chris Ofili would begin his journey to make portraits that could speak — and cry out — for themselves and for humanity, while Antony Gormley encompassed both the 20th and 21st centuries with his human figures as ‘vessels that both contain and occupy space’.

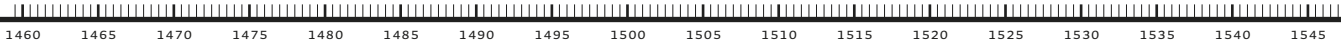
The diversity of the British landscape has proved equally as inspirational as the British people themselves. While J. M. W. Turner was recreating the seascapes that surrounded the British Isles, his rival John Constable was idealising the rural Suffolk of his childhood. As Britain grew more industrialised and greater numbers of people moved to urban areas, artists including L. S. Lowry, Walter Sickert and Charles Rennie Mackintosh turned city streets and buildings into works of art.

Rebellion has long been a part of the British psyche, with each generation discovering a reason to break away from the art that went before. The Romantics felt the need to break away from the Classicists, the Pre-Raphaelites rebelled against the Royal Academy, the Bloomsbury Group firmly shut out the Victorian period of their childhoods and Francis Bacon and Gilbert & George rebelled against Britain’s archaic homosexuality laws. By the late 20th century, it was becoming increasingly difficult to find a new and unique reason for artistic rebellion, but the Young British Artists (YBAs) purported to create an entirely new style of art for a new millennium, and Banksy chose to rebel against using anything as conventional as a canvas and oils.

The fifty artists you will encounter in this book encapsulate the diversity, beauty, joy and wit of British life, culture, people and landscapes. For a small collection of islands, Britain has played an astonishingly large role in the history of the world and *50 British Artists You Should Know* reflects that story. The artists chosen to

illustrate these pages take the reader on a journey from the time when England, Wales, Ireland and Scotland were separate kingdoms, through the age of unification, into the age of the vast world-encompassing British Empire and into a modern world, in which all four countries are exploring their own unique identities once again. With every generation, a new style of British art will continue to evolve and the British art world will continue to be peopled by activists, visionaries and rebels.

1492 Christopher Columbus discovers America

1486 Sandro Botticelli paints *The Birth of Venus*1512 Michelangelo completes work on
the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel1532 Sir Thomas More resigns as
Lord Chancellor of England

Nicholas Hilliard, *Portrait of Queen Elizabeth I*, oil on panel, 58.4 x 44.5 cm, Private Collection

1557 Robert Recorde invents the Equals sign

1584 Beginning of Golden Age in Dutch Painting

1616 Death of William Shakespeare

1564 Death of Michelangelo

1602 First recorded performance of William Shakespeare's Twelfth Night

1626 Death of Sir Francis Bacon

1550 1555 1560 1565 1570 1575 1580 1585 1590 1595 1600 1605 1610 1615 1620 1625 1630 1635

NICHOLAS HILLIARD

Trained in the arts of goldsmithing and jewellery Nicholas Hilliard's exquisite portraits combine the production of likenesses and fine brushwork with a sensitivity to the pearls, jewels and fine fabrics worn by his eminent sitters.

Nicholas Hilliard was born into an artistic family; his father was a successful goldsmith in the city of Exeter in Devon. Together with their local Protestant community, the Hilliards fought against the reintroduction of the Catholic faith into England — these beliefs would later lead to a necessity to flee England in fear of their lives.

In 1547, the year in which Nicholas Hilliard was born, Henry VIII's sickly son, Edward VI, ascended to the throne. After six years, the teenaged King Edward died and his Catholic sister was proclaimed Queen Mary I. The Hilliard family fled to Switzerland. Young Nicholas, a promising artist from childhood, learned to speak French and studied the work of French and Swiss artists, both skills served him well in later life.

The Hilliard family returned to England in 1558, following the death of Mary and the accession of her Protestant sister, Queen Elizabeth I. Through his father's contacts, Nicholas was found an apprenticeship in London with a goldsmith and limner (a painter). His earliest experiments in miniature portraiture date back to c. 1560, when he painted his self-portrait, aged just 13 years old. He would later write of his profession, 'Perfection is to imitate the face of mankind'.

By the early 1570s, Hilliard had finished his apprenticeship and his work was being talked about throughout fashionable London. His fame brought him to the attention of Queen Elizabeth I and he became her favourite and most trusted miniature painter. Hilliard later commented that the queen did not like to be painted in shadows, so she would sit to him outdoors, in full sunlight. Following Elizabeth I's death, in 1603, Hilliard worked for her successor, King James I (also known as King James VI of Scotland).

Hilliard ran a successful studio in Gutter Lane, not far from St Paul's Cathedral. As a favourite of the queen, he was highly fashionable and his sitters included the most famous and wealthy people in

London. A large number of studio assistants worked with Hilliard, but the most famous of his pupils was Isaac Oliver, a French artist whose family the Hilliards had met while living in Switzerland.

In c. 1600, Hilliard wrote *A Treatise Concerning the Arte of Limning* detailing some of his practises, including very precise details on how to paint specific elements, such as pearls. In his introduction, the artist commented, 'I wish it were so that none should meddle with limning than gentlemen alone, for that it is a kind of gentle painting'. Hilliard mixed his own pigments, both oil- and water-based, and painted either on wood or very fine vellum (animal skin). Hilliard's preferred type of vellum was that taken from an aborted calf foetus, which he liked for being so smooth and hairless; the vellum would be glued to a stiff material, such as wood or card. The brushes used by miniaturists were made from animal hair, often squirrel hair, and would sometimes be composed of a single hair. Hilliard became renowned for the delicacy of his lines and the elaborate work he could produce — such as recreating the patterns of lace or fine filigree — in such a small space. One of his most admired techniques was the creation of 'jewels', such as the rubies seen in this miniature portrait of Queen Elizabeth I; he made them by using coloured resin and burnished silver or gold. He was, however, deliberately secretive in his *Treatise*, careful not to give away to rivals one of his most important secrets. Hilliard also produced large oil paintings, but it is for his miniatures that he remains most renowned.



- c. 1547 Born in Exeter, Devon, England, son of Richard Hilliard, a Protestant goldsmith and High Sheriff of the city and county in 1560
- 1553 Accession of catholic Queen Mary I; sent into exile by his father to escape the Marian Persecutions
- 1558 Accession of Queen Elizabeth I; Hilliard apprenticed to the Queen's jeweller Robert Brandon
- 1569 Made Freeman of the Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths
- 1570 Appointed Court Limner (miniaturist) and Goldsmith by Queen Elizabeth I
- 1571 Produces 'a booke of portraitures' for the Earl of Leicester
- 1572 Paints first dated portrait of Queen Elizabeth I
- 1576–79 Marries Alice Brandon; paints a miniature of Francis Bacon in Paris
- 1584 Designs obverse for a Great Seal of Ireland
- 1586 Engraves the Great Seal of England
- c. 1588 Paints *Youth Among Roses*
- 1603 Accession of James I; Hilliard remains Court Limner and Goldsmith
- 1617 Receives a special patent of appointment from King James I, granting him sole license for royal portraits in engraved form for twelve years
- 1619 Dies 7 January in London

FURTHER READING
Karen Hearn, *Nicholas Hilliard (English Portrait Miniaturists)*, London, 2005

Nicholas Hilliard, *Self-portrait*, 1577

ANTONY VAN DYCK

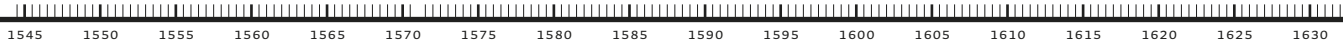
1563 Pieter Brueghel paints
The Tower of Babel

1581 English Parliament outlaws
Roman Catholicism

1559 Coronation of Queen Elizabeth I

1607 Caravaggio paints *David
with the Head of Goliath*

1624 Frans Hals
paints
*The Laughing
Cavalier*



Mary Beale, *Portrait
of Aphra Behn*,
c. 1670, oil on panel,
25.2 x 20.1 cm,
St. Hilda's College,
Oxford University

1635 1640 1645 1650 1655 1660 1665 1670 1675 1680 1685 1690 1695 1700 1705 1710 1715 1720

MARY BEALE

Mary Beale's success as a painter with a thriving portraiture business made her the breadwinner in her family and assured her place in the canon of women artists.

In 17th-century England, very few women were able to reach the top of their chosen profession, but Mary Beale became one of London's most famous portrait painters. Her world was one in which women were considered far inferior to men. Even while praising her, one of her contemporaries wrote what seems to be an astonished critique of her abilities, in which he declared himself amazed that Beale was 'little inferior to any of her [male] contemporaries, either for Colouring, Strength, Force or Life'.

Mary Beale was born Mary Cradock, the daughter of a Puritan clergyman. Her father was also a keen amateur painter and taught and encouraged his daughter to paint. Later, he paid for her to have an art tutor. It is not certain who her tutor was, but there are two likely candidates: one is the portrait painter Robert Walker, the other was Sir Peter Lely. Both men were friends with Mary's father and both painted his portrait, so it is likely Mary studied both men's work and perhaps learned from both of them.

It was fortunate that Mary married a man who not only understood his wife's talent, but encouraged her and was happy to take a step back from the limelight. Charles Beale, whom Mary married in 1651 or 1652, worked as a merchant and as a clerk at the Patents Office. His career went through a number of crises and Mary's talent helped keep the family's finances out of trouble.

The Beales moved in an exaltedly intellectual circle, numbering scientists, fellow artists, writers, poets and eminent clergymen amongst their closest friends. Mary also had literary aspirations and, although it was never published, wrote a text that could have proved as important, in terms of female equality, as Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*. Unlike Wollstonecraft, Beale was a dedicated Christian, yet in *Discourse on Friendship*, which Beale dedicated to her friend Elizabeth Tillotson, she reasoned that God created Eve as the equal of Adam, as 'a wife and friend, but not a slave'. The Beales were living through a turbulent

time. Mary was a teenager when the English Civil War broke out and King Charles I was beheaded. She lived through Oliver Cromwell's brief reign as Lord Protector and the reinstatement of the monarchy. In addition to the bloodshed of civil war, she survived the virulent outbreak of the bubonic plague, or 'Black Death', in 1665, as well as the Great Fire of London in 1666. The Beales expediently left their native London for the Hampshire countryside during the plague.

In 1670, Mary and Charles made the decision to return to London and set up a portrait studio in which they would work as equal partners. Charles Beale managed the finances as well as providing much-needed help in the thriving and often frenetic artist's studio. The couple had two surviving sons, Bartholomew and Charles (their first son, also called Bartholomew, died shortly after being born). The artist painted her sons' portraits on a number of occasions: the paintings are softly coloured, richly evocative portrayals of the fleeting years of childhood. She also taught her children to paint and, as they grew older, they worked as her studio assistants. The younger Charles Beale went on to become a professional artist.

Mary Beale was buried on 8 October 1699, at the parish church of St James's, Piccadilly. The church, which was designed by Sir Christopher Wren and decorated by Grinling Gibbons, was badly damaged during the bombs of World War II; sadly no remains of Mary Beale's grave survived the attacks.



- 1633 Born Mary Cradock on 26 March in Barrow, Suffolk, England.
- 1652 Marries Charles Beale, a cloth merchant and amateur painter from London
- c. 1654 Settles with Charles Beale in London and embarks upon a career as a professional portrait painter
- 1658 Mentioned in William Sander-son's book *Graphice*
- 1665 Moves with her family to a farmhouse in Allbrook, Hampshire due to financial difficulties and to escape the Great Plague of London
- 1670 Returns to London and establishes a studio in Pall Mall, with her husband working as her bookkeeper and studio assistant
- 1677 Receives a commission for thirty portraits of the Lowther and Thynne families
- 1699 Dies in London

FURTHER READING

Tabitha Barber, *Mary Beale (1632/3–1699): Portrait of a Seventeenth-century Painter, her Family and her Studio*, London, 1999

Mary Beale, *Self-portrait*, c. 1675–80, oil on sacking, 89 x 73 cm, Moyses's Hall Museum, Bury St Edmunds



left
Mary Beale, *Portrait of the Artist's Son*,
c. 1680, oil on canvas, Private Collection

right
Mary Beale, *Portrait of the Artist's
Husband, Charles Beale in a Black Hat*,
oil on canvas, 44 x 35.5 cm,
Private Collection



1642 Rembrandt paints *The Night Watch*1626 Peter Paul Rubens paints
*The Assumption of the Virgin Mary*1656 Diego Velázquez paints
Las Meninas

1610 1615 1620 1625 1630 1635 1640 1645 1650 1655 1660 1665 1670 1675 1680 1685 1690 1695



William Hogarth, *Marriage A-la-mode*:
4 *The Toilette*, 1743–45, oil on canvas,
70.5 x 90.8 cm, National Gallery, London

1703 Isaac Newton becomes chairman of the Royal Society

1724 Blenheim Palace construction is completed

1732 The first Royal Opera House opens in Covent Garden, London

1748 David Hume's *An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding* is published

1755 Samuel Johnson's *A Dictionary of the English Language* is published

1762 Construction of the Trevi Fountain in Rome is completed

1776 The United States of America declares independence from Great Britain

1700 1705 1710 1715 1720 1725 1730 1735 1740 1745 1750 1755 1760 1765 1770 1775 1780 1785

WILLIAM HOGARTH

Skilled engraver, painter and satirist William Hogarth commented on the morals of the modern world and raised the international status of British art with his complex depictions of British types and stereotypes.

William Hogarth created a uniquely British school of painting and an unusually honest style of portraiture. While artists such as Joshua Reynolds and Thomas Gainsborough were vying for aristocratic patrons and employing flattery to court wealthy sitters, Hogarth created portraits of people he admired and satirical engravings that made him wealthy.

As a young man, Hogarth made enough money to feel financially secure; it was a world away from his childhood. His father, Richard Hogarth, was an innovative schoolmaster eager to make his name and fortune by a brilliant scheme. His idea was to set up a fashionable coffee house in which the scholarly patrons would communicate only in Latin; it was not a success and he lost all his money. William Hogarth was ten years old when his father was arrested for debt and incarcerated in the Fleet Prison.

At the age of 16, Hogarth began an apprenticeship with silversmith Ellis Gamble, from whom he learned etching and engraving. He also attended free classes at the art academy set up by James Thornhill; Hogarth married Thornhill's daughter in 1729. By the end of the 1720s, Hogarth was making a profit by selling engravings of his own pictures. He had hit upon the simple fact that most people could not afford to buy original paintings, but Britain was full of people who could afford to buy prints. One of his early successes was *The South Sea Scheme* (c. 1721) an allegorical attack on a disastrous financial speculation the government had endorsed. His 'Progress' series, part morality tale, part comic soap opera, made him famous. *A Harlot's Progress* (1732) and *A Rake's Progress* (1732–33) were made up of six paintings that, when viewed together, told a story. While his artist contemporaries struggled to make money, Hogarth's prints became bestsellers.

In 1743, Hogarth began his most famous series: *Marriage-A-la-Mode* (1743–45), the story of a marriage of convenience between a dissolute and

impoverished aristocrat and the daughter of a very wealthy, but also indubitably middle-class, merchant. It is a comedy, but a twisted comedy which ends in tragedy. The comic effect comes solely from the viewer's ability to laugh at aristocrats — the story itself tells of adultery, murder and suicide.

Hogarth had a well-developed social conscience and much of his work was created to highlight the social ills of the contemporary world. He used his satires to parody politicians, aristocrats, idlers and drunkards. With pictures such as *Gin Lane* and *Beer Street* (both 1751), Hogarth brought the issues of the day directly to the public. He was also able to poke fun at the country he hated: France, the traditional enemy of the 18th-century Englishman. Gin, which had arrived in Britain from France, had become the favourite drink of the poor — with dire social consequences. Beer was the traditional drink of the British working class. With these two pictures, Hogarth was comparing the evils of France with what he perceived as the benignity of English life. When his friend, the novelist and social reformer Henry Fielding, began campaigning for an act to be passed to limit the selling of gin, Hogarth produced *Gin Lane* and *Beer Street* to aid the campaign.

When his father in law retired, Hogarth successfully took over the running of James Thornhill's art school, the St Martin's Lane Academy. He also garnered praise for the publication of his book *The Analysis of Beauty* (1753) in which he contradicted the classical belief that beauty was to be found in order, symmetry and straight lines. Hogarth argued that beauty was found in serpentine curves, which he called 'the line of beauty'. When Hogarth died, the great actor David Garrick wrote the epitaph for his tomb.



- 1697 Born 10 November in London
- c. 1714 Apprenticed to the silversmith engraver Ellis Gamble
- 1720 Begins working as an independent engraver
- c. 1726 Studies painting under the artist James Thornhill
- 1729 Marries Jane Thornhill, James's daughter
- 1731 Produces the series of six paintings, *A Harlot's Progress*
- 1732 Publication of *A Harlot's Progress*
- 1732–33 Produces the series of eight paintings, *A Rake's Progress*
- 1735 Publication of *A Rake's Progress*; is influential in the passing of a copyright law banning pirated copies of print editions
- 1743 Produces series of six paintings, *Marriage-A-la-Mode*
- 1747 Produces series of twelve prints, *Industry and Idleness*
- 1748 Arrested while sketching the gate of the port and drawbridge in Calais, France; is made to prove he is an artist for his release; paints *The Gate of Calais*
- 1753 Publishes *The Analysis of Beauty*
- 1755 Original paintings for *A Harlot's Progress* destroyed in a fire at Fonthill Abbey
- 1757 Appointed Serjeant Painter to the King
- 1764 Dies 26 October in London

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Jenny Uglow, *Hogarth: A Life and a World*, London, 1997
 Mark Hallett and Christine Riding, *Hogarth*, London, 2006

William Hogarth, *Self-portrait*, 1748–49, etching, 34.3 x 26.2 cm, British Museum, London



William Hogarth, Beer Street, 1751,
etching, 35.9 x 30.3 cm, British Museum,
London



William Hogarth, *Gin Lane*, 1751, etching, 41.9 x 30.5 cm, British Museum, London

GIOVANNI BATTISTA TIEPOLO

FRANÇOIS BOUCHER

1674 Death of John Milton

1683 The Ashmolean Museum
opens in Oxford

1711 Death of David Hume

1705 Edmond Halley determines
periodicity of what will be
known as Halley's Comet

1722–23 Russo-Persian War

1660 1665 1670 1675 1680 1685 1690 1695 1700 1705 1710 1715 1720 1725 1730 1735 1740 1745



Richard Wilson, *Lake Albano*, oil on
canvas, 30.5 x 42.9 cm, Private Collection

1750 1755 1760 1765 1770 1775 1780 1785 1790 1795 1800 1805 1810 1815 1820 1825 1830 1835

RICHARD WILSON

Richard Wilson's landscapes had a profound influence on later British artists. The delicacy and inventiveness of his work brought both an intellectual and emotional dimension to subjects that were previously treated in a more scientific manner.

At the age of 14, Richard Wilson left his native Wales and moved to England, where he was to train as a portrait painter. For six years he worked as an apprentice in the studio of Thomas Wright, in London. Wright was an accomplished portrait painter, but ironically his greatest claim to fame today is for having been Richard Wilson's teacher.

Wilson was born in the Welsh village of Penegoes, in today's Powys. There was little call for professional artists in such a remote part of Wales, nor were there many wealthy patrons waiting to make an artist's fortune, so after his apprenticeship ended, Wilson stayed in London for another 15 years. He did not enjoy the life of a portrait painter and longed to stop painting demanding, spoilt clients and to realise his dream of becoming a painter of landscapes.

In 1750, Wilson left London and journeyed to Rome, the destination of choice for almost every Grand Tourist. Artists who travelled to Grand Tour destinations did so knowing they could earn good money producing works of art for wealthy patrons to take back to their country homes in Britain. Wilson spent seven years travelling around Italy and living and working in Rome and Venice. He studied the art of the great masters and honed his skills as a landscape painter, producing accomplished works in the grand, classical style which proved highly popular. He also made the acquaintance of a number of wealthy aristocrats, who would become important patrons when he returned to Britain. Works such as *Lake Albano* (of which Wilson produced several versions) were the Grand Tourist's ideal souvenir. In 1757, he returned to London and set up his own studio, taking on apprentices as well as teaching students. He had moved from portraiture into landscape painting at exactly the right time: in the 1750s and 1760s, landscapes were highly fashionable. Wilson was influenced by Nicolas Poussin and Claude Lorrain and he would go on to influence generations of landscape artists, including

J. M. W. Turner and John Constable. He is also credited with having made painting landscapes of Wales a very fashionable pastime.

When Wilson returned to Britain, in addition to painting evocative landscapes of England and Wales, such as *Hounslow Heath*, *The Quarry and Valley of the Mawddach with Cader Idris beyond*, he continued to produce images of Italy. His students, the most famous of whom included Thomas Jones and Joseph Farington (who wrote of 'the largeness and dignity of Wilson's mind'), followed his example. Wilson was also not averse to painting landscapes of places he had never seen, such as *The Falls of Niagara* (c. 1768–74), painted when all things North American were very popular with the public.

By the late 1760s, Wilson was a well-known figure in London's artistic world. Although he would never reach the financial status of artists such as Sir Joshua Reynolds or Benjamin West, Wilson's studio was thriving and he earned an enviable income. In 1768, he was one of the founder members of the Royal Academy, with which he retained ties until the end of his life.

Unfortunately for Wilson, artistic fashion is fickle, and by the 1770s landscapes had largely fallen out of favour. His studio began to suffer and he began to fail financially; the Royal Academy came to his aid, appointing him Librarian (for which he earned £50 a year). In 1781, with his health fading, Wilson returned to the country of his birth. He lived in Mold, in Wales, for just a year before he died, an artist who had been so famous a mere decade earlier, but whose reputation was already starting to be forgotten by a new generation.



- 1714 Born 1 August in Penegoes, Montgomeryshire, Wales
- 1729 Moves to London; studies portrait painting under Thomas Wright
- 1750–57 Lives in Italy; begins painting landscapes under the advice of Francesco Zuccarelli
- c. 1760 Returns to England; exhibits *The Destruction of the Children of Niobe* at the Society of Artists in London; begins receiving commissions from wealthy families seeking classical portrayals of their estates
- 1768 One of the founding members of the Royal Academy of Arts in London
- 1776 Appointed Librarian to the Royal Academy
- 1781 Moves to Colomendy, Denbighshire
- 1782 Dies 15 May in Colomendy

FURTHER READING
Andrew Wilton and Anne Lyles, *British Watercolours, 1750–1880*, London, 2011

Anton Raphael Mengs, *Richard Wilson*, 1752, oil on canvas, 84.6 x 75.2, National Museum Wales, Cardiff

1675 Construction begins on the Royal Greenwich Observatory in London

1707 England and Scotland are joined as the Kingdom of Great Britain under the Acts of Union

1723 Antonio Vivaldi composes *The Four Seasons*

1738 The Treaty of Vienna is ratified

1749 Samuel Johnson's *The Vanity of Human Wishes* is published

1670 1675 1680 1685 1690 1695 1700 1705 1710 1715 1720 1725 1730 1735 1740 1745 1750 1755



Joshua Reynolds, *Cupid Unfastens the Belt of Venus*, 1788, oil on canvas, 128 x 101 cm, The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg