

NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY: CULTURE, IDENTITY, & TASTE

Please meet us at 10AM at the Fourth Plinth. You can find the Fourth Plinth on the North West corner of Trafalgar Square, London, WC2N 5NJ. We will brief you upon arrival. Please bring with you a sketchbook and dry drawing materials.

From 10:20AM, the group will leave the Fourth Plinth to continue our cultural visits. A group of tutors will return to the Fourth Plinth at 11AM to pick up any latecomers. Do your best to come on time!



*Antelope by Samson Kambalu,
Fourth Plinth, 2024*

According to Carol Duncan, “museums are excellent fields in which to study the intersection of power and the history of cultural forms” (Duncan 1995, p.12)

From next week, *Constructing Tastes* will take a closer look at how elements of identity and selfhood can be represented through illustration, and the ways in which clothing, style, expression, gestural mark-making, and symbolism might help represent ‘positionality’ in taste.

Selfhood is the quality that constitutes one’s individuality. Positionality is the social, cultural, and political context that shapes a person’s identity and how they understand the world.

Today, we want you to visit the Herbert Smith Freehills Portrait Award, and to question what visual tools the artists have used to attempt to represent the positionality and selfhood of their subjects.

Carol Duncan (1995) ‘The art museum as ritual’.
Art Bulletin Vol.7 No.1 (March 1995). pp.10-13

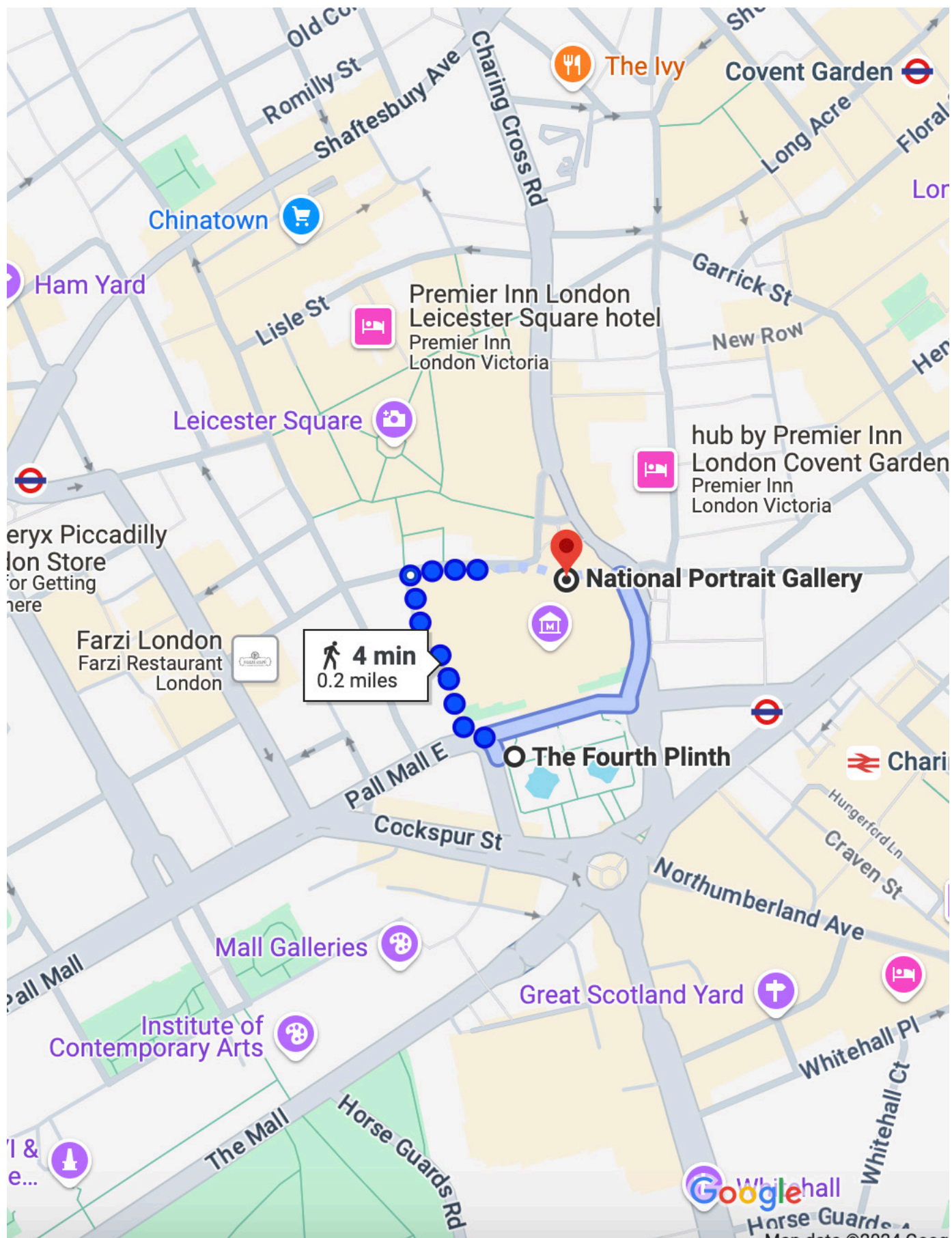
Once you’re in the Herbert Smith Freehills Portrait Award gallery, please make notes and observational sketches in response to the following prompts:

— Find a painting where you think colour plays an important role in depicting the sitter’s positionality. Document where and how colour is being used to communicate taste in this portrait.

— Find another painting. Are any forms (shapes, objects, etc) being used or exaggerated to communicate selfhood? This might be items of clothing, or props in the scene.

— Make observational drawings of any marks or forms you find communicative of the sitter’s, or artist’s tastes, think carefully about which is which. When is style being used to illustrate meaning? When is style being used to represent an aesthetic?

— Are there any paintings that you might have approached differently if you were the artist? Why? Make a drawing of how you might have done the portrait differently.



Timings/tickets for the National Portrait Gallery visit will be given to you via an additional handout given out on the day. These handouts will be given out at the Fourth Plinth. Students will enter the gallery in staggered timeslots, and additional cultural visits will be advised on the day! *Do your best to come on time!*