

Joshua Reynolds: The Creation of Celebrity

Martin Postle



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Joshua Reynolds: The Creation of Celebrity examines the artist in the social, political and cultural context of a century that cultivated a very modern notion of fame. This new approach to Reynolds (1723-92) considers his life and career in terms of a conscious quest for celebrity. Reynolds surrounded himself with the most famous men and women of his time: the rich, the powerful, the beautiful and the notorious. His portraits served to create, reinforce and advertise not only his subject's reputation but his own. It is, therefore, no surprise that Reynolds made no fewer than twenty-seven self-portraits in which he purposefully perpetuated his well-crafted public image as an artist, an academic and a knight. Joshua Reynolds: The Creation of Celebrity features many of Reynolds's most famous and beautiful portraits. Individual sections consider the friendships Reynolds cultivated with the famous and infamous figures of his time: politicians; courtesans; literary figures; war heroes; and aristocrats. These flamboyant and influential subjects helped to promote and sustain Reynolds's distinguished career and, ultimately, to secure his enduring popularity with audiences today.



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