IMAGE DETECTIVE

Wicked Problems & Visual Thinking Strategies

How does Visual Persuasion Work, and what Effect does it have on our Culture?

An Exercise in Looking Critically

Nicola Wilson Clasby

Lecturer in Composition
Department of English
SUNY New Paltz
wilsoncn@newpaltz.edu

Queen Elizabeth I

The Coronation Portrait C. 1600. Copy of original 1559 lost original. Artist unknown. Previously attributed to William Stretes. National Portrait Gallery London. Oil on Canvas

Queen Elizabeth II

Coronation Portrait 1953
Cecil Beaton
Silver Gelatin Print

Royal Portraiture: Genre, Audience & the Importance of Context

With a partner, discuss the similarities between these two portraits of Queens Elizabeth I & II.
Use your phone to Google the symbolism of:
Orb:
Sceptre:
Ermine:
Pearls:

There is a span of 353 years separating these two portraits. Discuss what these similarities say about the expectations, needs, and desires of the viewing public for these portraits.

Discuss what these similarities tell us about the cultural traditions and politics surrounding the representation of a monarch.

Now, look at both portraits VERY carefully. Identify & discuss the many subtle differences between the two portraits. List these differences here:

Do these differences make any difference? Explain.

What can you tell about the character & role of the two queens based on these differences? Why is this significant in regards to what was going on in history at this time (you may Google!)

Where are you, the audience (British subject) positioned in relation to the two queens? What are you meant to understand when looking at each portrait?
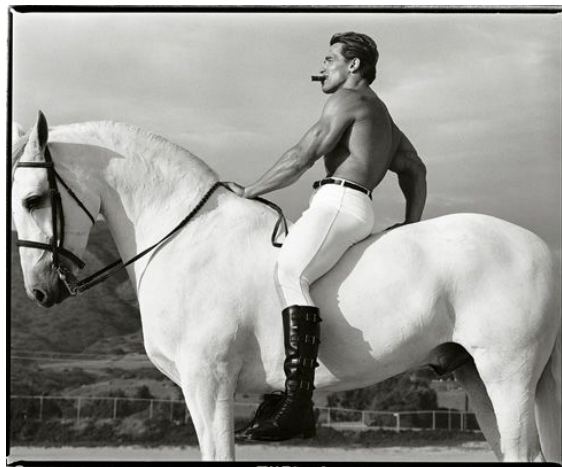
Sir Cecil Beaton

Audrey Hepburn 1964

Queen Elizabeth 1968

Annie Leibovitz

Arnold Schwarzenegger 1988

Queen Elizabeth 2007

Royal Photographers & the Importance of Ethos

Compare Leibovitz' 2007 portrait of the Queen with Sir Cecil Beaton's 1968 portrait.
Discuss the similarities.

Based on our discussion of the two photographers, do you think Leibovitz is COPYING Sir Cecil Beaton? Explain?

Compare Beaton's 1968 portrait to his 1953 coronation portrait of the queen. Discuss how he challenges the conventions of royal portraiture.
What effect does this have on the viewing public?

Discuss how Leibovitz extends Beaton's challenge.
What techniques does she use? Why are these significant?

Lets talk about authority and authorship: What is Leibovitz up to?
Discuss why is this important.

Ethos & Context
Based on evidence in her photograph, why is Leibovitz' portrait of the Queen so significant to a British audience in 2007?

Portrait of Queen Elizabeth II: Sir Cecil Beaton 1968

Portrait of Queen Elizabeth II: Annie Leibovitz 2007