





52. From *Madame Moitessier* by Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, begun in 1847, finished in 1856.

Madame Moitessier was a famous beauty. That is an aspect of the subject which it is difficult for us to realise – difficult, but essential, for Ingres felt it acutely and made it the basis of his design. She represents beauty enthroned, like a Phoenician goddess, half Roman, half Oriental, calmly aware of her feminine potency. Contemporary taste seems to find this self-confidence irritating, and the head which Ingres referred to as *terrible et belle*, repulsive. Even her hand which delighted Gautier has been abused for its lack of bony structure. By 1856 Ingres had been acclaimed for forty years as the greatest draughtsman in Europe; none of his contemporaries had been so foolish as to say that his hands were ‘out of drawing’, and we must, I fear, conclude that a sense of plastic coherency is less common now than it was in that derided epoch of taste, the mid-nineteenth century. For whatever we may think of her as a beauty, Madame Moitessier is a masterpiece of formal consideration. There is a largeness and continuity in every sequence of form which makes her neighbours look haphazard, and apparent defects of painting spring from deliberate subordination to a central idea.



Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres (1780–1867)
Madame Moitessier, 1856
Oil on canvas, 120 × 92.1 cm

53. From the *Portrait of Susanna Lunden(?)* (*‘Le Chapeau de Paille’*) by Peter Paul Rubens, painted about 1622–5.

This is a study of the contrast between Susanna Lunden’s delicate complexion and her dark eyes; and to give this contrast its full effect Rubens has painted her under a hat the tone of her eyes, with her face lit by reflected light, so that all dark shadows are eliminated, leaving only the local colours of lips, eyebrows and iris. Illumination by reflected light usually means rather flat painting, but Rubens has been able to keep the modelling alive at every point with a delicacy and transparency which is his secret, and with such apparent ease that we think more of his enchanting sitter than of his superb technical skill.



Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640)
Portrait of Susanna Lunden(?)
(*‘Le Chapeau de Paille’*),
probably 1622–5
Oil on oak, 79 × 54.6 cm



William Hogarth (1697–1764)
The Graham Children, 1742
 Oil on canvas, 160.5 × 181 cm
 Presented by Lord Duveen through The Art Fund, 1934

54. A Cat from *The Graham Children* by William Hogarth, painted in 1742.

55. A Dog from *A Satyr mourning over a Nymph* by Piero di Cosimo, painted about 1495.

Hogarth enjoyed painting this cat so much that the Graham children look hollow and lifeless beside her. She is the embodiment of cockney vitality, alert and adventurous – a sort of Nell Gwynn among cats. Her vulgarity would hardly be noticeable, were she not confronted by the noble silhouette of Piero's hound who regards her with the gravity of an antique philosopher. Paul Bourget, when asked what Walter Pater looked like, replied 'Il ressemblait à un amant de Circe transformé en dogue.'^{*}

* The French novelist Bourget (1852–1955) was perhaps not being entirely complimentary when he claimed that the essayist Pater (1839–1934) resembled a lover of the sorceress Circe transformed into a mastiff.



Piero di Cosimo (about 1462–after 1515)
A Satyr mourning over a Nymph, about 1495
 Oil on poplar, 65.4 × 184.2 cm



