

Homework

John Copley

Charles Wilson Peale

Benjamin West (p. 136-138)

Lecture 16.01.2020

- the beginnings were very humble
- people only wanted to have portraits as they were merchants
- Copley and Peale were genuine American painters
- *we chose Renaissance portraits that we liked and posted them on e-course, explaining what we like about them [here](#)*
- these portraits show very different things – seeking, self-assuredness, energy, determination, authority, power
- G. Hesselius portraits show that he had sympathy for the Natives
- in his letter though, he didn't think much of them, he found Colonial America appalling
- *"it is a savage and terrifying folk. They are naked ..."* writes Hesselius in a letter sent from Colonial America
- it took him 20 years of living in America between writing this letter and painting the Native chiefs
- he became an anthropologist and then painted the Natives from that kind of perspective
- Hesselius describes the environment that he was presented with when he came to America, a mess of competing religions, ethnicities, just a total mess
- John Copley – generally self taught artist, mostly learned from looking at copies and reproductions of other paintings
- he mostly painted rich Americans, he showed class, wealth, and dignity, not necessarily beauty
- he had great skills when it comes to the technical aspects, like painting reflections on an expensive hardwood table
- his self portrait might show a certain insecurity, as if he is searching for something, he was not completely happy – portraits did not feel fulfilling for him
- America was not a place for him to show his full potential, but in America there was no demand for anything that was not a portrait
- when the Independence War started, he got involved because his father-in-law was the loyalist merchant whose tea was thrown into the harbor during the Boston Tea Party
- in Great Britain he could paint pictures that would never find buyers in America because the interest in art is very different there
- his talent is recognized in GB and starts to paint historical paintings, which were not marketable in America
- as an American living in London he paints British history for the local audience, not American history, of which there was not a lot at that point