

The Models and Their Image: A Prospect of Modernism in Waterhouse Paintings

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This article examines the articles and the new facts about the models of the paintings of John William Waterhouse and reveals his method of reconstructing faces from a few models in his paintings. After that, it shows you that Waterhouse's method in his attempt of reconstruction is similar to that of Modernist painter in the first half of 20th century, although he mainly argued as a "Victorian" painter. Waterhouse is known as a painter who repeatedly painted the particular face in his works which have different narratives, and this fact demonstrates that he had his favourite model though there is no certain information about any of his models. However, it was revealed that in his comment in the magazine article published in 1908, he himself said that he once had a favourite sitter but she would not contact him again. The model was possibly a woman named Muriel Foster, whose name was on the drawing of her face, but we cannot conclude that she was Waterhouse's favourite model. Besides her, there are some females who possibly sit for Waterhouse like his two sisters Jessie and Mary. The fact that former researchers identify models with paintings differently shows us that there is higher possibility that he had a stock of sketches of the faces of his favourite model and fused them with other models' sketch, so that he can reconstruct his ideal female image in his paintings. Some of the sketches he had done were used repeatedly in different works. That process made those faces into forms and that is why we can say that there is a prospect of considering Waterhouse as not only a Victorian painter but also a Modernist painter.