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**PORTRAIT MINIATURES**

*Intimate Images from the Latter-Schlesinger Collection*

**NEW ORLEANS, LA** – The New Orleans Museum of Art (NOMA) presents the museum’s Latter-Schlesinger Collection of Portrait Miniatures. Cradled in the palm of the hand or worn close to the heart, portrait miniatures were never intended for public consumption, but rather, functioned as personal tokens of affection, love, or memorial. Drawing from NOMA’s permanent collection, the installation of more than 100 portrait miniatures is now on view in the Lupin Foundation Decorative Arts Galleries on the museum’s second floor.

“NOMA’s Latter-Schlesinger Collection of Portrait Miniatures, given in 1974 by Shirley Latter Kaufmann in honor of her parents, Harry and Anna Latter, is one of the singularly important collections at this museum,” said Susan Taylor, NOMA’s Montine McDaniel Freeman Director. “Ranging from the court of Henry VIII to Napoleonic France, the collection includes masterful examples of the important artists and techniques used in the art of miniature portraits.”

Portrait miniatures were the passion of New Orleans collectors Harry and Anna Latter. In 1957, the Latters travelled to London to oversee a government project and dedicated the trip to the pursuit of English portrait miniatures. After her parent’s passing, Kaufmann gifted the comprehensive collection to NOMA, where she was a trustee for more than twenty years and board president in 1978. The family continues Kaufmann’s tradition of supporting the museum through the Milton H. Latter Educational and Charitable Foundation, which sponsored the design and fabrication of a custom cabinet for the magnificent collection.

Portrait miniatures feature details of historic lace, jewelry, ornate hairstyles, royal adornments and military regalia, all executed by the artist sometimes using a single hair as a brush. The earliest 16th-century miniatures were painted with watercolor onto vellum (animal skin) or cardstock, but by the 18th-century heyday of portrait miniatures, artists painted on thin sheets of ivory for a natural luminescence to the watercolor portraits. NOMA’s collection includes master miniature artists Nicholas Hilliard (English, 1547-1619), John Hoskins the Elder (English, c.1590-1665), Samuel Cooper (English, 1609-1672), Richard Cosway (British, 1742-1821), and George Engleheart (British, 1752-1829). On view are examples of portraits framed with the sitter’s hair, intricately arranged and braided, and two “lover’s eye” miniatures, capturing just an intimate close-up of the sitter’s eye, recognizable only to her dearest confidants.

A tablet produced by NOMA details the stories behind these portrait miniatures, with the stories of royalty and historic celebrities, the highly-skilled craft of miniature painting, and the Latter family collection.

# NOMA

NOMA's installation was made possible with the support of the Milton H. Latter Educational and Charitable Foundation.

## **Additional Information**

[Press-approved images are available here.](#)

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Website: [www.noma.org](http://www.noma.org)

## **About NOMA and the Besthoff Sculpture Garden**

The New Orleans Museum of Art, founded in 1910 by Isaac Delgado, houses more than 40,000 works of art encompassing 5,000 years of history. Works from the permanent collection, along with continuously changing special exhibitions, are on view in the museum's 46 galleries Tuesday through Friday from 10 AM to 6 PM, select Fridays from 10 AM to 9 PM, Saturdays from 10 AM to 5 PM and Sundays from 11 AM to 5 PM. NOMA offers docent-guided tours at 1 PM Tuesday - Sunday. The adjoining Sydney and Walda Besthoff Sculpture Garden features work by more than 85 artists, including several 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>-century master sculptors. NOMA's Besthoff Sculpture Garden is free and open to the public seven days a week: 10 AM to 6 PM. The New Orleans Museum of Art and the Besthoff Sculpture Garden are fully accessible to handicapped visitors and wheelchairs are available from the front desk. For more information about NOMA, call (504) 658-4100 or visit [www.noma.org](http://www.noma.org). Museum admission is free on Wednesdays for Louisiana residents, courtesy of The Helis Foundation. Children 12 and under receive free admission. Teenagers (ages 13-19) receive free admission courtesy of The Helis Foundation.

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