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Facing Fame

Augustus John, at 70, still the best portrait painter in the country, has a large one-man show at the Leicester Gallery.

There is nothing astonishing about the show unless you care for painting; then the fact that picture after picture is quietly right and satisfying will shake you in these days of hurried experiment and academic incompetence.

He offers portraits of celebrities Yeats, Lutyens, Beecham, Churchill, Aleister Crowley, the would-be magician, and Sir John Anderson. I was particularly impressed by his portrait of a fellow artist, Matthew Smith, and by his presentation of the poet Dylan Thomas as an astonished cherub.