Portraits of Wealth and Refinement—Part I
Go to the West Pavilion, Upper Level, Gallery W202, and find the image identified below.

In our own culture, we form opinions about people through visual clues. What would someone wear today to tell you they had wealth, refinement, or power? This activity looks at two portraits of wealthy patrons from the 18th and 19th centuries. Both artists are known for their skill in portraying royal or noble sitters (the person who "sat" while the artist painted his or her portrait).

Title: Portrait of Leonilla, Princess of Sayn-Wittgenstein-Sayn
Artist: Franz Xaver Winterhalter (German)
Date: 1843
Medium: Oil on canvas

1. Look at the portrait of Princess Leonilla. Circle your top five adjectives from the list below that you think describe Leonilla.

   bored   calm   graceful   snobby   pretentious   lonely   tired   annoyed

   stiff   relaxed   poised   confident   vulnerable   pompous   flirtatious

   Or add your own adjectives to describe Princess Leonilla:

2. Take one adjective and describe how that word is visually communicated in the painting. For example, if you circled "bored," what visual clues make you say she looks "bored"?

3. Discuss with a partner the adjectives you selected and the visual evidence you found. Were the adjectives you chose the same or different? If any were different, explain to your partner why you chose the adjectives you did.

4. What qualities of the Princess's clothing and her surroundings establish her as a person of wealth, intelligence, and refinement?

5. The artist used oil paint on canvas to create this picture. Look at the finish and texture of the surface. Keep your impressions in your mind because you will be asked to compare the medium of this picture to the next work of art you will investigate.

Portraits of Wealth and Refinement—Part II

Go to the South Pavilion, Upper Level, Gallery S206, and find the image identified below.

Title: Gabriel Bernard de Rieux
Artist: Maurice-Quentin Delatour (French)
Date: About 1739–1741
Medium: Pastel and gouache on paper mounted on canvas

1. Look at the portrait of Gabriel Bernard de Rieux. Circle your top five adjectives from the list below that you think describe Gabriel.

   bored   calm   graceful   snobby   pretentious   lonely   tired   annoyed

   stiff   relaxed   poised   confident   vulnerable   pompous   flirtatious

   Or add your own adjectives to describe Gabriel Bernard de Rieux:

2. Discuss with a partner the adjectives you selected and the visual evidence you found. Were the adjectives you chose the same or different? If any were different, explain to your partner why you chose the adjectives you did.

3. What qualities of Gabriel's clothing and his surroundings establish him as a person of wealth, intelligence, and refinement?

4. If you were to have your portrait made, what would you want it to reveal about you? Share your ideas with your partner.

5. Take a close look at the frame. The Getty tries to display paintings in frames from the time period in which the painting was created; this painting is one of the few pictures still in its original frame. What do you see on the frame? What do the symbols tell you about Gabriel Bernard de Rieux?

6. This portrait is assembled from nineteen separate sheets of handmade paper. Some are cut to follow loosely the contours of the composition. The seams are visible, among other places, along the sitter's left sleeve. Can you see them?

7. This picture is made of pastel and gouache on paper mounted on canvas. Pastel is a chalky, dry pigment made into a crayon, and gouache is an opaque, watercolor paint. How does the material for this painting differ visually from the oil paint on canvas used in the portrait of Princess Leonilla? Write your response here.