



# NATIONAL CAPITAL COMMISSION COMMISSION DE LA CAPITALE NATIONALE

## **Diamond Jubilee Portrait of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II**

2012

Phil Richards

Acrylic on canvas

Crown Collection, Official Residences of Canada, National Capital Commission

Commissioned by the Government of Canada, 2-10

This portrait was painted on the occasion of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's Diamond Jubilee. It was officially unveiled in London, UK, on June 6, 2012, in the presence of Her Majesty, His Excellency the Right Honourable David Johnston and the Right Honourable Stephen Harper. The painting was installed in Rideau Hall on June 28. It is a contemporary representation of Her Majesty and a symbol of her presence in the governor general's official residence and workplace. The portrait is the subject of a documentary produced by the National Film Board of Canada; the film, which came out in the fall of 2012, shows the various steps involved in creating the portrait and interviews with the artist.

### **The Artist**

Canadian artist Philip James Richards was born in Toronto in 1951. He studied at the Ontario College of Art & Design University and graduated in 1973. He lives and works in Scarborough, ON. He explores a variety of genres in his works, including murals, landscapes, still life and portraits. He has notably painted a number of portraits of politicians and scholars.

### **The Iconography**

This portrait includes a number of details that refer to Her Majesty's reign and highlight her ties with Canada. The artist has attempted to reflect several aspects of Her Majesty's character in the expression on her face: intelligence, dedication, commitment and compassion. Over the years, the world has become intimately familiar with the changing image of The Queen, who grew from a young princess to a wife, mother, queen, grandmother and great-grandmother. The artist's goal was to capture the entire history of The Queen's life on her face.

The Queen is the source of all honours in Canada. In the portrait, she is wearing the insignia of the Sovereign of the Order of Canada and the Order of Military Merit.

The Queen is resting her left hand on the Carleton House desk, currently located in the Monck wing salon in Rideau Hall. This piece was created for the Prince of Wales – who later became King George IV – when he lived at Carleton House, around 1796. On the desk is a copy of the British North American Act (BNA), which was signed during Queen Victoria's reign and repatriated to Canada during the reign of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

Behind The Queen, through the archway, is a portrait of Queen Victoria in her coronation robes. The original of this portrait was painted in 1838 by Sir George Hayter and a copy, painted by J. H. Walker, hangs in the Tent Room at Rideau Hall. By juxtaposing the portraits of Queen Victoria and Queen Elizabeth II in the same painting, the artist has highlighted the ties that unite the two women: Queen Victoria is Queen Elizabeth II's great-great-grandmother and the only other British monarch to have celebrated a diamond jubilee. By representing Queen Victoria at the beginning of her reign and Queen Elizabeth II 60 years after her coronation, Richards has also highlighted the passage of time.

The space surrounding the subject is filled with fictional objects combined with a number of architectural and decorative elements found in Rideau Hall (the panelled archway, the mouldings, the pilasters and the wall sconces). The arrangement and interior colours of the residence have been modified to meet the portrait's esthetics. The red and white Canadian flag provides the tone for the paint colours. The combination of red and white is repeated several times in the portrait: in the flowers, the medals, the carpet, the BNAA and the portrait of Queen Victoria. Finally, the gold colour ties the architecture, carpet and furniture together, and creates a warm atmosphere within the painting.

### **The Frame**

The frame was built in Toronto by Elizabeth and Peter Porebski, based on suggestions by Phil Richards and one of his sons. The frame is topped with a large, gold medallion, Her Majesty's Canadian Diamond Jubilee Emblem. The design for this emblem was created by the Canadian Heraldic Authority.

### **Technical Details**

Dimensions, with frame:

Height: 124"

Width: 88"

Depth: 6"

Height including the carved medallion: 129"

Depth with medallion: 8"

Weight: 320 lbs

