



# Sir Thomas Lawrence (The Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art)

*Michael Levey*

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Sir Thomas Lawrence (1769–1830) was the most gifted and successful British portrait painter in the generation following Gainsborough and Reynolds, and his pre-eminence was confirmed by his election as President of the Royal Academy of Arts in 1820. Yet Lawrence's work has often been dismissed as flashy and meretricious. This beautifully illustrated, eloquently written, and comprehensive account reverses that view, demonstrating that Lawrence was an intelligent, hard-working, and profoundly conscientious artist. The book is the first sustained study of Lawrence's work in many years, and the first ever to look closely at his highly accomplished drawings as well as his paintings. Tracing the steps in his career, Michael Levey analyses and illustrates the finest of Lawrence's achievements, making pertinent comparisons with the work of British contemporaries and with foreign artists like Goya and Ingres. Utilizing published and unpublished sources and focusing detailed attention on individual works, Levey presents a persuasive argument for reconsideration of Lawrence as an artist of the top rank.

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