

Appendix 4

Sixth and final revision of the audio-description

Access point = overview button, top left

- ✧ This is an oil painting by Alessandro Allori (1535-1607), titled Portrait of a Young Man. Allori painted this portrait of a wealthy young man in 1560.
- ✧ There are seven element trigger points in the picture, made up of 3 dots – the Braille letter ‘S’. Double tap on these trigger points for a brief description. Double tap again to access a more detailed description.
- ✧ To stop the audio-description at any point, tap the trigger point once.
- ✧ Double tap here now if you’d like to hear an overview of the whole painting.

Detailed description

Alessandro Allori was a leading Florentine artist and court painter to the powerful Medici family.

From left to right, we find first an antique statuette of the god Apollo standing on a table.

Then in the middle of the canvas is a young man, painted three-quarter length. He is dressed in Renaissance clothes, all in black. Details such as the rows of tiny buttons and the silver buckle on his belt show that he is from a wealthy family.

Continuing to the right, there is a window. Through the window is a view of an imaginary landscape and a man looking over the distant hills. The man is standing on an outdoor terrace with his back to us.

Under the window, the young man’s left hand rests on a chair. He holds a bronze medal. The chair is richly decorated with red and green inlays.

The overall look of the portrait is refined, elegant and rather self-conscious. The young man looks at us with an aloof expression on his face, and objects in the picture such as the statuette of Apollo and the medal are intended to draw attention to his sophistication and his interest in the classical history of Italy.

Access point = statuette. This is a statue of the god Apollo, placed on a table. The trigger point is just to the left of his head.

Detailed description

This replica of an antique statue stands in the centre of a round table (the table is described separately). It depicts the god Apollo carved in marble. He has long curls and his right arm is curved up and over the top of his head.

Apollo’s left hand rests on his lyre, a musical instrument like a small harp, which stands on a small rocky mound.

The figure is nude apart from some minimal drapery around the legs.

We know that in 1561, the year after this portrait was painted, the original statue was in a collection in Rome.

Access point = young man, head. This is the young man's head. The trigger point is just to the left of his head.

Detailed description

The head of the young man reaches almost to the top of the painting and his eyes gaze directly at us. His skin is smooth and pale, his face long and slim. He has grey eyes, a very straight Roman nose, and a pointed chin. His curly hair is a rich auburn, cut short so that it just covers the top of his ears.

The young man's expression is calm and neutral but he looks very self-assured despite being so young – perhaps only in his late teens.

Access point = window. This is a window, through which there is a view of an imaginary landscape and a man looking over the distant hills. The trigger point is just to the left of the window frame and the landscape. In the tactile picture the landscape is represented by two horizontal curvy lines.

Detailed description

We know that this landscape is imaginary because it refers back to classical times. It consists of a plain with a few distant buildings, then some low hills, and higher hills further away. Pinkish clouds suggest dawn or dusk.

At the bottom of the window, there is a man leaning over a stone balustrade. The man is standing on a raised terrace, with his back to us and is nude except for a drape of terracotta-coloured cloth over one shoulder which falls, at the back, across his thighs. In the tactile picture, the man in classical draping is textured.

Access point = young man, torso. This is the body of the young man. The trigger point is just to the left of a row of buttons down the middle of the young man's coat, and just below his right shoulder.

Detailed description

The young man is dressed almost entirely in black, in the fashion of the Florentine court in the mid sixteenth century – the Renaissance period.

The close-fitting jacket is cut high, with the top button fastened at the dip of his throat.

Underneath this jacket he's wearing a white cotton shirt which has a ruffle around the edge of the collar. The jacket has sleeves that puff out at the shoulders and, on the torso, three rows of tiny black buttons - one down the middle to fasten it and one either side for decoration.

At the waist, where the rows of buttons stop, the young man is wearing a belt with a silver buckle. In the tactile picture, the belt and the buckle are filled in as one solid shape – a thick horizontal straight line. The belt emphasises the slimness of the young man and its silver buckle is embossed with classical figures.

Below the waist and belt, the jacket flares out into a short padded skirt with two layers, and slashes in the fabric, then in again at mid-thigh. Under it, the young man wears black fitted stockings.

It is interesting to note that true black was expensive to produce in the 16th century and wearing it therefore demonstrated wealth and status. We are not sure of the identity of this young man, but he clearly comes from a wealthy family.

*Access point = **pedestal and table**.* This is a pedestal with a table on top. The trigger point is just to the left of the pedestal, and just under the table rim. In the tactile picture, the pedestal is represented by a single curvy line.

Detailed description

The pedestal holds a table. The table has a plain round top on which a marble statuette of the god Apollo stands in the centre. The statuette is described separately.

The top of the table is in thick pale wood and it has a deep rim on which there is some decorative carving. In the tactile picture, the carving is represented by a textured surface. The carving – an inlay in an oval frame – shows a reclining female figure in classical drapery, and some Latin words on a scroll across a palm tree.

The heavy pedestal, holding the table, narrows towards the floor and ends in carved human feet. In the tactile picture, the pedestal is represented by a single curvy line. The carved feet at the bottom face outwards, with their heels touching, as if two people are standing back to back, facing in opposite directions.

*Access point = **medal and chair**.* This is a medal held in the young man's left hand. The trigger point is just above the medal. In the tactile picture, the medal is filled in as one solid shape – a circle.

Detailed description

The medal is like a large coin, which the young man is holding between his thumb and forefinger. He is tilting it a little towards us in order to show the head on the medal – a woman's head in profile, in classical costume. The young man appears to be a collector of classical medals, and this contributes to the overall impression of wealth and refinement.

The hand holding the medal rests on the wide curved arm of an ornate chair. Because the chair is on the far right side of the canvas, only a small part of it is shown in the painting. The frame of the chair is made of wood and has an inlaid row of lozenges in deep red and green, drawn together within a pattern of circles and rectangles picked out in fine white lines. In the tactile picture, the chair is represented by two parallel curved lines with small circles and rectangles between them.

By the 16th century the use of chairs instead of benches or stools had increased in prosperous Italian households and this one is sumptuously decorated. There was a fashion at the time for furniture to contain sculpted grotesque figures and this chair features a carved wooden gargoyle on the front edge of the arm. Unlike most of the painting, this isn't

shown in much detail but it is clearly a head with oversized ears with round baubles hanging from them and droopy folds of excessive flesh.

Access point = cloth. This is a white cloth held in the young man's right hand. The trigger point is just to the left of the cloth. In the tactile picture, the cloth is textured.

Detailed description

The young man is holding the cloth with the forefinger and thumb extended to show long elegant fingers.

The way the young man stands, with the cloth bunched in his hand, is intended to suggest he has been caught in the act of polishing the medal that he holds in his left hand. The medal is described separately.