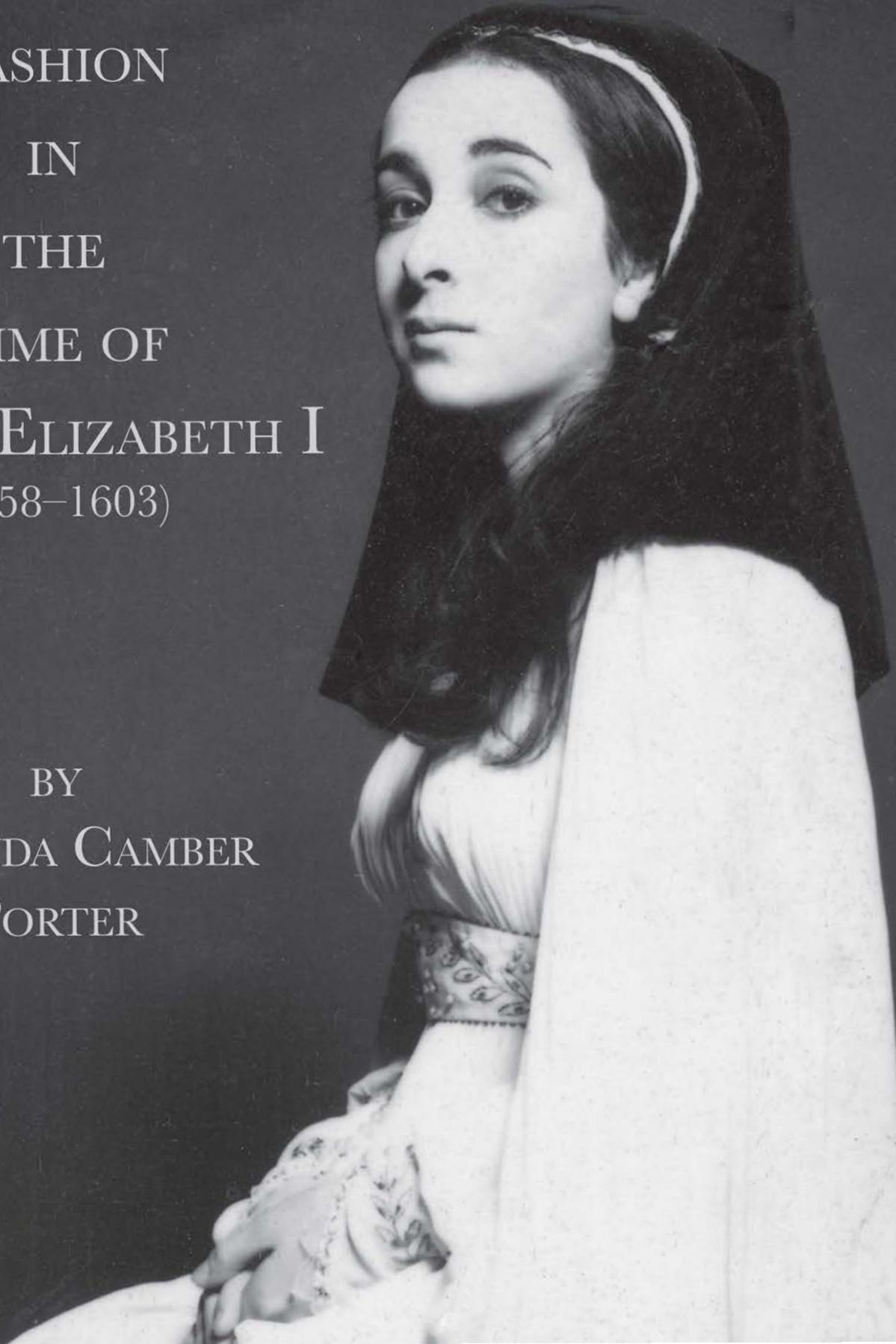


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FASHION
IN
THE
TIME OF
QUEEN ELIZABETH I
(1558–1603)

BY
MELINDA CAMBER
PORTER

FOREWORD BY
ROBBIE LYLE



Published by Blake Press

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Front Cover:
Melinda Camber Porter, 1970
City of London School for Girls
Photo: unknown

Back Cover:
Melinda Camber Porter, 1961
City of London School for Girls
Photo: unknown

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Fashion in the Time of Queen Elizabeth I (1558–1603) was a handwritten thirty-four-page document on eight-inch by twelve-inch lined British school tablet paper with thirty-one separate drawings on white paper by Melinda Camber Porter. Each drawing was cut out and glued into the document. The seventeen-page document on two sides was bound by pink yarn tied through two holes on the left side as the binding.

Melinda Camber Porter wrote and illustrated this book as a school report in Class 2 while she attended The City of London School for Girls. Her teacher (unnamed) gave her a grade of A and commented, 'Where did you find such descriptive material?' We will never know, but Melinda's reference material appears to originate from the great British fashion writer and illustrator of the 1930s, Dion Clayton Calthrop, who wrote and illustrated many books on English fashion from A.D. 1050 to 1750 A.D.

This publication, *Fashion in the Time of Queen Elizabeth I (1558-1603)*, is typed from the original handwritten text and includes reproductions of Melinda Camber Porter's original drawings and illustrations. The book encourages young women and men to sketch and write about their favorite fashions and inspirations.

The book also serves as a piece of history for The City of London School for Girls, and includes photos and awards of Melinda Camber Porter in the appendices. The City of London School for Girls has moved twice since the early 1960s and many records from Melinda's time at the school (1958–1971) are no longer available.

Mr. Robbie Lyle, who had known Melinda Camber Porter since their Oxford University days, provides background in the Foreword on the clothing in the time of Queen Elizabeth I as well as memories of Melinda Camber Porter.

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FOREWORD

I had known Melinda Camber Porter since Oxford. She arrived as a very noteworthy language scholar at Lady Margaret Hall (LMH) and continued to be one of the most intelligent people of our Oxford generation until her premature death from cancer. This handwritten thesis on Elizabethan fashion shows how early on during her time at The City of London School for Girls Melinda was intent on thoroughly researching her work—a theme that any reader would understand reading her subsequent and in-depth newspaper articles written for *The Times* from both Paris and New York.

Melinda sets out to explain the changing “haute couture” of courtly ladies whose collars were sanctioned by Queen Elizabeth herself. The paper also gives us a look at the clothes that



Fig. 1

Melinda Camber Porter with Robbie Lyle holding Melinda's elder child, Robert
Helston Village, Cornwall, UK, 1991
Photo: Joseph R. Flicek

were suitable for working people both in towns and in the countryside. Melinda’s description includes an insight into European fashion and how the English adopted both French and Venetian apparel during different periods of the Elizabethan Age. Those people who worked for either noble or rich city merchant families might have worn the “hand-me downs” of their employers, the clothes ever losing their original sheen and glamour. Yet other clothes were worn to signify the trading status of people such as milkmaids and tinkers, the fashion forerunners that became so familiar when depicting people classified in the “Cries of London” etching series so popular in both the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Melinda sets the reader out on a fascinating journey discovering how babies finally escaped the medieval practice of swaddling clothes; how both boys and girls adopted the Northern European fashion of ankle length garments and starched aprons; then as young adults adopted the changing fashions such as the breeches and trunks of the day. The research helps the reader understand the evolving fashions that were first portrayed by Hans Memling and his subsequent followers, who fled to England from Bruges at the beginning of the sixteenth century, to the fashion displays that were so brilliantly caught by the main portraitists of the sixteenth century Hans Holbein, Nicholas Hilliard and Isaac Oliver.

Robbie Lyle

One of the Four Lords of the Lizard

Director of the Commonwealth Disaster Management Agency

Hon Vice-President Overseas Territories British Red Cross Society

President of the Commonwealth Beekeepers Association

Director of the Music of the Great War Ltd.

**Fashion in the Time of
Queen Elizabeth I
(1558–1603)**

by Melinda Camber Porter



Elizabeth I

Nelida Comba

(1558-1603)

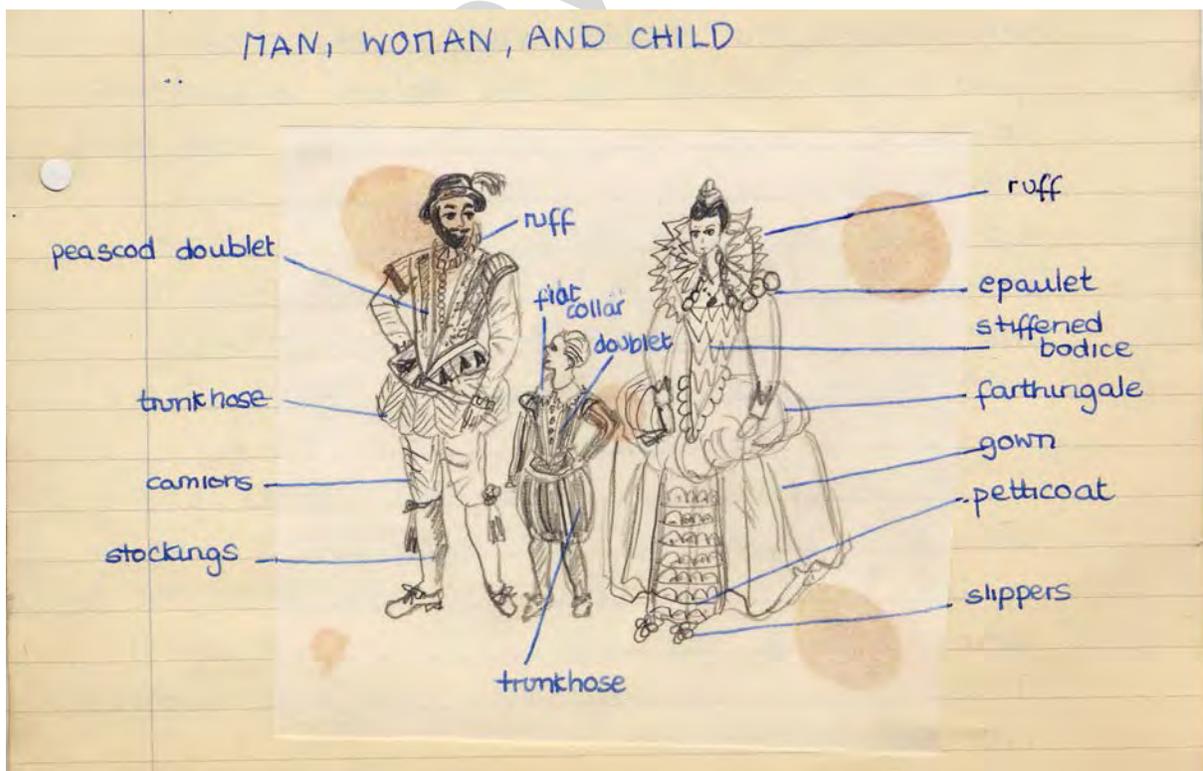
Fashion in the Time of Queen Elizabeth I (1558–1603)

When we think of Elizabethan fashion we have a picture of ruffs, wired hair, monstrous hoops, trunks, doublets and lace. In fact, extravagant and gorgeous clothes. Yet the inhabitants of Britain were not all clothed in such splendid garments and for the majority ‘the spacious days’ were not for them.

Queen Elizabeth was the centre of everything, including fashion, and from this remark we can see what her wardrobe must have been like.

‘I thank God I am endowed with such qualities that, if I were turned out of the realm in my petticoat, I were able to live in any place in Christendom.’

But not only were women (at least the wealthy women) dressed in elaborate things but also the men were.



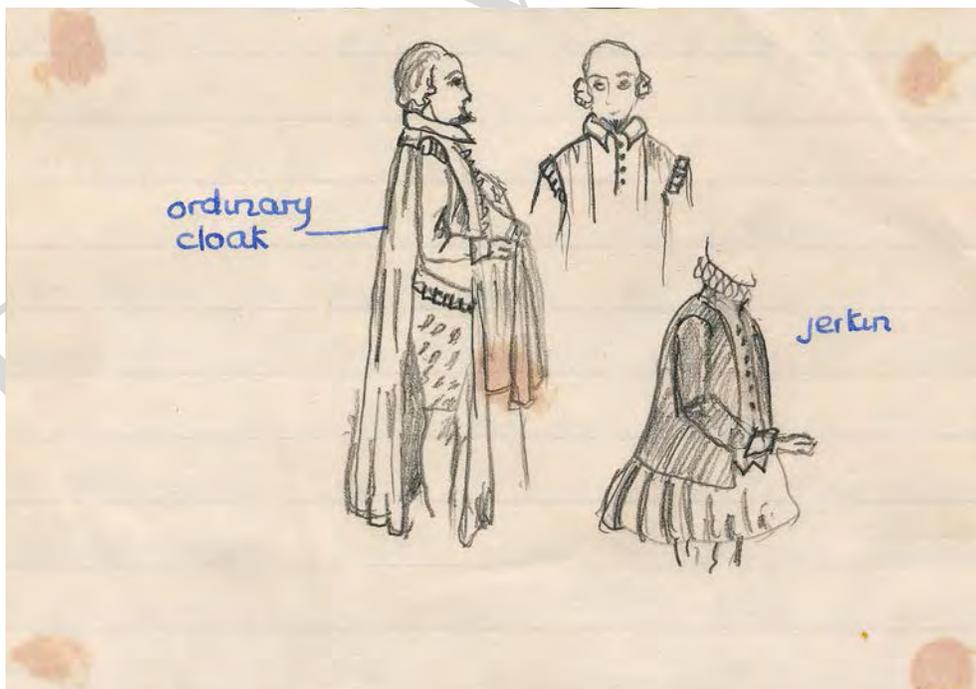
Noblemen

The fashion of the men almost takes one's breath away. Here is a description of a nobleman in the reign of Elizabeth.

'Here comes a gentleman in a great ruff, yellow-starched, an egg-shaped pearl dangles from one ear. One hand rests on his padded hip, the other holds a case of toothpicks and a napkin; his doublet is bellied like a pea's cod, and his breeches are bombasted; his little hat is stuck on one side and the feather in it curls over the brim. His doublet is covered with a

herringbone pattern in silk stitches, and is slashed all over. He is exaggerated, monstrous; he is tight-laced, his trunks stick out a foot all round him, and his walk is therefore affected; but for all that he is a gallant figure.'

The costume consisted of different parts. For the shapes, the doublet was a very close-fitting garment, cut (in one Italian style) down to a long peak in the front. They were made without sleeves, like a waistcoat, and an epaulette overhung the



armhole. The sleeves were tied onto the doublet by 'points' (ribbons with metal tags). For some time the doublets were stuffed into a shape then known as 'pea's cod bellied.'

The jerkin was a jacket with sleeves and was often worn over the doublet. The sleeves of the jerkin were often open from shoulder to wrist. The jumper was a loose jerkin and was worn for comfort in winter. Both the doublet and jerkin have a little skirt.

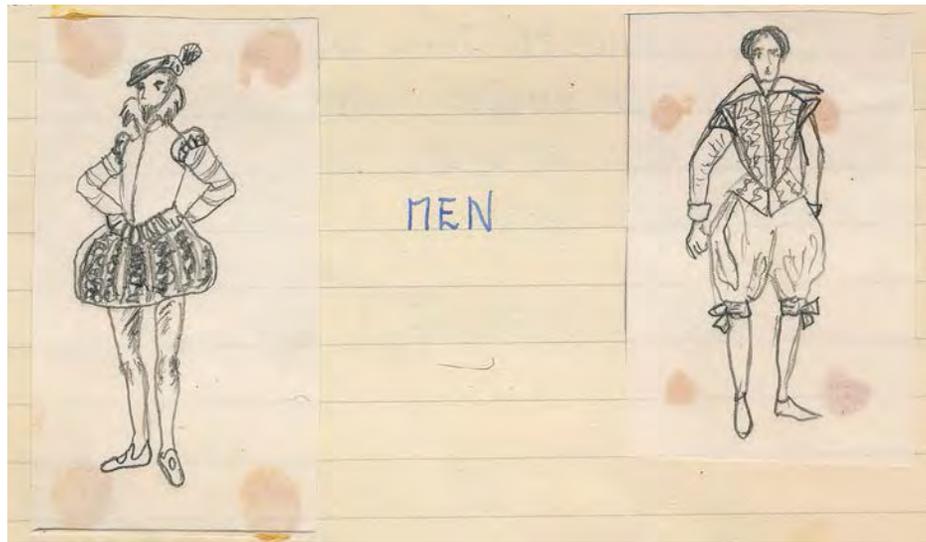
The very wide breeches were called trunks and were worn by nearly everyone in the beginning of Elizabeth's reign but were overtaken by Venetian breeches.

They were sometimes made of a series of wide bands of different colours placed alternately; sometimes they showed the stuffed trunk hose underneath. They were of many gorgeous materials but were stuffed with anything that came handy—wool, rags, or bran. This fashion lasted for about eight years.

The Venetian breeches were very full at the top and narrowed to the knee; they were slashed and puffed or paned like lattice windows with bars of coloured stuffs or gold lace.

The French breeches were tight and ruffled in puffs around the thighs.





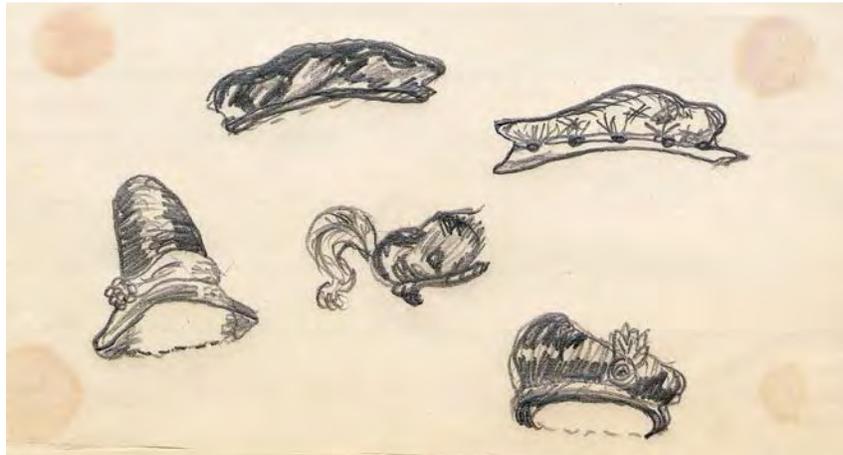
The stockings were made of yarn or silk or wool. They were gartered around the knee and pulled up over the breeches; but if a man had nicely shaped legs he would wear no garters. These stockings were sewn with clocks at the ankles and had different patterns on them, sometimes of gold or silver thread. There were also 'open-work' stockings.

The stockings and breeches were called trunk hose and trunks if the breeches came just to the knee and the stocking over them, reaching all the way up the leg. If the stockings just came over them they were called upper stocks or nether stocks.

The shoes were shaped to the foot and were made of leathers or stuffs. Sometimes a rose-shaped ribbon decorated the shoes.

There were shoes with high cork soles called 'mayles.' The sturtops were boots to the ankles. Some nobles, just to be different, wore square-toed shoes.





The hats worn vary in shape from narrow-brimmed hats to flat ones. Others tended to look like the broad-brimmed Jacobean hat. Round the hats were hat bands—gold chains, ruffled lace, silk or wool. As for the last detail—hair—we have the love-lock tied with ribbons, or hair left fairly

long and brushed straight back from the forehead or short-cropped hair. Pointed beards were very fashionable, and these and moustaches were worn by most.

Now after all this grandeur let us look at the poorer people.



GLOSSARY OF ELIZABETHAN FASHION TERMS

billement
pp. 17–19

An ornamental article of (female) attire, an ornament worn by women in the 16th century: The attire or ornaments of a woman's head or neck: or a bonnet: a French hood; also the jeweled fronts of ladies' head-dresses.

chopine
p.18

Shoe with high (between 2 and 8 inches) cork heels, worn by men and women in the 16th century.

dowlas
p. 21

A coarse kind of linen, much used in the 16th and 17th centuries.

mahoitre
p. 19

A padding placed in the upper part of the sleeve of a garment for the purpose of increasing the apparent breadth of the shoulders.

picadillie
p. 20

● A border of cut work or vandyking inserted on the edge of an article of dress, esp. on a collar or ruff.

slop
p. 13

Wide baggy trousers.

underpropper
p. 20

A device made of wires, whipped over either with gold, silver, or silk thread; worn around the neck under the ruff to bear up the whole frame and body of the ruff from falling and hanging down.

voluper
p. 26

A form of head-dress worn especially by women; a kerchief.

MELINDA CAMBER PORTER
British, 1953–2008

Melinda Camber Porter was born in London and graduated from Oxford University with a First Class Honors degree in Modern Languages. She began her writing career in Paris as a cultural correspondent for *The Times* of London. French culture is the subject of her book *Through Parisian Eyes* (published by Oxford University Press), which the *Boston Globe* describes as “a particularly readable and brilliantly and uniquely compiled collection.”

She interviewed many leading cultural figures in film and literature from Europe and America over her career. These included Nobel Prize winners Saul Bellow, Gunter Grass, Eugenio Montale, and Octavio Paz, writers including Joyce Carol Oates, Joan Didion, and Frances Sagan, and filmmakers Michael Apted, Martin Scorsese, and Wim Wenders, among many others. [Audio recordings are available for more than fifty of these cultural interviews.]

Her novel *Badlands*, a Book-of-the-Month Club selection, was set on South Dakota’s

Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. It was acclaimed by Louis Malle, who said: “better than a novel, it reads like a fierce poem, with a devastating effect on our self-esteem,” and by *Publishers Weekly*, which called it, “a novel of startling, dreamlike lyricism.”

A traveling art exhibition celebrating Melinda’s paintings, curated by the late Leo Castelli, opened at the French Embassy in New York City in 1993. This exhibition, sponsored by the National Endowment for the Arts and the French Embassy, traveled to cities across the United States through 1997.

Peter Trippi, Editor of *Fine Art Connoisseur* magazine said: “In our era of slickly produced images, teeming with messages rather than feelings, Melinda’s art strikes a distinctive balance between the achingly personal and the aesthetically beautiful. This equilibrium has developed, at least in part, through her discerning openness to a range of historical *mentors*, William Blake being the figure she has admired most passionately,” and “not surprisingly

she finds particular pleasure in Gauguin's notebooks, which erase the boundaries between image and word."

A film documenting the creation of her paintings featured in the art exhibition *The Art of Love* showed regularly on Public Television stations nationally, and a collection of her poetry and paintings, also entitled *The Art of Love*, served as companion to the show.

Her paintings have also served as the primary inspiration and as backdrops for several of her theatrical works. She created the backdrops, book, and lyrics for the musical *Night Angel*, with music by Carmen Moore, which was originally performed at The Clark Theater Lincoln Center, in New York City. She created the book, lyrics, and backdrops for the rock-opera-in-progress, *Journey to Benares*, with music, direction, and choreography by Elizabeth Swados, which was performed at the Asia Society and Museum in New York City in November 2003.

Robin Hamlyn, noted world expert on William Blake and senior curator of Tate Britain's Blake and Turner collections, delivered a lecture and wrote a book on her watercolors entitled *William Blake Illuminates the Works of Melinda Camber Porter*. Mr. Hamlyn writes about her, "I believe that all great art is, in its essence, defined by fearlessness. Both Melinda Camber Porter's and William Blake's works exemplify and illuminate the fearlessness that is part of the very essence of all great art."

Melinda Camber Porter leaves a prolific and creative legacy with thousands of paintings; more than two hundred hours of audio and film interviews with global creative figures in the arts, film, and literature; and tens of thousands of pages of writings: novels, plays, essays, journalism, and volumes of poetry. Her creative and spiritual works will be enjoyed for generations to come.

www.MelindaCamberPorter.com

JOURNALISM CONT'D

- Joyce Carol Oates, American Writer, Princeton, New Jersey, 1993 (with audio)
- Marcel Ophüls, French Filmmaker, Paris, 1977 (with audio)
- Nagisa Oshima, Japanese Filmmaker, New York, 1991 (with audio)
- Alan Parker, English Film Director, Wildwood, New Jersey, 1984 (with audio)
- Octavio Paz, Mexican Writer, Nobel Prize in Literature, Mexico City, 1982 (with audio)
- Tom Phillips, British Artist and Historian, Paris, 1975
- Jérôme Peignot, French Writer, Paris, 1975
- Michael H. Posner, American Human Rights Activist, New York, 1993 (with audio)
- Ishmael Reed, American Poet and Writer, New York, 1992 (with audio)
- Alain Resnais, French Film Director, Paris, 1985 (with audio)
- Jean-François Revel, French Journalist and Writer, Paris, 1985 (with audio)
- Alain Robbe-Grillet, French Filmmaker and Writer, Paris, 1974
- Éric Rohmer, French Filmmaker and Writer, Paris, 1975
- Françoise Sagan, French Writer, Paris, 1978 (with audio)
- Jean-Paul Sartre, French Philosopher and Writer, Paris, 1977
- John Sayles, American Filmmaker, New York, 1991 (with audio)
- Martin Scorsese, American Filmmaker, New York, 1998 (with audio)
- Stuart Seide, American Theater Director, Paris, 1975
- Delphine Seyrig, French Actress and Director, Paris, 1975
- George Steiner, French-born American Philosopher and Writer
Oxford, United Kingdom, 1973
- Bertrand Tavernier, French Filmmaker, Paris, 1985 (with audio)
- Olivier Todd, French Journalist and Writer, Paris, 1978 (with audio)
- Peter Trippi, American Art Historian, New York, 2006 (with audio and video)
- François Truffaut, French Filmmaker, Paris, 1975
- Roger Vadim, French Filmmaker, Paris, 1975
- Michel Veuthey, Swiss Human Rights Activist, New York, 1994 (with audio)
- Jon Voight, American Actor, New York, 1987 (with audio)
- Francis Warner, English Dramatist, Oxford, United Kingdom, 1977
- Wim Wenders, German Filmmaker, Paris, Texas, 1983 (with audio)
- Monique Wittig, French Author and Feminist, Paris, 1976
- George Wolfe, American Theater, New York, 1993 (with audio)
- Susannah York, English Actress, New York, 1991 (with audio)

“Students, of Melinda Camber Porter’s caliber, at the City of London School for Girls continue to receive the best opportunities and support to nurture their talent and to develop to their fullest potential.”

Ena Harrop
Headmistress
City of London
School for Girls
2014

Melinda Camber Porter Archive of Creative Works
Volume 2, Number 1



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www.cultureunplugged.com/storyteller/Joseph_Flicek

www.amazon.com/Melinda-Camber-Porter/e/B001HQ1BS6

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