



Sir Edwin Henry Landseer
The Pets, n.d.
Oil on canvas, 1925.169

The Pets



Sir Edwin Henry Landseer (1802–1873) The youngest son of an English engraver, Landseer began painting at an early age under the instruction of Benjamin Robert Haydon, who encouraged him to study animal anatomy. Landseer went on to train at the Royal Academy and was knighted by Victoria and Albert in 1850. Despite ill health, he continued his painting career throughout the majority of his life.

A product of its time

During the 19th Century there was a great deal of social divide amongst the classes. However, Landseer managed to cross those boundaries with the subject of his work and quickly gained recognition among both the Victorian era aristocracy and the emerging middle class.

Take a closer look

This painting of young Lady Rachel Russell and her pets was a commission from a royal family member. Both the animals and the little girl are painted realistically and are given a romantic quality with the contrast of the dark colors and the soft handling of subject matter.

Did you know?

Landseer was awarded a prize by the Society of Arts for the best drawing of animals at the age of 11. Before he was 12 years of age, he could paint in watercolors and oil. These early sketches are now preserved in the South Kensington Museum, London. At the age of 13, two of his oil paintings were hung in the Royal Academy Exhibition in London. He entered the Royal Academy when he was merely 15 years old.

On your own

Newfoundland Club of America: <http://www.ncanewfs.org/history/pages/landseer.html>

BBC – Your Paintings: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/arts/yourpaintings/artists/edwin-henry-landseer>