

Former Foreign Secretary unveils portrait-in-waiting

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A specially commissioned portrait of a world statesman, being unveiled in London next week (October 30), cannot be used for its purpose until after the death of its subject.

The painting of former Foreign Secretary and Minister of Defence Lord Carrington was commissioned to appear on the front cover of the forthcoming book "The Last Whig", the Peer's official biography by historian and former BBC Defence correspondent Christopher Lee.

It is believed to be the first occasion in modern times that a portrait has been specifically commissioned for a biography. Although the portrait is finished, the manuscript complete and already with publishers Penguin Books, the book will not be printed until after Lord Carrington's death.

And that, according to the artist Fiona Graham-Mackay, who spent five months working on the portrait, could be some time.

"Lord Carrington is full of restless energy," she says. "It took me five weeks to get the pose right. Every time we got down to work he would leap up and insist on showing me something in the house or garden. He is enormously restless and a man with so much more to do," she says.

The painting, which will be unveiled by the 88 year old former Minister of Defence and Foreign Secretary at Chatham House, shows a casually dressed Lord Carrington gazing pensively out of the window of his home in Buckinghamshire. With him is one of his two dachshunds, Edward, named after Edward Heath; the other, named Hilda after Margaret Thatcher, is absent.

Although Mrs Thatcher is unable to attend the unveiling of the painting by Lord Carrington at Chatham House next week, the list of those attending is impressive with a total of six former Tory Foreign Ministers: Major, Luce, Walden, Hurd, Howe and Lord Carrington himself.

An eminent artist who graduated from the RCA and studied under Quentin Blake and Linda Kitson, Fiona Graham-Mackay is also known for her scenes captured during her travels around the world including Pakistan, her work from a recent trip due to be exhibited at the Pakistan High Commission early next year. A number of recent commissions for portrait work lead to the Carrington painting and she is currently working on a portrait of the former Lord Mayor, Sir Francis MacWilliams. The Carrington portrait, along with other of her portraits and sketches, will be shown at a December reception at the artist's Studios in East Sussex.

Lord Carrington will unveil the finished portrait at a private reception at the London think-tank, Chatham House, St James's Square on 30 October. It will hang in Chatham House, the foreign affairs think tank where there is a recently established Carrington Chair of International Security.

Editors' Note:

A high resolution jpg image of the portrait are available immediately and photographs of the artist with

Lord Carrington and other VIP's will be available after the event. Numbers at Chatham Houe are limited and if you wish to send a representative and for further information on this press release please contact Chris Lee at Talk Up Ltd on 01323 833523 or email chris@talk-up.com