

Looking closer at portraits

Remember there is no right or wrong way to 'read' a portrait but they often contain clues to reveal information about the person's life.

Let's look and think about Paula Rego's work called *The Artist in her studio*.

- Who is the artist in the picture? How can you tell?
- What is the relationship between the people in the painting?
- What do you think the objects and fantasy personas tell you about the artist?
- What sense do you get of the woman's character or mood?

Let's look and think about Milly Childers work called *Self portrait*.

- What is her job? How do you know?
- What can you tell about the characters attitude? Look at the position of her head and gaze.
- Does she look like a Victorian woman? Yes or no, explain your answer.

Now lets look at both of the pictures together.

- Why do you think the artists created their portraits? Are their motives different?
- What are the similarities and differences between the portraits?
- What can you tell about their characters, lifestyles or experiences of the artists? Do they differ? If they do, why do you think they do?
- How do you feel when looking at the pictures? What is it about the pictures that make you feel this way?
- Do you like the pictures? Why?