



Thomas Hudson (British, 1701–1779), *Richard Ray*, 1746, oil on canvas, 30 x 25 in., Gift of Mary Prioreshi in memory of Dr. Plinio Prioreshi, 2022.5

Praised by his contemporaries for his ability to create striking likenesses of his subjects, Thomas Hudson (British, 1701–1779) was from the mid-1740s until the mid-1750s the leading fashionable portraitist in London. To cater to his enthusiastic clientele, Hudson maintained a busy studio, employing assistants and drapery painters and training a number of prominent portraitists. Commissioned by the sitter, this painting is a half-length portrait of Richard Ray, Esquire (1721–1811), proprietor of the Plashwood estate near Haughley in Suffolk. Ray's body is turned very slightly to the left, with the face presented in full. He appears clean shaven with long, curly brown hair. His red satin coat and large, white muslin collar, edged with lace and tied with a cord with tassels can be described as Van Dyck dress, after the sumptuous fashions depicted by the Flemish Baroque painter Anthony van Dyck (1599–1641), who enjoyed a successful career at the English court in the seventeenth century.

British portraiture has always had a prominent place within Joslyn Art Museum's collection, beginning with Sarah Joslyn's gift of a painting by Joshua Reynolds (*Portrait of Miss Franks*, 1766) in 1934. Hudson's *Richard Ray* is a gift from longtime museum member Mary Prioreshi. It was purchased in 1979 by her late husband, Dr. Plinio Prioreshi, a great admirer of British painting. Mary shared that he would be delighted that *Richard Ray* will be displayed within Joslyn's gallery of eighteenth-century European art.