Giovanni Antonio Fasolo was an Italian artist who lived and worked in the area around Venice. Fasolo is best known for his portraits of Venetian nobility, particularly family portraits including prominent family’s children. This family’s identity has yet to be uncovered. While we don’t know this family’s name or history, we can figure out a lot about them based on the way Fasolo created the composition. The father is wearing an austere black fur-trimmed coat, commonly worn by Venetian elite. The two eldest children are dressed in decadent clothing, further demonstrating the family’s wealth. We can also learn a lot about the relationships between family members, from the behavior of the dog to the protective arm of the father.

- What else can you glean from observing this portrait?

**GIOVANNI ANTONIO FASOLO**

Fasolo was a late renaissance artist and this portrait exemplifies many common characteristics of later Renaissance portraiture. The figures are dressed in rich clothing and are clustered together wearing somber expressions. The overall composition of the family forms a triangular assembly, with the father forming the apex and the three children forming the base. Color and movement are similarly balanced, with the dog jumping towards the boy’s hip as he bends forward towards the father, mirrored in the daughters crossed arm grasping the father’s hand.

- What other characteristics of late Renaissance portraiture can you identify?
When painting group portraits, making preliminary sketches is a tactic artists use to save their and their sitter’s time. This activity guides you in making rough sketches and using those to create a final composition.

**DIRECTIONS**

1. Begin by selecting people for a group portrait. You might choose to create a family group portrait including your family members, or select portrait participants from friends. Ask each person to sit for your group portrait. Using pencil, charcoal, or even crayon, roughly sketch each person’s likeness. Capture a number of angles on the same sheet such as standing, smiling, looking in the distance, seated, etc. Spend no more than 20 minutes sketching each individual person.

2. On a sheet of absorbent paper or canvas, use pencil to begin sketching your group portrait composition. Include each of the individual sitters in the final composition, paying attention to how the placement of each sitter will contribute (or disrupt) the balance of the composition.

3. Using oil or tempera paint and using your sketches as a guide, paint your final composition. Copy Fasolo’s style and pay close attention to the texture of clothing, harmony of balance and color selection, and formality.