

## SEMINAR 3

### PORTRAITS OF ELIZABETH I: KEY CONCEPTS & IDEAS

- Elizabethan courtiers had their portraits painted to pay allegorical homage to their Queen
- Elizabeth was the unmarried queen of a country isolated from a predominantly Catholic Europe
- Elizabeth rigorously controlled her own image, and no portraits of her circulated without her permission
- Elizabeth's likenesses were all frozen (i.e. painted) at the same age
- painters continued to be regarded as no more than craftsmen

### VOCABULARY TO DESCRIBE PORTRAITS OF ELIZABETH I

- courtiers circling the Virgin Queen in all their peacock finery
- Elizabethan painting is made of codes and puzzles
- the cunningness and cold-blooded political flair of Elizabeth is perfectly reflected in the hard, enamelled surfaces of Elizabethan state portraits
- Elizabeth's portraits were unique and exotic fabrications having no counterpart in European painting
- portraits densely packed with symbolic attributes
- Elizabeth's feet firmly planted on a map of England
- Elizabeth as a poised and reserved giantess
- Elizabeth even controls weather, dispelling storms and bringing sunshine
- the painting memorialises the defeat of the Spanish Armada
- her right hand resting on a globe
- to the right the Armada founders in defeat
- Elizabeth is seen as the great monarch of an endangered Protestant nation
- to hold the forces of the Catholic antichrist at bay
- Elizabeth had herself painted as the Sun, the unmoved mover and the centre of the universe
- combining frigidity with eros
- Elizabeth inherited the Reformation that her father began
- to bring peace to schismatic England
- the emblems on her sleeve are the most apt of all her attributes
- Elizabeth's face is like a cosmetic mask
- she seems as brittle as a china doll and almost as artificial
- portraits stilled and stifled by *Realpolitik* and the Elizabethan cult of sovereignty