

# Valerie's Portraits by George Mackie

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Valerie Rushton was one of several fictitious characters I invented when I was trying to launch an internet discussion forum on Tunicate Biology. I gave these characters email addresses and used them to stimulate lively discussions by having them write in with challenging questions or contentious points of view. This worked for a while and several hundred people signed up, but the discussion part dwindled over time and the forum degenerated primarily into a place where people announced their latest publications or advertised forthcoming meetings. I handed it over to a new list owner about 5 years ago.

Val lived on as a facebook identity, became "friends" with most of my family and made comments on their blogs. According to her facebook profile she was born in 1977, graduated from Evergreen High School in Seattle, and worked as a make-up artist. Her skills in improving upon nature in the way people look prompted her to create a series of portraits of her friends in which she photoshopped their faces onto the bodies of historical or famous figures.

In 2014 I began to get tired of playing games with false identities. The pedantic, sententious Mario Santagata was committed to a correctional facility after being convicted on several counts of identity theft and in 2015 I announced that *"Our friend Valerie Rushton is giving up her career as a makeup artist to become a Carmelite nun in a traditional, cloistered convent where her life will henceforth be dedicated to prayer and contemplation. She will be deactivating her facebook account but at my request has allowed me to put her album of "Portraits" on my web page. Thanks Valerie, and may you find fulfilment in the new life to which you have been called."*

Here then is a selection of Valerie's portraits with accompanying titles and a few comments as they appeared on facebook when first published (mackie.geo\_at\_gmail.com), see also <https://sites.google.com/view/mackiefamily/home>

## Elizabeth II, Queen of England

Rachel Mackie -We have risen to the occasion!

Catherine Placidi Walch -Génial ! J'adore celle là

Jean Blanchot Il faut un courage certain pour se déclarer timbré!





**Charlotte as Vivien Leigh as Scarlett O'Hara** in *Gone With the Wind* (1939)



**Rachel as Eva Braun** at the Berghof near Berchtesgaden



**Rachel as Cleopatra, Queen of Egypt**

Gillian Mackie -Frowning from the weight of all that glory.

Mario Santagata -she is frowning because she is suffering from snake bite

Rachel Mackie -She's not frowning. She's looking regal.

Gillian Mackie -worn down by the affairs of state, perhaps?

Rachel Mackie -More like the papyrus croco-packs

Richard Somerset Mackie -Left the cheese on toast on "high."





### Rachel as Madame du Barry

Mario Santagata -why is she holding a cabbage? or is it a lettuce?

Valerie Rushton -Louis XV didn't like broccoli



**Rachel as The Infanta Margarita**, daughter of King Philip IV of Spain (after Velasquez)

Rachel Mackie -Fond memories-I always loved that comfortable dress-it was so well-suited to the sand box.



**Rachel as Simonetta Vespucci.** (1453–1476). "Upon arriving in Florence, Simonetta was discovered by Sandro Botticelli and other prominent painters and before long every nobleman in the city was besotted with her." (Wikipedia)

Susan Safyan -She is a true beauty!

Delphine Thibault -hey Rachel Mackie aren't you starting to have multiple personality disorder???





**Delphine Thibault as Persephone,  
Goddess of Spring**

Catherine Placidi Walch -Bravo !! Déesse du printemps certes mais reine des morts et de l'enfer non ??

Valerie Rushton -Persephone has multiple personality disorder (like Rachel)

Delphine Thibault -Thanks Valerie Rushton

Valerie Rushton -I hope I got your hair right. I had to reconstruct the part on the left.

Delphine Thibault -it's just perfect, thanks

**Rachel as Guilhermina Augusta  
Xavier de Medim Suggia Carteado  
Mena,**

Portuguese cellist, inamorata of Pablo Casals







## Rachel as Boadicea, Queen of the Iceni

Valerie Rushton - "Boadicea was tall, terrible to look on and gifted with a powerful voice. A flood of bright red hair ran down to her knees; she wore a golden necklet made up of ornate pieces, a multi-coloured robe and over it a thick cloak held together by a brooch. She took up a long spear to cause dread in all who set eyes on her." (Tacitus)

Gillian Mackie - Surpasses Tacitus's description by looking mild and beautiful instead of "terrible to look on!"

Mario Santagata - Not so mild! In 60 A.D Boadicea led a revolution against the Romans, driving them out of Colchester and burning London to the ground. The Romans rallied, and the XIV Legion defeated the rebels, killing almost 80,000. According to Tacitus, Boadicea killed herself rather than be captured.

## The Infanta Margarita, daughter of King Philip IV of Spain

(impersonated by Rachel Mackie)







### **Joan of Arc, 1412-1431,**

known affectionately to the French as La Pucelle d'Orléans. (with Rachel)

Mario Santagata - Perhaps the most extraordinary woman in the whole history of the human race. At the age of 17, claiming divine guidance, Joan inspired and led the French army to victory over the English in a series of engagements in the Loire valley, including raising the siege of Orleans. She used her influence to embolden Charles, the Dauphin, to take the Crown of France in July 1429, thus further thwarting the ambitions of the English whose King Henry VI had a claim to the throne of France through his wife Catherine de Valois.

While helping defend Compiègne

against a siege by the Burgundians, Joan was captured and handed over to the English who sent her to the Bishop of Beauvais for trial in an ecclesiastical court. Condemned as a heretic she was burned at the stake on May 31, 1431.

George Mackie - I have to say, she is not a folk heroine as far as we English are concerned

Susan Safyan - Good thing Mario is more objective about her accomplishments. She was beautiful...at least in this photo!



### **Queen Nefertiti (ca.1370-1330 BC),** wife of Pharaoh Akhenaten, Eighteenth Dynasty -- with Bran Mackie.

Mario Santagata - It is worth a trip to the Museum der vaterländischen Altertümer in Berlin to see this marvellous bust.

Richard Somerset Mackie - How odd! she is the spitting image of meiner nichte. Must have royal blood.

Valerie Rushton - Heard from Bran Jan 2nd "Baby is doing great and is officially full term as of today. (ta da!)." Congrats to you and Jon ( Jonathan Sugerman).





**Diane de Poitiers (1499 - 1566)**, mistress of Henry II of France (with Rachel)

Mario Santagata - No mere bimbo, Diane was Countess of Saint-Vallier, Duchess of Étampes and Duchess of Valentinois. She had an acute understanding of finance and power politics and had an enormous influence on affairs of state and on the king personally. He loved her sincerely. She wrote many of his official letters, and Henry even entrusted her with bringing up his children.

Rachel Mackie - Maybe so, but she has drooping shoulders!

Valerie Rushton - I could straighten them out for you if it really matters so much. Back to the drawing board I guess (groan).

Charlotte Mackie - Do me do me!!!!

Valerie Rushton - do you want sloping or

square shoulders? some people think this is all that matters apparently.

Charlotte Mackie - anything!

**Editors Note** Charlotte got her wish. Valerie did one of her as Vivien Leigh as Scarlett O'Hara.



**Venus and Isolde by S. Botticelli (1445-1510)**

(with Isolde, daughter of Anita Roberts)





**Diane de Poitiers** with shoulders borrowed from Maria Sharapova.

Gillian Mackie - I like the cinquecento version much better, and it goes with the style of the dress! Perhaps a hybrid version would work?

Delphine Thibault - I prefer the sloping one, she looks taller and fits the dress better.

Mario Santagata - I rather agree. I admire Maria Sharapova's shoulders very much but they are perhaps too muscular for present purposes.

Rachel Mackie - They only fit the dress because the dress was cut for sloping shoulders! No one could do anything useful with sloping shoulders like that! Try hauling in a plankton net, Delphine, with sloping shoulders: you'll see what I mean!

Luc-françois Granier - Bref..tu continues à faire fantasmer ...!!!

Delphine Thibault - Rachel, I doubt Diane had to do net tows, at that time ladies did not really have to do anything useful.....

Rachel Mackie - They couldn't , Delphine ,they had sloping shoulders and dresses cut for leisure. Not to mention their shoes.

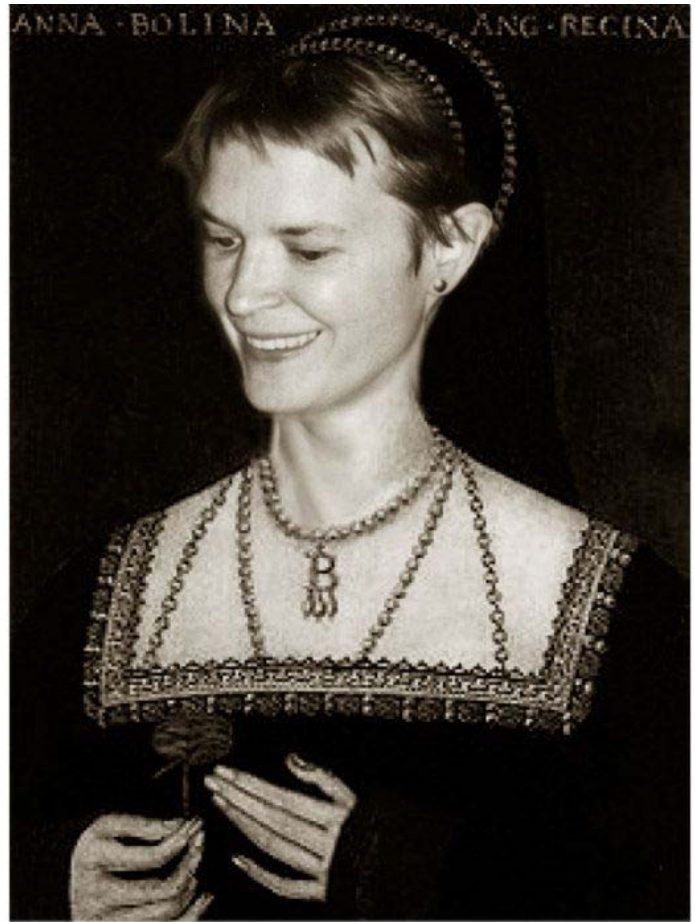


**Marie Antoinette (1755-1793),  
Queen of France** (with Rachel)

Richard Somerset Mackie - Only thing jarring re the glasses. Did they have them in 1740?

Rachel Mackie - Yes.





**Henry VIII, King of England, and his second wife Anne Boleyn**

(impersonated by Richard Mackie and Rachel Mackie)



**Femme fatale or troubled teenager?**

**Lucrezia Borgia, aged 16.** (with Rachel)

Mario Santagata - Illegitimate daughter of a Pope - that's enough trouble for anyone, and may excuse her promiscuity





**Emma, Lady Hamilton** , mistress of Admiral Lord Nelson, impersonated by Rachel



**The Great Sphinx of Giza** - الهول أبو

(With Alice Arnaud's cat Cleo Patre)

Mario Santagata - After 4500 years it is not surprising that the statue has suffered some damage. For instance the whiskers would originally have been much longer.

Cleo Patre - this is me!!

Valerie Rushton - sorry Cleo I should have asked you for purrmission to use your pic on the sphinx but I couldn't resist it you are such a handsome cat

George Mackie - I know what Pookie Mackie is thinking - why not meeeeee, why not meeeeee?

Pookie Mackie - Why not meeeeee? why not meeeeee?