

REVEALING PORTRAIT: DISCOVERING LLOYD PATTERSON

Dr. Wilfried Zeisler, Chief Curator

In 2022, Hillwood secured the long-term loan of a beautiful portrait of Lloyd Patterson (1910–42), an artist who settled in the Soviet Union in the early 1930s. In 1932, during the Great Depression and the height of the Harlem Renaissance, a twenty-two-year-old Patterson traveled to Soviet Russia to participate in *Black and White*, a Soviet-German film to highlight racism in the United States. The project attracted a number of Black American actors, students, activists, and cultural figures of the Harlem Renaissance, including Langston Hughes (1901–67), Louise Thompson (1901–99), and Dorothy West (1907–98).

While most of the group returned to the United States after the film project's cancellation, Patterson stayed on in Moscow, marrying the Ukrainian born theater artist and fashion designer Vera Aralova (1911–2001) and working as a designer and newsreader for Soviet radio. The couple became a staple of influential art circles. Their son, James Patterson, born in 1933, rose to stardom as a child actor, performing in *The Circus*, the beloved musical comedy directed by Grigori Aleksandrov (1903–83) in 1936, the year prior to Marjorie Post's arrival in Moscow as the U.S. ambassador's wife. Lloyd died during the war in 1942. James later became a poet, and after the collapse of the Soviet Union, moved to Washington, D.C., with his mother.

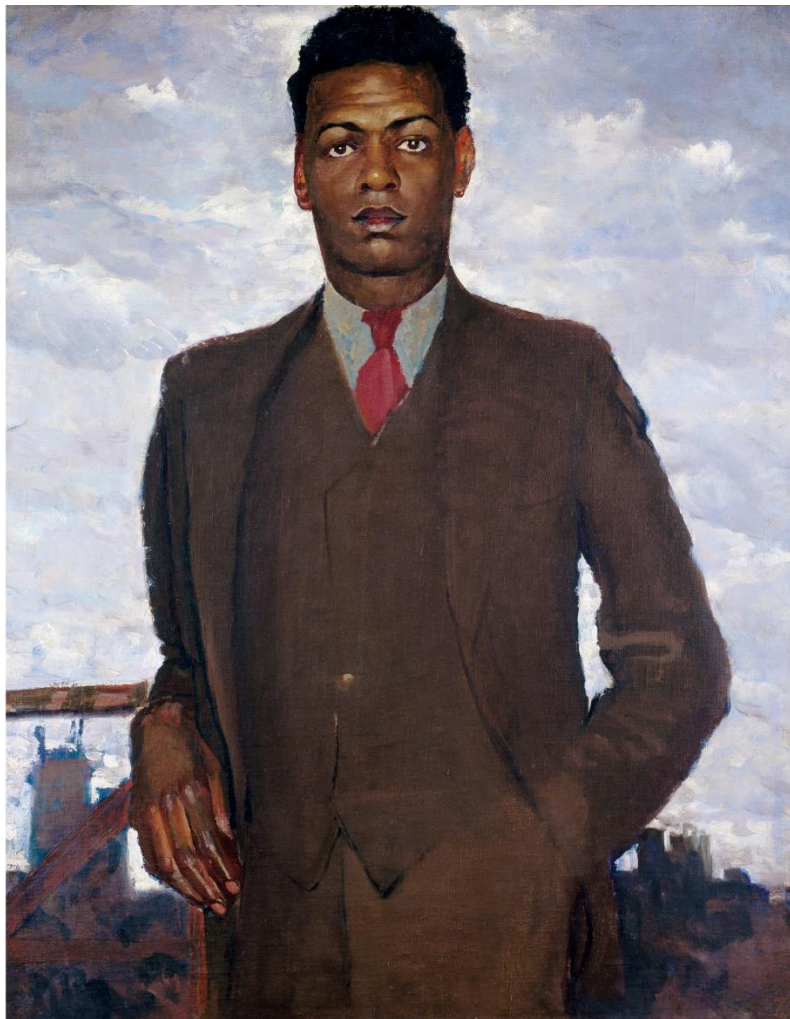


Fig. Portrait of Lloyd Patterson (1910–1942), Soviet Russia, 1960s, Oil on canvas, on loan from Andrew Leddy

This stunning portrait (on view starting April 19), the Portrait of Countess Julia Samoilova with foster daughter Giovannina and a Black Servant, and the selection of objects dedicated to the Russian literary giant of African descent Alexander Pushkin in the Pavilion bring a new dimension to Hillwood's collection of Russian art, illustrating the diverse stories and experiences of Black people in imperial and Soviet Russia.

To learn more about the portrait and its fantastic story, don't miss Hillwood's [livestream lecture on May 12](#) featuring a conversation between Andrew Leddy, owner of the portrait, and Chief Curator Wilfried Zeisler.