



Francesco Hayez, *Portrait of Matilde Juva Branca*, 1851
oil on canvas, 120 × 94 cm

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Born in Venice and trained in Venice and Rome, **FRANCESCO HAYEZ** (Venice 1791 - Milan 1882) moved to Milan in 1822, after the success of his painting *Pietro Rossi*. This introduced a subject from national history into Italian painting and made him the standard-bearer for Romanticism.

A teacher of painting at the Accademia di Brera for almost half a century, he dominated Milan's cultural life, profoundly renewing history painting and portraiture with a recovery of the dazzling Venetian colouring.

The portrait of the opera singer Matilde Juva Branca, exhibited in Brera in 1851 and Paris in 1855, one of the most important and intense portraits of nineteenth-century Italy, is an example of this, inspired by Titian's *Portrait of a Gentleman with a Glove*. ■