

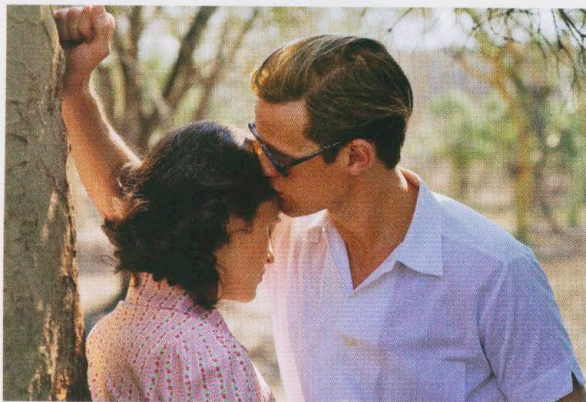
# People Are Talking About

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Talent

especially since playing the iconic Doctor Who from 2010 to 2014. Today, sitting in a corner banquette, he attracts more than his fair share of longing looks from the swishy-haired, Sloaney girls having tea at the neighboring tables. (Sorry, he's taken—his girlfriend is the actress Lily James, with whom he starred in *Pride and Prejudice* and *Zombies*.)

Raised in the English countryside, Smith is the son of a businessman father and a mother who “did a million dif-



SMITH AND COSTAR CLAIRE FOY BRING TO LIFE A YOUNG ROYAL COUPLE IN TRANSITION.

ferent jobs.” An outstanding footballer, he was all set to go professional but, at sixteen, had to quit because of a back injury. At a schoolteacher’s suggestion, he joined a production of *Twelve Angry Men*. “He was convinced I could be an actor,” Smith says. “I thought acting was a bit silly, but I did that play, and I suddenly felt quite enthusiastic about it.” He joined the National Youth Theatre and went on to study creative writing and drama at the University of East Anglia.

Charming, affable, and clever, Smith was an easy fit for his latest role: the young, glamorous Prince Philip in Netflix’s new show *The Crown*. Created by Peter Morgan (*Frost/Nixon*, *The Queen*) and codirected by Stephen Daldry (*Billy Elliot*, *The Hours*), *The Crown* also stars Claire Foy as the young Elizabeth, Jared Harris in a standout performance as King George VI, John Lithgow as Winston Churchill, and Eileen Atkins as Queen Mary. “The moment I saw Matt in the room, lanky and dangerous and confident and a little wild, I thought he was our Philip,” says Morgan.

For anyone suffering costume-drama withdrawal after the end of *Downton Abbey*, this series offers castles and palaces, twinsets and tweeds, and sailor-suited children galore. Underplayed and understated, and shot in gloomy English light as if under a veil of postwar austerity, *The Crown* feels like an authentic representation of royal life. “When Elizabeth became queen, the dynamic between her and Philip shifted. I think they both struggled,” says Foy. “Smith somehow makes Philip conflicted, loving, charming, strong, and exciting . . . and he looks really good in a blond wig!”

The show opens in 1947, just five years before Princess Elizabeth becomes queen. We watch as Philip gives up his birthright (he was born Prince Philip of Greece and Denmark) for his Duke of Edinburgh title. “He was a young man who had a great career in the making, and all that was stripped away from him,” observes Smith, who read biographies, watched archive film, and listened to recordings to try to capture that very particular “royal” accent. “I didn’t want to do a caricature.” On set, fiction did occasionally tip over into reality. He and Foy would “laugh at the absurdity of it,” he says, “because you stand there and people start to treat you like the prince and princess. We’d hear the crew saying, ‘Philip and the queen have arrived.’”—PLUM SYKES PATA>178

Art

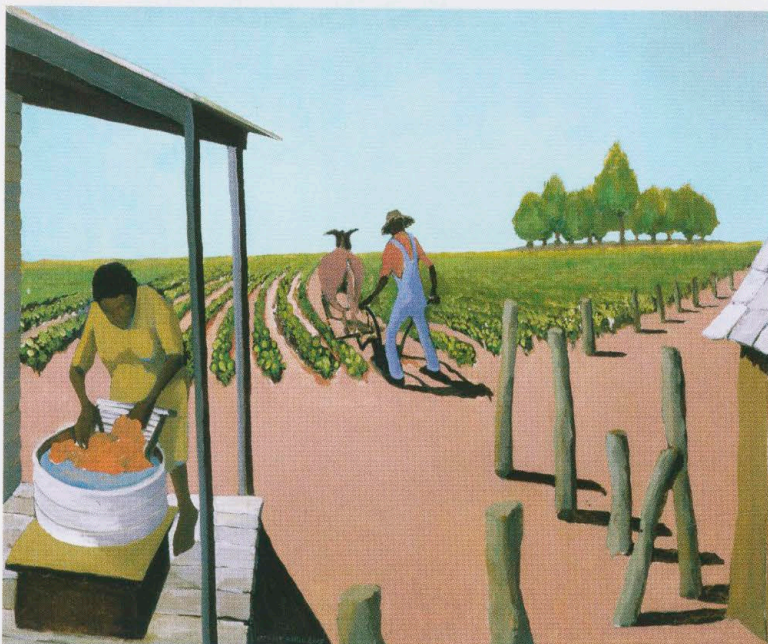
## Shared HISTORY

Born the second of ten children in Morgan County, Georgia, Benny Andrews (1930–2006) was shaped as an artist by his sharecropper roots, his engagement with politics, and his belief that Surrealism was the truest expression of the African-

American experience. Timed to the election, Chelsea’s Michael Rosenfeld Gallery brings together “**Benny Andrews: The Bicentennial Series**,” a monumental group of works he began in 1969, combining Thomas Hart Benton’s figurative Regionalism with dreamlike elements drawn from African-American tradition.

“Benny understood that if you don’t provide access to your own story,” says Pellom McDaniels III, a curator at Emory University, “it will not be told.”—LESLIE CAMHI

ANDREWS’S SOUTHERN LANDSCAPE, 1965.



TALENT: ALEX BAILEY/NETFLIX. ART: BENNY ANDREWS. SOUTHERN LANDSCAPE, 1965. OIL ON CANVAS, 33" X 40". MORRIS MUSEUM OF ART, AUGUSTA, GEORGIA. BRIDGEMAN IMAGES. © ESTATE OF BENNY ANDREWS/LICENSED BY YAGA, NEW YORK, NY.