

V&A Academy

PARIS: IMPRESSIONISM TO AVANT-GARDE

V&A

Introduction

Discover painting at its most vibrant. In the late 19th century, Paris was the western capital of modern art. Artists from across Europe and America converged on the city to study, exhibit, and sell their work, fostering an artistic community unrivalled in its competitive vitality.

Transformed under Napoleon III into a modern metropolis, Paris itself became a powerful source of inspiration for many artists of the period. These included the group we know as the Impressionists, who saw Paris - with its grand boulevards, café-concerts and vibrant nightlife - as a starting point for their revolutionary new approach to painting. Their experiments set a standard for innovation that younger artists like Seurat, Van Gogh and Toulouse-Lautrec would strive to surpass.

Information

Thursdays, 25 September – 23 October, 14.00-16.30. Online.

Watch lecture recordings on demand, available at the end of each day, until 27 November 2025.

Your course leader

Dr Kathy McLauchlan, art historian specialising in French painting and lecturer with the Arts Society, Morley College and Oxford University.

Note: V&A Academy programmes are subject to change without notice.

Week 1 – 25 September

Introduction to Paris & its Painters

- 13.45 Introduction to the Course
- 14.00 Paris: World Capital of Art **Kathy McLauchlan**
- 15.30 Defining the Avant-Garde **Joshua White**

Week 2 – 2 October

Making an Impression

- 14.00 Exhibiting new Art: Impressionism and its Publics **Kathy McLauchlan**
- 15.30 The Life of the City, by Day and by Night **Jo Rhymer**

Week 3 – 9 October

Artist Communities

- 14.00 Artist Communities from Home and Abroad **Kathy McLauchlan**
- 15.30 Making their Mark: Women Artists of Paris **Jo Rhymer**
- 16.05 Meet & Greet **Kathy McLauchlan**

Week 4 – 16 October

After Impressionism

14.00 A Salon of the Streets **Justine Hopkins**

15.30 Divisionism & its Legacies **Kathy McLauchlan**

Week 5 – 23 October

Legacies and Reactions

14.00 At Home in Paris: The Nabis **Kathy McLauchlan**

15.30 An Unlikely Forum of Modernity **Justine Hopkins**