

V&A Academy

ART AND
THE CITY:
RENAISSANCE
TO EARLY
MODERN



Introduction

Gain a unique perspective on the development of the arts by exploring the vibrant relationship between art, artists and the metropolis between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries.

As cities developed from the Renaissance period onwards, the arts increasingly came to symbolize their wealth and power. In this course we trace the impact of material and intellectual conditions on the arts, while at the same time examining how painters, sculptors and architects shaped the urban environment. Expert lecturers explore topics including the splendours of Baroque Rome, the 'golden age' of Dutch art in Delft and Amsterdam and the rise of Istanbul.

Information

Mondays, 19 January – 23 March, 11.00-15.30. Onsite and Online.

Watch lecture recordings on demand, available at the end of each day, until 1 June 2026.

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 – 19 January

Introduction - Cities of Commerce

- 10.45 Introduction to the Course
- 11.00 Centres of Trade, Wealth and Art **Kathy McLauchlan**
- 12.30 The Hansa **Zoë Opacic**
- 14.30 Bruges and Antwerp **Zoë Opacic**
- 15.30 Online Meet & Greet

Week 2 – 26 January

Germany and Middle Europe

- 11.00 Charles IV's Prague **Zoë Opacic**
- 12.30 Strasbourg and South Germany **Clare Ford-Wille**
- 14.30 Nürnberg and its Chronicle **Clare Ford-Wille**

Week 3 – 2 February

Constantinople under the Ottomans

- 11.00 A Conqueror's Dream: Istanbul under Mehmet II and his Successors **George Manginis** (*Presenting Remotely*)
- 12.30 Sinan the Architect and his Imperial Foundations in 16th-century Istanbul **George Manginis** (*Presenting Remotely*)
- 14.30 Constantinople, the European View **Kathy McLauchlan**

Week 4 – 9 February

Rome – Patrons and Artists

- 11.00 Cycles of Decline and Renewal **Kevin Childs**
- 12.30 Patrons of Rome **Antonia Gatward**
- 14.30 Architects and the Making of Baroque Rome **Antonia Gatward**

Week 5 – 16 February

Cities of Spain

- 11.00 11.00 Golden Age Seville **Jacqueline Cockburn**
- 12.30 El Greco and the City of Toledo, 1577-1614
Jacqueline Cockburn
- 14.30 Velazquez at Court in Madrid **Clare Ford-Wille**

Week 6 – 23 February

Cities of the Dutch Golden Age

- 11.00 Artists of Delft **Clare Ford-Wille**
- 12.30 Art of Amsterdam **Clare Ford-Wille**
- 14.30 Images of the Interior **Kathy McLauchlan**

Week 7 – 2 March

Cities of Russia

- 11.00 Moscow **Andrew Spira**
- 12.30 St Petersburg – new Capital of Russia **Andrew Spira**
- 14.30 The Hermitage **Justine Hopkins**

Week 8 – 9 March

London after the Fire

- 11.00 Rebuilding the City **Justine Hopkins**
- 12.30 Hogarth and the Life of the City **Justine Hopkins**
- 14.30 Urban Spectacle **Kathy McLauchlan**

Week 9 – 16 March

Rivals in Culture – Cities of Germany

- 11.00 Dresden **Clare Ford-Wille**
- 12.30 Munich – Museum City **Clare Ford-Wille**
- 14.30 Berlin, Capital of Prussia and Germany **Kevin Childs**

Week 10 – 23 March

Paris – Centre of Power and Art

- 11.00 18th-Century Paris **Kathy McLauchlan**
- 12.30 Napoleon's New Rome **Clare Ford-Wille**
- 14.30 Making a Capital of Art **Kathy McLauchlan**