

V&A Academy

**FROM
ROMANESQUE TO
GOTHIC: EUROPE
1050-1250**

V&A

Introduction

This ten-week hybrid course covers the period between 1050 and 1250, inspired by the V&A's medieval collections.

Between 1050 and 1150 Europe witnessed unprecedented investment in Romanesque church buildings, many inspired by Roman monuments, and the rebirth of architectural sculpture with plentiful regional variation.

The “New” style of architecture (termed “Gothic” from the 17th century) emerged in mid-12th century Paris. Craftsmen made buildings that reached new heights with increasingly light-filled interiors. Paris was the epicentre of new ideas, subsequently adopted, to varying degrees, by neighbouring realms. Figurative art changed profoundly from dynamic Romanesque design to something more natural, even classical; a revolution prompted by shifts in theological philosophy, urban and commercial growth, increased literacy, and monasticism’s decline (although the new mendicant orders were influential after 1220).

We explore the deterioration of relations between East and West, as the Crusading movement increased in zeal, and look at the Sack of Constantinople in 1204, which heralded the Byzantine Empire’s nadir and an influx of Byzantine influence, especially in Italy.

Information

Tuesdays, 21 April – 23 June 2026, 11.00 – 15.30. On site and Online.

Watch session recordings on demand, until Tuesday 1st September 2026

Your course leader

Dr Sally Dormer is a specialist medieval art historian, with an MA in Medieval Art History and PhD on Medieval illuminated manuscripts from the Courtauld Institute, London University. Sally teaches, or has taught, for the Arts Society, London Art History Society, Artscapades, Art Pursuits, Swan Hellenic, Gresham College, and was, until 2019, Dean of European Studies for two universities in Tennessee, USA.

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

Week 1 – Tuesday 21st April

Contexts: History, Iconography and Style

- 10.45 Introduction **Sally Dormer**
- 11.00 Historical Background: Europe 1050-1200 **Sally Dormer**
- 12:30 Romanesque Images of the Virgin **Sally Dormer**
- 14.30 The V&A Medieval Cast Court **Sally Dormer**

Week 2 – Tuesday 28th April

The Road to Santiago De Compostela

- 10.00 Gallery Talk (Group A): Romanesque Ivories **Michaela Zöschg** – *additional tickets only*
- 11.00 From Le Puy to the Pyrenees **Jana Gajdošová**
- 12.30 The Camina Franca **Rose Walker**
- 15.30 Gallery Talk (Group B): Romanesque Ivories **Michaela Zöschg** – *additional tickets only*

Week 3 – Tuesday 5th May

Romanesque England

- 10.00 Gallery Talk (Group A): The Gloucester Candlestick and Becket Casket **Kirstin Kennedy** – *additional ticket holders only*
- 11.00 English Romanesque Architecture **Richard Plant**
- 12.30 Case Study: Durham Cathedral **Richard Plant**
- 14.30 Secular Patrons and Secular Art **Richard Plant**
- 15.30 Gallery Talk (Group B): The Gloucester Candlestick and Becket Casket **Kirstin Kennedy** – *additional ticket holders only*

Week 4 – Tuesday 12th May

The Art of the Romanesque Book

- 11.00 English Monastic Libraries **Sally Dormer**
- 12.30 The English Romanesque Psalter **Sally Dormer**
- 14.30 Henry of Blois as a Patron **Sally Dormer**

Week 5 – Tuesday 19th May

Romanesque Walls and Floors

- 10.00 Gallery Talk (Group A): Romanesque Book Covers and Books in the V&A **Sally Dormer** – *additional ticket holders only*
- 11.00 Mosaic Floors **Richard Plant**
- 12.30 Case Study: The Bayeux Tapestry **Richard Plant**
- 14.30 Rhenish Architecture **Richard Plant**
- 15.30 Gallery Talk (Group B): Romanesque Book Covers and Books in the V&A **Sally Dormer** – *additional ticket holders only*

Week 6 – Tuesday 26th May

Romanesque Art and Architecture in Italy

- 11.00 The North **Jana Gajdošová**
- 12.30 The Centre and South **Jana Gajdošová**
- 14.30 Making Mosaics in Norman Sicily **Teresa Lane**

Week 7 – Tuesday 2nd June

Sicilian Kings and Byzantine Emperors

- 10.00 Gallery Talk (Group A): The “Theotokos Hodegetria” **Cecily Hennessy** – *additional ticket holders only*
- 11.00 Sicily and the Wider World **Umberto Bongianino**
- 12.30 Middle Byzantine Art 1050-1250 **Cecily Hennessy**
- 14.30 The 4th Crusade **Sally Dormer**
- 15.30 Gallery Talk (Group B): The “Theotokos Hodegetria” **Cecily Hennessy** – *additional ticket holders only*

Week 8 – Tuesday 9th June

The Romanesque Metalworker

- 11.00 Mosan, Rhenish and Limoges Metalwork **Sally Dormer**
- 12.30 Case Study: Nicholas of Verdun and the Klosterneuberg Ambo **Sally Dormer**
- 14.30 The Patronage of Henry the Lion **Richard Plant**

Week 9 – Tuesday 16th June

The ‘New Style’ of Architecture

- 10.00 Gallery Talk (Group A): Stained Glass **Anna Eavis** – *additional ticket holders only*
- 11.00 Abbot Suger and Saint Denis **Richard Plant**
- 12.30 High Gothic Architecture: Chartres and Bourges Cathedrals **Richard Plant**
- 14.30 Stained Glass **Anna Eavis**
- 15.30 Gallery Talk (Group B): Stained Glass **Anna Eavis** – *additional ticket holders only*

Week 10 – Tuesday 23rd June

The Rise of Gothic in England

11.00 Canterbury and Becket **Richard Plant**

12.30 Early English Architecture **Richard Plant**

14.30 Early Gothic Manuscripts **Sally Dormer**