

V&A Academy

ART AND CRIME:  
FORGERIES,  
THEFT AND  
FRAUD

V&A

# Introduction

Explore the fascinating relationship between art and crime from Antiquity to the present day. Expert lecturers will consider themes including forgery, artist convicts and Nazi looting.

Discover how the looting of art from major cities, such as Rome and Constantinople, impacted the development of the arts across Europe. We will also consider: how artists from Salvator Rosa to Sidney Nolan have celebrated the world of thieves and outcasts, the rise of the celebrity forger, the darker side of 19th-century archaeology, the systematic state-led pillaging of art collections, thefts from museums, the role of criminality in the modern art market, and the investigation of stolen art.

## Information

Thursdays, 23 April – 25 June, 10.30-13.00. Online.

Watch lecture recordings on demand, available at the end of each day, until 3 September 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 – 23 April**

### **Introduction**

- 10.20 Introduction to the Course **Kathy McLauchlan**
- 10.30 Art Crime in Antiquity: The Sacking of Syracuse & Corinth  
**Steve Kershaw**
- 12.00 Crusader Criminals **Sally Dormer**

## **Week 2 – 30 April**

### **Losses of War**

- 10.30 Sack of Rome **Kevin Childs**
- 12.00 Thieves, Pickpockets and Cardsharps in 16<sup>th</sup>- and 17<sup>th</sup>-Century  
Art **Clare Ford-Wille**

## **Week 3 – 7 May**

### **Theft, Bureaucracy and the Museum**

- 10.30 Napoleon and the Louvre **Kathy McLauchlan**
- 12.00 Dodgy Dealing in the 19th Century: C.R. Cockerell and Marbles  
for Munich and London **Steve Kershaw**

## **Week 4 – 14 May**

### **Representing Crime**

- 10.30 Crime and its Consequences: William Hogarth and the London Underworld **Justine Hopkins**
- 12.00 "Flourishing on the dunghill": Crime in British art from William Frith to Walter Sickert **Justine Hopkins**

## **Week 5 – 21 May**

### **Fakes, Forgeries and Scams**

- 10.30 The Development of the Market and the Rise of Forgery  
**Angelina Giovani**
- 12.00 Investigating 20th-century Forgery – the case of Wolfgang Beltracchi **Stefan Simon**

## **Week 6 – 28 May**

### **‘Heroes’ of Crime**

- 10.30 Brigands to Bushrangers **Kathy McLauchlan**
- 12.00 Film noir - Heist movies **Roger Luckhurst**

## **Week 7 – 4 June**

### **Museum Heist**

10.30 Case of the Mona Lisa **Kevin Childs**

12.00 Theft from the Museum **Angelina Giovani**

## **Week 8 – 11 June**

### **The Plunder of Europe**

10.30 Nazis – and Monuments Men **Alexandra Watson Jones**

12.00 My aunt the Masterpiece: the fight for Klimt's Adele Bloch-Bauer I **Justine Hopkins**

## **Week 9 – 18 June**

### **Crime at the Museum**

10.30 The V&A as Crime Scene **Vernon Rapley**

12.00 From Mistaken Identity to Stolen Property: The Donald Ross Tables Ella Ravilious and **Max Donnelly**

## **Week 10 – 25 June**

### **Black Markets**

10.30 The Dark Side of the Market **Angelina Giovani**

12.00 Recovering Stolen and Looted Works of Art  
**Richard Aronowitz**

### **Notes:**