

V&A Academy

A HISTORY OF JEWELLERY

V&A

Introduction

This course reveals the history of jewellery- transcending borders and centuries- from the Middle Ages to today. You'll learn about the collection of 3,500 jewels in the V&A's William and Judith Bollinger Jewellery Gallery, as well as other museum departments and major international museum collections. Beyond a chronology, various themes will be explored, including: the century-long traditions of making jewellery, the use of prints and drawings as inspiration, and the effect of innovative modern technologies.

Changes in economy and society were significant in the choice of jewels and materials, as were new trends in dress fashions. Styles were often influenced by historical events, international trade and art movements. Jewels are more than simply adornment and symbols of status, they are worn as a sign of authority and distinction, as symbols of faith or protective amulets, and may be personal to the wearer as an expression of devotion, love, grief or hope. In essence, jewellery is more than adornment, it accompanies the wearer through life from cradle to grave, marking special occasion.

Guest speakers on this course include Rachel Church, Sandy Jones, Clare Phillips, Emefa Cole and Silvia Weidenbach, and your course leader is Beatriz Chadour-Sampson.

Information

Tuesdays, 21 April – 23 June, 10.30-13.00. Online.

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

Your course leader

Beatriz Chadour-Sampson is an international jewellery historian, author and lecturer. She was consultant curator to the redesigning of the William and Judith Bollinger Jewellery Gallery and guest curator of the 'Pearls' exhibition at the V&A. She curated the Alice and Louis Koch Collection, in the Swiss National Museum, Zurich, and Gübelin Gem Museum, Lucerne.

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

Week 1 – 21 April

- 10.15 Welcome **Beatriz Chadour-Sampson**
- 10.30 Jewellery is more than adornment- How did it all begin and the meanings behind jewellery **Beatriz Chadour-Sampson**
- 12.00 Late Antiquity, Early Christianity, the Middle Ages between faith and superstition **Beatriz Chadour-Sampson**

Week 2 – 28 April

- 10.30 Jewellery in Renaissance Europe **Beatriz Chadour-Sampson**
- 12.00 Baroque Splendour at the European Courts and Global Trade **Beatriz Chadour-Sampson**

Week 3 – 5 May

- 10.30 Men's Jewellery **Rachel Church**
- 12.00 From Rococo Elegance to the Napoleonic Period **Beatriz Chadour-Sampson**

Week 4 – 12 May

- 10.30 Jewellery in the 19th Century: The Industrial Revolution, Changes in Society and International Exhibitions in London and Paris **Beatriz Chadour-Sampson**
- 12.00 Style Icons and the great jewellery houses **Beatriz Chadour-Sampson**

Week 5 – 19 May

- 10.30 Political Jewellery **Rachel Church**
- 12.00 European History told through rings in the Alice and Louis Koch Collection, Zurich **Beatriz Chadour-Sampson**

Week 6– 26 May

- 10.30 Traditional goldsmiths' techniques **Emefa Cole and Beatriz Chadour-Sampson**
- 12.00 Modern Day Technologies in jewellery making
Silvia Weidenbach

Week 7 – 2 June

- 10.30 A New Source of Diamonds and Jewellery from the Belle Epoque to Art Nouveau **Beatriz Chadour-Sampson**
- 12.00 Jewellery Designs, Prints and Drawings at the V&A
Sandy Jones

Week 8 – 9 June

- 10.30 Arts and Crafts in Britain **Clare Philips**
- 12.00 Art Nouveau in France, Jugendstil in Germany, Vienna workshops and Skønvirke in Denmark
Beatriz Chadour-Sampson

Week 9– 16 June

- 10.30 Modernism in Jewellery in the Art Deco Period and Beyond
Beatriz Chadour-Sampson
- 12.00 Jewellery, Global Fashions and New Style Icons from the 1950s to 1970s **Beatriz Chadour-Sampson**

Week 10– 23 June

- 10.30 Breaking with Traditions, Contemporary Artists' Jewellery
Beatriz Chadour-Sampson
- 12.00 High End Jewellery vs. Artist Jewellery
Beatriz Chadour-Sampson
- 13.30 Meet and Greet: your favourite jewel and share your story