

V&A Academy

ANTIQUÉ TO EARLY  
CHRISTIAN  
500 BCE-500 CE

Tuesdays

29 September – 1 December 2026





## Introduction

Discover the civilisations of Ancient Greece and Rome and gain a unique perspective on the classical tradition. Gain new insights in the Homeric myths and their representation in sculpture and vase-painting, the architecture of Athens and Rome, and the rich decoration and furnishings revealed at Herculaneum and Pompeii. Then consider the afterlife of the ancient world as the Roman Empire began to fragment and Christianity steadily assumed greater influence until it became the main religion under the Emperor Constantine in 313. Explore how painters, sculptors and masons developed a specific and distinctive Christian visual vocabulary laced with re-interpreted classical themes, motifs and styles, which continued to exert an enormous impact on European art and architecture.

# Information

Tuesdays, 29 September – 01 December, 2026. online or in person.

Watch lecture recordings on demand, available at the end of each day, until 09 February, 2027.

## Your course leader

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

## Your course series

This course is part of the The Story of Art at the V&A course series, which spans 3 terms running from September through June. To find out more about the other courses in this series, [take a look at our course listings](#) or speak to your course leader.

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

## Week 1 – 29 September

### *Introduction: Origins*

- 10.50 Introduction by Course Leader
- 11.00 Introduction to the Classical World, **Steve Kershaw**
- 12.30 World of Homer, **James Renshaw**
- 14.30 Archaic Greece, **James Renshaw**

## Week 2 – 06 October

### *Greece: Art & Architecture*

- 10.00 Gallery Talk: A Temple of Art: the Classical World and the Making of the V&A (Group A), **Katherine Dunleavy** *In Person learners only*
- 11.00 Classical Greece, **Andrew Mylne**
- 12.30 The Greek Temple, **James Renshaw**
- 14.30 Athens: the City & its Golden Age, **James Renshaw**
- 15.30 Gallery Talk: A Temple of Art: the Classical World and the Making of the V&A (Group B), **Katherine Dunleavy** *In Person learners only*

## Week 3 – 13 October

### *Form and Meaning in Painting and Sculpture*

- 11.00 Ceramics, **Claudia Daniotti**
- 12.30 Male Figure Sculpture, **Claudia Daniotti**
- 14.30 The Parthenon Frieze, **Steve Kershaw**

## **Week 4 – 20 October**

### *Power & Splendour*

- 11.00 Alexander the Great, **tbc**
- 12.30 Hellenistic Architecture, **tbc**
- 14.30 Greek Dress, **Jennifer Wearden**

## **Week 5 – 27 October**

### *The Female Figure*

- 10.00 Gallery Talk: Illustrating Myth in Art & Design (Group A),  
**Katherine Dunleavy** *In Person learners only*
- 11.00 Women in Myth and Society, **Claudia Daniotti**
- 12.30 Female Figure Sculpture, **Steve Kershaw**
- 14.30 Athena as Model and Exemplar, **Steve Kershaw**
- 15.30 Gallery Talk: Illustrating Myth in Art & Design (Group B),  
**Katherine Dunleavy** *In Person learners only*

## **Week 6 – 3 November**

### *Rome and the Classical Tradition*

- 11.00 Rise of the City in Myth and History, **Steve Kershaw**
- 12.30 Greece in Rome: Borrowings and Innovations, **Niamh Bhalla**
- 14.30 Models of Republican Virtue: Portraiture, **Niamh Bhalla**

## **Week 7 – 10 November**

### *Life and Art*

- 10.00 Demonstration: Emblema (Group A), **Eniko Leanyvari**  
*In Person learners only*
- 11.00 Pompeii and Herculaneum: 79 AD, **James Renshaw**
- 12.30 Paintings & Mosaic in Roman Interiors, **Katherine Dunleavy**
- 14.30 Roman Dress, **Jennifer Wearden**
- 15.30 Demonstration: Emblema (Group B), **Eniko Leanyvari**  
*In Person learners only*

## **Week 8 – 17 November**

### *Grandeur & Decline*

- 10.00 Gallery Talk: Consular Diptychs (Group A), **Sally Dormer**  
*In Person learners only*
- 11.00 Nero, Rome and the Golden Palace **David Bellingham**
- 12.30 City of Marble, **David Bellingham**
- 14.30 Art of Late Antiquity, **David Bellingham**
- 15.30 Gallery Talk: Consular Diptychs (Group B), **Sally Dormer**  
*In Person learners only*

## **Week 9 – 24 November**

### *From Pagan to Christian*

- 10.00 Gallery Talk: The Symmachi Panel (Group A), **Sally Dormer**  
*In Person learners only*
- 11.00 Christian Art before the Edict of Milan, **Sally Dormer**
- 12.30 Case Study: The Arch of Constantine **Steve Kershaw**
- 14.30 Constantine and Constantinople, **Steve Kershaw**
- 15.30 Gallery Talk: The Symmachi Panel (Group B), **Sally Dormer**  
*In Person learners only*

## **Week 10 – 1 December**

### *The Birth of Christian Art*

- 10.00 Gallery Talk: Coptic textiles in the V&A (Group A), **Helen Persson**  
*In Person learners only*
- 11.00 Early Christian Architecture in the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries,  
**Richard Plant**
- 12.30 Ivories, **Sally Dormer**
- 14.30 Goldsmiths Work, **Sally Dormer**
- 15.30 Gallery Talk: Coptic textiles in the V&A (Group B), **Helen Persson**  
*In Person learners only*