

V&A Academy

BAROQUE TO ROCOCO

Thursdays

1st October – 3rd December 2026





Introduction

Explore a remarkable period in the history of art. Expert lecturers will bring to life key changes in art and design during the late 17th and 18th centuries and show how a growing art market reshaped relationships between artists, patrons and audiences.

The art world during the early modern period was remarkable for its stylistic diversity, from the grandeur of French Baroque to the exuberance of Italian Rococo. By the end of the eighteenth century a reaction against the Rococo, fuelled by social and political developments but given further impetus by archaeological discoveries, prompted a return to classical restraint in the form of Neoclassicism. Throughout Europe, increasing wealth, together with better opportunities for travel, widened the art market beyond the traditional spheres of church and state. Drawing on the V&A's collections, expert lecturers will trace stylistic developments within a wider political and cultural context, and in relation to wider themes such as taste, patronage and the art market.

Guest Lecturers include Caroline Knight, architectural historian specialising in English sixteenth and seventeenth century architecture and patronage; Clare Ford-Wille, independent art historian, lecturer for the National Gallery, the V&A and the Arts Society.

Information

Thursdays, 1st October – 3rd December, 2026. Format Online and In Person.

Watch lecture recordings on demand, available at the end of each day, until 11th 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 Story of European 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 – 1st October

Introductions

- 10.45 Introduction and Welcome to the Course, **Kathy McLauchlan**
- 11.00 Institutions, Patrons and Ideals, **Kathy McLauchlan**
- 12.30 Styles and Terminologies, **Clare Ford-Wille**
- 14.30 Historical Background to 17th and 18th Century Europe, **Caroline Knight**

Week 2 – 8th October

French Grandeur

- 10.00 Gallery Talk: The Europe 1600-1850 Galleries (Group A), **Marie Tavinor**
In Person learners only
- 11.00 French Painting in Paris and Rome, **Kathy McLauchlan**
- 12.30 Architecture and Interiors in the Age of Louis XIV, **Marie Tavinor**
- 14.30 Late 17th-Century French Sculpture, **Barbara Lasic**
- 15.30 Gallery Talk: The Europe 1600-1815 Galleries (Group B), **Marie Tavinor**
In Person learners only

Week 3 – 15th October

Art and its International Connections

- 10.00 Gallery Talk: Ceramics (Group A), **Susan Bracken**
In Person learners only
- 11.00 Presenting the World: The Role and Development of Maps, **Jack Englehardt**
- 12.30 The Chinese Export Trade, **Helen Glaister**
- 14.30 The Trade in Exotic Woods after 1600, **Adam Bowett**
- 15.30 Gallery Talk: Ceramics (Group B), **Susan Bracken**
In Person learners only

Week 4 – 22nd October

Architecture and Design

10.00 Gallery Talk: Sculpture and its Materials (Group A), **Clare Ford-Wille**

In Person learners only

11.00 Wren and the Royal Palaces of the Later Stuarts, **Caroline Knight**

12.30 The Church in London: Wren to Hawksmoor, **Caroline Knight**

14.30 Virtuosi and Connoisseurs: Collecting for Interiors **Susan Bracken**

15.30 Gallery Talk: Sculpture and its Materials (Group B), **Clare Ford-Wille**

In Person learners only

Week 5 – 29th October

Painting for the Domestic Space

11:00 Genre Painting in the Netherlands, **Clare Ford-Wille**

12.30 Art of Still Life, **Kathy McLauchlan**

14.30 Landscapes, Views and Idylls, **Kathy McLauchlan**

Week 6 – 5th November

Making a Spectacle

11:00 Church Altarpieces and Ceilings in Rome, **Clare Ford-Wille**

12.30 Catholic Magnificence: Architecture of Germany and Central Europe, **Clare Ford-Wille**

14.30 International Celebrity: The Art of Giambattista Tiepolo, **Catherine Parry-Wingfield**

Week 7 – 12th November

French Style

- 11:00 Inventing the Fête Champêtre, **Kathy McLauchlan**
- 12.30 The Rococo Interior, **Barbara Lasic**
- 14.30 Dressing for Court, **Jennifer Wearden**
- 15.30 Demonstration: Court Toilette, **Hair and Makeup Artist Nicola Schuller**

Week 8 – 19th November

Capturing Life,

- 10.00 Gallery Talk: Arts of Entertainment (Group A), **Kathy McLaughlan**
In Person learners only
- 11.00 Hogarth's Narratives, **Marie Tavinor**
- 12.30 Paintings of Everyday Life in French Art: Chardin to Greuze, **Kathy McLauchlan**
- 14.30 French Sculptors from Pigalle to Houdon, **Catherine Parry Wingfield**
- 15.30 Gallery Talk: Arts of Entertainment (Group B), **Kathy McLauchlan**
In Person learners only

Week 9 – 26th November

Artists and Patrons

- 10.00 Gallery Talk: Luxury Objects (Group A), **Susan Bracken**
In Person learners only
- 11.00 Rivals at Court & Academy, **Kathy McLauchlan**
- 12.30 The Business of Portraiture, **Marie Tavinor**
- 14.30 Catherine the Great and the Arts in Russia, **Andrew Spira**
- 15.30 Gallery Talk: Luxury Objects (Group B), **Susan Bracken**
In Person learners only

Week 10 – 3rd December

Lure of Italy

- 10.00 Gallery Talk: Canova's Theseus (Group A), **Kathy McLauchlan**
In Person learners only
- 11.00 Grand Tour, **Clare Ford-Wille**
- 12.30 Taste for the Antique, **Caroline Knight**
- 14.30 Rome: Art Capital of the World, **Kathy McLaughlan**
- 15.30 Gallery Talk: Canova's Theseus (Group B), **Kathy McLauchlan**
In Person learners only