

How to Look at Contemporary Art

Dates	Tuesday 1 and Wednesday 2 July 2025
Times	18.00–20.00 BST
Location	Online (Zoom)
Tutor	Dr Ben Street
Level	All Levels



Course Description

Our current exhibition *Grayson Perry: Delusions of Grandeur* is an inspiration for us to take a closer look at contemporary art. Join Dr Ben Street to discover ways to appreciate, enjoy and understand art of the last 65 years, by learning useful techniques for making meaningful connections.

We'll take a broad sweep of works created in a vast array of media, and in a variety of geographical locations. During our exploration, we'll discuss the different techniques at play, the methods of display used by artists, and some of the ideas and concepts that have driven contemporary artists.

Session One: Where Do I Start?

When faced with a work of art you don't know, have you ever been tempted to simply move on, or spend more time reading the label than looking at the work itself? In our first session, we'll think about useful questions to ask ourselves that will increase our understanding of what we're looking at. We'll consider scale, materials, techniques and installation, while exploring a wide range of examples from across the world. Our approach will increase our confidence in interpreting art.

Session Two: Where Do I Go From Here?

Having paid close attention to the work itself, we can start to introduce ideas relevant to deepening our encounter with art. In our second session, we'll consider the contexts of art history, biography, social and political environments, and the place where we might find an artwork – all of which help to enrich our initial experience. We'll increase our understanding of a range of relevant art historical contexts, which will deepen our comprehension of contemporary art.

Course Tutor

Dr Ben Street is an art historian and author based in London. He has worked as a lecturer, educator and mentor for many museums and educational institutions including the National Gallery, Tate, the Royal Academy of Arts, Dulwich Picture Gallery, Christie's Education, Sotheby's Institute of Art, the Museum of Modern Art and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York. He is currently a tutor at the University of Oxford and the University of East Anglia. He is the author of several books on art and has written for numerous publications including museum catalogues, monographs and magazines. He has made expert contributions to TV and radio programmes for the BBC. He recently received his PhD on the late work of Philip Guston from the University of East Anglia.

Joining Information and Format

This course will be taught through [Zoom Webinar](#). Each course session duration is 120 minutes, including a five-minute break and time for Q&A with the tutor.

Tickets are for both dates. Ticket holders will be emailed the Zoom link, Webinar ID and Passcode 24 hours in advance of the first course session, which should be retained for accessing both sessions of the course.

Course Recording

This course will be recorded. Within 48 hours of each course session, ticket holders will be emailed a link to view the recording, which will be available for two weeks.
