

Cities of Art: Antwerp, Leiden, Delft

Dates	Wednesdays 22, 29 October and 5 November 2025
Times	18.00–20.00 BST
Location	Online (Zoom)
Tutor	Clare Ford-Wille
Level	All Levels



Emanuel de Witte, *Interior of the Oude Kerk, Delft*, 1651 (detail)

Course Description

Journey through the vibrant artistic and cultural heritage of Antwerp, Leiden and Delft – three northern European cities that played a pivotal role in shaping European art from the medieval era to the 17th century.

We'll learn how these cities were at the heart of artistic innovation, producing key paintings that now reside in the Wallace Collection and beyond. Delving into magnificent altarpieces created for churches, striking portraits by Rubens, Van Dyck, and Rembrandt, and the captivating scenes of everyday life depicted by de Hooch, Steen, and Vermeer, you'll learn how each city's unique character, patrons and artists helped creative innovation flourish over several centuries.

Session One: Antwerp

Our visual journey will begin in the Flemish city of Antwerp. Here, we'll discover how the artistic scene had declined during religious conflict from 1560 to 1585, but revived in the early 17th century. We'll learn how this resurgence was led by the celebrated artist Rubens and his followers, including Van Dyck, who helped re-establish Antwerp's reputation as a major centre of artistic excellence in Northern Europe.

Session Two: Leiden

In our second session we'll move our attention to the city of Leiden – a major artistic centre from the 15th century and home to the oldest university in the Netherlands, founded in 1575. As we explore engaging depictions of life by Gabriel Metsu, Frans van Mieris and Rembrandt, we'll consider how these paintings provide insights into the context of this city's rich cultural heritage.

Session Three: Delft

In our final session, we'll move our attention to Delft in the Netherlands, which was a thriving artistic town during the 17th century. This important centre fostered collaboration, competition and innovation amongst its many artists and artisans. We will look closely at works in the Wallace Collection by artists including De Hooch, Van Meirvelt and de Witte, and beyond the collection here, we'll also consider Vermeer, Delft's most renowned painter.

Course Tutor

Clare Ford-Wille was an Associate Lecturer at Birkbeck College, University of London and lectures regularly for many institutions including the V&A Museum, the National Trust, The Arts Society, the Art Fund as well as leading groups to places of art historical interest in Europe, Armenia and the USA.

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 all 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 all 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.
