

Winston Churchill and Modern Painting

Dates	Wednesdays 3, 10 and 17 June 2026
Times	18.00–20.00 BST
Location	Online (Zoom)
Tutors	Dr Kathy McLauchlan and Dr Matthew Morgan
Level	All Levels



Detail of Jean-Baptiste Camille Corot *Macbeth, paysage (Macbeth Landscape)*, 1858-1859

Course Description

How is Winston Churchill's painting connected to French Impressionism and avant-garde art? Join experts Dr Kathy McLauchlan and Dr Matthew Morgan as they explore the key artists and practices that shaped Churchill's artistic development.

We begin with late 18th- and early 19th-century French painters committed to working en plein air - painting directly from nature. We'll discover how figures including Camille Corot revitalised landscape painting. Our examination will also include the influence of avant-garde artists, Claude Monet, John Lavery, and Walter Sickert, revealing how their guidance helped Churchill progress from hesitant beginnings to confident, versatile works which reveal his interest in modern painting.

Session One - Painting Outdoors: Before Impressionism

We'll begin by exploring plein air painting. Painting outdoors in front of the motif is often credited to the Impressionists of the 1860s and 1870s, but we'll discover a selection of key artists who were working directly from nature long before. We'll look particularly at pioneers Pierre Valenciennes, Camille Corot, and Charles Daubigny, whose innovative work helped shape this practice in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. We'll discover the aims, techniques, and materials which laid the foundation for naturalist landscape painting of the late 19th century.

Session Two - Impressionism, Outdoor Painting, and Winston Churchill

We now turn our attention to several young painters - later known as Impressionists -who began creating evocative landscapes in and around the Forest of Fontainebleau during the 1860s. Our exploration will show how plein air painting, which strongly appealed to Claude Monet, led to the creation of informal, sketch-like compositions and highly innovative representations of light and atmosphere. As we consider Monet's audacious landscapes, we will also examine the lasting influence of Impressionism on Churchill's own painting practice.

Session Three – Churchill's Friends and Mentors: Lavery, Nicholson, Sickert

In our final session, we will assess how mentorship shaped Churchill's painting practice by examining the influence of John Lavery, William Nicholson, and Walter Sickert. We'll see how each played a significant role in British painting while guiding Churchill's artistic development. We will explore how Lavery introduced Churchill to oils and North Africa, Nicholson advised on still life and adopting a restrained palette, while Sickert advocated avant-garde approaches and stylistic freedom. We'll see how their advice helped Churchill create a personal style.

Course Tutors

Dr Kathy McLauchlan is a lecturer specialising in 19th-century art history. She is currently a course director at the Victoria & Albert Museum, organising courses and study days on the history of art and design. She teaches at several institutions, including The Arts Society, Morley College and Art Pursuits. She is a graduate of Oxford University and the Courtauld Institute, with a PhD on French 19th-century painters in Rome.

Dr Matthew Morgan is an independent art historian, educator and museum professional, specialising in 18th- and 19th-century art. He has been the Museum Director of Turner's House, and also an Associate Lecturer at Birkbeck, University of London. He has worked in the heritage sector for 10 years, including at the Royal Collection, the National Gallery, the Wallace Collection and the Victoria & Albert Museum. Prior to that he was a Director in Christie's Valuation Department. He has contributed to TV documentaries, podcasts, radio shows and has lectured widely across the country.

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.
