Online Course

Discover Porcelain

Dates	Monday 30 November and Tuesday 1 December 2026
Times	18.00-20.00 BST
Location	Online (Zoom)
Tutor	Felix Zoro
Level	All Levels



Vase 'pot Pourri gondole', Sèvres Manufactory C248 © The Wallace Collection.

Course Description

Home to one of the most magnificent ensembles of Sèvres porcelain in the world, the Wallace Collection offers a unique opportunity to explore the designs, techniques and patronage behind the flowering of France's premier porcelain manufactory.

Join Felix Zorzo to trace Sèvres's development from its beginnings at Vincennes in the 1740s to its heyday as a royal enterprise before the French Revolution. Learn how technical innovation and artistic collaboration gave rise to some of the most lavish works of decorative art of the 18th century, from the rococo commissions of Madame de Pompadour to the neoclassical grandeur of the courts of Louis XVI and Catherine the Great.

Session One

Rococo Imagination: Vincennes and Early Sèvres Porcelain (Back State Room)

Largely promoted by Madame de Pompadour, Vincennes porcelain was catapulted from a small, private enterprise to a royal factory under the patronage of Louis XV. Prominent artists such as the Italian goldsmith Jean-Claude Chambellan Duplessis and the painter François Boucher supplied designs at the forefront of fashion that came to fruition thanks to talented craftsmen and women, and porcelain painters such as Charles-Nicolas Dodin. From naturalistic flowers to whimsical elephants, the inventiveness of their creations drew from the rococo vocabulary. With examples on display in the Back State Room, this session will cover the first decades of Vincennes/Sèvres porcelain.

Session Two

Exquisite Neoclassicism: From Royal to Revolutionary Sèvres Porcelain (Study)

From the 1760s, a taste for designs inspired by Classical Antiquity accelerated a change in fashion that permeated every aspect of life in Europe. At Sèvres, artists linked to the Académie such as the painter Jean-Jacques Bachelier, who became its director, and Étienne Maurice Falconet, responsible for the sculpture workshop, led the transition from Rococo to Neoclassicism. Falconet's marble-like biscuit porcelain sculptures pushed the boundaries of fine versus decorative art, while Sèvres expanded internationally with commissions from Britain to Russia. Focused on pieces in the Study, this second session will explore the last decades of ancien régime Sèvres porcelain.

Course Tutor

Félix Zorzo is Assistant Curator of European Decorative Arts at National Museums Scotland. He studied Art History in Madrid and Paris, and completed an MA in Museum Cultures at Birkbeck College, London. Félix was previously Curatorial Assistant at the Wallace Collection and cover for the Curator of French Eighteenth-Century Decorative Arts. He has lectured for Buckingham University, the École du Louvre, Edinburgh College of Art and the Attingham Trust on Sèvres porcelain, French eighteenth- and nineteenth-century furniture, and the interrelations between the fine and decorative art in eighteenth-century France. Félix is a committee member of the French Porcelain Society and co-convener of its Emerging Scholars Group and Editorial Board.

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.
