

The Passion of Christ in Art

Dates	Tuesday 30 and Wednesday 31 March 2021
Times	11.00–13.00
Location	Zoom (online)
Tutor	Dr Richard Stemp
Level	All Levels



L-R (detail): Lombardy, *Manuscript Cutting (The Entry into Jerusalem)*, c.1500; Netherlands, *Prayer bead with scenes from the Life of Christ*, early 16th century; France or Italy, *Pendant Jewel (The Crucifixion)*, early 17th century.

Course Description

From Palm Sunday until Easter, a week later, the story of Christ's Passion is one of the most dramatic sequences of any religious narrative – and indeed, of any story, fact or fiction. Packed into the space of eight days, from the *Entry into Jerusalem*, until the *Resurrection*, is a remarkable combination of devotion and betrayal, love, loss, defeat and death – followed by miraculous new life.

All of this is depicted in the Wallace Collection's breathtaking array of paintings, sculptures, manuscript cuttings, ivories and even jewellery. In this short course, timed for Easter week, we will examine them in detail to help distinguish the different elements of the story, explore the ways in which each was interpreted, and discuss the wider implications for art and faith. You will also discover the intricacy and subtlety of some of the Wallace Collection's smaller works of art, which are often harder to see during a visit – one of the many advantages that online learning brings.

Session One: From Arrival to Arrest

Our course starts with Jesus's *Entry into Jerusalem*, and our first session will take us up to his arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane. We will see images of all of the different episodes, from Palm Sunday and *The Expulsion of the Money Changers from the Temple*, through *The Last Supper* and *The Washing of the Feet* to the *Agony in the Garden* and *The Betrayal of Jesus*, at each stage stopping to identify the relevance of each moment of the story.

We will use images from the Wallace Collection as our primary source, supplementing them with well-known works from outside the Collection. While learning more about the Easter narrative and the ways in which it is embodied within the traditions of Western European art, this will also give us a greater understanding of the depth of the Wallace Collection's holdings.

Session Two: Death and Resurrection

In our second session we'll look at everything that followed Christ's arrest: his meetings with the High Priests and Pontius Pilate; his condemnation; his humiliation; and, ultimately, his Crucifixion. Once more we will discover why artists chose to depict the biblical narrative in the ways which have become so familiar. Moving on to Easter itself, we will consider the Resurrection, and why, as often as not, artists did not show it as described in the bible. We will also consider what was so important about the first witnesses to Christ's miraculous return from the grave, and why the story of Mary Magdalene was so important for the Roman Catholic Church.

Course Tutor

Dr Richard Stemp is a graduate of Clare College, University of Cambridge, where he also completed his PhD on *Sculpture in Ferrara in the Fifteenth Century*. After a year at the Academy of Live and Recorded Arts he has shared his time between art and acting. Richard was a lecturer at the National Gallery for 24 years, and has worked regularly for London's leading galleries including Tate, Buckingham Palace and the V&A. His books include *The Secret Language of the Renaissance* and *Churches and Cathedrals*; he has written and presented two series for Channel Four: *Art in the National Gallery* and *Tate Modern*.

Previous Skills, Knowledge or Experience

None required. This course is designed as an introduction to the subject.

Joining Information and Format

This course will be taught through Zoom. For more information, including instructions on how to download and use the system, please visit www.zoom.us/support.

Each course session duration is 120 minutes, including a five-minute break and short Q&A session with the tutor.

Participants will be emailed the Zoom Meeting ID and Passcode 48 hours in advance.
