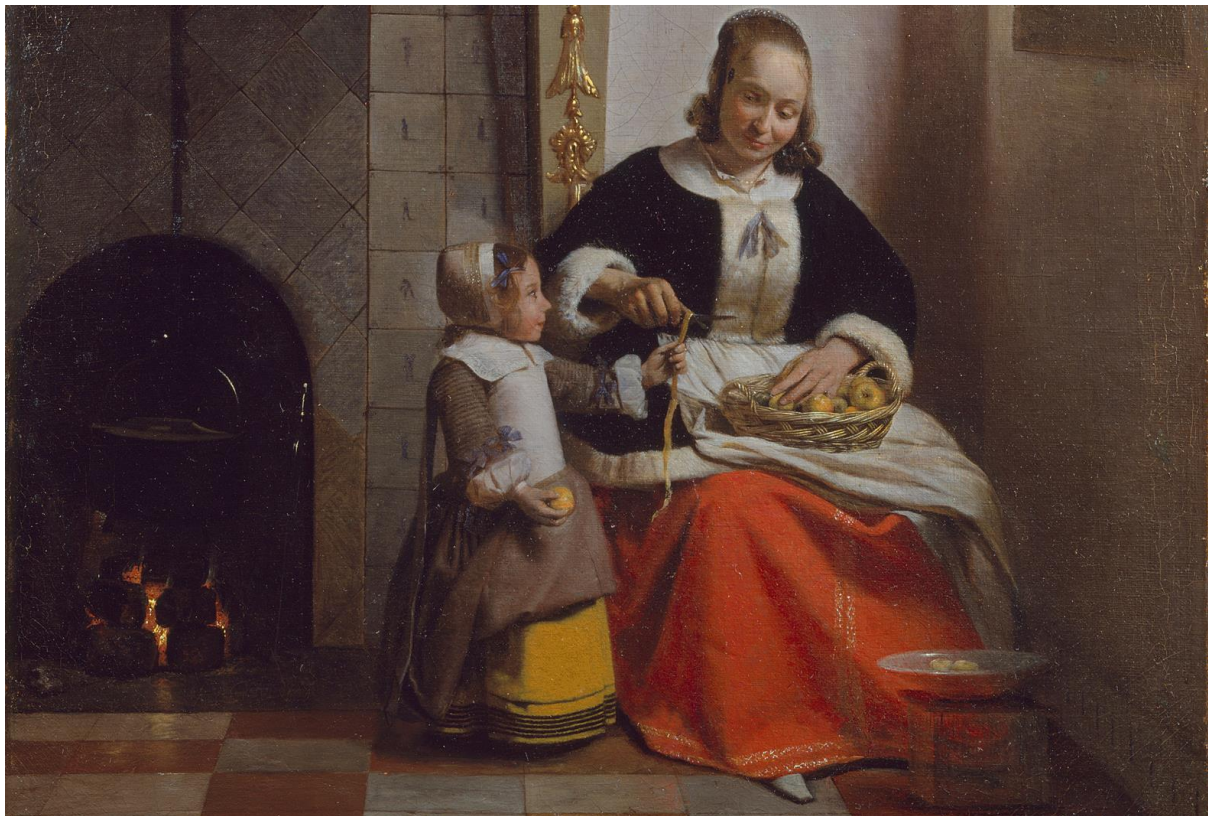


Making Connections with Art: Genre Paintings

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| Dates | Thursdays 2, 9 and 16 September 2021 |
| Times | 18.00-19.45 |
| Location | Zoom Webinar |
| Tutor | Jo Rhymer |
| Level | All Levels |



Pieter de Hooch, *A Woman peeling Apples*, c.1663 (detail)

Course Description

The Wallace Collection's outstanding paintings are as inspiring and thought-provoking today as when they were first created. Discover how we can make meaningful connections with them by looking slowly.

This course focuses on the rich subject matter of Dutch and French genre paintings, that is, scenes of daily life. Seen through the lens of a small selection of artists, we'll discover how ordinary moments are transformed to produce compelling images that reward close looking.

This three-session course is designed to help you develop visual analysis skills by looking at paintings in detail. Concentrating on a small number of genre paintings, you'll develop core skills in active looking which can be applied beyond the course, as well as increasing your familiarity with the artworks selected.

Session One: The Domestic Space

Dutch paintings of the home proliferated during the 17th century. The ideal home was perceived as the foundation for good morals and a spiritual life. Within the depicted confines of domestic spaces, a range of attitudes and activities are conveyed, which require us to look carefully in order to notice sometimes extraordinary details, and to unravel possible meanings.

In our first session, we'll look at a small range of paintings focusing on the domestic theme, including that of a seated woman peeling apples. In this painting, Pieter de Hooch (1629-1684) represents a young girl absorbed in watching the woman as she works, while we in turn contemplate the tenderness of an ordinary, but shared moment. However, not all representations of home reflect the ideal and we'll consider how the subject opened up possibilities for artists to represent warnings as well as virtuous life.

Session Two: Leisure and Pleasure

In our second week we explore another prevalent subject matter in Dutch genre paintings: the depiction of leisure, including music, drinking and smoking. The Early Renaissance art theorist, Alberti, proposed that including a depicted figure who looks out to the viewer is an effective way of drawing our attention and revealing a painting's possible meanings. How might we respond to a painting when the figure who connects with us is in fact the artist, set within a scene showing overindulgence and overtly amorous behaviour? Is the artist condoning loose morals or might he be indicating an alternative viewpoint?

While the focus of this course is scenes of everyday life, we'll also consider a painting which incorporates mythological subject matter within a contemporary scene of music-making and seduction; the mythological element probably becomes evident only after careful searching of the painting's exquisite surface.

Session Three: French Genre Painting - Reflecting on Love

During the 18th century, the representation of emotional states, erotic scenarios, and potentially moralising imagery were recurring aspects of French genre paintings. The focus of our final session centres on the depiction of love, anguish and regret. We'll start by looking closely at a painting by Jean Baptiste Greuze (1725-1805) depicting a self-contained world in which a young woman appears unaware of our presence, but whose personal distress draws us in and encourages contemplative looking. How might we respond to this scene?

We'll also look at two paintings of interiors by Léopold Boilly (1761-1845) revealing different facets of love. Comprising exquisite colours and meticulous attention to detail, we'll consider how the inclusion of objects in Boilly's paintings encourage us to 'read' the paintings to unlock potential meanings. To conclude this session and the course, we'll think briefly about how French genre painting manifested beyond the 18th to the mid-19th century.

Course Tutor

Jo Rhymer is a history of art lecturer. She has broad experience of working in museum and gallery learning departments and was previously Head of Adult Learning Programmes at the National Gallery. She leads tours in the UK and abroad and lectures for various organisations including the Institute of Continuing Education at the University of Cambridge and the Victoria & Albert Museum. Her particular interests include 19th-century French art, representations of women and women artists.

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 Webinar. For more information, including instructions on how to download and use the system, please visit www.zoom.us/support.

Each course session duration is 105 minutes, including a five-minute break and time for Q&A with the tutor.

Tickets are for all three 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 three sessions.

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 one week only.
