

## Cuffs and Ruffs: Decoding Dress in the Age of Frans Hals

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<b>Dates</b>	Saturday 23 and Sunday 24 October 2021
<b>Times</b>	11.00–13.00 BST
<b>Location</b>	Zoom Webinar
<b>Tutor</b>	Jacqui Ansell
<b>Level</b>	All Levels

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Michiel (Jansz.) van Mierevelt, *Portrait of a Lady*, 1628 (detail)

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### Course Description

Frans Hals's jaunty and jovial 'Laughing Cavalier' has welcomed generations of visitors to the Wallace Collection - his smile speaks through the centuries. His facial features and body language exude a casual confidence, and his clothing speaks in a language of its own, should we know how to read it. The elaborate embroideries, stiffly-starched linen, and shimmering silks of 17th-century sitters carried meanings and messages often lost on us today.

Over one weekend, we'll contextualise such clothing through images of artworks from the Wallace Collection and complementary collections. We'll explore the materiality of paintings by great artists such as Rembrandt, Hals and Van Dyck, and learn to decipher Dutch from Flemish dress. We'll also delight in the chaos of Jan Steen's disorderly households, and discover why such paintings appealed to collectors in the Dutch 'golden age', and to subsequent generations - including the founders of the Wallace Collection.

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### **Session One - Clothing or Costume? Decoding Dutch Dress**

The early 17th century was a turbulent time for the Netherlands, with political allegiances and social distinctions played out through dress. The Southern Netherlands was under Spanish rule, and the Northern provinces were fighting for their independence from the Hapsburgs. Distinctions between Flemish and Dutch female clothing were subtle but can be perceived in the paintings of Van Dyck and Rubens on the one hand, and Rembrandt and Hals on the other.

Through close consideration of the work of these great artists - and more - we'll distinguish daily dress (clothing) from painters' props (costume). We'll also explore the reasons that men seemed to follow the fashions of France, whilst their female counterparts kept to the more conservative and elaborately starched 'millstone' ruffs, long after they went out of fashion elsewhere in Europe.

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### **Session Two - Upstairs, Downstairs: Maids and their Mistresses**

Dutch genre paintings flourished in the 17th century and often give us a glimpse of life 'below stairs'. Colourful, often crowded, and vibrant with symbolism, the works of Jan Steen complement the quiet and contemplative canvases of Vermeer. In our second session, we'll enter the worlds of both artists and many more, to decode details of dress and behaviour, which often tell us what the maids really thought of their mistresses!

Family portraits by Frans Hals and his contemporaries, such as Judith Leyster, will also be explored to help us to decipher the manner and morals of the time. Discussion of the widespread appeal and varied interpretations of such subjects, will enable us to learn how, when and why such works entered the Wallace Collection.

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### **Course Tutor**

Jacqui Ansell gained an MA from the Courtauld Institute enabling her to decode and date dress in art. As an experienced gallery educator, she has devised and delivered numerous courses for the Wallace Collection and the National Gallery. She is an accredited lecturer for the Arts Society, and Senior Lecturer at Christie's Education where she writes, presents and tutors online courses in Art History and Luxury. Publication topics include Court Dress and Welsh Dress, and a forthcoming, richly-illustrated book about Vincent van Gogh's time living in Ramsgate, Kent in 1876 - Jacqui's hometown.

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### **Previous Skills, Knowledge or Experience**

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

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### **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](http://www.zoom.us/support).

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.

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### **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.

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