

A Feast for the Eyes: A Pictorial History of Drinking Glasses

Dates	Tuesday 23 and Wednesday 24 November 2021
Times	14.00-16.00 GMT
Location	Zoom Webinar
Tutor	Jane Gardiner
Level	All Levels



L-R (details): Unknown Maker, *Goblet*, about 1660 to about 1680;
Unknown Maker, *Goblet*, late 16th century to 17th century;
Unknown Maker, *Goblet*, probably mid-17th century.

Course Description

Trace the fascinating journey of the drinking glass from Roman times to the end of the 18th century. While our main focus will be the wine glass, we'll also look at glasses designed for other beverages, such as beer, cider and cordials, taking in examples in the Wallace Collection and beyond. We'll consider how, over the centuries, artists have represented fine drinking glasses in their paintings, capturing the shadows and reflections seen within the glass, as well as displaying their skill in portraying what lies behind and beyond.

Our pictorial exploration will also reveal the drinking habits of different countries, and the types of glasses associated with them, for example the fragile Venetian wing-stemmed glass, of which there are fine examples in the Wallace Collection; the German 'roemer'; the Dutch flute, and the sturdy English baluster-stemmed glass. And finally, we'll discuss the association of fine glass drinking vessels with scenes of feasting and conviviality.

Session One

We'll begin our course by looking at rare, surviving drinking glasses from as early as the third century BCE, and their remarkable depiction in Roman wall paintings. We'll then focus on the early history of glassmaking in Venice, and the desire for luxury goods in Renaissance Italy, which led to the Venetians using glass to imitate more precious materials. We'll consider how the perfecting of thin, clear 'cristallo' glass led to a demand for delicate drinking glasses throughout Europe, many of which appear in Renaissance paintings. We'll also learn that Venice's virtual monopoly on the production of fine glass began to be challenged in the late 16th century, as Italian craftsmen took their skills to other countries, resulting in what we call 'façon de Venise' glass.

We'll complete our first session by looking at the German and Netherlandish tradition of glassmaking, to see how these very distinctive glasses often form the focus of Dutch still life paintings.

Session Two

Our second session begins by looking briefly at some rare surviving drinking vessels dating from the early Middle Ages, followed by the work of an Italian craftsman making façon de Venise glass in London in the late 16th century. We'll discover that a truly English style of glass only started to emerge in the second half of the 17th century with the experiments of George Ravenscroft and fellow glassmakers, which led to the development of a distinctive glass with a high lead content. This type of glass lent itself to a sturdier and more robust style of drinking vessel, examples of which we can see in contemporary portraits. In the 18th century, a greater variety of drinking glass shapes emerged, often with decoration suggesting their particular use, and we'll uncover a growing interest in engraved, coloured and enamelled glass. Finally, we'll discuss the important development of English cut glass, which remains a popular type today.

Course Tutor

Jane Gardiner gained a Master's degree from the University of London and trained at the V&A. She was a Senior Lecturer at Sotheby's Institute of Art for 17 years, becoming a Deputy Director of Sotheby's UK. She has lectured for the National Trust, the Art Fund, London University, Buckingham University, l'Institut d'Études Supérieures des Arts, The Arts Society, on cruise ships and at antiques fairs and conferences in the US.

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 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 one week only.
