

Art and Power: The Visual World of Mary, Queen of Scots

Dates	Tuesday 8 and Wednesday 9 February 2022
Times	11.00–13.00 GMT
Location	Zoom Webinar
Tutor	Dr Christina Faraday
Level	All Levels



After François Clouet, *Mary, Queen of Scots*, about 1560–80 (detail)

Course Description

Inspired by the Wallace Collection's 16th-century painting of Mary, Queen of Scots, this course marks the queen's death by execution on 8 February 1587, and explores her extraordinary life. She had spent almost 20 years in England as a prisoner of Elizabeth I – in exile from her kingdom following a dramatic sequence of events involving assassination, abduction and rebellion. Throughout her life, and even in her final moments, Mary knew how to put on a show. Brought up in France, she learned the art of royal spectacle at one of the most culturally sophisticated courts in Europe.

Throughout her life she employed a range of fine and decorative arts to promote herself and her reign, even in exile. In this course we'll explore the images and objects that Mary had at her disposal: from portraits to entertainments, interior furnishings to fashion. By reconstructing the visual world that surrounded her and the images that came to define her, we'll examine the persuasive power of art in the world of politics.

Session One

In our first session we'll trace the biography of Mary, Queen of Scots, enlivening the story with a new emphasis on her visual and material surroundings. We'll consider her early life in France, at one of the most artistically well-connected courts in Europe, asking how this may have influenced her future tastes. We'll also consider the art and architecture she encountered on her return to Scotland: the narratives and emblems found on walls, ceilings and other objects, which promoted particular conceptions of monarchy and morality, and the entertainments organised while she was Queen.

We'll then turn to her long exile in England, with a particular focus on the embroideries she made in her captivity with Bess of Hardwick, a formidable English noblewoman. We'll explore the broader world view that engendered the vogue for the emblems employed in Mary's embroideries, and the blending of religious, classical and contemporary themes to express her increasing frustration.

Session Two

In our second session we'll explore Mary's outward promotion of power through portraits, miniatures and monuments. We'll look at 'fine arts,' including her early representation by one of the foremost European artists, François Clouet. What role did portraits – in oil and in miniature – play in Mary's political negotiations?

We'll also consider the decorative and practical imagery, much of it now lost, which conveyed the shocking events of Mary's reign to foreign courts: the famous sketch map of Kirk O'Field, showing the aftermath of the explosion that killed Mary's husband, Henry Lord Darnley, and the images of his suspected murderers apparently set up in the streets of Edinburgh in the wake of his death. Finally, we'll discuss Mary's tomb in Westminster Abbey, set up many years after her death by James VI and I, her son and heir, and Elizabeth I's successor in England – a fine balancing of family loyalty and political expediency.

Course Tutor

Dr Christina Faraday is a Research Fellow in History of Art at Gonville and Caius College, University of Cambridge, and a BBC Radio 3 New Generation Thinker. She specialises in the fine and decorative arts of Tudor and Stuart Britain, with wider interests in music, rhetoric and the history of ideas. From 2017-2019 she was a Curatorial Intern at the National Portrait Gallery, on the exhibition *Elizabethan Treasures: Miniatures by Hilliard and Oliver* (2019), and is currently writing a book about 'liveliness' (or vividness) in Tudor art. She regularly writes for wider audiences in outlets such as *Apollo* magazine, BBC Radio 3 and *The Telegraph*, and was shortlisted for the 2021 British Journalism Awards in the Arts and Entertainment Category.

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.
