

## Discovering Bonington

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<b>Dates</b>	Saturday 5 and Sunday 6 March 2022
<b>Times</b>	11.00–13.00 GMT
<b>Location</b>	Zoom Webinar
<b>Tutor</b>	Clare Ford-Wille
<b>Level</b>	All Levels

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Richard Parkes Bonington, *Venice: the Piazza San Marco*, 1828 (detail)

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### Course Description

The Wallace Collection features an extraordinary collection of paintings by the artist Richard Parkes Bonington (1802-1828), which cover all aspects of his short but remarkable career. His oil paintings and watercolours depict a range of fascinating subjects. They include atmospheric views of France and Venice, scenes with figures drawn from French history and the Court of Henri IV, as well as depictions of light-hearted everyday activities.

The paintings are small, luminous and atmospheric. The freshness and distinctive quality of his work sets Bonington apart from contemporaries such as Constable and Turner in Britain, and Delacroix in France. Bonington was born in England but when he was 14, he moved to France and subsequently his work relates to both countries. In this course we'll explore his life and output, discover the influences of Venetian and Flemish painting on his work, and consider the inspiration of his contemporaries on both sides of the Channel.

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## **Session One: Painter of Land and Sea**

In our first session we'll focus on Bonington's sparkling watercolours and gleaming oils of land and sea, which are the innovative results of his extensive travels. For the last six years of his life, he took regular trips along the Seine as well as spending summers in Dunkirk. He also journeyed further afield to visit Venice, London and Switzerland.

Bonington's father had been a painter and drawing master, exhibiting at the Royal Academy. His decision to move to France to set up a lace manufacturing business in Calais led young Bonington to come into contact with the painter Louis Francia, who encouraged him to go to Paris. Already a fine watercolourist and, encouraged by his teacher, Baron Gros, Bonington began to paint brilliant watercolours in the open air. We'll see how he became an inspiration for other young painters in Paris such as Delacroix, Géricault, Ary Scheffer and Charles Gleyre.

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## **Session Two: Painter of the Figure**

Another important aspect to Bonington's work was his paintings of small-scale, anecdotal figure studies drawn from medieval and Renaissance history. Bonington's career coincided with a general rediscovery and enthusiasm for historical subjects in art and literature, particularly fuelled by the novels of Sir Walter Scott. This was paralleled by an interest in 17th-century Dutch painting and Bonington's own admiration for Venetian and Flemish painting.

During this period, a general reaction against neoclassicism was emerging as well as the beginnings of 19th-century romanticism. We'll see these effects in Bonington's paintings *Earl of Surrey and the Fair Geraldine* and *La Siesta*, which are sometimes known as 'Troubadour Paintings'. In this session we'll explore Bonington's delightful figure scenes in the light of these latest ideas, as well as his influence upon similar works by his contemporaries. We'll also consider his fame following his early death.

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## **Course Tutor**

Clare Ford-Wille is an associate lecturer at Birkbeck College, University of London; she also lectures regularly for other institutions including the V&A, the National Trust, the Arts Society and the Art Fund, as well as leading groups to places of art-historical interest in Europe, Armenia and the USA.

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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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