

The Art of the Portrait

Dates	Wednesday 24 and Thursday 25 August 2022
Times	18.00-20.00 BST
Location	Online (Zoom Webinar)
Tutor	Clare Ford-Wille
Level	All Levels



Isaac Oliver, *Sir Richard Leveson*, about 1595-1600 (detail)

Course Description

What defines a portrait and what can they reveal about a sitter? Through our outstanding range of painted, sculpted, illuminated and metalwork portraits, learn why the genre has remained one of the most prestigious and compelling subjects in art.

We'll examine portraits large and small, intimate and grand, ranging from the Renaissance to the end of the 19th century, in order to understand how their function has evolved over time, and how the intentions of artists and their sitters has changed. You'll discover the surprising breadth of portraiture in the Collection, as well as being introduced to key artists, the enigmatic people they have depicted, and the circumstances of how these captivating portraits were made and collected.

Session One: Portraits from 1450 to 1700

By the end of the 15th century, portraits were produced in a variety of forms, using a surprising range of techniques and materials. In our first session, we'll look at early examples of small portraits in bronze, exquisitely carved walnut or pearwood, enamel, and ivory. Examples of the rare works in focus include a medal by the artist Pisanello, a miniature on vellum painted by Isaac Oliver, and a sword pommel belonging to Henry, Prince of Wales, featuring tiny portraits.

We'll also consider the form and function of later, more imposing portrait busts made from materials including terracotta, marble and bronze, such as those of Charles I and Louis XIV, as well as fascinating painted portraits by French, Flemish and Dutch artists, including Rubens to Rembrandt.

Session Two: Portraits from 1700 to 1860

In our second session, we'll discuss how portraiture became an important means for artists to achieve notoriety. We'll look at largescale portraits of George IV by John Hoppner and Thomas Lawrence, contrasting these with the more down-to-earth depictions of Napoleon and his wife, the Empress Josephine. Our focus for much of this session will also be on the intriguing painted portraits by artists Joshua Reynolds and Jean-Marc Nattier.

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.

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](#). 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.
