

## Gold Boxes: History, Hype and High Fashion

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<b>Dates</b>	Thursday 1 and Friday 2 December
<b>Times</b>	2022 18.00-20.00 GMT
<b>Location</b>	Online (Zoom Webinar)
<b>Tutor</b>	Alexandra Starp
<b>Level</b>	All Levels

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Jean Ducrollay, Snuffbox, 1744 (detail)

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### Course Description

In the month most associated with giving presents, explore the remarkable complexities of gifting a gold box in the 18th century. Amongst royalty and nobility, gifting a snuff box or gold box wasn't always straightforward - it may have concealed a political statement or comprised a subtle form of payment; it may even have represented a token of love or gratitude, or be a symbol of power, wealth or intellect.

But how did a simple, pocket-sized container for scented tobacco in the late 16th century, develop into an intellectual and dazzling status symbol in the following two centuries? The Wallace Collection's outstanding gold boxes reveal the enormous variety of techniques, materials, dates and places of origin, helping us to investigate the fascinating history of these perfectly portable works of art.

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## Session One

In our first session we'll discuss the most important gold boxes of Parisian origin in the Collection, tracing their development from practical snuff box to stunning status symbol. Examining different techniques and materials, we'll explore how and why, by the mid-18th century, a whole industry was created to produce these intimate art objects. While trailblazing Paris remained the centre for this flourishing luxury industry, we'll also look at production and patronage in places such as England and Germany in order to understand the often-inherent political intricacies associated with gold boxes.

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## Session Two

Focusing on the late-18th and the 19th century, in our second session we'll investigate the impact of economic changes on gold box production, alongside the development of distinctive styles in response to new clientele. We'll consider how makers in Geneva and Hanau became increasingly important, and how, at the end of the tumultuous 19th century, the desire for 18th-century 'microcosms of beauty' reached a new peak with famous collectors, including the Rothschilds.

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## Course Tutor

Alexandra Starp joined the Gold Boxes department at Sotheby's in 2017, with several years of experience in the auction world. Holding a degree in art history and economics, Alexandra is currently in charge of sales and valuations of gold boxes and objects of vertu at Sotheby's. She has handled, researched, valued and sold some of the most important objects in the field, among them a magnificent gold and hardstone snuff box by the Dresden court jeweller Johann Christian Neuber, from the collection of the Comtesse de Ribes, sold in Paris in 2019. Until this day, it remains the most expensive gold box ever sold at auction. Alexandra also follows her interest in the relations between Hanau and Geneva *bijouterie* in the 18th century.

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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](#). 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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