

## Rubens: Painter of Peace and Plenty

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<b>Dates</b>	Tuesdays 15, 22 and 29 November 2022
<b>Times</b>	18.00-20.00 GMT
<b>Location</b>	Online (Zoom Webinar)
<b>Tutor</b>	Dr Chantal Brotherton-Ratcliffe
<b>Level</b>	All Levels

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Peter Paul Rubens, *The Rainbow Landscape*, about 1636 (detail)

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### Course Description

Peter Paul Rubens (1577-1640) is one of the most celebrated painters of the 17th century. His paintings overflow with an exuberance and joy in life as he turned his eye to almost every subject during his career. As court painter, he created portraits, mythologies and massive schemes for palaces, as well as creating religious paintings for churches and convents. His domestic paintings - often made for his own enjoyment - include remarkable depictions of his family and the countryside he loved around Antwerp.

The Wallace Collection displays fine examples of all these subjects. Over three weeks, we'll look at them within the wider context of 17th century art and history, exploring their original meanings and marvelling at the technical brilliance of this outstanding painter.

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### **Session One – Rubens the Courtier: Painter and Diplomat**

Rubens was a man of many skills; he was multilingual and highly intelligent. He worked for the rulers of Flanders, Spain, Mantua and England, employed both as a painter and as a diplomat. He was often under tremendous pressure from many of his patrons to produce multiple pictures for various schemes. How did he manage such a workload? In our first session, we'll discover his inventive studio set-up, which included collaborations with the artist, Van Dyck. Investigating his methods of working, we'll learn how Rubens developed a smooth process for creating paintings in huge quantities and of enormous size, without compromising on quality.

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### **Session Two – Rubens the Man: Domestic Life, Religious Life**

Rubens's relief when he turned from his court duties to painting images of his domestic life is palpable. In our second session, we'll explore paintings of his first and second wife, his children, and the friends he loved throughout his life. We'll also discuss the social context in which he lived – the values, customs and dress, as well as the joys and fears.

Rubens was skilled in designing monumental compositions that hold their own inside enormous church interiors. Like most of the people with whom he associated, Rubens was a devout Roman Catholic and we'll discuss his intensely felt depictions of sacred figures and narratives.

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### **Session Three – Rubens and Landscape**

Rubens was born into a time of horrific religious struggle, as the Roman Catholic Church reacted to the Protestant Reformation. Rubens loved his country and worked endlessly to help find peace between European powers. His landscape paintings show the dream rather than the reality, with healthy livestock, abundant crops and farm workers happy and well-fed. Rubens's interest in landscape is part of a wider fascination with the natural world; in our final session we'll consider how his landscape paintings compare with those created by his Dutch neighbours.

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### **Course Tutor**

Dr Chantal Brotherton-Ratcliffe graduated from Edinburgh University with an MA in History of Art and completed her PhD at the Warburg Institute, University of London. She trained briefly as a paintings conservator and has worked as a lecturer for over 30 years at Sotheby's Institute of Art, and for a number of institutions including the National Gallery and the Royal Academy, teaching a wide range of topics within 15th-17th-century European art. Her interest is in the approach of the traditional connoisseur, teaching the analysis of those stylistic features of a painting or work of art that can tell us who the artist is, and when a painting is a copy, good or bad.

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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 all 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 further 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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