

Virtue and Vice: 17th-Century Dutch Paintings

Dates	Wednesday 21 and Thursday 22 August 2024
Times	18.00–20.00 BST
Location	Online (Zoom)
Tutor	Clare Ford-Wille
Level	All Levels



Jan Steen, *Celebrating the Birth*, 1664

Course Description

Peel back the layers of meaning embedded within 17th-century Dutch paintings to reveal the purpose and context of these extraordinary works. Our investigation of virtue and vice will focus on a selection of images by outstanding artists including Frans Hals, Jan Steen, Pieter de Hooch and Nicolaes Maes. Why were depictions of lewdness and wanton behaviour – or conversely, modesty and diligence – such recurring themes? We'll look closely at genre paintings (depictions of everyday life) to discover why they became a particularly popular and vibrant subject for newly-Protestant Dutch painters at this time.

Session One: Early Developments in 17th-Century Dutch Genre Paintings

We'll begin by learning how some of the earliest developments in Dutch genre painting emerged during the 1620s and 1630s in Haarlem and Amsterdam. Such subjects were mainly the *kermess* or village fairs, which developed into saucy 'merry company' scenes. We'll see that Dutch painters from Utrecht visited Rome and brought back the ideas of Caravaggio, which influenced contemporaries such as Frans Hals and Judith Leyster, while Rembrandt's pupil, Gerrit Dou, developed fascinating and meticulously painted scenes in Leiden. How would these developments have been understood within contemporary ideas of virtue and vice?

Session Two: Later Genre Painters and Their Specialisms

In our second session we'll explore how talented painters of genre scenes and other subjects were established in most Dutch towns, especially Delft and Leiden. We'll look at works by Gabriel Metsu, Nicolaes Maes and Pieter de Hooch alongside the outstanding example of Jan Steen – painter of scenes of virtue and vice, whose work is particularly well-represented in the Wallace Collection. Even today in the Netherlands, a disordered home is referred to as a 'Jan Steen household', and we'll delve into the detail and meaning of his often colourful and humorous works.

Course Tutor

Clare Ford-Wille is an Associate Lecturer at Birkbeck College, University of London and lectures regularly for many additional institutions including the V&A, the National Trust, The Arts Society, 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 two weeks.
