

**American Art and its Publics 1880-1939**

<b>Date/Time</b>	Friday 3rd July 2026 11am - 4.30pm	<b>Price</b>	£49
<b>Venue</b>	Lettsom House, 11 Chandos Street London W1G 9EB	<b>Lecturer</b>	Dr Kathy McLauchlan

This study day traces the development of American art during a period of dynamic change – from the optimism and glamour of late 19<sup>th</sup> century to the anxiety and hardship of the Great Depression. At the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries America was at the height of its ‘gilded age’. Cities like Boston, Philadelphia and New York were emerging as vibrant and sophisticated art centres. They were also home to some of the wealthiest art patrons in the world. Their purchasing power would form the basis for outstanding collections of American and European art – including the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Frick in New York, the Barnes Collection in Philadelphia and the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston. In this vibrant, confident environment new avant-garde groups emerged, starting with the Ashcan School in the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which challenged traditional ideals in favour of the gritty realities of urban life. By the 1920s private buyers and museum curators were trying to incorporate the most innovative European trends in their collections, provoking heated debates between advocates of abstraction and realism. The Wall Street Crash of 1929 was a trauma felt across politics society. Its impact, during the years of the Great Depression, can be traced in the work of Regionalist artists and in Roosevelt’s Federal Art Project.

**Lectures**

- 1 Art of the Gilded Age**
- 2 The Realities of Life - The Ashcan School**
- 3 New Directions in American Art – Abstraction and its Antagonists**
- 4 Painting the American Condition, 1930-1939**

**Lecturer**

**Kathy McLauchlan**

A lecturer specialising in 19<sup>th</sup>-century art history, she is currently a course director at the Victoria & Albert Museum, organising courses and study days on the history of art and design. She teaches at several institutions, including the Arts Society and Morley College. She also leads art tours for Art Pursuits to France and Denmark. She is a graduate of Oxford University and the Courtauld Institute, with a Ph.D. on French 19<sup>th</sup>-century painters in Rome.