

Arcimboldo in the Court of the Alchemists

Date/Time	Monday 19 October 2026 18.00	Price	N/A
Venue	Zoom	Lecturer	Rupert Dickens

2026-27 is the 500th anniversary of the birth of Giuseppe Arcimboldo, one of the strangest and most intriguing artists of all time. He captivated his contemporaries with his depictions of the human face composed of objects such as fruits, flowers, fish and books. After centuries of obscurity, he was rediscovered in the 19th century and then revered by the Surrealists who saw him as a pioneer for their mining of the subconscious. Arcimboldo worked at the court of the Holy Roman Emperor Rudolph II, an extraordinary collector who assembled hundreds of artists, wizards and alchemists at his castle in Prague. This lecture examines Arcimboldo's unique career in the context of his patron's grand project of pursuing occult knowledge.

Lecturer

Rupert Dickens is an art historian with a special interest in Dutch and Flemish 16th and 17th century painting. He is an accredited Arts Society lecturer and works at the Wallace Collection as a guide conducting public and private tours and lecturing on aspects of the collection. Rupert is also a tour director for ACE Cultural Tours. He studied art history at Birkbeck College before undertaking a Masters in Dutch Golden Age Studies at University College London. Before that Rupert had a 26-year career as a BBC journalist ending as an editor in radio news.