

**Byzantium's Capital:
Constantinople, the New Rome, the Queen of Cities**

Date/Time	28 th October 2026 11.00-16.30	Price	£49 Post-event recording £44
Venue	Lettsom House, 11 Chandos Street, London W1G 9EB	Lecturer	Dr Cecily Hennessy

Constantinople was the political and artistic capital of Byzantium for over a thousand years, celebrated for its legendary wealth and ceremony. This day will trace the development of Constantinople from the time of Constantine the Great, who founded the city in 324, to its fall to the Ottomans in 1453. It will examine architecture, particularly churches, mosaics, paintings, enamel work, manuscripts and ivories. Fascinating textual accounts will augment exploration of the visual heritage. Some of the focus will be on manifestations of imperial power and on the influence of the Church and the aristocracy, including foundations such as monasteries and orphanages. We will also look at the workings of society and the role of women and children including the materials used in everyday life.

- 1 The foundations of the City: Constantine to Justinian and Hagia Sophia
- 2 Iconoclasm and the Resurgence of Figural Art after the Ninth Century
- 3 The Komnenian Rulers and International Collaboration
- 2 The Artistic Blossoming in the Last Phase of Byzantium

Lecturer

Cecily Hennessy received her doctorate in Byzantine Art History from the Courtauld Institute and after working at the Courtauld joined Christie's Education, where she became Academic Director. She has taught and published widely on representations of children and the family in Byzantine art as well as on the architecture and paintings of Constantinople, Jerusalem and Ravenna. She has also focused on connections between Byzantine and western art. She has recently co-edited a book published by Courtauld Books Online on the *Cloisters Cross* (2026), and published a book on imperial child brides in Byzantium and beyond with Arc Humanities (2026).