

Mantua: Art and Patronage of the Gonzaga

Date/Time	Wednesday 19 February 2025 11am-4.30pm	Price	£49
Venue	Lettsom House, 11 Chandos Street, London W1G 9EB	Lecturer	Dr Paula Nuttall & Dr Geoffrey Nuttall

The Gonzaga are synonymous with Mantua, which under their rule became one of the artistically preeminent centres in Renaissance Italy. Recognising the value of art and architecture in enhancing their prestige, successive Gonzaga rulers attracted leading artists to their court, notably Pisanello, Mantegna and Giulio Romano. They also amassed a fabled collection of paintings, sculptures and antiquities – including masterpieces by Titian, Correggio and Michelangelo – eventually purchased by King Charles I of England.

This study day focuses on the heyday of Gonzaga patronage, between c.1440-1540, highlighting the discernment and innovation of successive rulers. Lodovico Gonzaga commissioned groundbreaking churches from Alberti, and brought Mantegna to Mantua, where the painter served three generations, producing novel masterpieces such as the *Camera Picta*, the *Triumphs of Caesar*, and poetic *Allegories* for Isabella d'Este, wife of Lodovico's grandson Francesco. Isabella, an exceptional patron by any standards, was truly remarkable in an era when this was typically a male preserve, housing her famous collections in purpose-built rooms, the *studiolo* and *grotta*. Her son Federico inherited her tastes, bringing Giulio Romano to Mantua, who created the Palazzo Te, a pleasure palace where Mannerist wit and innovation abounds.

Lecture 1: Mantua and the Gonzaga 1328-1707: an Overview (Paula Nuttall)

Lecture 2: Lodovico Gonzaga and the '*renovatio*' of Mantua (Paula Nuttall)

Lecture 3: Francesco and Isabella: The Arts of War and Poetry (Paula Nuttall)

Lecture 4: Giulio Romano and Palazzo Te (Geoff Nuttall)

Lecturers

Paula Nuttall is an art historian specialising in the Renaissance, with a particular interest in artistic relations between Italy and the Netherlands. She has published widely on this topic, and has contributed to major exhibitions, including *Van Eyck: An Optical Revolution* (Ghent, 2020).

Geoffrey Nuttall is an art historian whose work focuses on artistic patronage in Italy, and in particular the Tuscan city of Lucca. In 2020 he co-edited, with Paula, a volume of studies on Filippino Lippi, and has published widely on the activities of Lucchese merchants across Europe.