

## **Merry Monarch and Art Lover: Charles II as Patron and Collector**

<b>Date/Time</b>	Tuesday 18 March 2025 11am to 4.15pm	<b>Price</b>	£49
<b>Venue</b>	Lettsom House, 11 Chandos Street, London W1G 9DP	<b>Lecturer</b>	Steven Barrett

Charles II is remembered, perhaps incorrectly, as the 'Merry Monarch' who saved England from Puritanism and restored the Crown to glory. During his reign (1660-85) royal palaces were enlarged and great ceremonial portraits painted. The Court indeed became a place where beauty was admired again, but the trauma of Charles I's execution cast a long shadow. The King tried at great expense to recover works of art dispersed at the Commonwealth Sale of 1649; many were never returned. Emulating his father, Charles II became a discerning patron and collector. He enriched the Royal Collection considerably adding masterpieces by Pieter Bruegel the Elder and Georges de La Tour, artists whose works remain rare in Britain today. He acquired the precious notebooks and drawings by Leonardo da Vinci held in the Royal Library at Windsor. However, and perhaps due to the King's taste for continental art, native British art did not flourish; there was no Golden Age in Britain.

This study day will explore the reign of Charles II in the context of visual art, the function of portraiture at his Court, and the King's influence on British taste as a patron and collector of 'old masters'.

- Lecture 1** Magnificence and Beauty: Art at the Court of Charles II
- Lecture 2** Like Father, Like Son: The Legacy of Charles I
- Lecture 3** Trendsetter and Taste-Maker: Charles II as Patron and Collector
- Lecture 4** Legacy and Influence: Why no British Golden Age in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century?

### **Lecturer**

**Steven Barrett** has been at the National Gallery since 2024 presenting courses, lectures and gallery talks. He is also involved in the gallery access and outreach programmes. Previously he lectured at the Bishopsgate Institute, The Courtauld and City Lit. Steven presented the Society day on The Painter's Craft in March 2023.