

Super-splendid: Medieval Marian Art

Date/Time	Fridays 8 Jan–5 Feb 2027 11am-1pm	Price	£125 in-person £110 post-event recording
Venue	First Floor Lettsom House, 11 Chandos Street, London W1G 9EB NB There is no lift in this building	Lecturer	Dr Sally Dormer

This course is available as both an in person and a recording only event. The recording will be made available to ALL attendees on the Monday following each weekly lecture and will be available for 4 weeks.

Described by Baldwin of Forde, Archbishop of Canterbury (d. 1190), as “super-splendid, super gracious and super glorious”, Mary, the mother of Christ, was arguably one of the most revered figures in medieval Christendom. She features in abundant images, carved, painted, stitched, woven, and sculpted, displayed in public and private contexts, from the 4th to the 15th centuries. Marian relics, including her *maphorion* (veil), *camisa*, the gown she wore giving birth to Christ, her breast milk, and girdle, were deemed inestimably precious. Known affectionately by epithets including, the *Second Eve* and *Queen of Heaven*, she was renowned for her physical and spiritual purity, venerated as the mother of Christ and esteemed as *mediatrix* or *intercessor par excellence* between mankind and Christ, and for her ability to perform miracles. This course will explore various medieval Marian visual themes influenced by evolving theological precepts: her Old Testament links, her biography, her relationship with Christ as infant and adult, her physical appearance and attributes, and her connection with dragons, lions and unicorns.

Week 1 Mary’s life and death

Week 2 Mary and the Old Testament

Week 3 Mary as Mother

Week 4 Mary as *Mediatrix*

Week 5 Mary’s Attributes

Lecturer

Dr Sally Dormer is a specialist medieval art historian, with an MA in Medieval Art History and PhD on Medieval illuminated manuscripts from The Courtauld, London University. Sally founded the ongoing V&A Late Medieval Europe and Early Renaissance Year Course 1250-1500 in 1993, and in 2009 devised the V&A Early Medieval Year Course 300-800. She is Director of both. She has lectured for Gresham College, The Arts Society, ARTscapades. From 2000-2020 she was Dean of *European Studies*, a study abroad semester, for two universities in Tennessee, USA.