

THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE COURTS: INTRODUCTION AND THE MALATESTA

Thursday 15th June 2017

11.00am to 4.30pm (Access from 10.30am)

Brockway Room, Conway Hall, 25 Red Lion Square, WC1R 4RL

Some of the most beautiful works of renaissance art were made for the princely courts of Italy by artists such as Piero della Francesca, Andrea Mantegna and Leonardo da Vinci. Their princely commissions were distinctive, splendid and costly, made to enhance the public image of their patrons, such as Federigo da Montefeltro of Urbino and Isabella d'Este of Mantua, and to enrich the cultural life of their courts. This study day is the first of a series devoted to the art of the Italian courts.

Lecture 1: Historical introduction (Geoffrey Nuttall)

This introductory lecture sets the scene, from the rise of the Italian states and the emergence of powerful ruling dynasties in Middle Ages, to their extinction in the seventeenth century at the hands of the great powers of early modern Europe, France, Spain and the Holy Roman Empire.

Lecture 2: Court culture (Paula Nuttall)

How did renaissance rulers use art and artefacts to convey the all-important quality of princely magnificence? Chivalry, humanism and piety; portraiture, dress and display culture, are among the themes discussed in this second lecture, providing an overview of the distinctive characteristics of court art.

Lecture 3: The Malatesta: the rise and fall of a dynasty (Geoffrey Nuttall)

The Malatesta dominated much of Romagna, from the northern city of Brescia to the coastal town of Pesaro during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Their artistic patronage exemplifies the themes of the morning lectures whilst enabling us to think about one of the most ephemeral but original, early renaissance courts.

Lecture 4: Sigismondo Malatesta and the Tempio Malatestiano at Rimini (Paula Nuttall)

This final session will focus on the infamous Sigismondo Malatesta, Lord of Rimini, and Alberti's masterpiece, the so-called 'Malatesta Temple', created as a mausoleum for Sigismondo, his mistress and his court, one of the great landmarks of renaissance architecture and design.

Lecturers

Dr Paula Nuttall gained her BA and PhD from the Courtauld, writing her doctoral thesis on the reception of Netherlandish painting in fifteenth-century Florence. She is Director of the V&A's Late Medieval and Early Renaissance Year Course, and she lectures for a range of other institutions including the National Gallery, Christie's Education and NADFAS.

Dr Geoffrey Nuttall has several degrees including an MA in History of Art from Birkbeck and a PhD from the Courtauld. He is a specialist in the Courts of Europe and their dealings with the merchants of luxury goods. He lectures at the V&A and international conferences, and recently held a fellowship at the Huntington Collections and Art Gallery in California.