

Whistler, Sickert and the avant-garde

Date/Time	Fridays 6 January–3 February 2023 2-4pm	Price	£90
Venue	On-line via Zoom with recordings available for one week after each lecture	Lecturer	Jo Rhymer

Both Whistler and Sickert evade easy classification, but their impact on the history of art is significant. Looking at paintings and prints, this course aims to show how American-born painter and printmaker, James McNeill Whistler (1834-1903), and German-born painter and printmaker, Walter Sickert (1860-1942), each played crucial roles in the development of modern art.

Whistler found inspiration in historical art as well as ground-breaking work by French contemporaries including Gustave Courbet and Edouard Manet. After mixing in progressive circles in Paris during the mid-1850s, Whistler settled in London in 1859. Here, he socialised with figures such as Dante Gabriel Rossetti who, like many avant-garde colleagues in France, shared Whistler's passion for Japanese art. Looking closely at a selection of works by Whistler – and contemporaries on both sides of the Channel – we will see how Whistler's innovative ideas led to highly experimental work ahead of its time.

Sickert so admired Whistler, he quit his training at the Slade School of Fine Art to become Whistler's studio assistant. Taking his influences from various sources including Whistler and Edgar Degas, as well as modern life in the city, Sickert developed his own innovative pictorial language. How do Sickert's stark images of Camden Town reveal a darker side of modernity, which is both modern and quintessentially British?

Lectures

- 1a. Whistler, Sickert and London: setting the scene.
 - b. Courbet, Whistler and Joanna Hiffernan.
- 2a. Whistler and the Thames.
 - b. The *Nocturnes*.
- 3a. Whistler and the women in white.
 - b. Whistler, Sickert and the cosmopolitan scene.
- 4a. Sickert and French connections.
 - b. Sickert's Camden Town.
- 5a. Nude or body? The Camden Town Murders.
 - b. The legacies of Whistler and Sickert.

Lecturer

Jo Rhymer is an independent art historian specialising in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century French and British Art. She currently lectures for the V&A and The Wallace Collection. She is a Panel Tutor at the University of Cambridge Institute of Continuing Education.