

## Early Netherlandish art circa 1550: Pieter Bruegel the Elder and his contemporaries

---

**Start date** 18 November 2016**End date** 20 November 2016**Venue** Madingley Hall  
Madingley  
Cambridge**Tutor** Dr Sophie Oosterwijk**Course code** 1617NRX033**Director of Programmes**

Emma Jennings

**For further information on this course, please contact**Public Programme Coordinator, Clare Kerr  
[clare.kerr@ice.cam.ac.uk](mailto:clare.kerr@ice.cam.ac.uk) or 01223 746237**To book** See: [www.ice.cam.ac.uk](http://www.ice.cam.ac.uk) or telephone 01223 746262

---

### Tutor biography

Sophie Oosterwijk was born in Gouda, the Netherlands. She studied English at Leiden University and Medieval Studies at the University of York before completing her PhD in the History of Art at Leicester; she also has a second PhD in Middle English literature from Leiden University. She has published widely on her specialist research subjects: medieval iconography, medieval sculpture and tomb monuments, the image of the child in western art, and the *Danse Macabre*. Recent publications include two co-edited volumes entitled *Monumental Industry: The production of tomb sculpture in England and Wales in the long fourteenth century* (with Sally Badham: Shaun Tyas, 2010), *Mixed Metaphors: the Danse Macabre in medieval and early modern Europe* (with Stefanie Knöll: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011), and (with Sally Badham) a major survey article on precious-metal effigial tombs in medieval Europe 1080-1430 published in the journal *Church Monuments* 30 (2016).

Sophie has taught at the universities of St Andrews, Leicester, Manchester and Nottingham, Sotheby's Institute of Art, and other organisations. She was also for many years Editor of the journal *Church Monuments* and during 2011-2013 the Coordinator of Tomb Monuments for the MeMO (Medieval Monuments Online) project at Utrecht University. She is an Honorary Research Fellow with the University of St Andrews while also working as a free-lance lecturer and researcher.

A regular guest lecturer at Madingley Hall, Sophie has previously taught weekend schools on Early Netherlandish art in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries (including Jan van Eyck, art of the

later fifteenth century, and Pieter Bruegel), 'memento mori' themes in medieval and renaissance art, portraiture, and Dutch genre and history painting (Vermeer, Rembrandt) in the seventeenth century.

---

## Course programme

---

### Friday

Please plan to arrive between 16:30 and 18:30. You can meet other course members in the bar which opens at 18:15. Tea and coffee making facilities are available in the study bedrooms.

19:00	Dinner
20:30 – 22:00	Session 1: Introduction: Netherlandish art, society and religion in the early sixteenth century
22:00	Terrace bar open for informal discussion

### Saturday

07:30	Breakfast
09:00 – 10:30	Session 2: Mannerism: the lure of Italy
10:30	Coffee
11:00 – 12:30	Session 3: Landscape: Bruegel and Patenier
13:00	Lunch
14:00 – 16:00	Free
16:00	Tea
16:30 – 18:00	Session 4: Bruegel's graphic oeuvre
18:00 – 18:30	Free
18:30	Dinner
20:00 – 21:30	Session 5: Bruegel's peasants
21:30	Terrace bar open for informal discussion

## **Sunday**

07:30	Breakfast
09:00 – 10:30	Session 6: Religion and Allegory
10:30	Coffee
11:00 – 12:30	Session 7: After Bruegel: offspring and influence
12:45	Lunch

**The course will disperse after lunch**

---

## Course syllabus

---

### Aims:

This course aims to offer student a better understanding of the work of Pieter Bruegel the Elder within the cultural, social and religious context of the late Middle Ages and early Renaissance in the Low Countries. Bruegel lived and worked in a period of political and religious unrest in Europe: Calvinism was gaining support in the Low Countries, and before his death in 1569 Bruegel witnessed the Iconoclasm of 1566 and the start of the Dutch Revolt.

The oeuvre of Bruegel will be compared to that of his contemporaries, and the nature and complexities of both his graphic work and his paintings will be discussed. By Sunday, the artist should have become familiar to students as more than just a painter of droll peasant scenes, but as an influential and widely respected artist.

### Content:

The course will first offer an introduction on late-medieval culture, society and religion in the Netherlands on the threshold of the Renaissance, which will provide a background to the turmoil caused not just by the Reformation but also by political developments. Subsequent classes will focus the influence of Italy, especially Mannerism, on such artists as Jan Gossaert (or Mabuse), Quentin Massys (Metsys), Pieter Pourbus, Maerten van Heemskerck, Lucas van Leyden, and Jan van Scorel. Bruegel himself travelled to Italy, but his work is firmly rooted in Netherlandish tradition, as will become obvious in the discussion of the development of landscape by Joachim Patenier (Patinir) and others.

Bruegel may now be best known for his paintings, especially of peasant scenes, but it is also important to study his graphic output in his earlier career and his importance as a landscape painter. Comparisons will be made throughout to other Northern artists and works of art of the period. Aspects such as religion, patronage, and the status of the artist will be discussed, but also such questions as authenticity and imitation, especially in view of the work of Bruegel's son Pieter Brueghel the Younger.

**Note:** Although this course follows on from three earlier weekend schools on Netherlandish art in the fifteenth century and around the time of Hieronymus Bosch, it can be taken by students without such prior knowledge.

### Presentation of the course:

The course will be in the format of PowerPoint lectures with some class discussion, both on issues raised by the tutor and questions asked by students. Students will be asked to consider questions as to how a work was made of what materials were used. Advice will be given about places to visit in order to see the works studied during the course.

**As a result of the course, within the constraints of the time available, students should be able to:**

1. achieve a greater understanding of the oeuvre of Pieter Bruegel the Elder within its religious, cultural, social and historical context;
2. obtain a deeper insight into the artistic developments in Netherlandish art in the sixteenth century;
3. feel confident to analyse and discuss the nature and subject matter of some of Bruegel's works.

---

### **Reading and resources list**

---

Listed below are a number of texts that might be of interest for future reference, but do not need to be bought (or consulted) for the course.

<b>Author</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Publisher and date</b>
<b>General:</b>		
Cuttler, C.D.	<i>Northern Painting from Pucelle to Bruegel: Fourteenth, Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries</i>	New York, 1968, 1985 Harcourt Pub.
Friedländer, M.J.	<i>From Van Eyck to Bruegel</i>	1956, repr. Oxford, 1981 Phaidon
Hand, J.O., <i>et al.</i>	<i>The Age of Bruegel: Netherlandish Drawings in the Sixteenth Century</i>	(Exhibition catalogue). Washington, 1987 National Gallery of Art
Harbison, C.	<i>The Art of the Northern Renaissance</i>	The Everyman Art Library, London, 1995
Smith, J.C.	<i>The Northern Renaissance</i>	Art & Ideas – Series, 2004, Phaidon Press
Silver, L.	<i>Peasant Scenes and Landscapes. The Rise of Pictorial Genres in the Antwerp Art Market</i>	2006, University of Pennsylvania Press
Snyder, J.	<i>Northern Renaissance Art: Painting, Sculpture and the Graphic Arts from 1350 to 1575</i>	New York, 1985, 2 <sup>nd</sup> edn 2004 Prentice-Hall

<b>HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:</b>		
Geyl, P.	<i>The Revolt of the Netherlands 1555-1609</i>	London, 1961; 2001 Orion Publications
Honig, E.A	<i>Painting and the Market in Early Modern Antwerp</i>	1998, Yale University Press
Parker, G.	<i>The Dutch Revolt</i>	1977, Penguin
Parker, G.	<i>Spain and the Netherlands 1559-1659: Ten Studies</i>	1979, Fontana
<b>ON BRUEGEL:</b>		
Bovi, A.	<i>Bruegel</i>	London, 1971
Brink, P. van den (ed.)	<i>Brueghel Enterprises</i>	exhib. catalogue, 2001, Ludion
Dobbels, D.	<i>Brueghel</i>	Paris, 1994
Dundes, A., and C.A. Stibbe	<i>The Art of Mixing Metaphors: a Folkloristic Interpretation of the Netherlandish Proverbs by Pieter Bruegel the Elder</i>	Helsinki, 1982
Francastel, P.	<i>Brueghel</i>	Paris, 1995
Gibson, W. S	<i>Bruegel</i>	1977, Thames and Hudson
Marijnissen, R. H.	<i>Bruegel</i>	1988, Ghent
Meadow, M. A.	<i>Pieter Bruegel the Elder's Netherlandish Proverbs and the Practice of Rhetoric</i>	2002, Waanders Publications, Zwolle
Roberts, K.	<i>Brueghel</i>	1994, Phaidon
Silver, L.	<i>Brueghel</i>	2001, Abbeville Press
Sullivan, M.	<i>Bruegel's Peasants: Art and Audience in the Northern Renaissance</i>	1994, Cambridge University Press

Students may also enjoy reading the novel *Headlong* by Michael Frayn, Faber, ISBN 0571225586 paperback, for further insights into the work of Pieter Bruegel.

A detailed handout with further reading suggestions will be provided during the course.

## Website addresses

Copies of Bruegel's work can be found at <http://www.pieter-bruegel-the-elder.org/>.

**Note** Students of the Institute of Continuing Education are entitled to 20% discount on books published by Cambridge University Press (CUP) which are purchased at the Press bookshop, 1 Trinity Street, Cambridge (Mon-Sat 9am – 5:30pm, Sun 11am – 5pm). A letter or email confirming acceptance on to a current Institute course should be taken as evidence of enrolment.

*Information correct as of:* 13 October 2016