

## The construction and interpretation of medieval paintings

**Start date** 19 May 2023 **End date** 21 May 2023

**Venue** Madingley Hall  
Madingley  
Cambridge  
CB23 8AQ

**Tutor** Dr Spike Bucklow **Course code** 2223NRX034

**Director of ISP and LL** Sarah Ormrod

**For further information contact** [inteng@ice.cam.ac.uk](mailto:inteng@ice.cam.ac.uk)

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### Tutor biography

Spike Bucklow trained as a chemist in the 1970s and went on to make customised materials for special effects in the television and film industries through the 1980s. He made puppets for *Spitting Image* and animatronics and prosthetics for *Star Wars*, *Indiana Jones*, *Little Shop of Horrors* and more. With the advent of CGI he re-trained in Artificial Intelligence with the aim of moving back into the film industry. However, whilst doing R&D consultancy in AI on the Cambridge Science Park he discovered the conservation of paintings and re-trained once again. He then did a PhD in Art History at Cambridge and got a job teaching at the Hamilton Kerr Institute, University of Cambridge, where he worked until 2022.

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## Course programme

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### Friday

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

19:00 Dinner

**20:30 – 22:00 Medieval Painters and Modern Viewers**

22:00 Terrace Bar open for informal discussion

### Saturday

07:30 Breakfast (for residents only)

**09:00 – 10:30 Making a Modern 'Cimabue' crucifix**

10:30 Coffee

**11:00 – 12:30 Making the Thornham Parva Retable, c.1330**

13:00 Lunch

14:00 – 16:00 Free time

16:00 Tea

**16:30 – 18:00 Making the Westminster Retable, c.1260**

18:00 – 18:30 Free time

18:30 Dinner

**20:00 – 21:30 Making Ultramarine**

21:30 Terrace Bar open for informal discussion

### Sunday

07:30 Breakfast (for residents only)

**09:00 – 10:30 Making Lead White**

10:30 Coffee

**11:00 – 12:30 Understanding Red and Green**

12:45 Lunch

**The course will disperse after lunch**

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## Course syllabus

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### Aims:

The course will allow you to:

1. recognise the material composition of medieval works of art
2. recognise the potential cultural significance of art materials
3. recognise the existence of material-based meanings in works of art

### Content:

The course will present the historically-informed modern reconstructions of a medieval work of art and two medieval art materials. It will also outline the original production materials and methods of two medieval works of art. It will be introduced by a comparison between modern and medieval ways of seeing and will conclude with a medieval reading of a common colour combination.

### Presentation of the course:

Requirement: an open mind. The course will be illustrated with PowerPoint slides and will challenge assumptions about medieval art, acknowledging the philosophical and spiritual basis of craft practices.

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

1. Reconstruct the lost coherence of fragmented works of art
2. Become more sensitive to, or sympathetic, with other cultural points of view
3. Approach medieval art in a more immersive manner
4. Interpret medieval art in accordance with a developing 'period eye'

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## Reading and resources list

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- Albertus Magnus. 1967. *Book of Minerals*. Trans. D. Wyckoff. Oxford: Clarendon
- Baxandall, M. 1972. *Painting and Experience in 15th Century Italy*. Oxford: Clarendon
- Baxandall, M. 1980. *The Limewood Sculptors of Renaissance Germany*. Yale: YUP
- Bucklow, S. 2009. *The Alchemy of Paint*. London: Marion Boyars
- Bucklow, S. 2014. *The Riddle of the Image*. London: Reaktion
- Bucklow, S. 2016. *Red, the Art and Science of a Colour*. London: Reaktion
- Bucklow, S. 2018. *The Anatomy of Riches, Sir Robert Paston's Treasure*. London: Reaktion
- Bucklow, S. 2022. *Children of Mercury, the Lives of the Painters*. London: Reaktion
- Bucklow, S. 2023. *The Art Beneath*. London: CentreCentre
- Coomaraswamy, A. 1977. *Selected Papers, Traditional Art and Symbolism*. Princeton: PUP
- Cennini, C. 1960. *The Craftsman's Handbook*. Trans D.V. Thompson. New York: Dover
- Theophilus. 1979. *On Diverse Arts*. Trans. D.G. Hawthorn and C.S. Smith. New York: Dover