

The History of Art in Cambridge Collections: English Art from Reformation to Renaissance, c.1530–1630

European art was transformed by the renaissance of the 1400s and reformation in the 1500s, but English art has a very different, and very political, history. It was shaped by the national politics of reformation under Henry VIII (reigned 1509–47) and then economic flourishing of the 'renaissance' under Elizabeth I (reigned 1558–1603) and James I (reigned 1603–25). Political upheavals led to a preference for traditional, medieval styles even during times of great scientific advancements and robust international trade in luxury goods. Increasing wealth allowed artists to realise their visions on a vast scale, for example in architecture and gardens. At the same time, the market for miniature paintings and the introduction of printing allowed even the less wealthy to own and collect art for the first time. This course will survey the major changes in English art, and the politics that shaped them, from Henry VIII's Reformation of 1538 through the end of the reign of James I in 1625. As some of the world's best collections of English art of this period are in Cambridge, the lectures will be brought to life with site visits so that participants can see the objects that defined the history of English art.

Outline

1. Art and Artists in Renaissance England
2. Paintings and Portrait Miniatures
3. Prints, Illustrations and 'Propaganda'
4. Site Visit: Fitzwilliam Museum
5. Site Visit: Fitzwilliam Museum

Dr Elizabeth Savage took her PhD in the History of Art at King's College, Cambridge in 2013 and is a British Academy Postdoctoral Fellow. Her research explores how medieval and renaissance prints were made and used, but she is passionate about the history of art in all of its forms. She lectures and publishes widely, and her publications and research have won international awards.