

DÜRER AND VENICE

Dr. Richard Williams

This course will be held on THURSDAY MORNINGS from 10:30am to 12:30pm on 28 February & 1, 8, 15 and 22 March 2012 at the Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church

Albrecht Dürer was one of the very first northern artists to respond to Italian Renaissance art. After learning all he could from imported prints and books he resolved to cross the Alps to study Italian art at first hand. Rather than travelling to Florence or Rome, however, Dürer stopped and stayed in Venice. On his arrival the Venetian artists received him with great honour but combined with some jealousy. The technical brilliance of his graphic work had made a big impact in Italy, yet his paintings were said to lack such qualities as the deep, rich colour for which Venetian art was renowned. Dürer was determined to 'stop the mouths' of his critics, as he wrote in a letter to his friend in Nuremberg, before returning to effect a revolution, a 'renaissance' in the arts back in Germany. Close links between Venice and Germany had been long established and this course will examine this direct cultural cross-fertilisation, focusing on works Dürer produced in Italy under the inspiration of Giovanni Bellini, Giorgione and others, together with the influence Dürer's work had upon them. Exploring such connections and interconnections enables us to recognise and appreciate the international and multifaceted nature of Renaissance art.

The five two hourly sessions will be arranged as follows:

1. **Introduction: Germany and Venice** [Introducing Dürer and the established links between his native Nuremberg (and other Germany cities) with Venice]
2. **Dürer and the Italian Renaissance** [Dürer's response to Renaissance art and the classical tradition]
3. **Venetian Colour** [The unique qualities of Venetian art that captivated Dürer]
4. **Dürer's Stay in Venice** [Works inspired by the Venetian tradition]
5. **The Spread of the Venetian Renaissance** [The wider impact of Venetian art on the painting, sculpture and architecture of Germany]

Richard Williams has been an associate lecturer in art history at Birkbeck College for many years. In addition to being a lecturer in the Education Department of the National Gallery he has recently been appointed director of the High Renaissance to Baroque Year Course at the Victoria and Albert Museum. After completing his PhD at the Courtauld Institute Richard was awarded a post-doctoral fellowship by the Paul Mellon Centre (Yale University). He has published extensively on the Renaissance art of Northern Europe and lectures regularly at the Courtauld Institute, Cambridge University and elsewhere.