



Course details

Course title

Art Appreciation: The Emergence of Art Photography (1839 -1920)

Course code

Q00021437

Course date

Start: 06/06/25

End: 06/06/25

Number of classes

1 sessions

Timetable

Fri 6th Jun, 9:30 to 12:30

Tutor

Caroline Levisse

Fee range

Free to £11.10

How you'll learn

You'll join a small group of fellow learners for classes online in video meetings and materials will be provided in our virtual learning environment.

Got it!

Online

Venue

Online

Level of study

Entry Level

Course overview

This three-hour session explores the rise of photography as an art form from the mid-19th century to the early 20th century. We will examine key movements, including Pictorialism, and the work of pioneers such as Nadar, Julia Margaret Cameron, Alfred Stieglitz, Edward Steichen, and Paul Strand. The session will discuss how photographers used soft focus, composition, and printing techniques to elevate photography beyond documentation into artistic expression. We will also explore photography's relationship with modernism and its dialogue with painting. Learners will gain insight into how photography secured its place in the art world.

Course description

This three-hour session explores the transformation of photography from a documentary medium into a recognised art form between the mid-19th century and the early 20th century.

We will examine the rise of Pictorialism, a movement that sought to establish photography as a legitimate art form through soft focus, atmospheric effects, and painterly compositions. Key figures such as Julia Margaret Cameron, Gertrude Käsebier, and Alfred Stieglitz will be discussed, along with their efforts to challenge the perception of photography as merely mechanical reproduction.

The session will also explore the transition from Pictorialism to modernist photography, as artists like Edward Steichen and Paul Strand began embracing sharp focus, geometric composition, and an emphasis on the medium's unique capabilities. Strand's images, particularly his striking portraits and urban scenes, reflected a new photographic vision—one that combined realism with formal abstraction.

Throughout this period, photographers faced resistance from traditional art institutions, which often dismissed photography as a purely technical craft. Stieglitz and the Photo-Secession movement played a key role in advocating for photography's artistic legitimacy. Their efforts helped photography gain recognition as a major artistic medium in the early 20th century.

What financial support is available?

We don't want anything to stand in your way when it comes to bringing Adult learning within reach so if you need anything to support you to achieve your goals then speak to one of our education experts during your enrolment journey. Most of our courses are government funded but if you don't qualify or need alternative financial help to access them then let us know.

What other support is available?

All of our digital content, teaching and learning activities and assessments are designed to be accessible so if you need any additional support you can discuss this with the education experts during your enrolment journey and we will do all we can to make sure you have optimal access.

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