

LECTURE: 11 February 2021

Presenter: Chantal Brotherton-Radcliffe

This will survey the actual materials and techniques used, how they affected painting, and how they help us to appreciate paintings. They can be used to confirm whether a painting is genuine.

The 14th century artist Cennino Cennini



recommended using “the chicken bones that you will find under the dining table” for making charcoaled bone black to paint with. His treatise, *The Artists' Handbook*, gives us an understanding of some of the surprising materials which any artist had to master before he could begin to paint, such as the tail of a

squirrel to make his paintbrushes. But many of these materials were difficult to use and have an effect on the finished look of paintings from the centuries before industrial processes changed the artist's world. This lecture will explain the techniques and the reasons for some of the features of 15th and 16th century paintings which may seem odd to our modern eyes.

‘First catch a squirrel....’ Historical material and techniques of painting 15th-18th century



Chantal Brotherton-Ratcliffe graduated from Edinburgh University with MA in History of Art, and completed her Ph D at the Warburg Institute, University of London. She trained briefly as a paintings conservator, but her utter ignorance of Chemistry drove her to the more forgiving embrace of Art History. She has been a lecturer in Old

Master Paintings at Sotheby's Institute of Art for more than 30 years, training over 1,000 students on the MA in Fine and Decorative Arts. Her interest is in the approach of the traditional connoisseur, teaching the analysis of those stylistic features of a painting or work of art that can tell us who the artist is, and when a painting is a copy, good or bad, and helps us recognise whether we are seeing a painting as it left the artist's studio, or whether it has been altered by time or human hand.

