



# COLOUR AND THE ARTIST'S PALETTE

## *Day of Special Interest*

We live in a colourful man-made modern world. It is so easy to take colour for granted. But the challenge to find paints and dyes to mimic the bright natural world, and symbolise the heavenly world, has preoccupied mankind from the dawn of civilization.

Thinkers throughout history have grappled with the questions: What is colour? What does it mean? How does it make us feel?

Red is a colour of powerful emotions, of love and lust, anger and danger, royalty and revolution. It is worn by scarlet women and the Virgin. Historical recipes include worms, elephant and dragon blood, sulphur and mercury.

Blue is the colour of heavenly skies and the Virgin's mantle. It is spiritual, wistful and melancholy. Ultramarine, from across the seas, cost more than gold. Mysterious Tyrian purple was the prized dye for togas in Nero's Rome but blue denim is the most democratic cloth today.

Sunny yellow has, paradoxically, been the most poisonous pigment on the artist's palette. Its cheerful appearance belies the difficulties of using and making it. It has driven artists mad and (allegedly!) cows to a painful death.

Join me for a colourful day of 'Seeing Red', 'Feeling Blue' and 'The Peril of Yellow'.

### **Optional reading**

Ball, Philip, *Bright Earth, The Invention of Colour*, Vintage Books, London 2008

Delamare, François and Guineau, Bernard, *Colour, Making and Using Dyes and Pigments*, Thames and Hudson 1999

Finlay, Victoria, *Colour, Travels through the Paintbox*, Sceptre 2002

Finlay, Victoria, *The Brilliant History of Color in Art*, Getty Publications 2014

Gage, John, *Colour in Art*, Thames and Hudson world of art, London 2006

Gage, John, *Colour and Meaning: Art, Science and Symbolism*, Thames and Hudson 1999

Gage, John, *Colour and Culture: Practice and Meaning from Antiquity to Abstraction*, Thames and Hudson 1993

Hall, Marcia B., *Colour and Meaning, Practice and Theory in Renaissance Painting*, Cambridge University Press 1992

### **Lynne Gibson BEd MA**

Freelance lecturer in the History of Art, as well as in practical Drawing, Painting and Printmaking. She has held posts at the Universities of Sussex and Bristol, where she introduced 'Understanding Art' to the Lifelong Learning programme. She gives talks, lectures, courses and guided tours for a wide range of organisations including ARCA colleges, Art Galleries and Museums, The Art Fund, The National Trust and The Arts Society. She has worked as a professional artist specializing in oil painting and etching. Her work has been exhibited widely and used in a range of publications.

**Travel availability:** UK, Europe, Australia and New Zealand.

