

**BODY IDEAL AND THE SUFFERING BODY:
THE NUDE IN EARLY MODERN ITALIAN ART**

Tutor: Kasia Murawska-Muthesius

These four seminars will be held on MONDAY AFTERNOONS from 2-4pm in the Keynes Library, Birkbeck School of Arts, 43 Gordon Square, London WC1H 0PD. They will start on 23rd October and run for four weeks until 13th November 2017.

As claimed by Kenneth Clark, the nude is not the subject of art, 'but an art form, invented by the Greeks in the fifth century BC, just as opera is an art form invented in seventeenth-century Italy'. These four weekly meetings, run as seminars rather than lectures, will re-examine this statement in a small group of around twenty participants. We will begin by looking at the centrality of the nude in the art of the Italian Renaissance and Baroque, its alignment with the notion of the ideal beauty, and its lofty academic credentials as the demonstration of mastery. The following seminars will depart from the concept of the nude as 'pure form' to examine the representation of the naked body, both male and female, as a vessel to convey ideas, emotions, passions and religious beliefs, as well as gender hierarchies and the shifting rules of conduct. We will revisit the iconic nudes of Early Modern Italian art, discussing them as 'texts', as the expressions of power, virtuosity, fertility and eroticism, but also as the most poignant visualisations of suffering, despair, submissiveness, disease, rape, pain and death. Among the artists discussed will be Antonio del Pollaiuolo, Michelangelo, Giorgione, Titian, Annibale and Agostino Carracci, Caravaggio, Bernini, and Artemisia Gentileschi.

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| 23 rd October | Body Beautiful: The Nude and the Naked |
| 30 th October | The Heroic Body |
| 6 th November | The Suffering Body |
| 13 th November | The Body of Love and the Body of Rape |

Dr Kasia Murawska-Muthesius teaches art history at Birkbeck, University of London. She was Curator of Italian Paintings and Deputy Director of The National Museum in Warsaw, and Guest Professor at the Humboldt University in Berlin. Her publications include *Trionfo barocco* (1990) and *From Museum Critique to the Critical Museum* (2015, with Piotr Piotrowski). Her current research is on caricature.