

30 & 31 May 2025
Emotions in 17th Century Art
Love
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Lecture summary

Love is both a subjective experience and a transcendent force. It is utterly private, yet ideally shared and reciprocal, and an emotion that helps to determine a sense of oneself, while at the same time risking the loss of that self. It is frightening and exciting in equal measure. For the first part of this session we will look at traces of all different types of love experienced by individuals in the past through the traces they leave in material culture: tombs, portraits and other inscriptions. For the second part I have chosen the theme of 'amor vincit omnia', which can be roughly translated as 'Love conquers all', personified in the figure of Cupid in a famous painting by Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio. The phrase is an ancient one, and its meaning was not universally positive in the early modern period. Indeed, much of the literature and visual culture provides a chilling portrait of lovers driven by forces beyond their control - with love as a devouring and destructive force. Love madness, love frenzy and love melancholy are all too common aspects of early modern love. Something of its power can be seen in Caravaggio's defiantly sensual Cupid, who smiles out at the viewer, while below him are strewn a range of objects relating to music, learning and erudition. The message is clear – in the face of all-conquering love, no amount of learning and scholarship will save you.

Slide list
Example

1. Grave Steele, Anon, *Melisto, Daughter of Ktesikrates*, 340 BCE, from the Demos of Potamos, Marble, 95.5 x 49.2 x 10 cm, Getty Museum, Los Angeles.
2. Double Tomb of Sir William Neville and Sir John Clanvowe, 1391, grey marble, Istanbul Archaeological Museum, Istanbul.
3. Double tomb of Sir John Finch (1626-82) and Sir Thomas Baines (1622-80), Black and white Marble, Chapel of Christ's College, Cambridge.
4. Tomb monument of c. 1340, Sir John and Marjorie de Heslerton, Collegiate Church of St. Martin, Lowthorpe, Yorkshire.
5. Tomb of Sir Henry Redford and his wife, Broughton.
6. Photograph of the Palazzo Ducale, Urbino.
7. Piero della Francesca, *Double portrait of Federico da Montefeltro and his wife Battista Sforza*, 1473-75, oil on panel, 47 x 33 cm each, Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence.
8. Francesco Laurana, *Battista Sforza*, 1474, Marble, height 51 cm, Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence.
9. Piero della Francesca, *Allegorical Triumphs from the Diptych with Portraits of Federico da Montefeltro and Battista Sforza*, verso, oil on panel, each panel 47 x 33 cm, Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence.
10. Domenico Ghirlandaio, *Portrait of Giovanna Tornabuoni* (also known as *Portrait of Giovanna degli Albizzi*), 1488, tempera on panel, 77 x 49 cm, Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum, Madrid.
11. Niccolò Fiorentino's medal of Giovanna degli Albizzi.
12. Leonardo da Vinci, *Portrait of Ginevra de' Benci*, c.1474-76, oil on wood, 42 x 37 cm, National Gallery of Art, Washington.
13. Reconstruction of the original appearance of the Ginevra de' Benci portrait.
14. Leonardo da Vinci, *Portrait of Ginevra de' Benci (reverse)*, c.1474-76, oil on wood, 42 x 37 cm, National Gallery of Art, Washington.
15. Hans Memling, *Portrait of a man with a Roman coin*, 1471-74, oil on oak panel, 31 x 23.2 cm, Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Antwerp.

16. Small monumental tablet to a dog named Aminnaracus with a sculptured representation of a small dog with sharp ears, 1-2nd century CE, 22 x 20 x 6 cm, Rookwood, Llandaff, Wales.
17. Grave Stele for Helena, CE 150–200, marble, 61 x 31.5 x 16 cm, Getty museum, Los Angeles.
18. Marble epitaph to Carlo Capello's horse, Piazza dei Giudici, Florence.
19. Giulio Romano, *Sala dei Cavalli*, fresco, Palazzo del Te, Mantua.
20. Andrea Mantegna, *Camera Picta*, fresco, 1465-1474, Palazzo Ducale, Mantua.
21. Guercino, *Aldrovandi Dog*, c. 1625, oil on canvas, 112 x 173.3 cm, Norton Simon Museum
22. Aelbert Cuyp, *Portrait of a Twenty-year old duck Sijctghen*, oil on panel, 35 x 42 cm, Dordrechts Museum, Dordrecht.
23. Cornelis Visscher, *The Large Cat*, c. 1657, engraving on laid paper, plate: 14.4 x 18.6 cm.
24. Gerrit Dou, *Dog at Rest*, 1650, oil on panel, 16.5 x 21.6 cm, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.
25. A snuff box, silver gilt (vermeil) over brass, with a portrait in wax of Madame du Deffand's dog Tonton, Yale University Gallery, Yale, New Haven.
26. Jacques Louis David, *Portrait of Antoine Laurent Lavoisier and Marie Anne Lavoisier*, 1788, oil on canvas, 259.7 x 194.6 cm, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
27. William Wetmore Story, *Angel of Grief*, (tomb for his wife, Emelyn Story), 1894, Protestant Cemetery, Rome.
28. Cameo, Roman, 3.8 cm high, 2nd-3rd century CE, British Museum, London.
29. Early Byzantine Spoon, 6th century, British Museum, London.
30. English gold brooch, 14th century, with inscription 'Amor vincit Omnia', British Museum, London.
31. English gold ring, late sixteenth or early seventeenth century, with inscription 'Amor vinsit Omnia', British Museum, London.
32. Tile, 1420-1450, earthenware, tin-glazed, blue and white, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford
33. Lucas Cranach, *Venus and Cupid*, 1509, oil on canvas, 213 x 102 cm, St Petersburg: The State Hermitage Museum.
34. *Emblemata Amatoria*: Emblems of Love or Cupid's Adresse to the Ladies London, 1683.
35. Dish, Italian, 1510-20, tin-glazed earthenware, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.
36. Dish, tin-glazed earthenware, c. 1530, *Amor ingrate*, Victoria and Albert Museum, London
37. Dish, Gubbio, Workshop of Maestro Giorgio Andreoli, *Plate with Love Argument*. dated 1522, Maiolica (tin-glazed earthenware), lustered, 3 x 27 cm, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
38. Francesco Xanto Avelli (decorator), *Beautiful Dido receives Aeneas at Carthage*, detail of Dish, c. 1522-25, Maiolica (tin-glazed earthenware), Melbourne: National Gallery of Victoria.
39. Giovanni Battista Moroni, *Bust of a young man with an Inscription*, c. 1560, oil on canvas, 47.2x 39.8 cm, National Gallery, London.
40. Follower of Andrea Mantegna, *Triumph of Love, Triumph of Chastity, Triumph of Death*, ca. 1500, Tempera on wood, Denver Art Museum, Denver.
41. Petrarch's Triumphs, Manuscript, Bibliothèque Nationale de France (BNF), Paris, F. 12423, early 16th century French.
42. Bartolomeo Manfredi, *Mars chastising Cupid*, c. 1613, oil on canvas, 175.3 x 130.6 cm, Art Institute Chicago, Chicago.
43. Francesco da Barberino's *Tractatus de Amore*, c. 1315, ms. Barb Lat 4075, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vatican City,
44. Master Caspar of Regensburg, *Frau Minne's Power over Men's Hearts*, 1479, Woodcut Berlin: Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Kupferstichkabinet,
45. 'Do not eat your heart out', French, early sixteenth century, pen and brown ink with watercolour on laid paper, overall: 16.3 x 10.7 cm, National Gallery of Art, Washington.
46. Anon. *The Love Charm*, late 15th c. oil on panel, 24 x 18 cm, Museum der Bildenden Kunste, Leipzig.
47. *Venus venerated by Six legendary lovers*, Birth tray made in Florence, c. 1400. Tempera on wood, 51 cm, Louvre Museum, Paris.
48. Sandro Botticelli, *Birth of Venus*, tempera on canvas, c. 1485, 172.5 x 278.5 cm, Uffizi, Florence

49. Venus de' Medici, lifesize Hellenistic sculpture, a 1st century BC marble copy of a Greek bronze original sculpture, Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence.
50. Lorenzo Lotto, *Venus and Cupid*, oil on canvas, 92.4 x 111.4 cm, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
51. Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, *Amor Vincit Omnia*, 1601-2, oil on canvas, 191 x 148 cm, Staatliche Museen, Berlin.

References

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