

The Wilton Diptych Enigma

Ever since the mysterious double panel painting known as the Wilton Diptych was acquired for the National Gallery in 1929, speculations regarding its origins have been rife, because although many discoveries have been made regarding its subject, we are still non-the-wiser regarding its origins.

Who are the characters in this painting, what are they trying to tell us, what can this painting tell us about England or for that matter Europe at the turn of the 15th century, for what purpose was this enigmatic painting made, and why it has come to represent the quintessential example of a style of painting we have come to call International Gothic.

Through the lens of the Wilton Diptych this lecture will look at Medieval England, patronage, saints and kingship, and also unearth the many hidden signs and symbols in this painting that have been slowly revealing themselves to us over the past 80 years or so with detailed close-up, looking at the physical material of the painting to bring to life not only the Wilton Diptych, but also the time in which it was made.

Short Reading list:

Dunkerton, Jill, Foister, Susan, Gordon, Dillion, Penny, Nicholas, ***Giotto to Dürer: Early Renaissance Painting in the National Gallery***, (National Gallery Publications Ltd, 1991)

Gordon, Dillion, ***Making and Meaning: The Wilton Diptych***, (National Gallery Company Ltd, 2001)