

## What is a 'Masterpiece'



Matisse, Woman in a Hat, 1905

The term, masterpiece, so familiar in everyday language, carries a long and complex history. Originally, a masterpiece was a concrete requirement: the final work produced by an apprentice to earn admission to a medieval craft guild. Over the centuries, however, this practical certification evolved into an aesthetic ideal. Today, a “masterpiece” is a work of art deemed exceptional, exemplary, or culturally indispensable—yet what qualifies as such, and who has the authority to decide, is far from obvious.

CALL is a not-for-profit voluntary organisation which promotes lifelong learning in Cambridgeshire.



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Michelangelo, Creation of Adam, 1508-12

### A Short Course with Caroline Levisse

**Saturdays January 31st & February 7th 2026**

**On Zoom 10:00 – 12:30**

**Price £10.00 per screen**

**Booking Instructions.** Please read carefully.

**To make a booking, please provide your email address, without which we cannot send you the joining instructions**

Payment of **£10.00 per screen** can be made:

**Either:**

Pay online to:

**Cambridgeshire Alliance of Lifelong Learners**

Account no.52501360

Sort code 30-90-89

**Or:**

Please send your email address and a cheque payable to  
**Cambridgeshire Alliance of Lifelong Learners**

to: Mrs Vera Williams, 59, High Street, Offord Darcy,  
St Neots, PE19 5RF.

Please **DO NOT** use the abbreviated title '**CALL**' when making any payment, (online or cheque) as the bank software will be unable to match this with our account.

**How to contact CALL:**

**Website:** [www.call-ed.org.uk](http://www.call-ed.org.uk)

**Email :** [info@call-ed.org.uk](mailto:info@call-ed.org.uk)

**Phone :** 01480 810353

**All CALL group activities are listed on: [www.call-ed.org.uk](http://www.call-ed.org.uk).**

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### Programme

**9:30 am** The Zoom room will open

**10:00 am** **Morning Session**  
**2 hours of lectures and discussion**  
**with a break for refreshments**

**12:30 pm** **Close of Session**

In the first week we will look at:

- History and meaning of the 'masterpiece'
- Who says it's a masterpiece? Establishing the canon

And in the second week

- Changing tastes and the masterpiece's timelessness
- Is there such a thing as a *modern* masterpiece?



George Bernard O'Neill, Public Opinion, 1863

**Using Zoom.** If you have not used Zoom before, and would welcome guidance on how to install the software, please contact us.