

British Library and Courtauld Gallery

Posted on Wednesday 25th January 2012



Third year students enjoyed a day in London to visit the British Library's ***Royal Manuscripts: The Genius of Illumination*** (<http://www.bl.uk/royal>) exhibition and the Courtauld Gallery's medieval and early modern artworks as part of **Elizabeth L'Estrange** ([/staff/profiles/historyofart/lestrange-elizabeth.aspx](http://staff/profiles/historyofart/lestrange-elizabeth.aspx))'s special subject module *Women and Artistic Culture in the Late Medieval and Early Modern Period*.

We examined four large rooms laden with precious books of hours, genealogy scrolls and ancient maps. There was even a video installation on the production of a manuscript. The lighting was dimmed to prevent the vellum from further deterioration and the glass casings provided the viewer with extremely close visual access. Almost all the hand written publications are still vivid in colour and detail today. We discussed the imagery in relation to the themes studied on the course, which improved their visual analysis.

Then after some difficulties with the local bus network, we headed off to the Strand for lunch. The Courtauld Gallery at the beautiful Somerset House (pictured above) holds a large array of medieval and Renaissance artworks which the students examined in pairs. After some discussions about Italian marriage chests, religious iconography, and women and devotional practices, we headed home with many examples of art to add to their visual bank, and plenty of food for thought for upcoming seminars.

Marie Giraud.