

Lecture Series

May 2019



The Man or the Moment?

Contesting the cult of genius

with Sylvia Sagona

Travels Through Time

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The Man or the Moment?

Verasari's 1550 publication of *The Lives of the Most Excellent Painters, Architects and Sculptors* established the theory that the history of art was dictated by a series of genius' who crossed the cultural world like blazing comets. Although he identified Florence as the birth place of the Renaissance, there was scant attention paid to historical, economic, political or cultural factors in the background of these solitary men of genius (no women were considered capable of genius!)

This lecture series will question this concept of genius and argue that these men rose to fame as they were the most successful and accepted embodiments of the social forces of their times. The series will also examine what could be considered as crucial movements in the representation of reality and consider whether they were created by artists or whether, in fact, the artists were created by their environment.

Titian may have remained a useful portrait painter had he not lived precisely at the zenith of the Venetian Republic. Manet may have remained yet another artist struggling to be accepted by the Salon had he not lived at the time of advances in the study of light, speed and social change.

Lecture Series Details

This lecture series will consist of 3 x 1.5 hour illustrated lectures and morning coffee. Please select one stream.

Dates

Stream 1 : Wednesdays – May 1, 8, 15

Stream 2 : Fridays – May 3, 10, 17

Cost

The cost for the 3 sessions is \$145 (incl GST)

Time

10:15 – 12:00 noon

(Lecture starts at 10:30 sharp)

Venue

Alloarmo – 5 Grattan Street, Hawthorn

Lecture 1 – May 1 / 3



Tiziano Vecelli was the most versatile of the Venetian painters of the 16th century, excelling at portraiture, landscape, religious and mythological scenes. With his gift for dramatic colour, he was completely in sync with the demands of the propaganda machines of not just Venice, but the competing European dynasties such as the Hapsburgs, Italian princes and the papacy.

How much did he owe to the prestige of Venice?

Lecture 2 – May 8 / 10



Eugène Delacroix admired the colour of Titian and broke away from the linear Neo Classic style in vogue in the Paris of the Revolution. He is considered as the iconic genius of the emotional storms of Romanticism. He took as his themes the events of his day; the war between Greece and Turkey, the 1830 Revolution and the expansion of French colonialism into North Africa. His style mirrored the angst of his era.

How much did he owe to a society reeling at the defeat of Napoleon?

Lecture 3 – May 15 / 17



Edouard Manet disregarded academic conventions to take up the challenge of Baudelaire to be a "painter of modern life". He became the most controversial painter of his time and was the rallying point for the young artists who would create Impressionism. His work is considered the watershed that marks the beginning of modern art.

But how much did he owe to Haussmann's upending of Paris?