

# Online Lecture Series

September 2021



## *Portraying French History*

*with Sylvia Sagona*

**Travels Through Time**  
Cultural Studies and Tours

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# Portraying French History

The three paintings to be examined in this series mark pivotal moments in French history: the last struggle of the Ancien Regime, the consolidation of the Napoleonic legend and the birth of modern Paris. They also chart the move from commissioned art as propaganda to that of personal statement about art and its relationship to society. The series will examine the significance of the three painters as well as their depictions of the rapidly changing cultural landscape. Everything from the material culture of jewelry, clothing, textiles, hairstyles will be studied as well as concepts of childhood, class structure and urbanism.

## Lecture Series Details

This lecture series will consist of 3 x 1 hour Zoom lectures plus discussion. Please select one stream.

### Dates

Stream 1 : Wednesdays – Sept 8, 15, 22

Stream 2 : Thursdays – Sept 9, 16, 23

### Cost

The cost for the 3 sessions is \$90 (incl GST)

### Time

10:00 – 11:00 AM (AEST)

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### Venue

*Zoom lecture – details to be sent on enrollment*

## Lecture 1 – Sept 8 / 9

### The Last Family Portrait: Marie Antoinette and her children: Vigée Le Brun



In September 1785 when Marie Antoinette's popularity was on a dangerous slide, the famous portrait painter Elisabeth Vigée Le Brun was summoned to Versailles to rectify the Queen's reputation for licentiousness and frivolity with an image of a tender hearted but sorrowing mother. The life sized painting is filled with religious and historical references, each intended to resonate with the French viewers of the time. The lecture will unravel this symbolic context, touching on the history of childhood as well as the tragic destinies of the royal children.

## Lecture 2 – Sept 15 / 16

### The End of the Revolution: The Coronation of Napoleon: JL David

In the days before photography and the internet, Bonaparte called on the painter and impresario, Jacques Louis David, to choreograph and then record the moment when he became Napoleon and founded the first empire since Charlemagne. Adroitly juxtaposing Christian and pagan imagery, David closely followed instructions as to who was to be included, despite their absence, and who were to be excluded, despite their presence. This lecture will examine what was really happening to the cast of characters, their jewellery and regalia as well as addressing Napoleon's manipulation of "Fake News".



## Lecture 3 – Sept 22 / 23

### The Reluctant Flâneur: Paris on a Rainy Day: G Caillebotte



Paris on a rainy day exudes a sense of the isolation and monotony of Haussmann's newly constructed Paris and contrasts sharply with the other Impressionists' depiction of sunny days, flirting couples and cloying positivity. Caillebotte depicts the angst of the modern urban experience and its effect on class and interpersonal relationships. This lecture will focus on politics and the bourgeois identity, exemplified by Caillebotte's own life and career.