

# Lecture Series

November 2017



## *Creating Cities of the Imagination*

The artists' role in fashioning the ideal image of  
Venice, Paris and Amsterdam

*with Sylvia Sagona*

**Travels Through Time**

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# Creating Cities of the Imagination



A return to the Garden of Eden or Utopia is ingrained in Western Christian consciousness and finds its equivalent in popular conceptions of the history of European cities. In our imagination we visualise Venice in the Renaissance, Amsterdam during the 17<sup>th</sup> century Golden Age and Paris in the 19<sup>th</sup> century Belle Epoque. These conceptions run parallel with the images produced by the artists of these times.

The artists' vision crystallise and immortalise the vibrancy and energy of the values that made these cities great and continue to inform our collective imagination.

This lecture series will trace the sometimes thin line between civic pride and political propaganda.

## 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 : Mondays – Nov 13, 20, 27

Stream 2 : Fridays – Nov 17, 24, Dec 1

### Time

10:15 – 12:00 noon

### Cost

The cost for the 3 sessions is \$135 (incl GST)

### Venue

*Alloarmo* – 5 Grattan Street, Hawthorn

## Lecture 1 – November 13 / 17

### Venice: Fashioning the Myth of the “Serenissima”



By choosing the day of the Annunciation as its founding date, Venice would forever associate itself with angels, the Virgin Mary and divine right, which has woven a spell that endures today. Painters of its Renaissance Golden Age such as Veronese, Tintoretto, Carpaccio and Bellini added images of Venice as Venus and Victory. Although the Republic was in decadence by the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Canaletto and Guardi revived its legend in the veduta paintings which adorned the walls of English palaces and mansions.

## Lecture 2 – November 20 / 24

### Amsterdam and Delft: Recording the Dutch Golden Age



The Dutch Golden Age, which roughly spanned the 17<sup>th</sup> century, saw Dutch art, trade, science and military prowess rise to its highest peak despite, or because of, the ongoing struggle between Catholic and Protestant world views. A fascination with all aspects of the tangible contemporary world led artists to record intimate domestic settings and civic activities and raise them to the level of icons of a perfect world.

## Lecture 3 – November 27 / December 1

### Paris: Intriguing Perspectives



The Paris of boulevards and the elegant bourgeoisie that we go to in our imagination is the one created by Gustave Caillebotte, a leading, if little known, Impressionist artist and photographer. His striking cinematic vision and complex perspectives have earned him the title of “genius of the eye”. With fellow artist, Camille Pissarro, he visualised the concept of the sophisticated urban modernity of Belle Epoque Paris. Debate continues on whether it is a critical or appraising view that he presents.