

Lecture Series

March 2017



The “Villages” of Paris

An exploration of the legendary *quartiers* of Paris through their history, art, literature and famous inhabitants

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The Villages of Paris



This series will examine the distinctive flavour of the suburbs of Paris as celebrated by the great writers of the 19th and 20th century and the Impressionist and Salon painters. We will also explore each quartier through the eyes of their most famous residents, from politicians and philosophers such as Marat and Sartre, to muses and musicians such as Chopin and Marie Duplessis.

At the end of the Revolution in 1795, the Directoire established the pattern of 12 arrondissements in an attempt to control the disorder of the mediaeval structure of Paris. These administrative boundaries cut across the old family and professional structures clustered around the great abbeys and market centres. When Napoleon III came to power in 1851, he demolished the last ring of defensive walls and incorporated villages such as Montmartre and Passy into Paris, adding another 8 arrondissements and further alienating the population from their traditional local culture. So it is in the 19th century that the fascinating tapestry of the Paris we know today was established. The village spirit is still vibrant and in the typically insubordinate French manner, defies the administrative arrondissement structure.

The series will also examine cultural concepts that each of the three quartiers nurtured: the rise of public opinion in the Salons of the Marais, the invention of the public museum in Saint Germain and the formulation of a new meaning for art in Batignolles.

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 : Tuesdays – March 7, 14, 21

Stream 2 : Fridays – March 10, 17, 24

Cost

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

Time

10:15 – 12:00 noon

Venue

Alloarmo – 5 Grattan Street, Hawthorn

Lecture 1 – March 7 / 10

Saint Germain des Prés

The small squares and alleys of this vibrant quarter reveal the remains of the powerful mediaeval monastery originally built in the fields outside the first walls of Paris. Neighbours such as Danton, Robespierre and Marat would ensure it became the cradle of the French revolution before emerging once again in the 20th century as the intellectual and philosophical centre of the Left Bank. Oscar Wilde had already haunted the Café de Flore before Sartre and Camus. Manet and Renoir had sat the exams for the Ecole des Beaux Arts down the road from Miles Davis' first appearance at the Huchette.

Lecture 2 – March 14 / 17

The Nouvelles Athènes and Batignolles

This quartier spreads across the 9th and the 17th from the elegant Neo classical townhouses and elaborate churches in the south built for the new elite to the scruffier absinthe-charged cafés where the Impressionists would meet. Originally just a vast pleasure park, it was developed by the new rich of the Restoration in 1820 and named New Athens after the actresses, wealthy artists and writers such as Delacroix, Géricault, George Sand and Mlle Mars. A generation later it would become the cradle of Impressionism. Even today this dual identity is evident as you walk up the hill towards Montmartre.

Lecture 3 – March 21 / 24

The Marais

The charm of the Marais lies in the juxtaposition of beautifully restored 17th century mansions with narrow winding streets leading into small gardens. The culture of the Marais began when aristocrats escaped the stifling etiquette of Versailles for the theatres and salons of Paris where the art of conversation was born. In the 19th century their courtyards were divided into ateliers to employ the Jews fleeing the pogroms. Today the Marais maintains its mix of sophistication with its museums, cutting edge boutiques and Sephardic Jewish culture.