

Lecture Series

March 2018



The Fine Art of Survival

Following the fate of art, artists and aristocrats in
times of political turmoil

with Sylvia Sagona

Travels Through Time

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The Fine Art of Survival

When the young Napoleon set out at the head of the French Republican army to spread the ideals of the Revolution, he would set in motion the rearrangement of the geography and politics of Europe and with this the fate of not just the aristocratic class, patrons of the art of the day, but also the destiny of artworks deemed as emblematic of the old order, as well as the fortunes of artists themselves.

This lecture series will investigate this era of unparalleled rapid change through the life and travels of a Venetian aristocrat, a celebrated French artist and works of art coveted as symbols of power and prestige through the ages. It will also raise questions about the repatriation of stolen art.

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 6, 13, 20

Stream 2 : Fridays – March 9, 16, 23

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 – March 6 / 9



Plundered Plunder : The horses of Saint Mark's, Van Eyck's *Adoration of the Mystic Lamb* and Tacitus' *Germania*

When victors carried off works of art which were central to the identity of the conquered, they achieved a cultural hegemony that broadcast their superiority and demoralised the vanquished. This lecture will trace the journey of the bronze horses of St Mark's from Constantinople to Venice and Paris. Napoleon as well as the Nazis would attempt to appropriate the Ghent altarpiece and its symbolism. Himmler would spend a fortune pursuing the last copy of Tacitus' *Germania* which played a crucial role in the Nazi doctrine of the superiority of the German people. It has been labelled as being amongst the most dangerous books ever written.

Lecture 2 – March 13 / 16



Jacques Louis David: From Impresario of the Revolution and Napoleon's Empire to banishment from France

There was much more to the career of David than being the artist who ushered in the new Neo Classic style which championed severity as being in harmony with the ideals of the Enlightenment. As an ardent Republican, he would act as Robespierre's minister for propaganda and orchestrated the mass ceremonial rituals of the Republic which would be copied by Hitler. He transferred his allegiance and theatrical talent to the service of Napoleon whom he portrayed as he rose from General to Emperor. At the fall of Napoleon the greatest painter of the era was banished and even refused burial in France.

Lecture 3 – March 20 / 23



Lucia Mocenigo: A Venetian aristocrat in the age of Napoleon

When 16 year old Lucia Memmo married into the prestigious Mocenigo family, the Venetian Republic was already just a shadow of its former glory. As it collapsed before Napoleon and was bartered off to the Austrians as a pawn in international politics, she was required to live as an Austrian at the Viennese court, then as French in Paris where she became a close friend of Josephine. She ultimately returned to her decaying palazzo on the Grand Canal, illegitimate son in tow, to become Byron's landlady in order to pay the bills. She was considered the last surviving *grande dame* of the Venetian aristocracy and her salon was a must for the British Grand Tourists.