



'The Muddy Archaeologist'

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NADFAS Lectures

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Digging deep into history to add colour, depth and meaning to life today

Lively, engaging and professional talks showing what Ancient Art tells us about the people who made it, and how it still influences us today

Also available to lead Study Days/Weekends, Study Tours & Cruises (UK & Europe) on Ancient Art

Sculpture – Frescoes – Glass – Terracotta/Pottery – Mosaics - Metalworking – Architecture – Gems – Jewellery
All talks are fully and richly illustrated with high quality digital images.

Io Saturnalia – Happy Christmas the Roman Way!

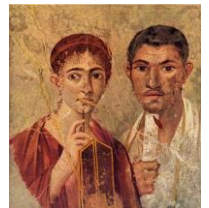
Early Christians celebrated Christmas at the same time as the ancient Romans were feasting and partying for their pagan Saturnalia festival. Many of the pagan habits were therefore absorbed into our Christmas traditions. Present-giving, holly and even party-hats all have their origins in this 2,000 year old party. This talk will revel in artwork that is ancient and modern as we unwrap the images and stories behind our festive season



Pompeii: A Fresh Look at Frescoes

The tragedy of Pompeii's burial by Vesuvius' eruption on 24 August AD 79 provided an archaeological miracle that enables us to see how and why Roman villas were richly decorated with stunningly beautiful frescoes. They show us aspects of Roman life that archaeologists could never have guessed at without these remarkably preserved images.

By examining the fashions that had changed over the decades, we can share the aspirations and personalities of the rich owners of the villas. We can even look the owners in the eye, for their portraits were preserved for two thousand years. The Romans are brought to life for us by the very powers that killed so many.



Pompeii: A Product of its Time

A wider look at the many kinds of art found in the homes and streets of Pompeii.

A thoroughly modern world is revealed, one full of material goods and works of art, in which craftsmanship and artistry were draped around the Romans themselves and amidst their everyday lives.

We explore how the Empire provided materials and the opportunity for this wealth of art to be accessible to more people than ever before. Its survival gives us a glimpse of the Roman Empire, in all its vastness, and reveals how Pompeii's burial captured a moment in time when the Empire was a multicultural, vibrant and growing power that reached into the lives of everyone, rich or poor.



A Mediterranean Tour: Not just a Load of Old Stones

A tour of the Mediterranean is a visit into the past; ancient sites are littered with ruined architecture, and museums are full of works of art testifying to once great civilisations.

This virtual tour of the Ancient Mediterranean will share not only who those civilisations were and how they fit together into a 'big picture', but especially how you can identify whose art or architecture are whose and why their lives and cultures prompted them to create such features; learn what to expect from sites and how to find the special personal details that thrill archaeologists; discover how to walk in the footsteps of the ancients and to see the sites as they might have done. You'll never look at ancient sites in the same way again ...

(This talk anticipates the publication of my next book which is on the same theme).



A Classical Gallery of Rogues: The Eternal Pantheon

A playful look at the Greek and Roman gods. The Romans adopted the Greek gods, renamed most of them and used them for their own ends. Each one was related to a different aspect of life, and had his or her own attributes and distinguishing features in ancient art. Discover how to identify them and, as they pose divinely, we hear ancient tales of metamorphoses and of gods behaving badly.

These stories and their messages were so powerful that they lived on for millennia and the gods continue to appear around us today, in surprising forms and in a variety of artistic media. Why and how are their images still used today, and what messages do they bear today?



Roman Britain Unearthed: What did the Romans ever do for Art?

How and why our art (even in our modern homes) owes so much to the Romans.

When the Romans invaded in AD 43 they came to stay and they brought with them not just their soldiers and their language, but their culture, way of life and art.

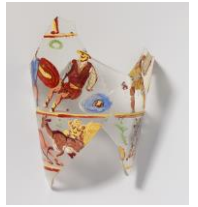
We tap into what archaeology can tell us about the lives of ancient Britons as they adapted to Roman rule. As town life became the way ahead, art and skills flourished and became embedded in our society. We look at our own modern lives too, to explore and bring to life the continuing impact Rome's invasion of Britain. We are still a product of Ancient Rome and, after this talk, your own homes – and those of your hosts when you visit – will never look the same again!



Beyond the Glass Case

We take the lid off those silent museum cases. Roman life was rich in material goods and it provides archaeologists with perhaps the most finds in any archaeological excavations in history.

As we take a virtual tour through the range of artifacts displayed to us in Roman museums everywhere, I share with you the tricks of the archaeologist's trade that enable us to discover the art – both fine art and daily art that lurks in the most humble of finds. This art reveals to us the secrets of its owners' lives, their hopes and aspirations, their connections and their public image. Museums exist to share something of the lives of those who lived before us; see them in a new light and let those lives speak clearly to us through the broken and cracked remains of Roman art.



Roman Art and the Perception of Beauty Then and Now

Is beauty timeless? Or is it bounded by the times we live in? Can Roman art tell us if beauty really is in the eye of the beholder?

We take a look at how the Romans expressed and revealed beauty in art forms that we still use today. The result is startling, being both alien and familiar. The shifting sands of beauty become apparent, but what remains constant is our need to express a message in our art, a message that says what we consider important, admirable and maybe aesthetically pleasing too. Is beauty in the eye of the beholder, or is it in society's *mores*, and in the mind?

What is certain is that a study of Roman art opens our eyes to view our own art – including our everyday art in our own homes – in a new refreshing way.



What did the Greeks and Romans Ever do for Art?

Ancient Greek art blossomed and then the Romans took that art – the sculpture, frescoes, vase painting, architecture and so much more – and made it their own. New media, new styles and new expressions burst forth, and this vibrant cocktail created the basis for Western Art for millennia.

Just what did those Greek and Roman artists achieve that was so world-changing? It wasn't just the media they expressed themselves in and the unforgettable works they created which have been echoed over the millennia, it was a mind-set that established how we would look at art for centuries to come. This talk explores how and why we owe so much to the ancient Greeks and Romans, and we identify the tell-tale marks of our debt to classical art around us today.



Contemporary Art for Ancient Romans

Emerging art, new expressions and fresh materials are all aspects of our concepts of contemporary art. Every age has redefined art in its own image and the Romans were no exception. They took existing art forms and made them all their own; sculpture now showed harsh reality, mosaics covered the land, architecture spoke a new language and frescoes burst into new life – and they all told new, and very Roman, messages.

What were these new works of art and what were they saying? What can they tell us about Roman life, Roman aspirations and Roman self-expression? This talk takes us on a visual and thought-provoking journey through the many media of Roman art and we consider how the past always continues to influence modern and contemporary art of any age.



Mythical Canvases: the Art of Myths and Legends

The Romans were surrounded by images of both Greek and Roman myths and legends. They appeared in sculpture, frescoes and mosaics, and every picture told a tale. Strategically displayed in public areas, on and in public buildings and adorning personal homes, each image showed more than just a legendary story; impressions of levels of craftsmanship and skill, and religious, political and personal messages oozed from them.

Such multiple focusses would continue to influence Western Art long after the Roman Empire had fallen. Artists and those who commission art through the ages have used Classical myths and legends to suit their own purposes and messages. Ancient Greece and Rome dominated education for so many centuries, and thus the messages were loud and clear to their contemporaries. We explore the range and depth and meanings of the art of myths through the ages.



The Iconic Roman Villa: through the Keyhole

Roman villas are popular modern destinations for family days out in England and in Europe. But what are we really looking at during our visit? Whose homes are we visiting? What did their house say about them, their household and the world they lived in?

Gillian shares the archaeologists' tricks of the trade that show what we should look for to bring a two-thousand year old home to life. Roman villas developed over the centuries from humble origins; discover how to recognize the hallmarks and special features that distinguished a wide range of villas, whether they were country working estates, city mansions or the stunning seaside homes of the ultra-rich. Roman villas are so much more than a pile of ruins; they are glimpses through the keyhole into the dynamic lives of the real Romans and their families.



Visions of Prehistoric Art

Vibrant and energetic, alive and exquisitely detailed, personal and intimate, prehistoric art constantly surprises us and makes us re-evaluate our perception of our ancient ancestors. There is nothing primitive about this art even though it's tens of thousands of years old. Cave paintings, hunting and domestic tools, breathtaking representations of wild animals and touching images of humans all feature.

Looking at these, our first works of art created by modern humans lead us to ask, not just what part art played in prehistoric lives, but what part art continues to play in our own modern lives. More astonishingly, this art helps us to consider at a deeper level what it means to be human.



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