

Study Days and Lectures on Medieval and Renaissance Art



The Rt Revd Dr Christopher Herbert.

STUDY DAYS.

Three Italian Cities: Ravenna, Assisi and Urbino

From the fifth to the fifteenth century these three Italian cities exhibited flair and audacious brilliance in their artistic lives. This study day looks at the great artistic programmes in the churches of Ravenna, Assisi, and at the Renaissance collections of the Duke of Urbino.

Art in Medieval Hospitals.

Hospitals across Europe in the late medieval and Renaissance ages for the well-being of their patients commissioned and created beautiful works of art. We shall be looking at these in the Rhineland, Florence and Burgundy.

Three Enchanting Empresses.

Three women who shaped their artistic and political worlds: Theophanu of the 10th century, Mary of Burgundy of the 15th century and Elisabeth of Austria of the 19th century. Great women who commissioned great art. They deserve to be better known.

The Mosaics of Ravenna

In the fifth and sixth centuries in Ravenna there was an outpouring of the most beautiful and sumptuous mosaic work. This study day will explore the mosaics that remain in the churches of the city, setting them in their political and religious context, and will also examine the origins of mosaic art in previous centuries.

The Fifteenth century artists of Bruges

Bruges was a rival to Venice for economic prosperity. Centered on the Court of the Dukes of Burgundy, artists such as Jan van Eyck, Hans Memling and Rogier van der Weyden plied their trade. This study-day explores how politics, religion, and wealth helped in the creation of superb paintings.

The Promenade Des Anglais: the artists of Nice.

"This lecture explores the influence that the sun-filled coast-line of Nice had upon artists of the late 19th and 20th century---Matisse, Dufy and Chagall, and reveals the remarkable part played by English people in creating and enhancing this elegant resort. Glorious art meets a glorious place..."

LECTURES

1. A Medieval Masterpiece: the Hotel-Dieu at Beaune.

Nicholas Rolin, one of the most powerful men in Western Europe in the 15th century, created the Hotel-Dieu at Beaune.

What stories lie behind this beautiful masterpiece?

What can we learn about van der Weyden's Last Judgement in the main ward?

What light can this shed on the medieval way of life?



2. Ante-rooms of Heaven? Art in medieval hospitals.

Some of the greatest art-works in medieval and early Renaissance times were created for hospitals. In some, wayfarers, foundlings, the old and the very sick were surrounded by paintings of remarkable beauty.

This lecture explores the origins of hospitals across Europe and highlights the art created for them.

3. Back to the future: Art , Architecture and the Church in Victorian England.

Victorian England responded to massive changes in society and the world with assertive confidence, laced with a strong dose of nostalgia.

In architecture and painting these two conflicting forces gave rise to some fascinating and provocative work both in the Church and in society.

This lecture explores the lively outcomes.



4. Banks, Burgundy and Piracy: the Fifteenth Century Artists of Bruges.

The Northern Renaissance, that great flowering of the arts in Fifteenth century Bruges, is not very well known.

And yet, the stories of banking, piracy and painting which interweave this period have exciting parallels with our own times.

This lecture places artists like Van Eyck and Memling in their turbulent context.



5. Baroque around the Clock: What is baroque art?

On the whole, British people are puzzled by baroque art; it has little purchase on our imaginations. Yet it has fascinating origins.

This lecture will explore those origins and will offer particular examples from Rome and Austria, including the sumptuous abbeys of Melk and Durnstein, to enlighten us.



6. Blood, Roses and Elephants: the art and history of St Albans Abbey.

The site of the first Christian martyrdom in England has seen some fascinating developments in its 1700 year history.

As a pilgrimage centre overlooking a Roman town, Verulamium, it has attracted the work of artists, architects, and book illuminators such as Matthew Parris and the Alexis Master, whose Psalter is one of the glories of medieval literature.

This lecture explores the continuous liveliness of one of England's great buildings.



7. Empress Elisabeth (Sisi) of Austria: a singular and lonely beauty.

The Empress Elisabeth was one of the most beautiful women of the 19th century. Married to the Emperor, Franz Joseph, she appeared to have it all. Yet, surrounded by wealth and beauty, she became increasingly unhappy and her life ended in tragedy.

This lecture explains and explores her sad but beguiling life.



8. Glittering Prizes I: the mosaics of Ravenna.

The mosaics of Ravenna were created during great political turmoil. In the fifth and sixth centuries, in-vaders played havoc with the western Roman Empire. In spite of this, artists and church leaders created churches of astonishing beauty.

This lecture looks at Galla Placidia, San Vitale and the Orthodox Baptistry.



9. Holy Poverty and artistic magnificence.

In the twelfth century a hot-headed but saintly man, Francis of Assisi founded a religious order dedicated to poverty. Within a year of his death, plans were laid to create one of the loveliest churches in Christendom, the Basilica at Assisi, where artists such as Cimabue and Giotto were commissioned to create frescoes of unparalleled beauty.

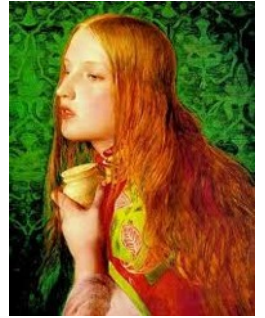
This lecture traces the story of Francis' life and, by exploring the work of artists, tries to explain how a movement dedicated to simplicity of life led to such an outpouring of artistic magnificence.



10. Mary Magdalene: a woman much maligned?

Biblical references to Mary Magdalene are sparse, yet she has been the subject of countless artistic representations. Some portray her as a Fallen Woman, others emphasise her vulnerability. Her cult gave rise to Provençal legends and to the creation of Vézelay.

Why has she captured the imaginations of so many?



11. Most Excellent Tree: the changing image of the Cross through the centuries.

The cross is a symbol which has had a massive effect upon the cultural and religious life of the world. From being a simple reminder for a beleaguered minority, it has become a treasured symbol for millions. Why did this happen? How have artists explored and developed its meaning?

12. Van Gogh and Provence

The feverish sunshine of Provence and the golden glories of sunflowers are images indelibly associated with Van Gogh. This lecture traces his development as an artist noticing the dark turbulence of his life as a teenager and as a young adult, and his difficult personality, but also explores how his powerful and radiant work has shaped our perceptions of the world ever since.



13. Surpassing Reality: the paintings of Jan van Eyck.

Jan van Eyck was one of the greatest artists of the Northern Renaissance. He introduced radically new styles of painting and left his peers gasping with admiration at his innovative skills and his sheer artistic genius.

This lecture looks at some of his most challenging, beguiling and enigmatic paintings.



14. Journey of the Magi: 1700 years of the Three Kings.

From the earliest days of Christianity the story of the Three Kings has fascinated story-tellers and artists alike.

This lecture traces the ways in which artists across the centuries have chosen to represent the Magi.

It is especially suitable for Christmas, but can be used at other times with equal interest.



15. Turbulence and Stillness: The paintings of Rogier van der Weyden.

In Italy during the Renaissance, one northern European artist, Rogier van der Weyden was called “Master”. It was an acknowledgement of his supreme artistic gifts.

This lecture explores many of his outstanding paintings from his enigmatic and haunting portraits to his great altarpiece at Beaune, and demonstrates why the Italian admiration for him was so well-deserved.



16. Urbino: the one-eyed Duke's Renaissance.

Federigo da Montefeltro, the Duke of Urbino, brought to his remote, hill-town palace some of the greatest artists of the Renaissance, including Piero della Francesca.

This lecture explores how such a crazy, astute soldier of fortune created not only a breath-taking palace but also an outstanding collection of art.



17. Theophanu: Empress of the West.

Theophanu was a young Greek girl who in her early life witnessed at first hand the intrigues and killings of the court of Byzantium. After her marriage in 972 to the Holy Roman Emperor, Otto II, she was inevitably caught up in the struggles for the control of Europe. Her husband was a head-strong, adventurous man but when he died Theophanu, a young woman in a strange new continent, had to use all her political acumen to survive. For some years she ruled much of Western Europe alone, on behalf of her infant son, and did so with conspicuous success. She is remembered with considerable affection in Germany where her tomb rests in St Pantaleon, Cologne. This lecture will explore her eventful life through a study of the arts and artefacts with which she was surrounded.



18. Mary of Burgundy: an Empress... almost.

Mary was suddenly thrust into the political maelstrom of Northern Europe when her father Charles the Bold, the Duke of Burgundy, was killed in battle. She was devout, dearly loved by her step-mother, Margaret of York,

the sister of Edward IV and Richard III, and a great lover of all things artistic. She inherited from her father the Duchy of Burgundy, a territory which stretched from the English Channel down into central France. Known as Mary the Rich she was the subject of numerous marriage proposals.

This lecture tells the story of her glorious but tragically short life. through the art works of the 15th century Low Countries that she knew and loved.

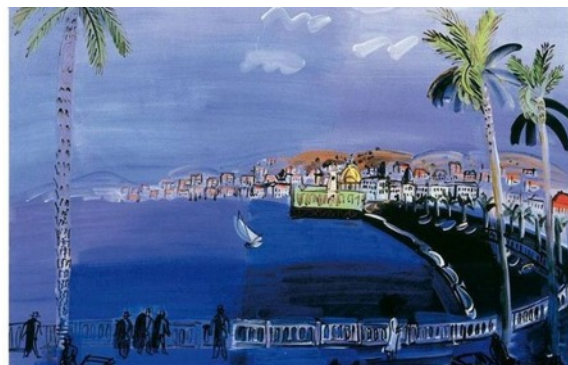


19. Raoul Dufy: "cradled by music and the sea"

Raoul Dufy was born in Le Havre in 1877. It is unsurprising therefore, given his maritime background and his father's musicianship, that Dufy described himself as "cradled by music and the sea". He was an artist with a remarkable range of talents: painter, ceramicist, a sought-after and very fashionable fabric designer, a creator of stage-sets, as well as a painter of huge murals and of small-scale tapestries. It was his astonishing artistic fecundity and perhaps the apparent effortless ease which he brought to his painting which has meant that he has received the attention he so richly deserves.

He had the capacity to enjoy life, in spite of living through the great upheavals and uncertainties caused by the two World Wars, and in spite, in his latter decades, of his own physical disabilities.

This lecture explores the delights of Dufy's work and celebrates that unique joie-de-vivre which shines through everything he created.



20. The Promenade Des Anglais: the artists of Nice.

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New lectures are added from time to time and this document is accordingly updated.

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