The power of art in the Restoration

Charles II used the royal collection to reinforce the Stuart dynasty

Revolution, Romantics and Reason

Order and chaos inspired art in equal measure in the 18th century

Nineveh: a place of myth

The magical city at the heart of the ancient Near East

Shakespeare and Stoic philosophy

How the ideas of Socrates, Seneca and Lipsius influenced the work of the Bard

The Classical Now

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The art of collection

The power of a piece of art can be intoxicating and, whether it is 2000 years old or was made this year, it can still evoke admiration, happiness or passion.

Unity and simplicity are the two true sources of beauty and ‘The artist must conceive with warmth yet execute with coolness’ are two of many memorable quotations from ‘the father of art history and modern archaeology’, Johann Joachim Winckelmann, born 300 years ago. An exhibition celebrating his life and work is currently on show at the Capitoline Museums in Rome. He was born the son of a cobbler in a small town in Germany and spent many years in poverty. It was not until he moved to Rome where he could display his knowledge of the Classical world that he came into his own. It was Winckelmann who first discerned and documented the different styles and time periods of Greek art – about which he wrote in his Geschicht der Kunst des Altertums (History of the Art of Antiquity) in 1764. You can read more about this remarkable aesthete and scholar on pages 22 to 27.

Winckelmann, who became the curator of an exceptional collection of ancient art, acquired by Cardinal Albani, revelled in the beauty and power of the objects that surrounded him. The owner of Minerva, Christian Levett shares this passion but he views antiquities not simply as archaeological objects, but as works of art in their own right. This is why Mougins Museum of Classical Art (MACM) in the south of France, which houses most of Christian’s collection, displays ancient works of art alongside cutting-edge pieces of modern and contemporary art. Reflecting this, although Minerva focuses mainly on ancient art, we also include features on modern and contemporary works inspired by, or related to, antiquity. The MACM loans works to museums and galleries all over the world. Christian is also personally involved with specific museums and archaeological sites. Our interview with him is on pages 14 to 20.

After Charles I was beheaded in 1649, Cromwell sold off most of his wonderful collection of art but, with the Restoration in 1660, his son Charles II retrieved some of these fine paintings, as well as commissioning many more of his own. Today the Royal Collection owes a great deal to these two Stuart monarchs – as you can see at two ravishing exhibitions: Charles I: King and Collector at the Royal Academy of Arts and Charles II: Art and Power at the Queen’s Gallery, Buckingham Palace. We look at the second exhibition on pages 8 to 13.

Art can have many functions: it is a conveyer of beauty and harmony; a status symbol; an agent of propaganda. It is also the mirror of society: reflecting the zeitgeist, fashion, politics, even war. Between 1750 and 1850, two opposing currents of thought and taste flowed concurrently: the order of the Classical World and the wildness of the Romantic vision. Both movements are represented in an exhibition called Order and Chaos on show at the Carnegie Museum of Art in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; see pages 28 to 33. Order and chaos have both unfortunately played a part in the story of the city of Nineveh. Once the most important cities of the ancient world, capital of the Neo-Assyrian Empire, in recent years it has been attacked and largely destroyed by Daesh. Luckily, many of its great monuments were no longer in Iraq but are safely in the British Museum and other institutions. The National Museum of Antiquities in Leiden is currently staging a fascinating exhibition on the history of Nineveh; see pages 34 to 39.

Just as art is timeless so literature can borrow from the past and project into the future. Shakespeare was inspired by many stories, myths and historical events from the past including the Classical world. The Greek poet Ovid was one of his richest sources but so too, was the philosophy of Stoicism, which runs through several of his plays. John Davies picks up this ancient philosophical thread on pages 40 to 45. For a breath of fresh air, turn to our travel feature on pages 48 to 51. Many of you will know George Gissing’s name as the author of New Grub Street, but not many of us knew that he was also a travel writer. Alexander Ekserdjian did, though, and, book in hand, decided to set out in Gissing’s footsteps around Magna Graecia, a less visited area of southern Italy. You can follow him on pages 46 to 51.

Last but not least, we have book reviews and our Classical Conundrums quiz on pages 52 to 55 and our eclectic Calendar of Events on pages 56 to 61.

CONTRIBUTORS

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Geraldine Fabrikant
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Visitors to the Getty Museum at the Getty Center in Los Angeles, California are now greeted by a 15-feet tall granite obelisk. Carved in AD 88–89 and dedicated to the goddess Isis and the emperor Domitian, it is a loan from the Museo del Sannì in Benevento, Italy, and one of more than 200 objects in Beyond the Nile: Egypt and the Classical World, a major exhibition exploring the artistic connections between Greece, Rome and Egypt. Beyond the Nile is the first comprehensive exhibition of its kind to be mounted in an American museum. “It’s an unprecedented compilation of works of art from the Bronze Age to the late Roman Empire, drawn from the major museums of Europe and America, as well as the Getty’s own collection,” says Timothy Potts, Director of the Getty Museum and one of the exhibition’s curators. In four chronologically sequenced rooms, Beyond the Nile explores the interaction of the three ancient civilisations, uncovering everything from trade, exchange and artistic borrowings to diplomacy, immigration and warfare.

The first room explores the origins of Egyptian trade, contacts with Crete and mainland Greece during the Middle and Late Bronze Ages (circa 2000–1100 BC), through diplomatic gifts and trade goods. By the time you reach the second room, the Greeks have arrived in Egypt as merchants and mercenaries in the Archaic and Classical periods (circa 700–332 BC). As Egyptian objects are exported to Greece and copied, Greek sculptors and architects are inspired to carve their first large stone figures, while myths on Egyptian themes begin to be depicted on Greek vases. The third room shows how, after the conquest of Egypt by Alexander the Great in 332 BC, the country was ruled by a Greek dynasty, the Ptolemies, for nearly three centuries. A complex hybrid culture developed under the Ptolemaic kings and queens, and this Hellenistic culture is reflected in portraits of private and royal individuals, including Cleopatra VII, Julius Caesar and Mark Antony. The last room explores the art and identity of Egypt after the Roman conquest of 30 BC. Soon Egyptian imagery became fashionable in the imperial metropolis, Egyptian religious cults spread throughout the Roman Empire and Egyptian sculpture was exported to Italy, where it was copied by local craftsmen who produced monumental statues, like that of the emperor Domitian, as well as luxury goods decorated with the exotic deities and vistas of the Nile Valley.

Beyond the Nile is the first of a series of exhibitions at the Getty Museum entitled The Classical World in Context. ‘The overarching goal of this exhibition is for visitors to understand Egypt, Greece and Rome not as monolithic, separate entities, but as cultures that shared and exchanged aspects of their religion, artistic traditions, languages and customs in an evolving milieu,’ says Jeffrey Spier, the Getty Museum’s senior curator of antiquities, and co-curator of the exhibition. ‘Works from the Classical period and from ancient Egypt are found in collections throughout the world. In bringing so many of them together at the Getty Center, we are able to explore this aesthetic and cultural interconnectedness, and how that interplay generated beautiful, compelling art for generations.’

- Beyond the Nile: Egypt and the Classical World is at the Getty Museum Getty Center, Los Angeles (www.getty.edu) until 9 September 2018.
- The accompanying scholarly catalogue, edited by Jeffrey Spier, is published by Getty Publications at $65.

Dominic Green
Tiles and temples

A Roman temple uncovered in a Hampshire farmyard by archaeologists from the University of Reading may be the first building of its kind in Britain to be dated back to the reign of Emperor Nero.

The temple remains were found within the grounds of the Old Manor House in the Roman town at Silchester, along with rare tiles stamped with the name of Nero, who ruled from AD 54–68.

This temple was found to join two others when it was investigated in Silchester in autumn 2017, and it is the first to be identified in the village for more than 100 years. The three temples are inside a walled sanctuary, numbered Insula XXX by Victorian archaeologists. Four fragments of tiles stamped with Nero’s name were found in a ritual pit on the temple site, along with another three at the kiln site (below and above right) at nearby Little London where the tiles were made. These provide further evidence that the temples could all have been part of a Nero-sponsored vanity building project in Silchester.

Professor Mike Fulford of the University of Reading, who leads the Silchester archaeology team, said: ‘These findings are a crucial piece of the jigsaw, as we look to solve the mystery of Nero’s links to Silchester. This is something that has puzzled archaeologists for more than a century. Only a handful of Nero-stamped tiles have ever been found in the UK, so to unearth this many was very exciting. It adds to the evidence that Nero saw Silchester as a pet project where he could construct extravagant buildings like those seen in Rome, to inspire awe among his subjects in Britain.’

The three temples, the earliest known masonry constructions in Silchester (which was known as Calleva in Roman times) would have been the most prominent buildings in the city, erected decades before others, such as the great complex of forum basilica in the centre of the town, were rebuilt in masonry. They were aligned north to south at the eastern end of the Roman town.

The remains of the first two temples on the Insula XXX site were first found during grave-digging in St Mary’s churchyard in 1890. Evidence of the third building was unearthed in 1902, but was not identified as a temple until now.

Ground-penetrating radar and a follow-up excavation confirmed three temples once stood on the site. They had a typical ‘double-square’ plan, with a central cella (shrine) surrounded by a walkway. This design originated in the late Iron Age, and is rare in Britain but more common in France and Germany. The foundations suggest that the temples could have been up to 15m high. The dimensions of the third temple are 15m by 17.5m. Although the religious purpose of the temples remains a mystery, evidence uncovered at the most recent temple site suggests it was built in the 50s or 60s of the 1st century AD – within Nero’s short reign. Often associated with brutality and extravagance, Nero was known for the persecution of Christians as well as his grand building plans, some of which were realised after Rome’s great fire four years before his suicide. His buildings were in high-quality stone, as well as ceramic brick and tile, but only the tiles found at Silchester are stamped with his name.

The existence of one of his buildings in Roman Britain, as well as evidence that he might have visited, has always remained elusive. However, the find of the seven tiles, adding to 14 previously found (only in Silchester and Little London), validates the theory that Nero was keen to sponsor a building project in Silchester.

Another Nero tile found close to the public baths in Insula XXXIII-A in the south-east of the Roman town suggests that the baths were built early in its development. Excavation to test this will take place this summer.

• (Visit http://www.reading.ac.uk/silchester) Lindsay Fulcher

Free medieval literary gems

From its vast collection of 150 million items in more than 400 languages the British Library has now made over 80 rare manuscripts and early print editions available online free of charge. This brings together more than 50 works from the 9th to the 16th centuries with extracts of medieval drama, epic poetry, dream visions and riddles. They can be accessed alongside more than 20 articles that explore themes, such as gender, faith and heroism, written by contemporary poets, including Simon Armitage, academics and writers.

Highlights of the new website include: the single surviving manuscript of Beowulf, the longest epic in Old English; the earliest autobiography in English, The Book of Margery Kempe; the Wycliffe Bible, the first complete translation of the Bible in the English language; William Caxton’s pioneering illustrated print edition of The Canterbury Tales; and the first work written by a woman in English, Julian of Norwich’s Revelations of Divine Love. Other favourites include a unique manuscript of the mysterious, surreal poem, Sir Gawain and the Green Knight (right) which survived a fire in the 18th century.

The British Library has already published on-line collections relating to Shakespeare and the Renaissance, the Romantic and Victorian periods and 20th-century literature. • Visit www.bl.uk/medieval-literature) Lindsay Fulcher

Minerva March/April 2018
Henge and sauna

Archaeologists in Yorkshire excavating a wood henge have uncovered evidence of what could be a 4000-year-old sauna. The site (right) at Little Catwick Quarry near Hornsea on the Yorkshire coast 15 miles north of Hull is 30m across, with more than 58 post-holes, surrounded by a later ditch with entrance points on the northwest and southeast.

‘Three pits in the centre of the site were found to contain a quantity of burnt cobbles of a uniform size,’ says John Tibbles of East Riding Archaeology, who led the project. ‘There was no evidence of burning in-situ, hence the “sauna” theory being expounded. We think you could have ritual cremation there. It is possible that bodies were brought there to be cremated and then the remains burned elsewhere. There could be links to Sandsfield, a mile away, where there was a cemetery with a ring ditch with 37 urns, dating to the late Neolithic or early Bronze Age.’

The theory that a henge Age sauna has already been identified at Westray in Orkney. The first signs of the henge in Yorkshire were spotted in crop marks in aerial surveys. Three months of excavation work, at the end of 2017, involved hand-sifting through 95 tonnes of material in the surrounding ditches. Other discoveries awaiting full analysis include loom weights, cattle enclosures and a Roman well, from later occupants. Several pits were found to contain crude pottery.

Another henge at nearby Northorpe, Hornsea, which was uncovered in 2015, has an English Heritage listing, but no evidence of burning in-situ, which the company has been fully supportive. Indeed, it seems to be proud of the finds on its land, which included a mammoth tusk and a 4000–5000-year-old highly polished Cumbrian greenstone axe.

The company takes its name from a meadow of yarrow (Achillea millefolium) that once grew here and was used by Romans as a healing agent. In Greek mythology Achilles was advised to use yarrow leaves on his wounded comrades at Troy.

A second, smaller henge is known to lie to the south of the Little Catwick Quarry site. In the coming season a strip surrounding the area will be excavated, and further finds are expected.

The Significant Seven

The dozen heritage sites and buildings shortlisted for Europa Nostra’s ‘7 Most Endangered’ subjects for 2018 are nothing if not eclectic, ranging from havens of paleolithic art to 20th-century industrial sites. The oldest are some 300 caves and shelters that have been identified across a wide area in the province of Cádiz in southern Spain. Some have motifs (below right) attributed to hunter-gatherer groups from 20,000 years ago.

‘In this exceptional ensemble, a crucial stage in the development of human beings is shown in a vivid way through paintings and engravings, the style and theme of which are unique,’ says Hispania Nostra, the Spanish arm of the NGO that put forward the citation. It wants to see a detailed inventory and management plan of the sites, which have suffered from human as well as elemental depredation.

Concerns for later cave art are voiced too about the David Gareji Monasteries and Hermitage (above right) in eastern Georgia on the border with Azerbaijan. Here, 22 rock-hewn monasteries and more than 5000 sanctuaries and cave-cells have long been central to the nation’s culture, but they suffered at the hands of the military in both Soviet and post-independence times when their strategic position led to armies taking up positions nearby.

Saint David Gareji was one of the 13 Assyrian Fathers from Mesopotamia who, in the 6th century, founded monasteries in Georgia. They became an important artistic centre, with a distinct school of monastic painting developed during the 9th and 10th centuries. Christian pilgrims who visited left inscriptions in Greek, Arabic, Persian and Armenian still visible on the walls. The site of this complex has been occupied since the Bronze Age.

‘The combination of rock architecture, medieval murals, prehistoric archaeology and paleontological fields makes the entire ensemble a masterpiece of Georgian culture,’ says the citation. It is also a living monument, belonging to the Patriarchate of Georgia, and services are regularly held here. Only 25km from the capital, Tbilisi, it is looking for means of protection from the increasing number of tourists who visit, as well as proposals for conservation.

The other contenders for the ‘7 Most Endangered’ include: the historic centres of Vienna and Gjirokastra and churches in Voskopoja and Vithkuqi in Albania; the romantic castle of Sammezzano in Tuscany, Italy; the Casino in Constanța, Romania, and the Greek Orphanage on the Princes Islands, Turkey.

Roger Williams

Roger Williams

Roger Williams

Roger Williams
Jim Ede’s vision lives on

After two years of subtle transformation by Jamie Fobert Architects, the New Kettle’s Yard in Cambridge has just re-opened to the public.

Kettle’s Yard grew and evolved from the personal passion of the curator and collector, Jim Ede, starting life in 1957 when he opened the doors of his house every afternoon for people to view his collection. In the 1920s and 1930s he had been a curator at the Tate Gallery in London and, thanks to his friendships with artists, he gathered a remarkable collection of works – by Alfred Wallis, Christopher Wood, Ben and Winifred Nicholson, David Jones, Joan Miró, Henri Gaudier-Brzeska, Constantin Brancusi, Henry Moore and Barbara Hepworth among others.

In 1966, Jim Ede gave the house and its contents to the University of Cambridge. In 1970, three years before he and his wife Helen retired to Edinburgh, the house was extended and an exhibition gallery added, both to the design of the architects Sir Leslie Martin and David Owers. Ede’s vision was for: ‘A living place where works of art could be enjoyed… where young people could be at home unhampered by the greater austerity of the museum or public art gallery.’

Now, between the 1970 galleries and the façade of Castle Street, two new galleries and an education suite have been made and a glass entrance area, framed in bronze, has been inserted in the entry courtyard. This allows movement between the galleries, the house and a new café located where offices had once been.

Architect Jamie Fobert said: ‘In his wonderful book, Kettle’s Yard, A Way of Life, Jim Ede said: “It starts from the cottage, with a couple of generously wide steps down… and continues… into the very large and comfortably-proportioned new building, which itself develops in easy and individual stages.” I read this quote when we first started to work on Kettle’s Yard and it has remained a guiding principle in our work. To add on to Leslie Martin and David Owers’ beautiful 1970s extension has been both a privilege and a great responsibility. My hope is that our new spaces will feel like a seamless and easy continuation of the Kettle’s Yard we all love.’

With the completion of this new development, it is hoped that Kettle’s Yard will reach its potential as a world-class centre for engaging with modern and contemporary art in the 21st century.

Andrew Nairne, Director, Kettle’s Yard, said:

‘This is a proud moment for all of us. It’s not just about encouraging people to come to a museum. We want to reinvent the notion of what a museum and gallery can be, and do. I believe Kettle’s Yard, with its remarkable collection and vibrant connections with artists of today, can be a beacon for the next generation.’

• (Visit www.kettlesyard.co.uk)

Lindsay Fulcher

1. Five Ships – Mount’s Bay, circa 1928, by Alfred Wallis, oil and graphite on card. 44cm x 5 5.5cm.
2. Self-Portrait, 1927, by Christopher Wood, oil on canvas. 129.5cm x 96cm.
3. Andrew Nairne, the current Director of Kettle’s Yard.
4. Lourdes, 1928, by David Jones, watercolour on paper. 48cm x 61cm.

All images © Kettle’s Yard.

5. Jim Ede, the creator of Kettle’s Yard, in 1972, with Bird Swallowing Fish, 1913, bronze, by Henri Gaudier-Brzeska. Photograph: Derry Moore.
A MONUMENTAL EGYPTIAN RED GRANITE
PORTRAIT OF NECTANEBO II
30TH DYNASTY, REIGN OF NECTANEBO II, 360–342 B.C.
15 ½ in. (39 cm.) high
$600,000–800,000
To be sold at Christie's New York on April 18, 2018
On 29 May 1660, the day of his 30th birthday, Charles II (1630–85) made a triumphant return to London and the throne. The Restoration of the monarchy marked the end of 11 years of Commonwealth rule, which began with the execution of Charles I on the 30 January 1649. Following the king's trial, conviction and public beheading for treason, the puritanical republican regime led by Parliamentarian General Oliver Cromwell had swept away the trappings of monarchy. On his Restoration, Charles II wasted little time in reinstating the ancient rituals abandoned during the Commonwealth; he ordered new regalia to replace that which had been destroyed, commissioned new coinage through which his image could be disseminated and staged the most extravagant coronation since that of Elizabeth I.

His 14 years in exile, chiefly spent at the great courts of Europe, had taught the newly restored king the importance of princely tradition and magnificent display in enforcing the power of monarchy. Charles II: Art & Power, currently on show at The Queen’s Gallery, London, explores how Charles and his ill-fated brother James II used art, pageantry and personal mythology to reinforce the legitimacy and authority of the Stuart dynasty.

One of the first acts of Charles II was the recovery of his father’s art collection. Peter Paul Rubens once described Charles I as ‘the greatest amateur of paintings among the Princes of the world’ and during his reign he had amassed an art collection renowned throughout Europe both for its scale and quality. Although the royal residences had survived the Civil War largely undisturbed, after the execution of Charles I, the Commonwealth government had sold off much of the Royal Collection. One of the first acts by the House of Lords after the Restoration in May 1660 was to issue a proclamation commanding that all royal goods be returned with immediate effect. Among those recovered works displayed in Charles II: Art & Power is A Sibyl by Italian painter Orazio Gentileschi (2). Drawn from antiquity, the 12 sibyls were women endowed with the gift of

Louise Cooling traces the Restoration of Charles II who used art, pageantry and personal mythology to reinforce the Stuart dynasty

1. Charles II, circa 1671–76, by John Michael Wright (1617–94), oil on canvas. 281.9cm x 239.2cm.

2. A Sibyl, circa 1635–38, by Orazio Gentileschi (1563–1639), oil on canvas. 59.9cm x 68.7cm.
prophecy and in the Renaissance were adopted by the Christian Church as figures believed to have foretold the coming of Christ – pagan counterparts to the Old Testament prophets. Most likely painted for Charles I between 1635 and 1638, the painting was sold at the Commonwealth Sale for £6 to Robert Houghton, the late King’s Brewer, and subsequently passed to the Parliamentary Viscount Lisle. Lord Lisle had acquired 61 paintings at the Commonwealth Sale and was initially reticent in handing over his purchases; Gentileschi’s *A Sibyl* was among the paintings eventually returned to the Crown four months after the Restoration, in September 1660. Others were more forthcoming, recognising the return of royal goods as a way of currying favour with the restored monarch, and, by the mid-1660s, a significant proportion of Charles I’s picture collection had been recovered.

The success of the recovery endeavour was by no means assured, with many of the finest paintings from Charles I’s collection having already left the country, not to return. Acutely aware of the importance of paintings as visual symbols of magnificence, and mindful of the need to furnish empty palaces, in the days prior to his return Charles II acquired a large group of Old Master paintings from William Frizell, a Breda-based picture dealer from whom Charles I had also made purchases in the 1630s. A further significant group of Renaissance paintings was added to the Royal Collection in 1660 when Charles II was presented with an extraordinary gift of pictures, antique sculpture and furniture by the states of Holland and West Friesland. The king had spent several years in the Low Countries during his exile and the ‘Dutch Gift’, as it became known, was intended to strengthen relations between the Dutch and English courts and to discourage Charles from entering into a treaty with his French cousin, Louis XIV. Works by Hans Holbein the Younger, Parmigianino and Leonardo da Vinci formed the core of Charles II’s collection and laid the foundation of the remarkable assemblage of drawings now at Windsor Castle.

The king not only collected works of art but also commissioned new ones. Having grown up at the Caroline court, to which his father had been able to attract some of the most talented artists in Europe, Charles II recognised the importance of royal patronage and he appointed a number of official court artists. Among these was the Italian painter Antonio Verrio, who in 1674 presented the king with *The Sea Triumph of Charles II*. Intended as a trial piece by which Verrio could display his talent and rich Baroque style, the painting have encountered a number of notable collections, such as that of his cousin, Louis XIV. Works by Hans Holbein the Younger, Parmigianino and Leonardo da Vinci formed the core of Charles II’s collection and laid the foundation of the remarkable assemblage of drawings now at Windsor Castle.

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portrays the king in Classical armour, riding in a shell-backed chariot led by Neptune. Charles is surrounded by allegorical and mythological figures. Time proffers a laurel wreath, while another figure offers a Roman helmet; to the right Minerva and Venus look down on the British fleet, while above the king a figure representing Fame carries a scroll inscribed IMPERIVM OCEANO FAMAM QVI TERMINET ASTRIS (Let the boundary of his empire be the ocean and the limits of his fame be the stars). The work was evidently a success and Verrio went on to paint 20 ceilings and three staircases at Windsor Castle as part of Charles II’s ambitious scheme to create a magnificent royal building to rival the great Baroque palaces of Europe.

Another Italian painter active at the Restoration court was Benedetto Gennari. Gennari’s Classical-style paintings dominated by semi-nude figures particularly appealed to the king’s taste and he acquired seven between 1676 and 1681. Among these were a set of four mythological scenes representing love stories from Ovid’s Metamorphoses, two of which, Venus and the Sleeping Adonis (4) and The Triumph of Galatea are included in the exhibition.

Royal patronage at the Restoration court extended beyond the king himself; both the Duke of York, later James II, and his first wife, Anne Hyde, commissioned important works of fine and decorative art. Between 1675 and 1685, James, Duke of York, commissioned a set of six tapestries representing scenes from the life of the Greek philosopher, Diogenes of Sinope (circa 412–323 BC), one of the founders of Cynic philosophy. They were woven by the Mortlake manufactory, which had been founded by James I and which was the preeminent producer of English tapestry in the 17th century. The
tapestry displayed in the exhibition depicts the meeting between Diogenes and Alexander the Great at Corinth.

Among other artworks commissioned by the Duke and Duchess of York, Sir Peter Lely's so-called 'Windsor Beauties' provide perhaps the most enduring image of the Restoration period. Commissioned by Anne Hyde over four years from 1662–65, the 11 portraits depict celebrated women at the Restoration court, including Barbara Villiers, Countess of Castlemaine and Duchess of Cleveland. Barbara Villiers was the king's principal mistress in the 1660s and one of the most powerful women at court. During this period she was also Lely's muse and was painted by him on at least 10 occasions. The portrait on display in the exhibition depicts Lady Castlemaine as Minerva (6); her youth, beauty and elegance contrasting with the repulsiveness of the Gorgon's head on her shield. In portraying her as the promoter of peace and the arts, Lely elevates Barbara Villiers from mistress to goddess. Another of the king's mistresses is similarly, if more lasciviously, represented as the goddess Venus in a rare mezzotint displayed in the exhibition (5).

Nell Gwyn was one of the most celebrated comic actresses of the Restoration age and became the king's mistress in the late 1660s. Print production in England blossomed during the reign of Charles II and printed portraits of the king, his family and other members of the court were rapidly produced and eagerly purchased. Portraiture was something of a national obsession during the Restoration, and Charles II was aware of its power in re-establishing the royal image and promoting the restored monarchy.

Doubtless one of the most striking portraits on display at The Queen's Gallery is that of Charles II by John Michael Wright (1). Though not a royal commission, Wright's portrait of the king is an imposing and powerful image of the monarchy restored.

Showing Charles II enthroned in Parliament robes and wearing the Crown of State, the formal pose, symmetrical design and meticulous detail recall depictions of earlier English monarchs such as Henry VIII and Elizabeth I, and suggest the continuity of the royal line. During his reign Charles II developed a personal mythology and iconography which glorified the monarchy and magnified his achievements, with the aim of reinforcing his authority. This is not only evident in portraits of the king but can also be seen in paintings such as The Royal Escape in a Breeze by the Dutch maritime painter Willem van de Velde the Younger (7). The painting commemorates the vessel in which Charles escaped from England to France after the defeat of Royalist forces at the battle of Worcester in 1651. After the Restoration, the king purchased the vessel, originally called the Surprise, converted her into a yacht and re-named her the Royal Escape. Van de Velde's painting suggests the heroism of the king's escape from the storm clouds of rebellion towards the blue skies of a safe haven and glorious return.

Another celebrated episode from Charles II's escape after the battle of Worcester, during which he concealed himself from Parliamentarian forces by climbing into an oak tree, is commemorated in a decorative charger (8) displayed in the exhibition. The story of the Royal Oak, as it became...
known, was recounted throughout Charles II’s reign as testimony to his bravery, ingenuity and divine protection. Commemorative wares such as the charger were the royal souvenirs of their day, intended for display as a patriotic symbol of loyalty to the king and to demonstrate the power and widespread popularity of the restored monarchy. Neither Charles II nor his successor James II was able to wield the absolutist power of their European counterparts. However, as this exhibition shows, through the magnificence of his palaces, the collecting, patronage and display of art, and the perpetuation of a commanding royal image, Charles II – so often written off as merely the ‘Merrie Monarch’ – was able to re-establish a powerful and, for a time, much-loved monarchy.


• *Charles I: King and Collector* celebrating the king’s art collection, one of the most extraordinary and influential ever assembled, is on show at the Royal Academy of Arts (www.royalacademy.org.uk/exhibition/charles-i-king-and-collector) until 15 April 2018. Tickets cost £18. This landmark exhibition, organised by the Royal Academy in partnership with Royal Collection Trust, reunites masterpieces by Titian, Van Dyck, Rubens and Holbein, among other artists.

• A joint ticket to visit both exhibitions at £29, including tea/coffee and cake at the Royal Academy, can be booked on +44 (0)20 7300 8090.
In May 2011 Christian Levett opened the doors to his own museum in the south of France – the Musée d’Art Classique de Mougins (MACM). Over the last few years, and increasingly since his retirement, Levett (1) has gone on to sponsor archaeological excavations, museum galleries, exhibitions and outreach projects. He also sits on the Board of the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford and on the Arms and Armour Committee at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.

What’s the story of your collection? Collecting has always been my passion. As a young boy I used to visit shops selling old coins and medals. Whenever I could afford them, I tried to buy inexpensive items like cheaper Victorian coins and First and Second World War campaign medals. I also loved toy soldiers and making aeroplane models (that probably came from various family members having served in the army, as well as a fascination with history).

I think I was inspired by family visits to museums, castles and cathedrals, but it was only later that I became interested in ancient objects. Around 20 years ago work took me to Paris, and I often spent Sunday mornings in the Louvre and the Musée d’Orsay. I had started collecting again – above all, to furnish my apartment and my house in London, but I was also purchasing hand-painted illustrated books and Roman and medieval coins. I was becoming interested in armour too; visiting a shop called Blunderbuss Antiques in Marylebone High Street, I was stunned that an English Civil War helmet from the mid-17th century could be bought, at that time, for around £1,500. I went on to buy medieval arms and shields from Peter Finer Gallery. At that time, though, I mostly acquired artworks from Sotheby’s and Christie’s.

Arms and armour have formed a major part of the collection of Mougins Museum, not least with your acquisition of much of Axel Guttmann’s collection. What led you to antiquities specifically? Back then, when I was ordering auction catalogues in my 20s, I had always overlooked ‘antiquities’ – I thought they were restricted to places like the Louvre or British Museum. Discovering what was available on the market was like a bolt from the blue: I had been financially successful, and I was drawn to these amazing ancient works. I bought a lot in the early 2000s, when the antiquities market was quiet and under scrutiny; and yet many fantastic, and perfectly well-provenanced pieces were being offered at give-away prices (at least relative to other areas of the art and collectibles markets). Things have changed since then: today I wouldn’t be able to put together the sort of collection that I managed just 10–15 years ago.

The museum really just evolved naturally from those early purchases. The collection became so large, and was clearly way beyond what I could display at home in London (and, by then, a newer house in France). I decided to put the pieces on public display so that everyone could see them – members of the public, as well as scholars.

As for the Guttmann ancient armour collection (2), I had a long-standing interest in historic militaria. At the same time, I thought it...
important – from absolutely everyone’s perspective – to try to keep the bulk of Guttmann’s collection together and properly managed. Provenance of certain pieces was lighter than I would normally have preferred, but it was a known collection – much of it had been published, and I didn’t want to see it broken up and scatter-fired across the world.

Private collectors in antiquities have been constantly criticised in academic circles, but I think often unfairly. If pieces are bought from public sources, with the highest ethics, and if they are available for loan and study, then in a world where national museums are struggling to find funds to run themselves, let alone purchase important items, this seems to me the next best thing. It also allows museums and institutions to borrow those works when necessary.

One distinctive thing about Mougins Museum is its mode of display, showing ancient pieces alongside modern works that respond to Graeco-Roman art. Perched on the wall outside the museum, Antony Gormley’s two bronze male figures, Reflection (3) stand sentinel. Inside, we find some unexpected pairings: a Marc Quinn bust amid your Roman portraits (4) and various ‘Venuses’ – by Yves Klein, Salvador Dalí and Andy Warhol – next to a Roman torso of Venus (5). Can you say something about the rationale?

Yes, it appears that, however unwittingly, I was at the forefront of a trend. I’ve been connected with the 20th- and 21st-century art market for some time – not least through my partnership in Vigo Gallery in London. The idea for those juxtapositions really came from when I was buying antiquities and noticed so many Classically inspired artworks along the way.

At first, I thought certain ancient and contemporary pieces would look good paired together at home. Later, when I had a larger collection, I thought it might be good to add still further recent works: I started actively looking for pieces on Classical themes – pieces that would encourage visitors who were interested in the contemporary as well as in the ancient.

That’s how the museum came to be structured around the ‘Classical’: despite the diversity, I wanted to make sure the museum had a coherent collection and remit – above all, that it would tell a story.

It’s absolutely astounding how many artists had a Classical period in their work, emulating ancient artefacts, drawing pieces as part of their training, responding to them. The more I collected, the more I realised the interconnection. I can’t think of anywhere else in the world that demonstrates the point better than Mougins Museum.

How is the museum (6) doing now; seven years on?

Well, it’s run as a professional museum, open all year except Christmas day; it attracts between 15,000 and 20,000 visitors a year. We’ve won several museum awards (and were a nominee for European Museum of the Year in 2013). But what’s really grown is the number of loans of antiquities and artworks that we are making to other museums and exhibitions around the world. We’ve gone from loaning two or three pieces a year, to over 20 in 2017 – and this year will be similar. 2017 was particularly busy. We sent five Roman cavalry helmets to a Hadrian’s Wall exhibition, along with a mask and shield boss; another shield and helmet have just been shipped to the Getty; two Roman helmets are on loan this year at the Met, and a sarcophagus frieze has just returned from Tullie House in Carlisle. In France, we lent various banqueting items to an exhibition in Marseilles, and a Greek helmet went to a show in Nice.

The same goes for more recent artworks: two of our Cézanne drawings were in an exhibition in Martigny in Switzerland; a Classical portrait by Toulouse-Lautrec went to Brazil to feature in an exhibition in Sáo Paol; two drawings by Modigliani are on show at the Jewish Museum in New York; and a tomb-rubbing by Belzoni is currently on loan to Sir John Soane’s Museum in London. It’s been a strong year for loans, which has been amazing.

That goes too for the 20 pieces which have come from Mougins to

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6. The Musée d’Art Classique de Mougins with Antony Gormley’s REFLECTIONS II on the wall outside. MACM (Musée d’Art Classique de Mougins).


Should that onus extend to more thorough testing of materials? I do think there’s a responsibility for sellers to test whether objects are actually what they are claimed to be before they try and sell them to the public – particularly if they are valued at, say, more than £20,000. Otherwise, even if acting ethically, a collector may well innocently end up with a problem. Having said that, I don’t think that the problem is just restricted to antiquities: forgeries are an issue even with 20th-century artworks too. But with modern artworks it’s much easier for the client to be duly diligent about provenance.

Do you think the looting and black markets are less of a problem now than they have been in the past?

Not necessarily in the market for smaller objects, or in those markets external to the US and Europe. But among major dealers and the auction market in the West, I do think that things have improved in the last two or three years. I’ve certainly been pushing for that personally for many years now, and have lost popularity with one or two dealers as a result (not that that bothers me). Thankfully we are starting to see some improvements. Buyers are getting much more sophisticated – they are often way ahead of the dealers in their documentation requirements. Auction houses have changed their act too: Sotheby’s now generally requires pre-1970 provenance, and Christie’s needs pre-2000 documentation.

What role has the Art Loss Register (ALR) played here, in your opinion? The ALR has had a very positive impact. It’s provided a common register, used across the art and antiquities sphere, so that works can be checked against international databases of stolen or looted goods. But it seems to me that, in extraordinary cases, the ALR could be open to misuse: if it’s just a dealer has a thief, or a dealer may have invented or deleted provenance) that a currently ‘trusted’ dealer is a trusted source. That means that a currently ‘trusted’ dealer could invent provenance for a recently looted object and register it, while the ALR would have no way of knowing that the piece was illicit. To safeguard against this, the ALR only registers pieces from established dealers, collectors and auction houses that they know well. However, they are still then reliant on all those entities operating in a wholly correct way. But it is now getting more difficult for looted antiquities to find their way into the mainstream antiquities market – at least in Western Europe and North America. At the same time, the whole talk here of provenance is tricky. In particular, and especially in light of recent events, one also has to be wary of countries that make restitution claims based on early 20th-century dates.

Over time, with countries imposing greater restrictions about provenance and import documentation, the market will eventually dry up of stock. At that point highly provenanced pieces, sold into strong private or museum collections around the world, will become extraordinarily valuable: those sorts of objects will become increasingly unobtainable; by extension, lesser items will be sellable only in an ever-shrinking market. So ultimately it seems to me that correct ethics will end up prevailing through attrition.

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France, rather than economically slowly improving the situation in Macron now seems to be very ago). But, fortunately, President in parliament a couple of years Hollande (when it was raised on art had passed under to London if wealth tax year. I’d have moved it is around €500,000 a of running the museum want to. The overall cost money – nor would I donations or raise I can’t ask people for a private collection, costs. And because it's costly to establish (around €10m with the set-up. The museum was out of date, so we need to work on another one over the coming year.

If the museum is at capacity, is further expansion on the cards? We did think about this in the past, but our neighbours didn’t want to sell the buildings next door. To be honest, I’m now very happy with the set-up. The museum was costly to establish (around €10m including the purchase of the museum building and its office building), and it’s incredibly expensive to run. Our ticket and shop sales cover only a quarter of the running costs. And because it’s a private collection, I can’t ask people for donations or raise money – nor would I want to. The overall cost of running the museum is around €500,000 a year. I’d have moved it to London if wealth tax on art had passed under Holland (when it was raised in parliament a couple of years ago). But, fortunately, President Macron now seems to be very slowly improving the situation in France, rather than economically strangling the country like the previous government.

Removing those forgeries has evidently been one priority. How else is the museum evolving? Mougins Museum has become something of a living collection: local members of the public want to see new things, so there have to be some changes in the permanent displays. Generally, I don’t like to sell antiquities, although a while back I de-accessioned a few pieces that never made it into the museum because they weren’t high enough quality. The museum has always been pretty full, but now it’s bursting, and I don’t like the idea of keeping things in storage: we’re not a national museum – we’re not going to fish things out in 40 years for an exhibition, so other collectors and museums should enjoy them.

Last year I put a few pieces into a sale at Pierre Bergé in Paris: it’s an easy way of letting the public have a chance to buy, even though we would get better prices in New York or London. Many of these items were in the museum, but it has become a little overcrowded over the years, and some of the displays needed updating to keep the visitor experience of the highest quality. It also means that now our museum catalogue is out of date, so we need to work on another one over the coming year.

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Is there one piece that you would never consider ‘de-accessioning’, even if the financial outcome was overwhelming? That’s a difficult question! While the museum is definitely not there to trade antiquities or artworks, and we operate as ethically as we possibly can, I am trying to make it more financially self-sustaining. If another museum offered a very significant price for a particular object, it would therefore have to be considered – but it would need to be another museum, and the price would have to be exceptional. There are pieces that I would never want to sell – most of the pieces, in fact. We have an incredible collection of marbles with 17th- to 19th-century provenances, two of which were etched by Piranesi. Both major Egyptian sarcophagi (7) have 100+ year prove- nances, and I’m particularly fond of them – as indeed I am of an Egyptian head of Bes (which was etched in the 17th century as part of the Medici collection). The bronze head of Apollo and the bronze head of Augustus (8) – the latter first published in the 19th century – would be high on my list too. We loaned the bronze Augustus head to Cologne four years ago: if I died and it was the last thing I saw – aside from family – I’d be a happy man! More recent works would include the vase by Keith Haring (with its stick-figures, almost like a Geometric Greek pot), or Grayson Perry’s A Classical Compromise (9), a vase from 1989 – long before he was famous, he was just coming out of college. Composition, the 1935 Francis Picabia painting (10) is also a personal favourite – not just because of its super-high quality and Classical characteristics, but also because Picabia lived in Mougins. As with so many pieces, there’s this great local connection.

Where does this passion for antiquity and the Classical tradition come from? Does it stretch back to your school days? And do you think there should be more room for ancient civilisation in school curricula? I did a little Greek and Roman civilisation at school – but only as part of the standard curriculum. There was some Roman and Egyptian history, and I remember learning about Greek myths, but I never went to university – I headed straight to work instead. I do think there should be more room for Classics in schools; in my opinion, languages in general should be taught from a younger age. I’ve also always been impressed by Latin teaching. I didn’t learn Latin, but my two boys did; interestingly, when they were young they found it much easier and were more open to it than French. Ancient cultures have this incredible draw for young minds, and Classics teachers are extremely good at bringing antiquity to life.

That said, I also think British
curricula need to come into the 21st century. We need to teach more economics and accounting from an early age, especially if students are going to compete with schools in Asia. It’s a terrible thing that kids come out of school not understanding the basics – why interest rates move, why mortgage rates increase, why exchange rates shift.

You can’t understand what politicians are saying to you unless you understand the basic principles of economics; likewise, you shouldn’t set up a small business without having a knowledge of market analysis and accounting. People often fall into financial trouble because they have no ability to predict the financial intricacies of the world they actually live in: it’s totally mad!

Interesting: are you thinking of any particular British political event?

I think this is probably why Brexit is happening: Britain gave the most important economic decision of our lifetime to a country that generally doesn’t teach economics at school; the effect on the country’s current account (the weakening of the currency creating import inflation, leading to higher interest rates in the most leveraged mortgage market in the world) was neither understood, nor even properly explained.

At least two politicians lied about what was going on, while others just didn’t express the economic point properly (or maybe they didn’t understand it themselves). The public voted without being able to decipher economic fact from the totally absurd.

The social and protest vote won the day – which clearly had a strong voice, and one that needed to be heard. But if the potential long-term economic dangers (weaker trade, higher unemployment rates, slower growth) had been fully understood, that vote could never have prevailed.

We’re talking economics here. Officially, though, you’ve now retired from financial life. Over the last few years, you’ve embarked on various replacement activities. Among other things, you have supported exhibitions and events at many museums: Ice Age Art (2013) and Sunken Cities (2016) at the British Museum; Bronze (2012), At Weiwei (2013) and Abstract Expressionism (2016) at the Royal Academy of Arts, and most recently, Marc Quinn’s Drawn from Life show at Sir John Soane’s Museum. You have also sponsored outreach events and academic conferences, including study days in London: Ancient Armour (2014), Sculptural Display: Ancient and Modern (2017) and Modern Classicisms at King’s (2017–2018) – culminating in our current show, The Classical Now.

What is your motivation?

It feels good, to be honest. First, it’s a privilege to be asked (even though I’m rather barricaded at the moment!). Second, it’s good to have the synergy with Mougins Museum. Third, in the case of those workshops, it’s great for the promotion of Classics.

To sponsor an exhibition – to walk in, to see what you have helped to create – is unbelievably exciting and satisfying. Having a hand in the work, seeing how things turn out, interacting with all these hugely passionate people – that’s a lovely thing, an honour really.

And how do you see the role of Classical objects in museums – does antiquity have a future, as it were?

Antiquity stands at the beginning of art as we understand it. For the first time, you had these incredible lifelike artworks being produced – with movement, with balance, with real beauty and feeling to them.

But I do think there’s a need for greater cross-over between the historical and artistic study of ancient artefacts, and museums have an important role to play. When people visit the British Museum – or the antiquity galleries in the Louvre, or the Met in New York – antiques are normally displayed and described as pieces of cultural and social history. While that is critically important, the public loses sight of the fact that they are also often looking at extraordinary works of art. When you go to national museums you have Roman objects in one room, Renaissance in another, Old Masters in another, modern in another. Everything is culturally or chronologically laid out. You rarely see ancient art displayed as art, or juxtaposed in a way whereby each piece complements another. If you saw more of that, it would help accelerate the public interest in the Classical period.

It’s clear to me that, over the years, artists have seen things differently. They have often been inspired by ancient artworks – that’s why they have spent so much time, and over so long a period, looking at ancient objects. To get the public to view antiques as artists do is the challenge, in my view. David Ekserdjian’s 2012 Bronze exhibition at the Royal Academy captured the point brilliantly – it was a masterpiece of an exhibition, perfectly showing how the art of making bronze masterpieces has barely changed in over 3,000 years.

That’s also why I think The Classical Now show at King’s is so exciting: if you can just remind people that ancient works are part of ‘art’, however we understand the term, you can engage new audiences, and in wholly new ways.
Why do Classical Greek and Roman objects still stir the modern imagination? How can contemporary artworks shed light on ancient visual traditions? And what might such responses, set against the backdrop of others over the last two millennia, tell us about our own cultural outlooks? The Classical Now is a major exhibition at King’s College London that addresses these questions by juxtaposing objects from past and present. Through a series of eclectic and provocative displays, The Classical Now explores how Graeco-Roman motifs, styles and ideas still pervade the modern and contemporary art-worlds, focusing on the period from the 1930s to the present. As they consider both continuities and ruptures, visitors are invited to rethink the categories of ‘classicism’ and ‘modernity’: when viewed comparatively, the past and present can prove to be at once familiar and strange, sparking a process of mutual illumination. Alongside ancient Greek and Roman objects, The Classical Now exhibits work by Edward Allington, Pablo Bronstein, Jean Cocteau, Michael Craig-Martin, André Derain, Hans-Peter Feldmann, Ian Hamilton Finlay, Damien Hirst, Alex Israel, Derek Jarman, Yves Klein, Louise Lawler, Christopher Le Brun, Roy Lichtenstein, George Henry Longly, Ursula Mayer, Henry Moore, Bruce Nauman, Christodoulos Panayiotou, Giulio Paolini, Grayson Perry, Frances Picabia, Pablo Picasso, Marc Quinn, Mary Reid Kelley & Patrick Kelley, Sacha Sosno, Mark Wallinger and Rachel Whiteread.

The Classical Now forms part of a larger research project at King’s College London on ‘Modern Classicisms’ (www.modernclassicisms.com) and is presented in partnership with MACM (Musée d’Art Classique de Mougins).

Tuesday to Saturday: 11:00–17:00  Admission is free

THE CLASSICAL NOW is on show in two locations:
Bush House Arcade, King’s College London, Strand, London, WC2B 4PJ
Inigo Rooms, Somerset House East Wing, King’s College London, Strand, WC2R 2LS

kcl.ac.uk/culture
#TheClassicalNow
‘Art is the daughter of pleasure...’

Dalu Jones visits an exhibition dedicated to ‘the father of art history and modern archaeology’, Johann Joachim Winckelmann, that is currently on show at the Capitoline Museum in Rome.

1. Johann Joachim Winckelmann, 1768, by Anton von Maron (1733–1808), oil on canvas. 100cm x 136cm. Weimar Castle/Wikimedia Commons. (This painting is not included in the exhibition at the Capitoline Museum.)
Almost 250 years ago, on 8 June 1768, Johann Joachim Winckelmann, ‘the father of art history and modern archaeology’, was murdered in the Habsburg free city of Trieste in somewhat sordid circumstances, by Francesco Arcangeli, a former cook and petty thief. Winckelmann had befriended Arcangeli who lodged in the same hotel in a room next to his. While waiting to board a ship to take them south, the two men took daily walks and meals together until Winckelmann unwisely showed his new acquaintance the valuable medals he had just been given by Maria Theresa, the Empress of Austria (1717–80). After unsuccessfully attempting to persuade Winckelmann to part with the medals, Arcangeli tried to strangle the famous German scholar in his hotel bed, and then stabbed him several times, causing his untimely death at the age of 50. Europe’s enlightened intelligentsia was shocked and, in due course, a handsome Neoclassical tomb was built to commemorate the great art historian and antiquarian.

Now, a new exhibition in Rome currently commemorates the dual anniversary of Winckelmann’s birth and death focusing especially on his life in Rome and on his relationship with the Capitoline Museum, the first public museum in Europe and the venue for the exhibition.

Winckelmann, who was born the son of a cobbler in 1717, endured a poverty-stricken childhood in the small German town of Stendal, a few kilometres west of Berlin. Yet, despite his humble beginnings, he managed to climb the ladder of society to the very heights. After many gruelling years of studying and teaching the Classics as a penniless scholar, he moved to Dresden where he met the visiting papal nuncio who suggested that he come to Rome. Conversion to the Catholic Church was the logical and very necessary next step to achieve his ultimate goal, which was to study Rome’s unique collections of ancient art.

Winckelmann at this time attained fame with his Reflections on the Imitation of Greek Art in Painting and Sculpture, published in German in 1755, the year after his conversion to Catholicism. This was also the year when his dream finally came true thanks to a scholarship awarded him by the Prince Elector of Saxony, Augustus III (1690–1763). Although, like most of his northern European contemporaries, Winckelmann had seen only a few ancient statues, most of them Roman copies of Greek originals, he nonetheless laid down his guiding principles regarding ancient art in his book, concluding that the noble simplicity and calm grandeur of Greek art made it superior to all others.

He wrote: ‘Grace can never properly be said to exist without beauty: for it is only in the elegant proportions of beautiful forms that can be found that harmonious variety of line and motion which is the essence and charm of grace.’

During the following 13 years, until 1768, Winckelmann laid down the foundations for modern archaeology by establishing a system of chronological and stylistic analysis founded on the direct observation of Classical works of art and a perceptive and critical reading of literary sources. He thought there was an organic development of growth, maturity and decline in the quality of ancient artefacts. Climate, cultural differences and the mastering of craftsmen’s techniques taken all together explained the arts...
of a group of people and helped to define the ideal of beauty of their time. There would be successive periods in the development of the arts: a pre-Phidian (or archaic) one; the high or sublime style of the great 5th-century BC Greek sculptors Phidias and Polycletus; the elegant style of 4th-century BC Praxiteles the sculptor, and Apelles the painter; and the ensuing imitative period corresponding to Hellenistic and Roman art.

For Winckelmann, 5th-century Greek art represented the human ideals of both beauty and virtue, and they pointed the way to reforming the era in which he lived. The paragon of beauty was, of course, male and, he argued, those who are not moved by it seldom have an instinct for beauty in art. In his description of the Apollo Belvedere (now in the Vatican), a 2nd-century AD Roman copy of a Greek bronze original of the 4th-century BC by the sculptor Leochrates, he enthused:

‘The eternal spring of youth covers the perfect manliness of the body… If a God should be pleased to reveal himself in such a shape all the world would worship at his feet… Here they would find the sun embodied in human shape.’

But Winckelmann’s reactions to Classical works of art such as Dying Galata (3) were not just an epiphany but rather a physical experience with homoerotic undertones. So it is not surprising that in a beautiful portrait (1) painted in 1768 by the Austrian artist Anton von Maron, showing him in luxurious undress, wearing a coat lined with fur and a turban, he has an engraving of a sculpture of Antinous, Emperor Hadrian’s luscious Bithynian lover, in front of him on his desk.

J J Winckelmann’s masterwork, Geschichte der Kunst des Altertums (A History of Ancient Art), which was published in 1764, soon became a landmark for future art historical studies. As well as Classical art, it also included Egyptian and Etruscan artefacts found in Rome or newly excavated, and it organised art history for the first time into categories, ranging from early development to decadence.

While modern scholarship would discard notions of ‘early’ and ‘late’ as criteria of excellence, it is Winckelmann’s insistence on a direct and meticulous first-hand, detailed observation of individual works of art, together with a deep knowledge of iconography and literary sources, that are his most lasting legacy. Never known to be self-effacing, Winckelmann wrote: ‘If anything may be called perfect, it will be my history of art, I believe. I myself am amazed by the rare essays which offer themselves to me.’

But, his contemporaries agreed with him and the book made him into an international celebrity. Soon after his arrival in Rome Winckelmann wrote delightedly: ‘… I live like an artist and as such I am welcomed in places where young people are permitted to study, such as the Campidoglio. Here there is the Treasure of antiquity of Rome and here you can stay in complete freedom from morning to evening.’

All Roman artists by birth or
adoption had free access to the Capitoline Museum in the Palazzo Nuovo and to the Accademia del Nudo, which opened in the Palazzo dei Conservatori opposite in 1754. Here, life models were provided for artists to draw without cost.

The Palazzo Nuovo was built as a twin to the Palazzo dei Conservatori (the seat of the city council) according to a magnificent and innovative plan designed by Michelangelo (1475–1564) for a group of three buildings facing a central trapezoidal square (2, 4 and 6) around an equestrian statue of Emperor Marcus Aurelius, made during his rule (AD 161–80), which can now be seen in the museum.

It was Pope Clement XII (r 1730–40) (7) who was behind the world's first museum. He had wanted to promote the magnificence and splendour of Rome to encourage cultural tourism and protect its priceless antiquities from illegal trade and export. He decided to use the 17th-century Palazzo Nuovo on the Capitoline Hill to house the more than 400 statues, formerly in the collection of Cardinal Alessandro Albani (1692–1779), which he had acquired to avoid its dispersion. Albani was a leading collector of antiquities and patron of the arts but also a spendthrift whose gambling debts had forced him to sell the major part of his extraordinary collection. Winckelmann had been Albani's protégé when he arrived in Rome and had studied the Cardinal's collection when he had become his secretary.

Today the Albani sculptures are shown, as then, in the magnificent rooms of the Palazzo Nuovo, assembled in clusters by type (8): famous men, imperial portraits, statues (5), bas-reliefs.

Laudably, a guidebook to the museum, Musei Capitolini, was printed in four volumes from 1741 to 1782, with illustrations, while a pocket-book guide, without illustrations appeared in 1750. Giovanni Domenico Campiglia (1692–1775) made more than 1000 superb, accurate drawings and engravings of statues for these publications, often using the camera obscura system, with special lamps and lighted torches.

‘The only way for us to become great and, if possible, even inimitable, is through imitation of the ancients’
(From Reflections on the Imitation of Greek Art in Painting and Sculpture, 1755, by JJ Winckelmann)
In 1763 Winckelmann was appointed Commissario della Antichità della Camera Apostolica and, in this capacity, he had complete control over archaeological excavations within the papal states and power to grant or deny export licences for works of art. The first foreigner to be given this job, Winckelmann contributed to the drive to stem the illegal trade in ancient works of art in Rome.

The Treasure of Antiquity: Winckelmann and the Capitoline Museum in 18th-century Rome, the exhibition currently occupying various sections of the Capitoline Museum, provides an overview of Winckelmann’s pursuits in Rome and highlights the objects he saw and studied in this institution. They are captioned with the scholar's
comments. Most interestingly and for the first time in many years, the rooms on the ground floor of the Palazzo Nuovo have been cleared and reopened for the occasion.

Here the artefacts are displayed and laid out as they were in Winckelmann’s time, before they were moved elsewhere in Rome or taken abroad. One of these is a splendid 1st-century AD marble tripod (9) found at Emperor Hadrian’s villa in Tivoli. It was formerly an important element of the furnishings of the Palazzo Nuovo (8), and it was taken to the Louvre in 1797 as loot by Napoleon and never returned.

The Pharaonic objects, which moved to the Vatican museums in 1838, are introduced by a cast of the ‘Egyptian Antinous’, a large statue dating from the 2nd century AD, which was originally in the middle of the Palazzo’s main salon. There is a posthumous bust of Winckelmann (10) but pride of place is given to one of the most famous of the imperial portraits in the museum’s collection. This is the marble bust (11) of Faustina Minor (AD 130–75), wife of the emperor Marcus Aurelius. This also appears in a portrait of the politician George Legge, Viscount Levisham (12) painted on his Grand Tour by Pompeo Batoni, the most famous of the painters working in 18th-century Rome.

Perhaps the final word on Winckelmann belongs to his illustrious near contemporary, fellow countryman and Classicist, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832): ‘One notices that Winckelmann is feeling his way. Yet in doing so he follows a certain direction, and there is something great about it. He is like Columbus who had in his mind a notion of the New World before he actually discovered it. By reading Winckelmann we do not learn anything but we become someone.’

Winckelmann’s art criticism may appear somewhat dated today but the works of art that he so admired will still beguile any visitor to the Capitoline Museum.

‘The first time that I entered the Capitoline Museums I felt a shock of electricity… a nation of statues lives here; it is the great book of antiquarians.’
(From Voyageurs en Italie, JJ Barthelemy, 1756)
In Classical, Romantic, Modern (1957), Jacques Barzun wrote that to understand the past, we ‘see the strivings of past epochs with generous fellow feeling’. But we also cannot help but remember ‘the needs – which includes the lacks’ of our own time. The past is interpreted from the perspective of the present, and the present develops new possibilities in the perspective of the past. In recovering the Classical past, the Renaissance created political and aesthetic answers to medieval dilemmas. The Enlightenment extended those Renaissance responses into the age of empire, commerce, science and revolution. Man, having emerged

Dominic Green visits an exhibition surveying a period of European art, from 1750 to 1850, in which both Neoclassicism and Romanticism flourished, giving birth to the cult of reason and to chaotic revolution.
as the measure of all things in the Renaissance, now became Kant’s autonomous subject.

‘God created humanity,’ wrote Kant in his Metaphysics of Morals (1785), ‘but within humanity each individual must create himself as a moral, and consequently, human being’. Kant’s universe tends towards the beautiful and the good. In his definition of the Sublime, the individual’s experience of overwhelming beauty hints at an otherwise inaccessible truth, the order and goodness of the universe.

There was, however, an earlier Sublime. In 1757, seven years before Kant’s Observations on the Beautiful and the Sublime, Edmund Burke defined the Sublime as the opposite of the beautiful. To Burke, the ‘power’ of nature is terrifying and amoral, and the individual diminished before a chaos of natural forces.

Visions of Order and Chaos: The Enlightened Eye, now on show at the Carnegie Museum of Art in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, presents a double image of the century between 1750 and 1850. This was the Neoclassical Age and also the Romantic Age; the Age of Reason and also the Age of Revolution. Organised by Louise Lippincott, the Carnegie Museum’s curator of fine art, with support from Rachel Delphia and Margaret Powell of the Carnegie’s department of decorative arts and design, Visions of Order and Chaos explores Neoclassicism and Romanticism through pairings of more than 200 objects from the Carnegie Museum’s collections.

‘We’re presenting the Classic and the Romantic not as a contrast, but as a continuum,’ explains Louise Lippincott. ‘We are very interested in how in the late 18th century people reacted to their visual experience and to the Classical past.’

In an age of rapid intellectual and political change, Classical ideals offered rational, historically tested principles for the interpretation of experience and the organisation of society. Yet copying, the training device of the Renaissance workshop, was as much a process of translation as of replication.

The broken upper torso of the marble Sleeping Hermaphrodite, from the 1st–2nd centuries AD, is domesticated for early modern Europe in Woman Asleep by Candlelight, circa 1692, an engraving by John Smith (1652–1743) after the oil portrait by Godfried Schalken (1643–1706). The damage to the ancient Sleeping Hermaphrodite is an accident of history, but Schalken’s presentation of a partial torso is an aesthetic choice. The sleeping woman’s pose classicise the mundane, and this Classical echo deepens the...
historical field of the image. But Schalken’s decision to narrow his painting’s margins intensifies the intimacy between the viewer and the unknowing sleeper. This creates another, Romantic, kind of depth, the psychological interiority that Hegel called *absolut Innerlichkeit*, ‘absolute inwardness’.

When Schalken’s Flemish contemporary Gerard de Lairesse (1640–1711) creates an image of a sleeper in *Ceres Rescuing Triptolemus* by turning King Lynces into a Lynx, he chooses to frame this scene from Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* within broad margins. In this widened field of vision, the sleeper is one figure in a social tableau. Sleep is not a subjective experience, so much as a universal act. Individual experience expresses a universal experience, and the modern viewer’s perception is framed within the ancient myth.

A series of studies of male nudes traces a similar pattern from mythic imitation to modern variation, and then onwards to modern myth. *Nude Figure of a Man Crouching* (2) by Annibale Carracci (1560–1609) is depicted from behind with Mannerist stylisation and an implausibly Herculean set of muscles. The *Figure of a Young Man Seated*, by an unknown 18th-century Italian hand, is heavily muscled without being cartoonish. In *Seated Male Nude with Inscribed Stone Tablet*, 1793 (4) by Louis Lafitte (1770–1828), modern and Classical are balanced. The nude sits frontally on a pedestal whose original statue has vanished. A living man inhabiting the place of a dead one, he points to the inscription on the tablet, and makes the past speak.

The weight of the Classical past pushes the image towards Romantic myth. The *Shepherd Boy and Mercury*, two studies by Erling Carl Wilhelm Eckersberg (1808–89) after Bertel Thorvaldsen, are idealised beyond personality. Thorvaldsen has abstracted the figure of the male nude back towards myth and marble. Another path that leads from Classical to Romantic, from order to disorder, is shown in the multiplication of images after Claude Lorrain (1604–82). The Arcadian ideal of Claude’s etching...
Departure for the Fields, 1638–41 (1) leads to a pen-and-ink imitation by an unknown 18th-century French hand, Landscape with Shepherd and Shepherdess (3). Around the same time, Claude’s landscapes undergo a comprehensive reproduction as a Classical ideal.

For his own reference, Claude copied all of his paintings into a sketchbook, which he called Liber Veritatis, or Book of Truth. In the 1720s, the 2nd Duke of Devonshire brought Liber Veritatis to London. Between 1774 and 1777, the printer John Boydell capitalised on Claude’s posthumous reputation and the growth of a picture-buying public, and published prints of more than 200 Liber Veritatis drawings, with etching and mezzotint by Richard Earlom. Earlom’s Liber Veritatis engravings transformed British landscape painting. They also inspired Claude’s admirer JMW Turner to create a ‘Drawing Book’ of his own, Liber Studiorum, or Book of Studies, between 1807 and 1819.

In etchings like Berry Pomeroy Castle (Raglan Castle), Turner assimilated Lorrain as a Classicising model. If Thorvaldsen developed towards one kind of Romantic myth, the idealisation of natural form to an unnatural and unchanging degree, Turner’s later oils developed towards another Romantic myth, in which art reflects subjective impressions of a world in motion. In Rain, Steam and Speed, 1844, a train thunders forward towards the viewer. We can make out the elements of a Claude pastoral in the mist – the stone bridge, the boatman, the Italianate trees that hang over the water’s edge. But these elements no longer narrate the myths of Virgil and Ovid, as in Liber Studiorum. They seem superannuated and mute. The train runs on a new, brick bridge that cuts across the landscape, and carries its passengers towards the future that awaits over the viewer’s right shoulder.

Romanticism, Baudelaire wrote in the same decade, was not a matter of ‘subjects’ or ‘exact truth’, but ‘a way..."
of feeling’. The favourite literary creations of the age – Rousseau’s Emile, Goethe’s Faust, Byron’s Don Juan, Mary Shelley’s Frankenstein, share, like Ary Scheffer’s Faust in His Study, circa 1831 (6), tormented and defiant subjectivity. In Francesco Bartolozzi’s engraving after Richard Cosway, Vincent Lunardi, Esq., Secretary to the Neapolitan Ambassador and the First Aerial Traveller in the English Atmosphere, 1784, the Faustian gamble of technological risk and individual liberation pays off. In Cosway’s image, it is as though Lunardi will have the wind in his hair forever. But the revolutionary gambles of the French Revolution and philosophical scepticism carried a higher cost for the individual.

One of the smallest and most striking exhibits in Visions of Order and Chaos is Miniature Painting Depicting an Eye, circa 1800 (8), the work of an unknown English artist, showing just the eye of an unknown English sitter. ‘It’s tiny,’ says Louise Lippincott, ‘less than one inch square. Eye paintings were a fad in Europe between about 1790 and 1810. Beliefs about how lovers communicated drew upon new theories about optics and the physiology of vision. Lovers gazing into each others’ eyes were communicating in the deepest and most intimate level possible – the ultimate in Romantic communication.’

The gift of an eye portrait was a personal reminder of this intimate subjectivity, a proof of individuality and inwardness, and a personal offering to the Romantic cult of love. But an eye painting could only be understood in this inward context. ‘An eye isolated from the rest of the face is anonymous,’ Louise Lippincott explains. ‘No one else who looked at the eye painting would have had a clue as to who it belonged to.’ Deprived of context, the eye in this painting is impersonal. Disorientated, the subjective mind must struggle towards universality. Capitalising on Coleridge’s misreading of Kant, Emerson called himself a ‘human eyeball’, and sensed in the ‘beauty & power’ of the ‘majesty of nature’ his ‘claims to his rights in the universe’. After all, Emerson reasoned, it seemed ‘impossible that the wind which breathes so expressive a sound amid the leaves – should mean nothing’.

The period in which eye paintings were in fashion overlaps with the time of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars. Bonaparte, the consciously Classicising hero, became a Romantic celebrity, and produced chaos, not order. Yet the Classical frame contained images of disorder and violence long before his rise to power. The
eruption of Vesuvius in Johann Carl Richter’s Aüsbruch des Vesuvs von 1779 (Eruption of Vesuvius in 1779) (9) takes on proleptic power, as an anticipation of the force with which the French Revolution will strike the Italian peninsula. Sleeping Monsters and Revengeful Monsters (5), by John H Mortimer, both dated 1780, anticipate Goya’s El sueño de la razón produce monstruos (The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters, circa 1796–99) and The Disasters of War, his record of the violence with which Napoleon visited his Classicising vision upon Spain.

The Classical image of empires haunts the Neoclassical reconstruction of society, and the inner lives of the age. Piranesi’s Roman ruins diminish and disorientate the viewer by historical perspective. In Venice from Fusina, 1821 (7), Turner portrays an imperial city dissolving on the horizon while the living, apparently oblivious to this image of grandeur, busy themselves with their sails and ropes.

Earlier, in 1779, George Romney (1734–1802) affirms the place of aristocracy amid the disorder of the American Revolution by showing The Honorable Mrs Trevor (Viscountess Hampden) strumming a lyre beside Classical columns in vaguely Greek costume (10). In An African, 1833, the Austrian painter Ferdinand Georg Waldmüller (1793–1865) fixes the unchanging primitivism of his subject by arranging a modern African warrior in a pose that echoes the Classical image of Diana the huntress.

Another alarming sequence in Visions of Order and Chaos exposes the formal resemblances between betrothal scenes and the slave trade. The joining of hands in Jean-Baptiste Greuze’s country wedding scene, L’Accordée de Village, 1819, is horribly echoed by slavers abducting an African man in George Morland’s Execrable Human Traffic, 1791. The same imagery recurs in a sketch for The Betrothal of Raphael and the Niece of Cardinal Bibbiena, 1813–14, by Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres.

Charles Baudelaire praised the Neoclassical art of Jacques-Louis David, the official painter of the French Revolution, for being as ‘harsh and despotic as the revolution from which it was born’. The Classical world supplied precepts for government as well as aesthetics, and also for techniques of joining the two in a pictorial language of power. •

Many of the great cities that flourished in the ancient world are still vibrant today: Athens, Rome, Jerusalem among them. Others have almost disappeared: buried by sand, eroded by time or destroyed by war. For centuries passionate explorers and learned archaeologists have uncovered the remains of early empires – from Sumerian to Egyptian. For decades those discoveries have allowed historians to study how these empires rose and, equally important, how they fell. But even as scholars brought to light objects that revealed how life was lived in antiquity, Daesh has been destroying what was left at some of those sites, as well as in the museums that acted as repositories for those finds.

Perhaps nowhere has that been more true than at Nineveh, outside Mosul in modern Iraq. Once the capital of Neo-Assyria, it was the most powerful empire in the world from 850 BC to 612 BC (9) when it was overthrown by the Babylonians and the Medes. In 2015 and 2016 Daesh destroyed the visible remains of Nineveh, including the reconstruction of the halls and gates, as well as the Mosul Museum, circulating videos of the horrendous damage that had been done. To
Unveiling Nineveh

Geraldine Fabrikant visits an exhibition at the National Museum of Antiquities in the Netherlands that tells the story of one of greatest cities of the ancient world.

Historians and archaeologists such destruction was tragic in part because uncovering Nineveh had been such a complex effort, filled with failed attempts and incorrect conclusions. Now an exhibition, Nineveh: Heart of an Ancient Empire at the Dutch National Museum of Antiquities in Leiden, provides an insight into the history and power of that once-great city.

Located outside Mosul and by the Tigris River, Nineveh reached the apex of its power under King Ashurbanipal (r 705–627 BC). It was a city dominated by palaces and gardens where the king was revered as a savvy warrior and passionate hunter, particularly of lions. It was also a capital capable of spreading its reach, in part because its rulers built an excellent network of roads and created an army that used chariots to move rapidly across the empire. Indeed one of the pieces on display in the current exhibition in Leiden is a limestone relief of a soldier grasping the spoke of an enormous wheel of the royal chariot (5), while copies have been specially made of the palace's famous lamassus (11), mighty winged lions with human heads, from the British Museum (3).

Ashurbanipal also created one of the world's first great libraries. Much

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of that collection was dispersed throughout the city’s two palaces. When Nineveh was looted in 612 BC, the main part of the library crashed through to the ground floor breaking its cuneiform tablets into thousands of pieces. Those fragments were brought to the British Museum where they have gradually been reassembled to reveal laws, economic texts and tales of heroes, all of which provide insight into life at Nineveh and its trade with adjacent kingdoms. There were even tablets that dealt with the rights of women in marriage.

For centuries Nineveh captured the imagination of archaeologists and explorers who sought to find its location and repeatedly got it wrong. The greatest finds were in part prompted by the intense rivalry between the British and the French, who each wanted to bring home and boast of their discoveries of the ancient world. Testimony to their respective successes are the rooms at the British Museum and the Louvre laden with finds from Nineveh and the earlier capitals of Assyria: Khorsabad and Nimrud.

The pre-eminence of Nineveh in the ancient world, as well as the saga of the battle for the discovery of that city and the bounty that came with it, prompted Lucas Petit, the Near East Curator at the Dutch National Museum of Antiquities in Leiden, to begin the task of mounting an exhibition on Nineveh, even as Daesh has destroyed much of what remained. What the exhibition captures is both the grandeur and sophistication of the empire as well as the aggressive and intriguing battle among archaeologists that led to the gradual discovery of Nineveh. As with many exhibitions that explore destroyed sites, the curators want to recreate what cannot be known and a clever 3D animation of Ashurbanipal’s palace (10), shows a series of images suggesting how the great palace at Nineveh may have looked. They also use old photographs of the area around the ancient city to show that it is a surprisingly fertile land. This helps the visitor to understand that the empire had land rich enough to support animals, as well as a population of about 120,000. ‘It was far greater and more fertile than people realise,’ says Petit.

This part of the world fascinated students of history long before the race to uncover its ruins started in the 19th century. Interest in Assyria began early, in part because Nineveh is mentioned in the Old Testament when the prophet Jonah is sent to the Near East Curator at the Dutch National Museum of Antiquities in Leiden, to begin the task of mounting an exhibition on Nineveh, even as Daesh has destroyed much of what remained. What the exhibition captures is both the grandeur and sophistication of the empire as well as the aggressive and intriguing battle among archaeologists that led to the gradual discovery of Nineveh. As with many exhibitions that explore destroyed sites, the curators want to recreate what cannot be known and a clever 3D animation of Ashurbanipal’s palace (10), shows a series of images suggesting how the great palace at Nineveh may have looked. They also use old photographs of the area around the ancient city to show that it is a surprisingly fertile land. This helps the visitor to understand that the empire had land rich enough to support animals, as well as a population of about 120,000. ‘It was far greater and more fertile than people realise,’ says Petit.

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As early as 1165, a Spanish
rabbi named Benjamin of Tudela identified Nineveh among the ruins that emerged near the Tigris. However his discovery was not published for another 300 years. The work of searching for the ancient site did not begin until the 19th century. In the excavation ‘wars’ between the French and the English, the French won the first round. It was not at Nineveh, but rather at Khorsabad that Paul Emile Botta uncovered objects that were sent back to France in 1843. At the time he mistakenly thought that Khorsabad was Nineveh.

The first major discovery at Nineveh that the world watched, as the exhibition explains, was the work of Claudius James Rich (1787–1821) who, in 1820, went to Mosul and established that the giant hill, or tell, Kuyunjik, and a second site, Tell Nebi Yunus, were the original site of Nineveh. Rich did not excavate but bought the ‘Bellino cylinder’ (7), a clay barrel covered in cuneiform describing the two great battles of King Sennacherib (740–681 BC), which was copied by his talented secretary Carl Bellino, who died of fever in Mosul aged 29.

Sennacherib’s father, Sargon II (8), reigned at Khorsabad but, after he was killed in battle, his son moved the capital to Nineveh where he built an extravagant palace complex. The cylinder, which is on display in Leiden, refers to the new palace as ‘The palace without rival’.

Perhaps the greatest of the explorers of Assyria was the English archaeologist Austen Henry Layard (1817–94) (4). Though he initially set out to dig at Nimrud, he did arguably the most consequential work of any archaeologist by uncovering Sennacherib’s southwest palace at Nineveh, between 1846 and 1851. He describes the 75 halls he uncovered: ‘They were decorated with two miles of bas reliefs with 27 portals formed by colossal winged bulls and lion sphinxes.’

But while Layard’s discovery was monumental and of great historical importance, perhaps the most splendid of the artefacts at Nineveh was unearthed by his assistant, Hormuzd Rassam (1826–1910), who, between 1852 and 1854, found many stone reliefs, including the Royal Lion Hunt, a stunning series of panels that is now on show in the British Museum.

The exhibition in Leiden also highlights the work of Gertrude Bell (1868–1926), the British explorer and archaeologist who did much to help shape the outline of the Middle East. Eager to see the ancient sites, she visited and photographed sites around Nineveh in 1911. Among her photographs are images that illustrate how King Sennacherib diverted water into a long canal that helped irrigate the fields, gardens and parks of Nineveh. This is particularly significant, Lucas Petit explains, as while there are the myths about the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, there is no evidence that such gardens existed there, in such an
and is the strong reason to theorise that a so-called hanging garden might have been constructed at Nineveh instead.

And then, of course, there is the delightful tale of the romance between the archaeologist Max Mallowan and the crime writer Agatha Christie. While Mallowan was on a dig at Ur, Ms Christie, 14 years his senior and divorced, came to visit. The two became romantically involved and when Mallowan was invited to dig at Nineveh, Agatha Christie joined him, though she had one stipulation – she would need a chair and a table on which to write. It appears to have been a happy time for both. The exhibition includes photographs of the pair visiting an excavation at the ancient Sumerian site of Nippur.

Christie’s adventures in the Near East doubtless inspired her thriller, Murder in Mesopotamia, while her husband contributed to discoveries made at Nineveh when, between 1931 and 1932, he was asked to sink a vertical sounding shaft there, which revealed early archaeological deposits.

One of the most interesting objects in the exhibition is the copy of a copper head that portrays an Akkadian king (1), which may be Sargon, or his son or grandson. The original is in Baghdad Museum, but the British Museum has loaned Leiden its copy. This profile is thought to be of a ruler from as early as 2300 BC. The length of the beard clearly tells the viewer that the head is that of a king.

Leiden Museum attempted to borrow the original, as well as several other objects, from Baghdad Museum, and Wim Weijland, the director of the Leiden Museum, was permitted to go to Baghdad for three hours to meet Qais H Rasheed, Iraq’s Vice Minister of Culture, at Baghdad Museum to discuss the loans. As recently as last December, it seemed as if the two sides could strike an agreement, but in early January 2018 the packed objects were still in Baghdad awaiting transportation.

Evidence of how much of ancient history still remains a mystery can be seen in the small stone head of a woman (6) that Layard discovered in Nineveh. Because a similar head was discovered at a temple dedicated to the goddess Ishtar in another Assyrian capital, it led archaeologists to surmise that this...
image is Ishtar. However, there is no way to be certain of this.

Much of what is shown on the reliefs from Nineveh portrays servants accompanying kings and other royals, and the exhibition helps to make these scenes come alive by showing the real objects that are also carved in stone. For example, there is a handle of a fly whisk, or fan, from Nimrud which relates to the reliefs that show servants using fans decorated with animal heads. Likewise, reliefs showed dignitaries holding staffs that had finials with lions’ heads, and the exhibition includes a bronze finial with four lions’ heads. There is also a clay tablet from Ashurbanipal’s library with cuneiform writing that contains an astrological inscription describing the different manifestations of the moon and other celestial bodies, and explaining the predictions that can be inferred from them.

Over the years, as archaeologists came and went, they made discoveries concerning later communities living in the area. The exhibition includes a striking gold mask from the Parthian period in the 2nd century AD. This mask is a reminder of how many centuries of culture lie under the ruins of Nineveh and other Assyrian cities, and only underscores the tragedy of their destruction.

In 2017 Mr Rasheed stated that Daesh had destroyed up to 70 percent of the remains at Nineveh, making the current exhibition’s attempt to bring those remains to the public particularly poignant.

The two Classical authors who had the greatest influence on Shakespeare (1582–1618) (1) and his contemporaries, both Elizabethan and Jacobean, were Ovid (43 BC–AD 17/18) and Seneca (4 BC–AD 65), who wrote, respectively, under the first and last of the earliest dynasty of Roman emperors, Augustus and Nero. Ovid was admired for his wit and verbal skills, Seneca for his dramatic power and rhetoric. As Greek myth was experienced by Shakespeare through the prism of Ovid’s great epic poem, the *Metamorphoses*, both in the original Latin and in the English of the famous translation by Arthur Golding (1536–1605), so Greek drama was viewed through the tragedies of Seneca, with their verbal brilliance and delight in the gruesome.

But Seneca (2) was primarily a philosopher, who advocated the doctrine of Stoicism, and all his writings reflect the teachings of this philosophical school. Not only Seneca but other Classical authors, such as Cicero and Marcus Aurelius, were studied in the Renaissance for their Stoic teaching, and *On Constancy*, a particularly important treatise by Shakespeare’s contemporary, the Dutchman Justus Lipsius (1547–1606) (3), published in 1584, sought to recommend Stoicism to all the educated men of Europe. This system of thought, invented by the Greeks, was adopted by most Romans, who found in it the perfect complement to their view of their national character.

As such, it is abundantly illustrated in the other main source...
for Shakespeare’s three major ‘Roman’ plays (Coriolanus, Julius Caesar and Antony and Cleopatra), The Parallel Lives by the Greek biographer Plutarch who wrote at the end of the first century AD. This work would have been read by Shakespeare in the celebrated translation by Sir Thomas North, published when the poet was about 15 years old.

The Stoics believed that there is no such thing as chance, and the course of nature is rigidly determined by natural laws. The world is presided over by a Lawgiver who is also a beneficent Providence. As a dramatist, Shakespeare seems to have been interested primarily in Stoic morality, and particularly in the notion that moral goodness equates with happiness. The individual life, according to Stoic doctrine, is good when it is in harmony with nature. Virtue is the only good, and since virtue resides in a man’s will, everything really good or bad in a man’s life depends on himself. A tyrant may put him in prison, but he can still live in harmony with nature. He may be sentenced to death, but he can still die nobly, like Socrates (4) or St Thomas More.

Every man has perfect freedom, provided he is not enslaved by earthly desires. Such things as health, happiness, possessions are unimportant to the Stoic; only virtue matters. Socrates is the Stoic saint; his attitude during his trial, his refusal to escape, his calmness in the face of death, his belief (radical at the time, 400 years before Christ) that the perpetrator of injustice harms himself more than his victim, all fitted in perfectly with Stoic belief. The Stoic is, above all, in control of his emotions and capable of endurance in the face of adversity. The qualities that later writers fastened on when trying to portray the Stoic were constancy, moral courage, equanimity when confronted by death, contempt for the vicissitudes of fortune.

Horatio provides a good example of this mentality as we see from the language with which Hamlet (5) praises his friend for all his loyalty and stability:

‘... for thou has been
As one, in suffering all, that suffers nothing;
A man that Fortune’s buffets and rewards
Has ta’en with equal thanks;
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and bless’d are those
Whose blood and judgement are so well commingled
That they are not a pipe for fortune’s finger
To sound what stop she please.’
(Hamlet, 3.2.70–76)

Such a plaything of fortune will be illustrated later by the time-serving Osric, whom Hamlet mocks as a ‘water-fly’ (5.2.84). Yet it is the composed and constant Horatio whose feelings get the better of him when Hamlet lies dying and who has to be warned off suicide by his friend: ‘I am more an antique Roman than a Dane’ (5.2.355).

Stoic virtue did not sanction rushing into death; suicide was held to be an acceptable, even desirable, end only when no other honourable solution was available. As Seneca wrote: ‘A brave and wise man ought not to flee from life but to make a proper exit’.

Of all Shakespeare’s tragic characters, the most unlike a Stoic in behaviour is, perhaps, Cleopatra (6) but, paradoxically, she is given the most Stoic of ends, full of dignity and composure, as she declares:
‘My desolation does begin to make
A better life; ’tis paltry to be Caesar—
Not being Fortune, he’s but Fortune’s knave,
A minister of her will; and it is great
To do that thing that ends all other deeds,
Which shackles accidents and bolts up change.’
(Antony and Cleopatra, 5.2.1-6)

At last her chameleon nature finds virtue through isolation, when she says:
‘... now from head to foot
I am marble-constant; now the fleeting moon
No planet is of mine.’
(Antony and Cleopatra, 5.2.238-40)

So this unlikely Stoic ensures her victory over Octavian who has defeated her army. She has won the kind of triumph that Seneca expresses in a letter to his friend Lucilius: ‘He who has learned to die has unlearned slavery.’

The Romans never tired of looking back at their Republican past and seeking models of moral greatness for the present generation to admire and emulate. A complex example was provided by Coriolanus, the supremely gifted warrior whose victories exalted his people but whose arrogance caused them to banish him. Shakespeare catches this paradox beautifully in Coriolanus’ farewell speech to Rome, a curious mixture of Stoicism and its emotional opposite:
‘...There is a world elsewhere.
...There is a world elsewhere.’
(Coriolanus, 3.3.118–21; 133)

His indifference to being banished is
Stoic in that it reflects the Senecan notion that place is unimportant, as the Stoic is a citizen of the world, but his language in its anger and contempt is utterly foreign to true Stoicism and marks him as the servant, not the master, of his passions.

Julius Caesar presents us with a model of Stoicism in Brutus (7), the patriot who places love of Rome before love of a friend, but paradoxically it is Cassius who is allowed to read him a Stoic sermon, though his motives are altogether less pure:

‘The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars,
But in ourselves, that we are underlings.’
(Julius Caesar, 1.2.139–40)

The thought is echoed in a later play by the bastard Edmund, another malcontent, again to suit his own circumstances:

‘This is the excellent foppery of the world, that, when we are sick in fortune, often the surfeit of our own behaviour, we make guilty of our disasters the sun, the moon and the stars.’
(King Lear, 1.2.132–35)

But it is Portia (8), the wife of Brutus, who teaches her husband true constancy and fortitude by inflicting a wound in her own thigh and ignoring the pain to show him she can be trusted with his secret thoughts. This reflects one of the central tenets of Stoicism that ‘pain is not an evil’. Pain is rather an opportunity for the virtuous man to test his strength of mind and

emerge the better for it as a human being. Portia shows that a woman can be as good a Stoic as any man, reminding Brutus that she is the daughter of Cato, the republican hero venerated by Roman aristocrats for his noble suicide at the battle of Thapsus:

‘I grant I am a woman, but, wisthral,
A woman well-reputed, Cato’s daughter.
Think you I am no stronger than my sex,
Being so father’d and so husbanded?’
(Julius Caesar, 2:1.292–97)

However, Shakespeare was too well versed in the complexities of human nature to ascribe Stoic sentiments always to good men and women. A fine Stoic indifference to material possessions appears in lines spoken by villainous Iago to Othello:

‘Who steals my purse steals trash; ’tis something, nothing.
’Twas mine, ’tis his, and has been slave to thousands;
But he that filches from me my good name
Robbs me of that which not enriches him,
And makes me poor indee.
(Othello, 3.3.157–61)

These lines remind us that not everyone in Shakespeare who at times sounds Stoic is necessarily virtuous. There seems little doubt that Shakespeare admired Stoicism and incorporated its teaching in his tragedies. Yet he must have realised the cost in human terms of such a stern, uncompromising philosophy that could become like the Puritanism that dogged him and his fellow actors, causing the playhouses of London to be closed as places of low morality.

A sense of this threat to ‘cakes and ale’, as Sir Toby Belch puts it, appears in an exchange in one of the comedies and shows how Shakespeare expected some of his audience to understand the Stoic identification of virtue and happiness. Newly arrived in the university town of Padua, Lucentio tells his servant Tranio he is determined to study ‘that part of philosophy... that treats of happiness/By virtue specially to be achiev’d’, which must be Stoicism.

Tranio, a student of life, gives qualified approval that perhaps comes close to Shakespeare’s own view of the matter:

‘Only, good master, while we do admire
This virtue and this moral discipline,
Let’s be no stoics nor no stocks, I pray.’
(The Taming of the Shrew, 1.1.29–31)
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www.hiddenhistory.co.uk  Tel: 0121 444 1854
Southern Italy really is a world apart. Puglia, Basilicata and Calabria, the three southernmost regions of mainland Italy, have played a subordinate role in the political history of the peninsula in recent times. In 1935, the painter, writer and political activist Carlo Levi (1902–75) was exiled to Aliano in Basilicata, safely out of the way. He described his experiences of the poverty and harshness of existence there in his remarkable memoir *Christo si è fermato a Eboli* (*Christ Stopped at Eboli*). Travellers keen to see the great sites of the ancient past often ignored the southern parts of the country. The heel, instep and toe of Italy were bypassed by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832) in 1787 when he made his *Italienische Reise* (*Italian Journey*). The great writer, enthused by all things Italian, sailed directly from Naples to Messina, Sicily.

The two poles of ancient Italy, Rome and Naples, through early excavation and the presence of wealthy patrons, held a dominant position in early archaeological tourism. Both cities, in the 17th and 18th centuries, remained also at the forefront of contemporary artistic
Alexander Ekserdjian follows in the footsteps of the Victorian writer George Gissing around the ancient sites of Southern Italy

styles. With Pompeii, Herculaneum and, indeed, Paestum within striking distance of Naples (as well as Sicily, accessible by boat), it is perhaps no surprise that few travellers found their way down to the far south of Italy. A spine of mountains, a continuation of the Apennines, runs down Calabria, bisecting the portion of land that forms the toe.

The traveller would have had to cross the mountains in a carriage, or make the lengthy journey through the famously perilous Straits of Messina, watched over in Classical myth by Scylla and Charybdis. Even as access to Athens and the other Greek centres of the Ottoman Empire opened up in the 18th century, Greek cities of southern Italy, known already in antiquity as Magna Graecia (Greater Greece), were comparatively unknown and unvisited. It took the enterprising French archaeologist François Lenormant (1837–83) to bring the cities of the Ionian Sea (the Gulf of Taranto, lying between the heel and the toe) to the attention of the contemporary academic audience.

But the south of Italy was not always a backwater. From the 8th century BC Greek colonists came to the southern and western shores of Italy, building cities that became thriving centres of trade and production. The city of Sybaris was, and indeed is, proverbially famous for its love of excess (as in ‘sybaritic’, fond of luxury); Tarentum (modern Taranto) was the last city in Italy to put up a major, if ultimately unsuccessful, challenge to the Roman domination of the peninsula.

The cities of Magna Graecia, dotted around the coastal plains of southern Italy, were very much at the centre of the ancient Mediterranean. Attracting famous artists and philosophers alike in the Classical period, these cities fell on harder times with the encroachment of the Italic mountain peoples, such as the Bruttians and the Lucanians, and, later, the Romans in the last few centuries BC. It was the desire to explore these exotic places with magical names, familiar from a Classical education, that impelled the 19th-century novelist George Gissing (2) to visit the south of Italy. His journey to ‘that old world which was the imaginative delight of my boyhood’ resulted in By the Ionian Sea (1901), a travelogue, rich in observed detail and personal reflection. It was with Gissing’s book in my hands and his words in my mind that I travelled through southern Italy.

Like my Victorian forerunner, I began at Taranto. Located on a peninsula between a lagoon (Mare Piccolo or the ‘Little Sea’) and the Mediterranean, the site was easily defensible; an Aragonese castle from the 15th century still stands proudly looking out to sea.

The wealth resulting from the plentiful fish in the Little Sea probably gave Taranto an economic boost in the unsettled early years of colonisation. Gissing believed he saw the descendants of those first fishermen still working the lagoon more than 2500 years later, he wrote: ‘To-day the fisher-folk form a colony apart; they speak a dialect which retains many Greek words unknown to the rest of the population. I could not gaze at them long enough; their lithe limbs, their attitudes at work or in repose, their wild, black hair, perpetually reminded me of shapes pictured on a Classical vase.’

The continuous occupation of the city, and the constraints of the island itself, has allowed few traces of the ancient settlement to remain above...
ground. Descent into the tombs of the Greek period, some of them painted, is possible in many areas of the city, presuming the sites are open to the public. While two Doric columns of a temple lie above ground near the castle, the most evocative place to see the rich past of Taranto is in the Cathedral of San Cataldo. Dedicated to an Irishman of the 7th century, patron saint of Taranto, the church incorporates *spolia* (re-used elements of earlier, often ancient, buildings) in the form of medieval and antique columns of different materials. The stones exhibit different colours and textures, ranging from white marble to grey granite, and the individual columns are consciously placed, sometimes paired across the central aisle. In this way, the initial discordant decoration of the church is shown to be the result of consideration and design, exhibiting a variety and opulence no doubt enjoyed by the original 11th-century audience, who in this way cast themselves as the successors to the glory of their Greek and Roman forebears. The National Archaeological Museum of Taranto (MARTA) has recently been renovated and its ancient masterpieces (3 and 7) now shine within its pared-down interiors.

Heading west along the Ionian coast, I reach Metaponto (ancient Metapontum) (4). From the *strada statale*, the mighty Doric columns of the colossal Temple of Hera (5 and 6) demand that the traveller stop to visit. Known as the *Tavole Palatine* (the Tables of the Paladins) in the early-modern period, but also as the ‘Tables of the Emperor’ or the ‘School of Pythagoras’, these temple ruins have been the centre of local myth-making and storytelling for almost 2000 years, opened to their many modern interpretations by the abandonment of the city well before the end of antiquity and the consequent forgetting of the temple’s original function.

Set on the Bradano river, which formed the ancient border between the lands of Metapontum and Tarentum, this temple staked a powerful claim to the territory held, and a projection of power outside the urban centre. The river
still marks the boundary between Puglia and Basilicata. The town of Metapontum itself, a few miles from the Tavole Palatine, has been well-excavated. The results of this work can be seen in a rather packed museum and a well-kept archaeological park where the theatre is still used for performances. The wealth of Metapontum and the connections with the rest of the Greek world are attested by a beautifully made white marble head of the sun god Helios (12).

Marble does not naturally occur in southern Italy, so both the material and the workmanship must be of Aegean Greek origin. The style of the work reflects the image of Helios, better known as the Colossus of Rhodes, itself based on the portrait of Alexander the Great. Lysippus, the sculptor of the most famous images of Alexander the Great, also created a colossal bronze Zeus for the Tarentines at the end of the 4th century BC. Southern Italy in that period was certainly not on the artistic margins of the Classical world.

Further west, the city of Croton, home to the school of the mathematician and philosopher Pythagoras, was famous for its temple of Hera Lacinia, lying outside the city on a promontory now known as Capo Colonna. It was visited by the Carthaginian general Hannibal, who had dedicated a bilingual account of his campaign there, and a single column now remains standing of what was once a proud temple, roofed in sparkling tiles of white marble. An opportunistic Roman general, Fulvius Flaccus, stripped the roof of tiles in 173 BC, hoping to use them as dazzling decoration for a temple he was building at Rome. But the senate, fearing the impiety

6. The temple of Hera, circa 530 BC, known as the Tavole Palatine, in the territory of ancient Metapontum.

of the act, made sure the tiles were returned to the temple, although they were not replaced on the roof (Livy 42.3). The cult of Hera was replaced in Late Antiquity by a miracle-working cult of the Virgin, on the same spot, and now known as the ‘Madonna di Capocolonna e Crotone’. The Roman presence in the region only grew stronger with time, and colonies of Roman citizens were being founded and refounded there as late as the reign of the emperor Nerva (AD 96–98).

An example is Scolacium (8), home of the 6th century AD Christian writer Cassiodorus and site of the only amphitheatre so far discovered in Calabria. It also possessed a large forum (an open square for political and economic use) of typical Roman plan and filled with marble statues, some of which depict members of the imperial family and can be seen on site. A magnificent Norman basilica adorns the archaeological park, which is beautiful also for the luxuriant olive grove that surrounds the excavated portions.

The interplay of the sea and the mountains is most dynamic in Calabria, where the coastal plain narrows and the hills just inland rise higher than in neighbouring Basilicata. In a short time one can move from the sites of Greek cities on the sea, such as Monasterace (11) where the remains of the temple platform stand just above the beach, up to the hills where the population fled in Late Antiquity in the face of sea-borne threats. The Byzantine occupation of Italy in the reign of Justinian (AD 527–65) has left traces in these hill-top settlements, either in the form of the jewel-like church of the Cattolica di Stilo or in the unique survival of the Rossano codex, a Syrian manuscript of the Gospels, finely illustrated and luxuriously written out on purple-dyed parchment.

The views out to sea from the hills are stunning, and the medieval villages clustered on the peaks underline the fact that the move back to the sea shore was a fairly recent one, prompted by the building of the coastal railway in the 19th century and much increased by the demands of beach tourism in the late 20th.

The modern tourist fares far better than my Victorian predecessor did, crucially in the matter of food and wine. At Scolacium Gissing wrote: ‘I poured from the thick decanter (dirtier vessel was never seen on table) and tasted. The stuff was poison. Assuredly I am far from fastidious; this, I believe, was the only occasion when wine has been offered me in Italy which I could not drink.’ He did not dare to drink the water.

Such asides form the very proper purpose of Gissing’s account, giving humour to his story, as well as a sense of the people and the places he encountered. Gissing is frank about the poverty of the south of Italy, the desperation of the people who never knew anything else. In this he was followed about 30 years...
later by Carlo Levi. Eye-opening for
the modern reader, the recent past
of this region, once known, cannot
be forgotten.

The culmination of Gissing’s
journey was Reggio Calabria,
across the strait from Sicily. The
traveller by this point will have
passed through the windy city of
Catanzaro, where the inhabitants
must tie down all their possessions
that are kept outside. They will have
stopped at Locri, the find-spot of
the famous Ludovisi throne now
on view in Rome at the Palazzo
Altemps. They may have seen
the hills of Calabria burning
in the summer drought;
and they cannot but have
experienced the unparalleled
kindness and humour of the
southern Italians – quick to help
and laugh. Here, in Reggio, are
two of the ancient world’s greatest
art treasures, The Riace Bronzes
(9 and 10), magnificent heroic-
scale warriors brought up from the
sea-bed, await the visitor, and are
more than worth the pilgrimage,
whatever its length.

By the Ionian sea you will find
gaggles of pine-trees sloping
down to the beach; there is
cold sea-water for the hot
days, and the richness of
a landscape that has
been at the centre of
the swirling currents
of Mediterranean
culture for 3000 years. To end with
Gissing’s reflection on this place
where Rome met Greece and Greece
met Rome: ‘In Magna Graecia the
waters of two fountains mingle and
flow together; how exquisite will be
the draught!’
BOOKREVIEWS

Antiquity Matters
Frederic Raphael
Tate University Press
Hardback, £20/$26

The barbarians will always be with us, but what about the Greeks and Romans? In 1940, when nine-year-old Frederic Raphael first encountered Kennedy's Latin Primer, both private and grammar school curricula were designed to inculcate a working knowledge of Classical history, and a Loeb-enhanced familiarity with either or both Latin and Greek. Today, in a culture at risk of entertaining itself to death, and with most British school-leavers unable to communicate in a living foreign language, the study of Classics has returned to its 18th-century form, a hobby for the elite, minus the 18th-century rigour. Raphael started to learn Greek at 11, then worked his way up to a Classics scholarship at St John's, Cambridge, but instead of an academic career he chose the freelance life of the writer. The author of 22 novels, including The Glittering Prizes (1976) and an Oscar-winning screenplay for Darling, (1976); and a prolific, often barbed journalist, Raphael, now 86, remains an underrated ornament of English letters. Antiquity Matters is a sharp, instructive and utterly entertaining testament to Raphael's lifelong pursuit of Classics, and how learning about the past leads to understanding the present, and to self-understanding.

As a personal view, Antiquity Matters is ‘more of a montage than any kind of textbook’. The newcomer in search of a clear narrative and chronology should probably look elsewhere – and then take up Antiquity Matters as an interpretation and stimulus. For we hold up the ancients as a mirror to the modern, and the image we see is, as the subtitle of Paul Cartledge’s The Greeks has it, ‘a portrait of self and others’. The pleasures of Antiquity Matters are idiosyncratic, digressive and, like Distant Intimacy, the published online correspondence between Raphael and his friend, the American critic Joseph Epstein, highly acute and a little bit curmudgeonly.

The past, and especially the Athens of the Golden Age, is always with us, but the eternal outlines of human nature are disguised by the quick changes of historical costume. Xanthias, the servant in Aristophanes’ Frogs, is ‘the prototype of the savvy servant who camouflaged in Beaumarchais and Mozart’s Figaro, if not in PG Wodehouse’s Jeeves’. The fate of Gaius Cassius Longinus, exiled for advocating ‘the values of the old Republic’ in the age of empire, recurs in the fall of Enoch Powell, ‘ostracised by his own party’ after stating ‘Delphic apprehensions’ about post-imperial immigration. Cicero, vesting ‘sentimental hopes in what he took to be the innate qualities of the Old Families’, and called ‘father of the country’ by patricians even though he was ‘never quite one of them’, appears in Victorian Britain as Benjamin Disraeli, ‘another arrivate of rare eloquence and even greater panache’ who ‘did the hard work’ for the Tory grandees.

Some motifs are carried directly from myth to the modern age. A reference to Odysseus’ prolonged homeward journey leads to the observation that Cavalry’s evocation of ‘the delights of delay and deviation’ in Ithaca (1911) are anticipated by Tennyson’s Ulysses (1842). Euripides’ Medea is traced forward to Jean Anouilh’s 1946 play Medée, and Pasolini’s 1969 film, starring Maria Callas. Many other footnotes delight through deviation alone, into free-associative comparisons reminiscent of another Classically-minded novelist, Robert Graves. Draco, the ‘primordial’ legislator of Athens, punished ‘any serious crime’ by death. So, Raphael notes, did the Paraguayan dictator Velasco (1766–1840). The reader must guess whether Velasco was inspired by Draco, or whether the consistent viciousness of human nature produces similar results across time and space. That guess, Raphael insists, is the reader’s prerogative. Instead of trusting ‘academics on the make’, and the ‘petty treason’ and ‘inapposite erudition’ of weak translation and misleading interpretation, we should seek direct contact with Classical texts. Antiquity Matters proves this case in the inimitable Raphael style.

Dominic Green

The Transformation of Athens: Painted Pottery and the Creation of Classical Greece
Robin Osborne
Princeton University Press
Hardback, £41.95/$49.95

As Edgar Wind wrote in Art and Anarchy (1963), art is an imaginative exercise that engages us as it detaches us. He said that an artwork ‘makes us participate in what it presents, and yet presents it as an aesthetic fiction’. Through style, the aesthetic fiction, we participate in content, and this participation, by carrying us ‘beyond the actual’, can ‘deepen our experience by compassion’.

Though style and content cannot be fully separated, changes of style are more easily described than changes in content. The pots painted in Athens in the middle of the 5th century BC differ from those painted in the late 6th century in both style and content. In 1959, Ernst Gombrich described the emergence of the Classical style in this period as the ‘Greek Revolution’. He attributed the development of Classical naturalism in Athens to the stimulus of ‘story-telling’. Social changes, especially the end of the Persian Wars and the rise of Athenian democracy, required new modes of representation.

In The Transformation of Athens, Robin Osborne, Professor of Ancient History at King’s College, Cambridge, writes that this stylistic focus pursues the origins of the aesthetic fiction or what we now call naturalism, but it does not account for changes of content. Yet in the decades between the invention of red-figure technique (circa 520 BC) and the middle of the 5th century, the content of painted pottery changed too. Osborne argues that these changes were not a case of art imitating life and its activities so much as art expressing a changed view of the world.

This may seem like a small difference, but its implications are considerable. If, as Wind wrote, participation in content can deepen our experience by compassion, then the content of red-figure pottery was able to direct the deepening of that experience for contemporary Athenians, and even change their understanding of their physical and social environment. In this view, life imitates art, and The Transformation of Athens presents, and yet presents it as an aesthetic fiction.
will, as Osborne hopes, change the way in which we write Greek history.

He examines subjects divided into five categories: athletics, warfare, sexual relations, relations with the gods, and the symposium (drinking party). In athletics, the gymnasion changes from a site of sexually charged ‘individual episodes of athletic endeavor’ to ‘a place of education’. In war, the singular combat of the hoplite soldier dissolves into images of groups of soldiers, and departures from domestic to military life. Sexual imagery, in particular the decreased emphasis on the orgastic, also shows a shift from ‘questions of achievement’ to ‘appearance’. Instead of ‘acts of courtship and sexual acts’, we see the social circumstances in which a sexual relationship might be formed or be desirable. And depictions of the komos, the ritualistic, drunken procession, also shift from individual acts and physical contact to an absence of contact and character.

These changes of subject, Osborne argues, ‘correlate most strongly not with changes in those particular activities in life, but with the changes that occur in the representation of all scenes of “everyday life”’. The new way of seeing rejected the conception of the world as a place where distinctive individuals competed for limited goods, and depicted a world inhabited by essentially similar people with essentially similar lives. Instead of being challenged to enter the other world of combat, the viewer was now assured that ‘the world out there was the same as the world in which the viewer lived’.

Pottery images were not a ‘transcript of the world’, but selective representations that played ‘an active role in shaping experience’. Ideology, Osborne suggests, powered a ‘feedback loop’ that shaped perceptions in a society transformed by the trauma of the Persian Wars, and by the rise of democracy and the theatre. By exploring the motives of story-telling in Classical context, The Transformation of Athens requires us to reconsider the origins of Classical style.

Dominic Green

The Odyssey

_Homer, translated by Emily Wilson_  
WW Norton & Co  
592pp, four black-and-white maps  
Hardback, £30

Readers of _Minerva_ will need no introduction to Homer’s epic tale of homecoming. Odysseus’ exploits on his way back to Ithaca after the Trojan War, with shipwrecks, sirens, the Cyclops and Circe, are familiar to many. The immortal ancient work still attracts new readers, though, and this new version of the _Odyssey_ by Emily Wilson, Professor of Classical Studies at the University of Pennsylvania, is a fresh and worthwhile addition to the many existing translations, both for newcomers and veteran readers.

Trying to match Homer’s swift pace, Wilson offers a neat, accurate and lively verse translation with exactly the same number of lines in English as the Greek text. Homer’s dactylic hexameters are turned into clear iambic pentameters. Although the language is direct and feels refreshingly current without being modish, some of the peculiarities of Homeric descriptions are carefully reflected in the English. The Greek text also contains many frequently repeated epithets, owing to the oral tradition it stems from, but these have been rendered with a little more diversity in English to allow for a more varied read.

As well as a translation of the poem itself, the publication has a good set of notes providing a summary of the content of each of the _Odyssey_’s 24 books with a commentary explaining mythological or geographical references, nuances of Greek words that may be lost in translation, and some of the finer literary points of the poem that have helped secure its place in world culture.

To get more out of the poem, Wilson’s introduction sets Homer and his _Odyssey_ in context, with discussion of when it was composed, and where it was written and set. For anyone new to Homer, this is a straightforward and informative orientation into the world of Greek epic, the vocabulary and structure of the _Odyssey_, its characters and prominent themes. The role and presentation of the gods, female figures and slaves provide food for thought, as does the important concept of _xenia_ (good relations between host and guest) that is prevalent throughout the work. Other overriding topics involve ‘Telemachus’ voyage into adulthood, Odysseus’ relationship with his enemies, and his choice to return to his wife Penelope in Ithaca; these are all thoroughly discussed using passages from the poem.

The introduction also takes a brief look at the reception of the _Odyssey_ from antiquity to the present. This is a vast topic and includes the poem’s translation history—a subject that matters because it can always offer interesting insights. George Chapman’s _Odyssey_ (1615), for instance, was the first complete translation in English and its hero is portrayed as ‘a proto-Christian and proto-Stoic’, while in Alexander Pope’s 18th-century translation, Odysseus exemplifies ‘proper manners and good government’, which were predominant concerns of Pope’s time. It is worth pointing out that in the rich, millenium-long tradition of engaging with, re-imagining and translating Homer’s epics, this is the first published English translation of the _Odyssey_ by a woman.

_Lucia Marchini_

_Aeschylus: Libation Bearers_  
CW Marshall  
Bloomsbury  
200pp  
Paperback, £16.99

A gripping tale of revenge and one of the least performed Greek tragedies, _Aeschylus’ Libation Bearers_ is the second part of the Oresteian trilogy. It follows Agamemnon’s son Orestes as he returns home to discover that his mother Clytemnestra killed his father some years earlier with the help of her lover Aegisthus (events that take place in the first part of the trilogy, _Agamemnon_). Orestes responds by committing matricide and is then pursued by the _Erinyes_, or Furies, the deities of vengeance.

As CW Marshall demonstrates in this nifty companion to the tragedy, it is an influential work well worth studying in its own right. With good reason, Marshall places much emphasis on examining performances and performative aspects of the play. Aeschylus,
BOOK REVIEWS

for instance, is not only the first individual we know by name in the history of Greek theatre, but as well as being a playwright he directed the debut production of *Libation Bearers* at the City Dionysia of 458 BC, choreographed it, composed part of the music, and acted in it. *Libation Bearers* was performed again just a few decades later in the 420s. More recent years, however, have seen relatively few productions of the tragedy. Moreover, as the *Oresteia* is the only surviving trilogy from antiquity, it has often been performed as a trilogy, which means that large numbers of lines are frequently cut from *Libation Bearers* in such productions. It was not until 1868 that the work was first performed as a stand-alone play.

Yet the far-reaching impact of *Libation Bearers* can be felt down the centuries. The play and its protagonist became models for revivals in the 16th century and beyond, and have been reimagined by 20th-century writers, such as TS Eliot in *The Family Reunion* in 1939, and Jean-Paul Sartre in *Les Mouches* in 1943. Marshall even credits the existence of cohesive second instalments in modern trilogies – such as *The Two Towers*, from *The Lord of the Rings*, and *The Empire Strikes Back*, from *Star Wars* – in part to the exemplary ancient model offered by Aeschylus.

This engaging book serves as a first-rate guide to *Libation Bearers*, setting it in the context of 5th-century Athens, a city-state that put much stock in retributive justice and that had recently agreed a treaty with Argos. As Marshall points out, Argamemnon’s capital was traditionally Mycenae, but Aeschylus sets it a short distance away in Argos. Drawing together a wide range of scholarship, the book adeptly explores diverse aspects of *Libation Bearers*, its performance, and its reception, including ancient illustrations of scenes from the play.

*Diana Bentley*

**The Ancient Greeks in 100 Facts**

*Paul Chrystal*

Amberley

192pp

Paperback, £8.99

As Paul Chrystal points out, ancient Greece was never one single identifiable nation – rather, its various city-states were independent entities that went their own way, argued among themselves and only collaborated when they ganged up on each other, or when the Persians arrived in force. Whether geographically, politically, socially or economically, the history of ancient Greece is not straightforward, so to simplify the task of getting to grips with it, Chrystal breaks the subject down into 100 bite-sized chunks of one or two pages each, which certainly makes for easy reading. Although Chrystal tells the story of ancient Greece from the Bronze Age through to the time it was vanquished by the Romans, you can pick up *The Ancient Greeks in 100 Facts* and dip into it as the mood takes you – depending on what aspect you want to explore, from the birth of democracy to the nature of ancient Greece, from their military and naval struggles and triumphs to the great literature they produced, from their major philosophers through to their sex lives (there seems to have been an awful lot going on in this category).

There are sections entitled: *The Greek Alphabet Was Derived from the Phoenician Alphabet; The Gods Started the Trojan War; By 650 BC Sparta had Become the Dominant Military Land-Power in Ancient Greece; Euripides: the Most Tragic of Poets and The Gymnasium was the Place to Go.*

Overall, through Chrystal’s coverage of this wide range of subjects, we are given a full picture of the sometimes tumultuous history and great achievements of this remarkable people and their world. He gives us plenty of factual material, interesting quotations and tantalising titbits that you may not find in more conventionally presented works. *‘Accessible’ may be an overused word, but this book certainly makes the history of the ancient Greeks easy to tackle and presents plenty of information in entertaining snapshots.* Chrystal makes his subject come alive with his robust, easy style in a simple format. He reminds us that as we celebrate the enduring legacy of the ancient Greeks, so remote from us in time, we feel a great affinity for them too.

*Diana Bentley*

A Foot in the River: Why Our Lives Change – and the Limits of Evolution

*Felipe Fernández-Armesto*


304pp

Paperback, £12.99/$16.95

Albert Einstein claimed he had ‘little patience with scientists who take a board of wood, look for its thinnest part, and drill a great number of holes where drilling is easy’. Only by seeking out the toughest, most difficult spot, he thought, could one hope for any significant breakthroughs. That maxim seems to have been a guiding principle for *One Foot in the River* by the polymath historian Felipe Fernández-Armesto, in which he tackles some of the Big Questions that have fascinated and frustrated brilliant minds for centuries.

The title comes from an aphorism by the Greek philosopher Heraclitus: ‘You cannot step twice into the same river.’ An ethnographer can only gather bucket-sized samples from a culture’s flowing stream. Another investigator will take away utterly different samples – and yet there is usually (but not always) substantial agreement on what the whole river is like.

Applying his broad knowledge of history, literature, philosophy, anthropology, animal behaviour, evolutionary theory and even cosmology and physics, the University of Notre Dame scholar boldly confronts such eternal enigmas as: What is Life? What is the thrust, or direction, of biological and cultural evolution, and what drives their development? What is consciousness? What ‘glue’ holds societies together? What is unique about human culture when compared to the learned and shared behaviour of beavers or chimpanzees? What does archaeology teach us about the inevitable progress (or decline) of human societies? How did human language come about? Why is religion so ubiquitous in human cultures and societies? Should we consider language as cultural or biologically based? ‘The honest answer,’
he says, ‘is that we do not know; but, in any species, [local] differences... are almost certainly cultural’. But when we compare human languages with animal communication systems, a conspicuous anomaly arises – not only for language but for all aspects of culture: ‘Why are human systems so much more dazzlingly diverse? By most counts the tally of extant human languages in the world is between five and six thousand. No other species we know of needs more than one... We have thousands of religions, cusses, modes of dress, coffures... The problem for the study of culture is not so much ‘Why do we have symbolic communication?’ as ‘Why do we have so many varieties of it?’’

That overarching characteristic, he thinks, might well be the most obvious characteristic of humans if we were observed by the proverbial Man from Mars: ‘Wolves, dogs, cats, or protozoa, or viruses might seem more interesting: all, from a biological point of view, have features as conspicuous as those of humans – vast environmental reach, stunning adaptability, remarkable generation. But the Observer would surely notice how [our cultures] differ from [those of] other species... we have more of it, of more various kinds, than any other creature. I think a look-out in the cosmos Crou’s Nest would summarise our story in a single word: Divergence.’

Fernández-Armesto argues against the popular view that the big narrative of human history is a pattern of progress or Providence or increasing complexity, or cyclical change or dialectical conflict. Our destiny is not only for language but for all aspects of communication systems, a conspicuous anomaly arises – thousands of times to cover the tremendous range of divergent ways of life with which we now surprise each other and infest every inhabitant of the planet.’

‘By comparison with other species,’ he concludes, ‘we are strangely unstable: human cultures self-transform, diverge, and multiply with bewildering speed. They vary, radically and rapidly, from time to time and place to place. And the way we live – our manners, morals, habits, experiences, relationships, technology, values – seems to be changing at an ever accelerating pace.’

Fernández-Armesto offers a fascinating guided tour through the intellectual landscape surrounding these questions, entertaining and informing the reader with hundreds of side-lights on intellectual and cultural history. But though our author may try mightily, in the end don’t be disappointed if he cannot explain the unexplainable, ponder the imponderable, or unscrew the inscrutable.

Richard Milner

Minerva March/April 2018

CLASSICAL CONUNDRUMS

Adam Jacot de Boinod poses a vocabulary quiz from Latin and Ancient Greek

Can you guess the correct definition from the following three options for:

1) madao (Ancient Greek)
   A) to be flaccid; to be bald
   B) to shout
   C) to talk with little to say

2) simiolus (Latin)
   A) a stupid person, a fool
   B) a likeliness
   C) a little ape

3) stauroma (Ancient Greek)
   A) a stomach-ache
   B) a headache
   C) a palisade or stockade

4) vindex (Latin)
   A) unusual, bizarre, interesting
   B) a claimant
   C) the fruit of the yew-tree

5) akathartos (Ancient Greek)
   A) having a pearly lustre
   B) smelling like burnt flesh
   C) covered with or containing unpleasant substances, such as dirt or grime

6) vulpecula (Latin)
   A) an oddity, a peculiarity
   B) a barren wolf
   C) a sly little fox

7) prosexis (Ancient Greek)
   A) intelligence
   B) attention
   C) anxiety

8) vitinus (Latin)
   A) a poor, wretched character
   B) of a calf
   C) tawny, yellow tinged with red

9) rhutis (Ancient Greek)
   A) a fold or pucker in the face, a wrinkle
   B) a cold
   C) the large paunch of a pig

10) udus (Latin)
    A) wool taken from a dead sheep
    B) wet, moist, damp
    C) a breast, teat, udder

11) prageneios (Ancient Greek)
    A) unusual, bizarre, interesting
    B) of a calf
    C) a breast, teat, udder

12) proterve (Latin)
    A) without thought, headlong
    B) vigorously; forcefully, with might
    C) pertly, wantonly, impudently

• Adam Jacot de Boinod has worked as a researcher on the BBC television quiz programme QI. He is the author of The Meaning of Tingo and creator of the iPhone App Tingo.

ANSWERS

10. C) pertly, wantonly, impudently
11. B) of a calf
CALENDAR compiled by Lucia Marchini

UNITED KINGDOM

BATH
Michael Petry: In the Realm of the Gods

Ley lines, as described in 1921 by the British antiquarian Alfred Watkins, refer to the relatively straight lines on which Neolithic monuments and other ancient sites are aligned. A ley line is said to run between two of Bath’s most famous locations, the Royal Crescent and the Circus, which, according to some, represent the moon and the sun. In exploring these mysterious lines in the city, Michael Petry has created for the exhibition a glass ley line that takes inspiration from Neolithic forms.

Holburne Museum
+44 (0)1225 368 569
(www.holburne.org)
Until 8 April 2018.

CAMBRIDGE

Flux: Parian Unpacked

In 2016, the Fitzwilliam acquired the David Glynn Collection, more than 300 pieces of 19th-century Parian ware (pictured above), a porcelain invented by the Minton pottery in 1845 to look like marble and named after the Greek island of Paros where white marble is found. These pieces depict literary figures, kings and queens, notable people from British history, and characters from mythology. More than 100 busts are displayed, curated by ceramic artist Matt Smith, who delves into questions of our notion of history and its constant state of flux, celebrity and colonialism. New Parian works by Smith throughout the galleries bring these themes to mind when contemplating the permanent collections.

Fitzwilliam Museum
+44 (0)1223 332900
(www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk)
From 6 March to 1 July 2018.

Things of Beauty Growing: British Studio Pottery

Charting nearly a century of British potters’ innovative work using traditional ceramic forms, this show looks at the evolution of specific types of vessel in British studio pottery. Organised with the Yale Center of British Art, where it was first displayed, the show features more than 100 historic and contemporary ceramics by celebrated artists such as Lucie Rie, Edmund de Waal, Grayson Perry and Clare Twomey, whose work Made in China – a sprawling set of 80 vast porcelain vases, highlighting the difference in labour conditions in different regions – will be installed around the museum.

Fitzwilliam Museum
+44 (0) 1223 332900
(www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk)
From 20 March to 17 June 2018.

EDINBURGH

A New Era: Scottish Modern Art 1900–1950

The traditional view of modern Scottish art is that it was dominated by the Scottish Colourists and heavily influenced by French artists. By putting progressive works by leading Scottish artists and their lesser-known counterparts in the spotlight, this exhibition challenges previous thinking on the subject. More than 80 works by some 50 artists reveal the contributions that Scottish artists made to Expressionism, Fauvism, Cubism, Surrealism and Abstraction.

Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art
+44 (0)131 624 6200
(www.nationalgalleries.org)
Until 10 June 2018.

LONDON

Royal Watercolour Society Spring Exhibition

A selection of the latest works by members of the Royal Watercolour Society will be on show for a month at the RWS resident venue. The society was founded in 1804, making it the world’s oldest watercolour society, as well as perhaps the most prestigious. RWS artists work in a wide range of styles on paper in any water-based media, and this includes gouache, acrylic and ink.

Bankside Gallery
+44 (020) 7928 7521
(www.banksidegallery.com)
From 23 March to 21 April 2018.

James Cook: The Voyages

To mark 250 years since Captain James Cook set sail from Plymouth on Endeavour at the start of his first expedition, the British Library brings together original documents by the on-board artists, scientists and seamen to illuminate the story of Cook’s three major voyages of exploration to the Pacific, and the encounters that improved British knowledge of the world’s geography. Journals, maps, handwritten log books, natural history drawings (including the first European depiction of a kangaroo) and drawings by Polynesian high priest and navigator Tupaia, who joined the ship in Tahiti, show the variety of talents exhibited by these pioneering voyagers.

British Library
(+44(0)1937 546546)
From 27 April to 28 August 2018.

Pots with Attitude: British Satire on Ceramics, 1760–1830

Satirical prints on ceramics, as well as paper, put the spotlight on 18th-century Georgian society. The upper classes enjoyed political parodies and satirical takes on the Napoleonic War in hand-coloured prints, like the one on this Spode bone china jug (above) of John Bull guarding a toy shop, from 1803. Bawdy mugs and jugs for drinking alcohol brought similar images to a wider audience. Ceramics, fans and handkerchiefs carried similar mocking scenes. This display is part of a project researching the relationship between 18th-century prints and ceramics, funded by the Monument Trust.

British Museum
+44 (0)20 7322 8299
(www.britishmuseum.org)
Until 13 March 2018.

Turning Time

An exhibition of eight evocative new photographs by the German artist, Vera Lutter, includes impressive images of the mighty Greek temples at Paestum, southern Italy, such as the gelatin silver print Temple of Athena, Paestum, V: October 8, 2015 (below) and the Effelsberg radio telescope in Germany. These studies of both historic monuments and pivotal technological innovations reflect Lutter’s deep relationship with the forces of time. At each site she transformed a standard shipping container into a camera obscura, one of the oldest image-capturing technologies, whereby light enters into a dark space through a pinhole, projecting an image onto a sheet of photographic paper. Lutter’s images are large and exposure time can last for hours, weeks, even months. The resulting pictures are dramatic and unique, as they cannot be reprinted.

Gagosian, Britannia Street
+44 (0)207 841 9960
(www.gagosian.com)
Until 14 April 2018.
Murillo: The Self Portraits

To celebrate the 400th birthday of one of Spain’s great Golden Age painters, Bartolomé Esteban Murillo, this exhibition takes a close look at his only two known self-portraits – reunited for the first time in more than three centuries. Murillo’s paintings of religious scenes and street children have long been celebrated, but his portraitative has been somewhat overlooked. New York’s Frick Collection has loaned the first self-portrait, painted circa 1650–55 and showing Murillo, in his 30s, elegantly dressed but there is nothing in it to suggest his vocation. In the National Gallery’s self-portrait (above right), we see the artist, some 20 years later, with his palette and brushes. Other works by Murillo are on show, along with subsequent reproductions of the two self-portraits, which show their popularity in Europe.

National Gallery
+44 (0)20 7747 2885
(www.nationalgallery.org.uk)
Until 21 May 2018.

Monet & Architecture

Monet is widely praised for his sensitive depictions of the natural world – gardens, landscapes and the sea – but in this exhibition it is his response to the built environment that is under the microscope. In an interview in 1895, the artist said: ‘Other painters paint a bridge, a house, a boat… I want to paint the air that surrounds the bridge, the house, the boat – the beauty of the light in which they exist.’ The works on display reveal how he set out to do just this throughout his career. Village scenes and modern cityscapes reflect the changes in society in Monet’s day. Among the highlights are his iconic pictures of Venice and London.

National Gallery
+44 (0)20 7747 2885
(www.nationalgallery.org.uk)
From 9 April to 29 July 2018.

Victorian Giants: The Birth of Art Photography

Lewis Carroll (the Reverend Charles Dodgson) did much more than conjure up the children’s classics: Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking Glass. He was a mathematics don in Oxford and also a pioneering photographer. This exhibition brings together portraits taken by Carroll, such as one of Alice Liddell (the child for whom he wrote the Alice books) in 1858 (below), and by other ground breaking Victorian photographers, such as Julia Margaret Cameron, Lady Clementina Hawarden and Oscar Rejlander, to chart the development of art photography. Rejlander, described by some as ‘the father of photshop’ because of his complex photomontages. His striking Two Ways of Life (1856–57), combines over 30 separate negatives to create a single image so large that it was printed on two sheets of paper. Rejlander taught the other three photographers briefly, and many ideas were exchanged among them, as this exhibition reveals.

National Portrait Gallery
+44 (0)20 7306 0055
(www.npg.org.uk)
From 1 March to 20 May 2018.

Charles I: King and Collector

Charles I was one of the great collectors and patrons of his day but, after his execution in 1649, his collection of masterpieces, by the likes of Titian, Dürer, Mantegna and Holbein, and contemporary commissions by Rubens, Van Dyck and others, was sold off. Charles II recovered many pieces during the Restoration, but others stayed scattered across Europe. More than 100 works, including Classical sculpture, such as the Royal Collection’s famous 2nd-century Crouching Venus (right), paintings, tapestries and miniatures, will be reunited for this show that explores their impact on England’s visual culture. (For the art of Charles II see Art and Power on pages 8 to 103.)

Royal Academy of Arts
+44 (0)20 7300 8000
(www.royalacademy.org.uk)
Until 15 April 2018.

Joan Jonas

With a range of works spanning five decades, from the late 1960s to the present, Tate Modern is mounting the largest UK exhibition of the boundary-pushing art of American artist Joan Jonas. She is a pioneer of video and performance and her cutting-edge installations address topical themes, such as climate change and extinction.

Tate Modern
+44 (0)20 7887 8888
(www.tate.org.uk)
From 14 March to 5 August 2018.

Picasso 1932: Love, Fame, Tragedy

Focusing on one particularly prolific year in the life of Picasso, Tate Modern’s first solo exhibition devoted to one of the 20th-century’s most popular and influential artists brings together more than 100 paintings, sculptures and drawings as well as photographs, that offer an insight into his personal life. One of the highlights of the show is a set of three images of his lover, Marie-Thérèse Walter, which Picasso painted in five days in March 1932, now shown together for the first time since their creation.

Tate Modern
+44 (0)20 7887 8888
(www.tate.org.uk)
From 8 March to 9 September 2018.

OXFORD

America’s Cool Modernism: O’Keeffe to Hopper

Paintings, photographs and prints by American artists of the 1920s and 1930s offer an overview of Modernism in the USA. With loans from the Terra Foundation for American Art and the Met, this is the first time many of them have been seen outside the USA. Early works by Georgia O’Keeffe, such as Black Abstraction, 1927 (below), are on show alongside Edward Hopper’s cityscapes, the Precisionist work of Charles Demuth, Paul Strand’s photographs, a painting by the American poet ee cummings and one by Edward Steichen, who destroyed most of his paintings before turning to photography.

Ashmolean Museum
+44 (0)1865 278000
(www.ashmolean.org)
From 23 March to 22 July 2018.
From Sappho to Suffrage: Women Who Dared
An important anniversary being celebrated this year is the centenary of the Representation of the People Act of 1918, which gave the vote to British women over the age of 30, with a property qualification. Marking 100 years of women’s suffrage, the Bodleian is highlighting the remarkable achievements of women who defied expectations, from pirates and explorers to suffragettes, and going as far back as the poet Sappho.

ST IVES, Cornwall
Virginia Woolf: An Exhibition Inspired by her Writings
As a leading member of the Bloomsbury Group, Modernist writer Virginia Woolf (1882–1941) had a profound influence on the arts. Her sister, the artist Vanessa Bell, designed the covers for her books. But many other female artists have responded to Woolf’s work and the themes she addressed since then. This exhibition brings together their paintings, sculptures, films, photographs and texts, which go back over the past 160 years. Work by Laura Knight, Frances Hodgkins, Dora Carrington, Louise Bourgeois, Claude Cahun and Agnes Martin explore landscape and nature, the public performance of identity and gender, domesticity, the subconscious and intimacy.

Tate St Ives
+44 (0)1736 796 226
(www.tate.org.uk)
Until 29 April 2018.

The Classical World in Context
Beyond the Nile
From 27 March to 27 May 2019.

The Classical World in Context explores Greek sculpture, and Egyptian statuary influenced Archaic sculpture, and Egyptian religious cults spread through the Roman Empire. It was a two-way interaction: for example, portraits made in the Ptolemaic period, a time of cultural hybridisation, were often in a dual style. The ring (above), shows Ptolemy VI Philometor (186–145 BC) wearing the double crown of Egypt. (See also page 3)

J Paul Getty Museum
+1 310 440 7300
(www.getty.edu)
From 27 March to 9 September 2018.

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD
Western Library
+44 (0)1865 277094
(www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk)
From 6 March 2018 to 3 February 2019.

New York, New York
Rodin at the Brooklyn Museum: The Body in Bronze
Brooklyn Museum’s 58 bronzes by Rodin were acquired in 1983 through a gift from the Iris and B Gerald Cantor Foundation. This exhibition examines how the sculptor captured these human figures and the abstract forms in his work, both large and small, such as Seated Bather with Feet Apart, 1895–1900 (below), cast after 1972. Fragments of ancient Classical sculpture will also be displayed to show the influence such pieces had on this great sculptor.

Brooklyn Museum
+1 718 638 5000
(www.brooklynmuseum.org)
Until 22 April 2018.

NEW YORK, New York
Leon Golub: Raw Nerve
Leon Golub (1922–2004) blended Classical and modern sources in his work, which is distinguished by his bold depictions of power and brutality and his advocacy of social justice. This survey of Golub’s career includes paintings and works on paper portraying a Vietnam War victim, Brazilian dictator Ernesto Geisel, mercenaries, interrogators, nudes and animals. The exhibition has been organised to celebrate and showcase his enormous painting Gigantomachy II. Painted in 1966 against the backdrop of the Vietnam War, this work presents a contemporary retelling of the battle between the Olympians and giants in Greek mythology, but with no heroes, only anonymous, wounded combatants.

The Met Breuer
+1 212 535 7710
(www.metmuseum.org)
Until 27 May 2018.

The Met Breuer
+1 212 535 7710
(www.metmuseum.org)
Until 27 May 2018.

NY CARLSBERG GLYPTOTEK, COPENHAGEN
CARLSBERG TRUST CANTOR FOUNDATION, 84.75.1. (PHOTO: SARAH DESANTIS)

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The Met Breuer
+1 212 535 7710
(www.metmuseum.org)
Until 27 May 2018.
Portable Storage: Tribal Weavings from the Collection of William and Inger Ginsberg

For nomadic groups in Iran, Turkey and the Caucasus, woven bags have provided a practical storage solution for life on the move for hundreds of years. They can contain everything, from bedding to salt and, as the examples in this exhibition show, are often distinctly patterned. As well as bags and a woven saddle cover, the display includes two Islamic paintings that illustrate the role of bags and trappings. The weavings were gifted to The Met in 2015 from the Ginsbergs’ collection of small textiles, which focuses on artefacts from tribes in Iran and surrounding areas.

Metropolitan Museum of Art
+1 212 535 7710
(www.metmuseum.org)
Until 7 May 2018.

Minerva March/April 2018

Dangerous Beauty: Medusa in Classical Art

Although frightening, the deadly gorgon Medusa is often portrayed as beautiful and feminine rather than grotesque. This fascinating shift in visual representation first started in the 5th century BC, when other female mythical creatures, including sphinxes, sirens and Scylla, underwent a similar transformation. Art from the Classical world and beyond is used to explore the relationship between beauty and fear, and how the ancient femme fatale combined erotic desire, violence and death, and became a model for the late 19th-century reactions to women’s empowerment.

Metropolitan Museum of Art
+1 212 535 7710
(www.metmuseum.org)
Until 6 January 2019.

ST LOUIS, Missouri
Sunken Cities: Egypt’s Lost Worlds

The touring exhibition showcasing finds from the lost Egyptian cities of Thonis-Heracleion and Canopus makes its North American debut in St Louis. More than 250 remarkably well-preserved objects, recovered from beneath the waves between 1996 and 2012 by the French archaeologist Franck Goddio and his team, offer an insight into these well-preserved objects, recovered from beneath the waves between 1996 and 2012 by the French archaeologist Franck Goddio and his team, offer an insight into these.

Metropolitan Museum of Art
+1 212 535 7710
(www.metmuseum.org)
Until 13 May 2018.

FRANCE

PARIS

A collaboration between the Centre Pompidou and National Gallery Singapore has brought the work of one of southeast Asia’s foremost Modernists to Paris. After training in West Berlin, Malaysian artist Latiff Mohidin returned to southeast Asia in 1964; Pago Pago II (below) dates from this year. This exhibition looks at the artist’s time in Europe and his Pago Pago series, created in the 1960s as he tried to capture his sense of the region in paint and poetry.

Centre Pompidou
+33 (0)1 44 78 12 33
(www.centrepompidou.fr)
Until 28 May 2018.

TOLEDO, Ohio
The Mummies: From Egypt to Toledo

The founders of the Toledo Museum of Art, Edward Drummond Libbey and Florence Scott Libbey, purchased two Egyptian mummies in 1906. A young priest buried circa 800 BC and an old man buried circa AD 100 during the Roman period are only occasionally on show for conservation reasons and because of controversy about displaying human remains, but they are now the focal point of an exhibition. One striking object is a painted plaster Ptolemaic mummy mask of a young man with glass eyes, perhaps from Luxor, from circa 100 BC (above right). Other artefacts have been brought together to investigate religion and burial customs, and to show Egyptomania from Napoleon’s invasion to the present, and our changing perceptions of this ancient civilisation.

Toledo Museum of Art
+1 419 255 8000
(www.toledomuseum.org)
Until 6 May 2018.

VERO BEACH, Florida
Grayson Perry Making Meaning

A new curatorial partnership between the Royal Academy of Art and the Gallery at Windsor will see the Florida venue stage shows by three different Royal Academicians over the next three years. The cross-dressing Grayson Perry is the first, and his work provides a bold take on identity, Britishness and craftsmanship – not to mention the whole art establishment. His ceramics, sculpture, etchings and tapestries, including his 8-metre-long Comfort Blanket of 2014, cannot be ignored.

The Gallery at Windsor
+1 772 388 4071
(www.windsorflorida.com)
Until 27 April 2018.

THE SUEZ CANAL: FROM THE EMBATTLED VIRGO TO THE BLOOMING RED SEA

An impressive feat of engineering between 1859 and 1869 to connect the Mediterranean and the Red Sea. The Suez Canal was constructed for the invasion to the present, and our changing perceptions of this ancient civilisation.

TOLEDO MUSEUM OF ART
PURCHASED WITH FUNDS FROM THE LIBBEY ENDOWMENT, GIFT OF EDWARD DRUMMOND LIBBEY, 1961.27 TOLEDO MUSEUM OF ART
extension, through archaeological finds, photographs, scale models and archival film footage. Institut du monde arabe +33 1 46 51 38 38 (www.imarabe.org) From 28 March to 5 August 2018.

Delacroix (1798–1863) For this comprehensive tour of the career of one of France’s finest painters, more than 180 works by Eugène Delacroix are on show. They include his early works, exhibited at the Paris Salon of 1820, historic and mythological scenes, such as his Medée furieuse, 1838 (below), and his later religious and landscape compositions. The paintings reflect Delacroix’s consciousness of his place in art history, pursuing individuality while at the same time following 16th- and 17th-century Flemish and Venetian artists. Louvre +33 1 40 20 50 50 (www.louvre.fr) From 29 March to 23 July 2018.

Guernica On 26 April 1937, the Basque town of Guernica was destroyed by aerial bombing during the Spanish Civil War. Picasso created his painting Guernica for the Spanish Pavilion at the Paris Exposition Internationale des Arts et Techniques dans la Vie Moderne that same year. The vast and haunting monochrome canvas, which captures the chaos and violence of war, evoking pity and terror, has been reproduced across the world. The iconic painting is on loan from the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia with a number of related sketches, and the exhibition tells the story of the creation of the work and the impact of the Spanish Civil War on Picasso. Musée national Picasso-Paris +33 1 85 36 00 36 (www.museepicassoparis.fr) From 27 March to 29 July 2018.

Ghosts and Hells: The Underworld in Asian Art Focusing on ghost stories from China, Thailand and Japan, this exhibition takes a look at how the spirit world has manifested itself through the centuries in religious art, Hokusai prints, theatre, cinema, contemporary design, Magma ceramics and, even, Pac Man. Visitors will meet a wide range of spirits, including cat-women, the hungry spirits of the dead, jumping vampires, and yokai (supernatural creatures from Japanese folklore). Musée du quai branly – Jacques Chirac +33 1 56 61 70 0 (www.quaibranly.fr) From 10 April to 15 July 2018.

MEXICO

MEXICO CITY

Sean Scully – San Cristóbal Luis Barragán’s 1966 modernist equestrian and residential complex Cuadra San Cristóbal is hosting its first exhibition. Recent sculptures by Sean Scully in Cor-Ten and painted steel have been installed in a display that highlights the abstract artist’s relationship with architecture and celebrates his links with Mexico, a country that he first saw in 1981 and has returned to repeatedly since, visits that inspired his Wall of Light series of paintings. Cuadra San Cristóbal (www.blainsouthern.com) Until 24 March 2018.

NETHERLANDS

AMSTERDAM

High Society Portraiture is one way in which the rich and powerful project their status. Commissioning the finest artists comes at a price as do the high-end garments the sitters wear. This exhibition brings together full length, life-size standing portraits of princes, aristocrats and other prominent and wealthy individuals – from the 16th to the 20th centuries. This standardise, but potent, format was adopted by the likes of Veronese, Velázquez, Reynolds, Gainsborough, Sargent, Munch and Manet. Highlights include Rembrandt’s recently restored wedding portraits of Marten Soolmans and Oopjen Coppit and Cranach the Elder’s depiction of the sumptuously dressed Henry the Pious, Duke of Saxony, 1514 (above). A concurrent exhibition of prints and drawings, called Guilty Pleasures, takes a peek at the private lives of high society and their sometimes illicit entertainments of reckless gambling, excessive drinking, wild partying and visiting brothels. Rijksmuseum +31 20 674 7000 (www rijksmuseum.nl) From 8 March to 3 June 2018.

SPAIN

BILBAO

Art and Space In the 1960s Basque artist Eduardo Chillida and German philosopher Martin Heidegger collaborated together and, in 1969, published an artist’s book entitled Art and Space, featuring an essay by Heidegger with images by Chillida. Using this partnership as a starting point, the exhibition looks at concepts of place, presence and science in abstraction over the past 50 or so years, through such artists as the Brazilian Ernesto Neto and American Bruce Nauman, with his Green Light Corridor of 1970 (below). Guggenheim Museum +34 944 35 90 80 (www.guggenheim-bilbao.eus) Until 15 April 2018.

Henri Michaux: The Other Side Active throughout most of the 20th century, Henri Michaux (1899–1984) was celebrated by the likes of André Gide and Francis Bacon, both as a poet and as a painter. As the art, documents and objects on show here reveal, he had a great interest in the human figure, the alphabet, and the altered psyche, experimenting with hallucinogenic substances to create pieces which established him as a leading figure in the emergent psychedelic culture. Guggenheim Museum +34 944 35 90 80 (www.guggenheim-bilbao.eus) Until 13 May 2018.

MADRID

Sorolla and Fashion Spanish artist Joaquín Sorolla (1863–1923) was a keen portraitist, with an eye for and interest in fashion; so he became a chronicler of the changing trends and fashions of his time. In his female portraits, from 1890 to 1920 in particular, he depicts stylish dresses, jewellery and accessories. The paintings in this show are complemented by a display of outfits from the period. Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza +34 917 91 13 70 (www.museothyssen.org) Until 27 May 2018.

Minerva March/April 2018
UNITED KINGDOM

LONDON

Accordia Lectures: The Nuragic statuary of Monte Prama in Iron Age Sardinia
Carlo Tritschetti
Joint Lecture with the Institute of Classical Studies
20 March, 5.30pm

Room G22/26, Senate House

Late Antique dipytchs and their use in Carolingian Italy
Cristina La Rocca
Joint Lecture with the UCL Institute of Archaeology
8 May, 5.30pm

Room 612, UCL Institute of Archaeology

Ancient Philosophy Seminars 2017-18
Why Socrates’ legs don’t run off to Megara: Moral Deliberation in Plato’s Crat
Ellisif Waswmith
12 March

Plato on ruling and being ruled
Amanda Greene
26 March

Seminars organised by the Institute of Classical Studies are held Mondays 4.30–6.30pm
Room 243, Senate House.
(ics.sas.ac.uk/events)

Chosen Ancestors: Seamus Heaney and Virgil
Held in honour of the late poet and UCL professor AE Housman, the 2018 Housman Lecture will be given by Bernard O’Donoghue, Emeritus Fellow of Wadham College Oxford. In his talk he will focus on Seamus Heaney’s posthumously published ‘poetic remaking’ of Book 6 of Virgil’s Aeneid and its influence on his last collection of poems, Human Chain, in the context of the work of poets of the past, from Dante to Osip Mandelstam, WB Yeats and Ted Hughes.

Unipus Lectures

UCL
14 March, 6pm
(www.ucl.ac.uk/classics/events/2017-2018-Housmanlecture)

Classical Archaeology in the Modern Middle East: Experiences and Responses

The Ghost of Palmyra Yet-to-Come? Exploring Memory, People and Place in Post-Conflict Reconstruction
Zena Kamash
7 March

‘Hello! is it (not) me you are looking for?’ The Many Local Communities of Middle Eastern Living Heritage Sites
Heba Abd el Gawad
14 March

The Institute of Classical Studies

Classical Archaeology and Art Seminars in 2018 are held on Mondays at 4.30pm
Room 329, Senate House.
(ics.sas.ac.uk/events)

Medieval Seminar Series 2017–2018
UCL Institute of Archaeology and British Museum

Discovering the Northern Picts: Kingship and Society in Northeast Scotland circa AD 300–1000
Gordon Noble
20 March, 6pm

Room 612, UCL Institute of Archaeology
(www.ucl.ac.uk/archaeology/calendar/events)

Mistaken Identities: Roman Emperors in Modern Art
Professor Mary Beard will deliver King’s College London’s 2018 Rumble Lecture in Classical Art, discussing how some modern artists have re-imagined and, at times, misidentified Roman emperors in their work.

Bush House Auditorium, King’s College London
14 March, 6.30pm

Ten Days Six Nights
The second annual BMW Tate Live Exhibition will take place in the Tanks and will include performances and installations by Joan Jonas, and performances by Sylvia Palacios and Turner Prize-winner Mark Leckey.
16–25 March

Tate Modern, The Tanks
(www.tate.org.uk)

LINDISFARNE, Northumberland

DigNation
Lindisfarne is the chosen venue for the first DigNation festival this year. Organised by a crowd-funding initiative called DigVentures in memory of Tone Team archaeologist Mick Aston, this event includes two days of excavations, a keynote talk by Tony Robinson, lectures and other activities. Those unable to attend in person will be able to access a ‘virtual festival’ online.
22–23 September
(digventures.com/projects/dignation/)

Oxford

Archive of Performances of Greek and Roman Drama (APGRD)

Public Lecture

Tragedy’s Endurance
Erika Fischer-Lichte
5 March, 3pm

Ioannou Centre Lecture Theatre
(www.apgrd.ox.ac.uk/events)

The Classical Art Research Centre (CARC)

Saving Mes Aynak
Brent E Huffman’s award-winning documentary highlights the threat copper-mining brings to this Silk Road site (near Kabul, Afghanistan) and its ancient Buddhist art. Part of the Gandhara Connections project, the screening of the film is followed by an interview with the director.
8 March, 5–7pm

Ioannou Centre
(www.carc.ox.ac.uk/events)

NETHERLANDS MAASTRICHT

TEFAF Maastricht

Presenting 7000 years of art history, dealers and experts in ancient art, design, paintings, works on paper, tribal art and more, will all be taking part in the 31st edition of this leading art and antiques fair. Among those offering antiquities are: Calin International AG, Charles Ede (whose stand features an over life-size Hellenistic head of a youth), Galerie Harmakhis and Rupert Wace Ancient Art (whose exhibits include a Hellenistic marble seated figure of the goddess of healing, Hygeia). There will be works inspired by the ancient world, too. Tomasso Brothers Fine Art’s stand, for instance, is on a Roman theme, with works ranging in date from antiquity to the Neoclassical period, including Giovanni Battista Cipriani’s large oil painting of Castor and Pollux (right), commissioned in 1783 by George Walpole for Houghton Hall. This year, TEFAF Maastricht’s loan exhibition will showcase the Amsterdam Museum’s newly restored The Headmen of the Longbow Civic Guard House, 1653, by Bartholomeus van der Helst, with examples of 16th-century silverware (depicted in the painting) displayed alongside. Five further recently restored ‘Golden Age’ group portraits will also be on show, including two by Ferdinand Bol.

MECC (Maastricht Exhibition & Congress Centre)
10–18 March 2018
(www.tefaf.com)

Minerva March/April 2018

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