

This course is an eclectic wander through art history. It consists of twenty two-hour talks starting in September 2018 and the topics are largely taken from exhibitions held in London during 2018. The aim is not to provide a guide to the exhibition but to use it as a starting point to discuss the topics raised and to show the major art works. An exhibition often contains 100 to 200 art works but in each two-hour talk I will focus on the 20 to 30 major works and I will often add works not shown in the exhibition to illustrate a point.

References and Copyright

- The talks are given to a small group of people and all the proceeds, after the cost of the hall is deducted, are given to charity.
- The notes are based on information found on the public websites of Wikipedia, Tate, National Gallery, Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, Khan Academy and the Art Story.
- If a talk uses information from specific books, websites or articles these are referenced at the beginning of each talk and in the 'References' section of the relevant page. The talks that are based on an exhibition use the booklets and book associated with the exhibition.
- · Where possible images and information are taken from Wikipedia under

an <u>Attribution-Share Alike Creative Commons License</u>.

• If I have forgotten to reference your work then please let me know and I will add a reference or delete the information.

ART HISTORY REVEALED

- 1. Impressionism in London
- 2. Modigliani
- 3. Gothic Revival
- 4. Charles I: King and Collector
- 5. A Century of Painting Life
- 6. The Birth of Art Photography
- 7. Picasso 1932
- 8. Monet & Architecture
- 9. The Invention of Antiquity
- 10. Rodin and Ancient Greece

Term 1: Wed 26 September, to 5 December 2018

- 1. Art after World War One
- 2. The Summer Exhibition
- 3. Mantegna and Bellini
- 4. Burne-Jones
- 5. Klimt and Schiele
- 6. Lorenzo Lotto and His Portraits
- 7. The Turner Prize
- 8. Gainsborough's Family Album
- 9. Van Gogh and Britain
- 10. Michelangelo versus Leonardo

Term 2: Wed 9 January to 13 March 2019 (no half-term)

Art History Revealed – Wednesday 26 September– 5 December, Wednesday 9 January – 13 March (no half-term)

Exhibitions in Start Date Order

- 1. Impressionism in London, Tate Britain, 2 November 2017 7 May 2018
- 2. Modigliani, Tate Modern, 23 November 2017 2 April 2018
- 3. Charles I: King and Collector, Royal Academy, 27 January 15 April 2018
- All Too Human Bacon, Freud and a century of painting life, Tate Britain, 28 February – 27 August 2018
- 5. Victorian Giants: The Birth of Art Photography, National Portrait Gallery, 1 March – 20 May 2018
- 6. Picasso 1932 Love, Fame, Tragedy, Tate Modern, March 8 to September 9, 2018
- 7. Monet & Architecture, National Gallery, 9 April 29 July 2018
- 8. Rodin and the Art of Ancient Greece, British Museum, 26 April 29 July 2018
- Aftermath Art in the Wake of World War One, Tate Britain, 5 June 16 September 2018
- 10. The Great Spectacle: 250 Years of the Summer Exhibition, Royal Academy, 12 June 2018 19 August 2018
- 11. Mantegna and Bellini, National Gallery 1 October 2018 27 January 2019

- 12. Burne-Jones, Tate Britain, 24 October 2018 24 February 2019
- 13. Klimt/Schiele, Drawings from the Albertina Museum, Vienna, Royal Academy, 4 November 2018 – 3 February 2019
- 14. Lorenzo Lotto Portraits, 5 November 2018 10 February 2019
- 15. Gainsborough's Family Album, National Portrait Gallery, 22 November 2018 3 February 2019
- 16. Vincent van Gogh (1853-1890). Tate Britain, March 2019. Van Gogh and Britain will be the first exhibition to take a new look at the artist through his relationship with Britain. It will explore how Van Gogh was inspired by British art, literature and culture throughout his career and how he in turn inspired British artists, from Walter Sickert to Francis Bacon.

<u>Ideas</u>

- Gothic Revival, based on an Andrew Graham Dixon TV programme but without the references to the literature of the period
- The Invention of Antiquity refers to ideas in Mary Beard and John Henderson, *Classical Art from Greece to Rome*, Oxford History of Art Series, 2001, Nigel Spivey, *Understanding Greek Sculpture: Ancient Meanings, Modern Readings*, 1997 and John Boardman, *Greek Art*, Thames & Hudson, 1996
- The Painting War: Michelangelo versus Leonardo described in the novel Oil and Marble, released on 5 July, 2018, and The Lost Battles: Leonardo, Michelangelo and the Artistic Duel That Defined the Renaissance
- The Turner Prize

London Galleries

Wallace British Museum Hayward National Gallery National Portrait Gallery White Cube Serpentine Tate Britain Tate Britain Tate Modern Royal Academy Estorics



- Greek Art and Architecture, based on
 - Mary Beard and John Henderson, *Classical Art from Greece to Rome*, Oxford History of Art Series, 2001
 - Nigel Spivey, Understanding Greek Sculpture: Ancient Meanings, Modern Readings, 1997
 - John Boardman, Greek Art, Thames & Hudson, 1996
- Subtitled, The Invention of Antiquity
- I start with a very brief (three slide) introduction to Greek sculpture which will be repeated next week. However, this chronological development of Greek sculpture can be found in many books and I thought it would be more interesting today to raise more fundamental questions about our understanding or rather our lack of understanding of the role and context for art in antiquity. All we can do is interpret classical works based on our present day cultural assumptions and our limited knowledge from the few remaining objects and texts. We often take it for granted that we understand what we mean by the classical but even the simplest questions of when, why and what make it clear that we interpret everything from the point of view of our culture. Often what we regard as common sense hides some fundamental assumptions that are part of our culture. By giving examples and

raising questions I will show that most of what we think we know is constructed around our culture.

- I start with a sculpture but the majority of the works shown are mosaics and paintings. This is a particularly difficult area as very few wall paintings remain from antiquity. The majority come from the Roman sites of Pompeii and Herculaneum and include:
 - The statue of Seneca or the Old Fisherman in the Louvre.
 - The Alexander mosaic
 - The House of the Faun, all nine works.
 - Brothel pictures and Priapus
 - Villa Farnesina, Rome
 - Achilles discovered on Skyros, different examples of the same story
 - Medea, two examples
 - Still life
 - Landscape
 - Portrait of a Girl
 - Mau wall styles 1-4
 - House of the Priest Amandus
 - House of the Mysteries
 - Boscotrecase
 - Rome, garden
 - Aldobrandini
 - Nero's Golden House



Kouros, 530 BC

Kore ('young woman'), c. 530 BC, Peplos Athena dedicated to the goddess Athena. Every year in Athens a peplos (a one-piece woollen woven dress) was presented to the goddess Athena during the Panathenaic festival during August.

Minoan, Mycenae civilizations followed by the Dark Ages, then ...

Geometric (900 BC to 750 BC)

Geometric art is a phase of Greek art, characterized largely by geometric motifs in vase painting, that flourished towards the end of the Greek Dark Ages, circa 900 BC – 700 BC. Its centre was in Athens, and from there the style spread among the trading cities of the Aegean. The Greek Dark Ages is also called the Geometric period.

Archaic (8th century BC to second Persina invasion in 480 BC)

• The conventional way that Greek art is taught is chronologically and divided into architecture, metalwork, sculpture and pottery. Very little two-dimensional art remains from the early Greek period. The art that remains is also mostly Roman copies of Greek originals.

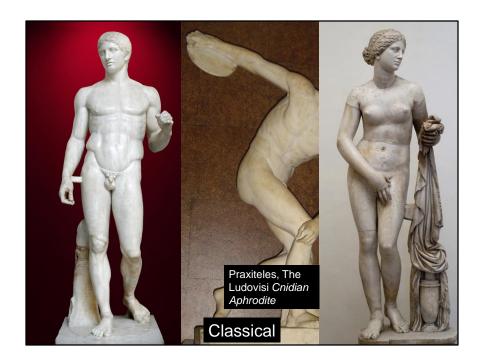
- If we focus on sculpture, the earliest Greek art consists of stylized, rigid figures known as kouri (male, singular kouros) or korai (female, singular kore) carved from limestone, later marble. Some early statues were made of bronze but most have been lost as the metal has been reused. Note that male kouri were naked and female kore were clothed.
- Black Figure pottery from early 7th century BC to Red Figure from about 530 BC

Clothing

 Greek women wore three types of apparel, the chiton, the peplos and the himation. A chiton was made from two rectangular pieces of fabric sew down each side and sewn or buttoned in two places along the top edge shoulder width apart. The peplos is similar, it was made from one rectangular piece of fabric sewn to create a cylinder. The top of the cylinder was then folded over like a cuff down to the bust, waist or sometimes lower. The neck and armholes were formed by fixing two brooches called fibulae on the top (folded) edge. It was often worn with a belt. The himation was a cloak that could be worn by men or women. Older men wore it as a garment that wrapped around the lower body like a skirt and then came up over the left shoulder. The fabric could range from wool to silk and women's clothing was dyed bright colours. Greek men wore wide-brimmed hats or headbands and women could wear their hair up.

Women's Role

• Women in the ancient Greek world had few rights in comparison to male citizens. They were unable to vote, own land, or inherit, a woman's place was in the home and her purpose in life was the rearing of children. However, Spartan women were treated somewhat differently and they had to do physical training like men, were permitted to own land, and could drink wine. Girls were educated but with an emphasis on dancing, gymnastics, and musical accomplishment. Young women were expected to marry as a virgin at the age of 13 or 14, and marriage was usually organised by their father or guardian, who chose the husband and accepted from him a dowry. There was no role in Greek society for single mature females. Contact with non-family males was discouraged and women occupied their time with indoor activities such as weaving. They could visit the homes of friends and were able to participate in public religious ceremonies and festivals but not public assemblies. We do not know if they could attend theatre performances. A woman's name was not mentioned in public.



Polykleitos (5th century BC), *Doryphorus* (Spear-bearer), Roman marble copy Myron (480-440 BC), *Discobolus* (discus thrower), British Museum, with incorrectly restored head, Roman marble copy

Praxiteles, The Ludovisi *Cnidian Aphrodite*, Roman marble copy (torso and thighs) with restored head, arms, legs and drapery support, National Museum of Rome

Classical Period (510-323 BC)

- Classical Greece was a period of about 200 years and started with the last Athenian tyrant and independence from the Persian Empire.
- Classical Greece had a powerful influence on the Roman Empire and on the foundations of Western civilization. Much of modern Western politics, artistic thought, scientific thought, theatre, literature, and philosophy derives from this period of Greek history.
- Naturalistic style, and from 500 BC depicting real people.
- It was in this period that sculpted figures adopted a contrapposto stance. The word describes a human figure standing with most of its weight on one foot so that its shoulders and arms twist off-axis from the hips and legs. This gives the figure a more dynamic, or alternatively relaxed appearance. Contrapposto was an

extremely important sculptural development as it marks the first time in Western art that the human body was used to express a psychological disposition. The static, balanced stance of the kouri suggests the perfect, ideal man but contrapposto creates an individual real man and the point of movement.

- We know the name of the individual sculptors:
 - Phidias (493-430 BC) oversaw the building of the Parthenon (447-432 BC), statue of Zeus at Olympia (now lost) and the statue of Athena Parthenos in the Parthenon (now lost). The Parthenon itself replaced an older temple of Athena, which historians call the Pre-Parthenon or Older Parthenon, that was destroyed in the Persian invasion of 480 BC. The Parthenon is regarded as an enduring symbol of Ancient Greece, Athenian democracy and Western civilization, and one of the world's greatest cultural monuments. To the Athenians who built it, the Parthenon and other Periclean monuments of the Acropolis were seen fundamentally as a celebration of Hellenic victory over the Persian invaders and as a thanksgiving to the gods for that victory. From 1800 to 1803, Thomas Bruce, 7th Earl of Elgin removed some of the surviving sculptures with permission from the Turks of the Ottoman Empire. The *firman* or certificate of authorization from Sultan Selim III reads 'When they wish to take away some pieces of stone with old inscriptions and figures, no opposition be made'. These sculptures, now known as the Elgin Marbles or the Parthenon Marbles, were sold in 1816 to the British Museum in London, where they are now displayed.
 - Polykleitos (5th century BC), *Doryphorus* (Spear-bearer), produced a canon of the ideal proportions (now lost)
 - Myron (480-440 BC), *Discobolus* (discus thrower). He is known for making a bronze heifer that was mistaken for a real cow
 - Praxiteles (400-330 BC) Aphrodite of Knidos, made the nude respectable from the Late Classical (350 BC onwards). It is one of the first life-sized representations of the nude female form in Greek history. The Aphrodite of Knidos was commissioned as the cult statue for the Temple of Aphrodite at Knidos. It depicted the goddess Aphrodite as she prepared for the ritual bath that restored her purity, discarding her drapery with one hand, while modestly shielding herself with the other. Praxiteles produced a clothed and an unclothed version of Aphrodite. The clothed version was purchased by the city of Cos and the unclothed by Knidos. The statue would have been polychromed and there are stories that it aroused men sexually. Nigel Spivey argues that she was not a 'pin-up' but designed to be attractive to both male hetero- and homosexual modes of desire. The statue brought much fame to Knidos and many tourists and the statue was used on their coins. It was one of the most widely copied statues in the ancient world.



Lysippus, *Alexander*, Roman copy of a herma by Lysippos, Louvre Museum. Plutarch reports that sculptures by Lysippos were the most faithful. Hermes-type bust (pillar with the top as a sculpted head) of Alexander the Great called *Hermes Azara*. Bears the inscription: "*Alexander* [the Great], *son of Philip*, [king of] *Macedonia*." Copy of the Imperial Roman Era (1st or 2nd century CE) of a bronze sculpture made by Lysippos. Found in Tivoli, East of Rome, Italy. Pentelic marble, region of Athens. *Venus de Milo*, 130-100 BC, Louvre

Laocoön and His Sons, attributed by Pliny to Agesander, Athenodoros and Polydorus, we do not know if this is an original work or a copy of an earlier sculpture, probably in bronze, or made for a Greek or Roman commission.

Dying Gaul, a Roman marble copy of a Hellenistic work of the late 3rd century BC. Capitoline Museums, Rome. An Ancient Roman marble copy of a lost Hellenistic sculpture, thought to have been originally executed in bronze. The original may have been commissioned some time between 230 and 220 BC by Attalus I of Pergamon to celebrate his victory over the Galatians, the Celtic or Gaulish people of parts of Anatolia (modern Turkey). The identity of the sculptor of the original is unknown.

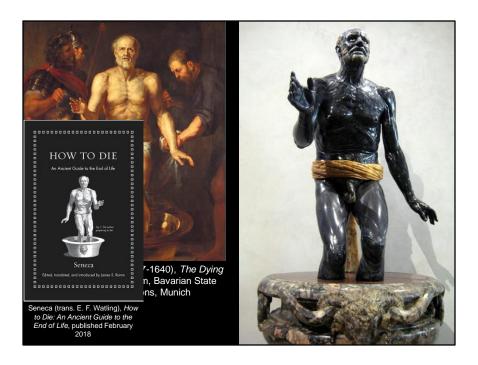
Hellenistic Period

• The period following the conquests of Alexander the Great (336-323 BC) is known

as the Hellenistic Period. The sculpture includes portraits, nude female figures and figures showing the extremes of emotion.

• Lysippus (4th century BC), the official sculptor to Alexander the Great (356-323 BC). Alexander created one of the largest empires of the ancient world by the age of thirty, stretching from Greece to north-western India. He was undefeated in battle and is widely considered one of history's most successful military commanders.

CLASSICALART FROM GREECE TO ROME Mary Beard



The Old Fisherman or *Dying Seneca,* 2nd century CE, black marble and alabaster, basin: purple breccia, height 1.8m, Louvre

Old Fisherman Vatican-Louvre, also known as *Dying Seneca*, statue: black marble and alabaster, (modern) basin: purple breccia, **Roman copy of the 2nd century after an original Hellenistic statue**, found in Rome.

Peter Paul Rubens (1577-1640), *The Dying Seneca*, 185 x 154.7 cm, Bavarian State Painting Collections, Munich

Seneca (trans. E. F. Watling), *How to Die: An Ancient Guide to the End of Life*, published February 2018

• In 65 CE there was a botched attempt to assassinate Nero. One of those rounded up as a conspirator was Nero's old tutor Seneca. He was 'invited' to take his own life and chose to open the veins of his arms, wrists and legs and step into a warm bath. Fifteen hundred years later a statue surfaced in Rome immortalising the moment of his death. His face is scored with the pain and yet we see the fortitude and resignation of the philosopher. Rubens was so moved by the statue that he based his painting *Death of Seneca* on the image and there was extravagant praise from intellectuals. Another admirer, Napoleon Bonaparte brought the statue back

for his new museum, the Louvre, although by this period the haggard upturned face was already seen as disgusting.

- When the statue was first found it was missing its eyes, parts of the face, both legs from the crotch to below the knees and probably both arms from below the armpits, and it was not standing in a basin. So a large part of the work is a Renaissance restoration that was created to inspire us with a famous figure from antiquity in his moment of glory. You might also be wondering about the yellow belt. It was also added in the Renaissance with the supporting pillar you can see between its legs.
- The attribution was soon doubted by some scholars including the father of modern art history, Johann Joachim Winckelmann (1717-1768) and today it is called *The Old Fisherman*. Over a dozen similar figures have now been found wearing belts or loin cloths but none of them has such bent knees with the torso bent straight.
- Around 1900 the Louvre removed the basin and mounted it on a concrete plinth. In the late 1990s it was put back onto the basin, perhaps in recognition of the role of the restoration in the history of the piece.
- This talk explores the ways in which we invent stories around our discoveries that fit the aspirations of the period and how these change over the years. Remains are modified, 'restored' and tampered with and identifications change as controversies rise and fall. The image is still being used to illustrate the death of Seneca.

<u>Notes</u>

- Timeline first proposed by Sir Arthur Evans and still used:
 - Egyptian Middle Kingdom MK (ca. 2000-1800 BCE),
 - 2nd. Intermediate Period2IN (ca. 1800-1550 BCE)
 - New Kingdom LK (ca. 1150-1000 BCE)
 - Middle Minoan MM (ca. 2000-ca. 1600 BCE)
 - Late Minoan LM (ca. 1550-1350 BCE)
 - Mycenaean Civilization (ca. 1650BCE-1200 BCE)



The House of the Faun, Pompeii, 2nd century BC, repaired/rebuilt after the earthquake of 62 CE. It was owned by the Cassius family which had married into the gens or clan Satria. It was first excavated in 1830 and contained the famous Alexander mosaic. We see the atrium of the house, a courtyard open to the sky and containing an impluvium for catching the rain water. The statue of the faun was originally at the edge of the impluvium. The impluvium was semi-permeable and it allowed rain water to slowly drain into a cistern below which could be accessed by a cover, ropes and buckets. Excess water in the winter drained out of the house and in the hot summer water would be brought from outside by servants and poured into the impluvium. The evaporating water would cool the entire atrium and surrounding rooms.

Our most spectacular discovery of the ancient world was the uncovering of the ancient worlds of Pompeii and Herculaneum in the mid-eighteenth century. They were both buried by the same eruption of Vesuvius in 79 CE. The finds that began to be uncovered caused excitement across the whole of Europe and tourists flocked to see the sites. What was exciting was the idea that a complete civilization had been captured and we could imagine ourselves back in antiquity. Everything had been caught, graffiti, workmen's tools and the living quarters for the slaves.

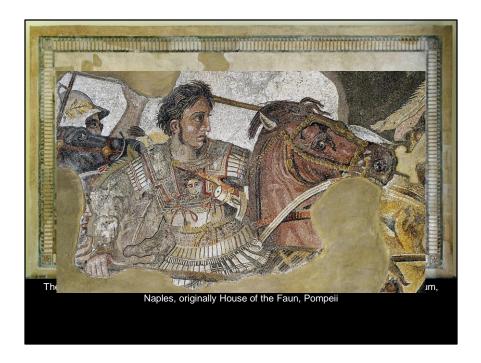
Despite the excitement no one at the time could have imaged the impact the discovery would make far into the future. Today we are still discussing and making discoveries at both sites and those sites form **virtually the only examples we have of ancient painting**. At the time of the eruption of Vesuvius, Pompeii was a town of modest size, with a population of around 11,000, and a thriving community with sophisticated architecture and infrastructure.

- The House of the Faun covers 3,000 square metres, an entire city block, and is one of the largest and most impressive private residences in Pompeii. The house has two enclosed gardens, a private bath system, kitchens, slave quarters, bedrooms, dining rooms for summer and winter, a reception room and an office.
- I will look at the wall and floor art in the House of the Faun. What we are looking at is the outer atrium which is a room with an open skylight. A faun is an untamed woodland spirit and this bronze faun was originally at the edge of the impluvium which is often found in the centre of the atrium and is designed to catch the rainwater.
- The house was built in the 2nd century BC and rebuilt after the great earthquake of 62 CE. An inscription was found with the cognomen Saturninus suggesting the villa was owned by the important gens (clan) Satria. Also a ring was found with the family name Cassius was found indicating someone from the Cassii family married into the Satria family.
- In the entrance is a floor mosaic with the greeting 'HAVE' (a variant of 'Ave') which is a greeting both for meeting and parting.

Roman Personal Naming Conventions

- A Roman name consisted of a praenomen, nomen and cognomen (the tria nomina). It is the basis of modern naming conventions and differed from the way names were constructed in other civilizations. The nomen was the hereditary family name which identified the person as belonging to a particular gens or clan. The nomen could be followed by the personal name of their father or sometimes their mother. The cognomen was a sort of sub-tribe and could be personal or hereditary or both.
- The format and structure of names changed through Roman history and during the Roman Republic the praenomen and nomen were the essential elements. The cognomen was used by the Roman aristocracy and not often by the plebeians. By the imperial period the cognomen became the principal distinguishing element of the name and from the second century onwards the nomen and cognomen were the important elements. The cognomen could be enhanced by the addition of a fourth name, the agnomen, which might refer to a famous victory, for example Quintus Caecilius Metellus Numidicus (conqueror of Numidia). The upper-class Romans generally referred to each other using their cognomen as we do today, for example, Marcus Tullius Cicero is Cicero, and Gaius Julius Caesar is Caesar.

• Women's names evolved differently and by the end of the Republic most women did not use or have a praenomina and were called by their nomen alone.



The Alexander Mosaic, c. 100 BCE, mosaic, 273 x 513 cm, National Archaeological Museum, Naples, originally House of the Faun, Pompeii

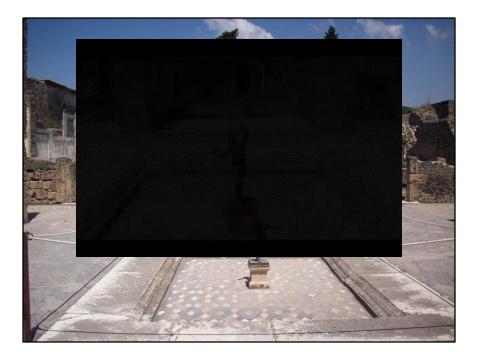
- The Alexander Mosaic, dating from circa 100 BC, is a Roman floor mosaic originally from the House of the Faun in Pompeii. It depicts a battle between the armies of Alexander the Great and Darius III of Persia and measures 2.72 by 5.13 metres. The original is preserved in the Naples National Archaeological Museum. The mosaic is believed to be a copy of an early 3rd-century BC Hellenistic painting.
- One of the most extraordinary works to have survived from antiquity. A vast mosaic floor unearthed in 1831 that has always been thought to show Alexander the Great routing Darius, the king of Persia in 330 BCE. There are 2.5 to 5.5 million tesserae in total in five main colours. The scene is a turning point in a battle. The figures on the left are surging forward while the figures on the right are in turmoil. In particular, the tallest figure turns to look back even though his charioteer has already turned away and is whipping his team of black horses to carry them off as fast as possible. One of the soldiers has been caught out by the turning point of the battle and is about to be crushed under the wheel of the flying chariot. We can see a last glimpse of his face reflected in his shield a moment before he is crushed.
- We do not know if it represents a specific battle but it does show a turning point in

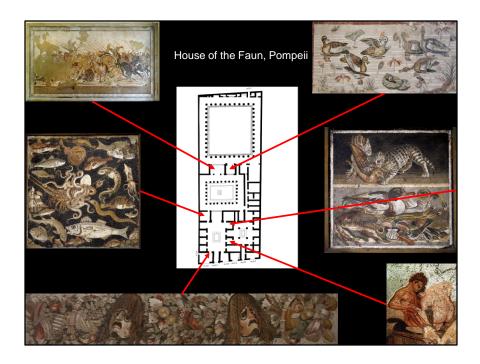
world conquest and the founding of a new empire. It is inaugurates a new period in Art history called the Hellenistic era. The work captures a key moment in world history even though it may not represent a specific moment. Alexander became a legendary leader to the Romans and to subsequent generations up to the present day. **King Darius is shown noble in defeat**, a trope that continues to be repeated. Civilized art heightens the moment of triumph by showing the defeated army **as worthy opponents that evoke feelings of pity or sadness** (pathos).

- We do not know how the mosaic arrived in Pompeii. It may have been bodily transported from Greece, alternatively, it has been suggested it is the work of Italian craftsmen copying an earlier Greek painting that may have dated from the time of Alexander the Great. All of these different theories are based on references and other clues from the past. For example, Pliny the Elder mentions a Greek painting of a *Battle of Alexander against Darius* by Philoxenos of Eretria in the Macedonian court.
- Many mosaics and paintings from the Roman period copy or are variations on a Greek original. This would have been known and appreciated by visitors to the house. A great deal of research today consists of finding or usually speculating about a Greek original. There was an active trade in plunder, purchase and copying original works and there was a long tradition of easel painting in Greece and Rome but little if anything survives and scholars scour texts for any hint of an artist, painting, style or critical judgement.
- Today we value the original and regard copies as inferior. However, it is likely that Romans regarded Greek culture as a lesser culture to their own but one associated with the origination and production of art. The Roman writer Horace said: 'Gracia capta ferum vicitorem cepit' (the conquered Greece conquered the barbarian conqueror). In Roman women had to live and eat with their husband and homosexuality was considered a vice. Greek women had to live and eat in a different room, man mixed with men and homosexual relations were common. The Romans adopted a great deal of Greek culture (the arts, literature, philosophy, the alphabet, weights and measures, coinage, gods and cults and temple buildings) but they did conquer Greece and so would have regarded them as a lesser culture. It became a must for every rich young Roman to study in Athens or Rhodes and learn to speak Greek but some Romans did not trust the Greeks and thought that adopting Greek customs would lead to degeneration and the fall of Rome.

<u>Note</u>

 If it does represent the victory of Alexander the Great over Darius III and the Persians at the Battle of Gaugamela (331 BC) then it shows one of Alexander's greatest victories. The Persians easily had double the number of troops as the Macedonians and the came prepared for victory with scythed chariots and the largest cavalry force that had ever been assembled up till then. Darius expected Alexander to outflank him as he had done previously but this time Alexander changed strategy. It is said that Alexander rejected a night attack as it would steal a victory. The next morning Alexander overslept and his men were well fed and relaxed. Darius's men had stayed awaked the whole night fearing an attack. Alexander feigned an all out attack on the right wing and Darius moved the troops in his centre to his left wing. Alexander held off an outflanking manoeuvre and his infantry held the centre. He suddenly turned his elite troops to the centre and launched an all out attack on Darius himself. Alexander came close to Darius and flung his spear narrowly missing him. Darius tried to turn his chariot but was prevented by dead bodies so he fled on a horse. This led to confusion and disarray among his troops and Alexander achieving a total victory. Darius was later killed by one of his officers and Alexander found the body and buried him with full military honours in Persepolis, the former capital of the Persian Empire.

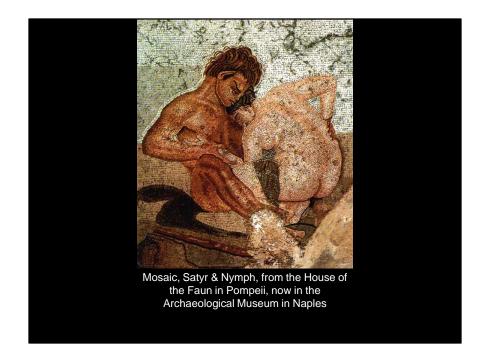




House of the Faun, Pompeii, 3,000 sq. m.

- National Archaeological Museum, Naples, originally House of the Faun, Pompeii (left to right and down)
 - The Alexander Mosaic, c. 100 BCE, mosaic, 273 x 513 cm,
 - Nilotic scene, a series of three mosaics that include a crocodile and a hippo
 - Seafood
 - Cat and Bird, Ducks
 - Masks, Fruit and Flowers
 - Mosaic, Satyr & Nymph
- The House of the Faun was the largest surviving house in Pompeii and its area of 3,000 sq.m. could have contained up to a dozen standard houses. The house had many mosaics of which about ten are preserved in the Naples Archaeological Museum. I will concentrate on one of these to make a point about how differently we see these works from the Romans.
- The range of subjects at Pompeii far exceeds the mythological, there still-lifes, portraits, landscapes and an enormous range of naked bodies ranging from the modern idea of an artistic nude to what we would see as pornography.

- In ancient Rome prestige and power had to be demonstrated by the display of opulence. Outside all the houses looked the same although some were larger than others. Inside the wealthy demonstrated their power through gardens with vistas, mosaics, sculptures and paintings. The owner of the house was the lead actor in this theatre of display and everyone else played minor roles designed to enhance his prestige. The House of the Faun occupied an entire block and had two gardens, two courtyards and many rooms for receiving and entertaining guests. Houses were not as packed with furniture as ours but a house like this would have had table and chairs, divans, cupboards, candelabra, vases and silverware. The images range from sealife to erotic displays of nudity. At the entrance is the word 'H A V E' (Welcome) picked out in mosaic.
- The house had stood on the site for 300 years and so the meaning and use of the images must have changed over time. The house and the images were also modified and repaired, for example following the severe earthquake that had occurred 17 years previously. The town of Pompeii became an ally of Rome and it was then 'Romanised' and forcibly settled by a large number of retired Roman soldiers. It is likely all the major mosaics were installed as early as the second century BCE in which case by the time of the eruption they would have become period pieces and referred as such.



Mosaic, Satyr & Nymph, from the House of the Faun in Pompeii, now in the Archaeological Museum in Naples

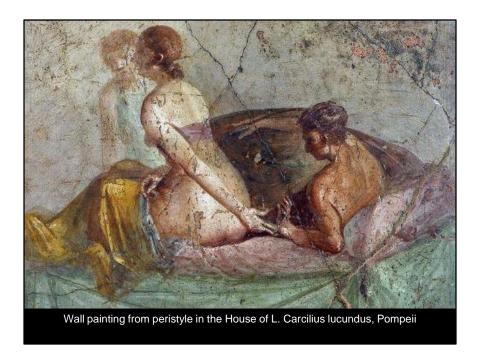
<u>Sex</u>

- One of the controversial aspects of Roman art is the representation of the naked body. When Pompeii was first excavated all erotic images were regarded as associated with brothels and were locked away in the Archaeological Museum. They could only be viewed by respectable adult males by appointment. More and more finds were found and increasingly elaborate reasons were found to explain why they were found in association with respectable houses. Today it is thought that the Romans had a much more open view of the body and it is not clear that what we call erotic was a concept they possessed.
- This mosaic was found in the side chamber of the main atrium and we do not know whether it was a semi-private room for relaxing inhibitions or simply another tasteful decoration of a mythical scene.
- When Pompeii and Herculaneum were being excavated in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries many images and works were uncovered that were considered obscene. When the only visitors were aristocrats on the Grand Tour

this was not considered a problem but as the works were placed in public museum it was felt the public had to be protected. In 1821 the National Archaeological Museum in Naples put all such objects in its Secret Museum (*Gabinetto Segreto*) and the doorway was bricked up in 1849. At Pompeii frescoes deemed to be obscene had locked metal covers placed over them and only men 'of mature age and respected morals' could see them on payment of a fee. This practice continued until the 1960s. The modern work 'pornography' and the modern concept developed during this period. What was regarded as natural by the Romans and interesting on the Grand Tour had become so shocking it was hidden away and never discussed.

References

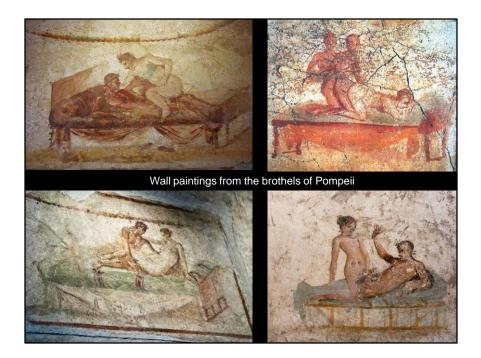
<u>https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=nx1EAgAAQBAJ</u> Pornographic Art and the Aesthetics of Pornography, H. Maes, 2013



Wall painting from peristyle in the House of L. Carcilius lucundus, Pompeii

- This is a bedroom scene found on the **wall of a courtyard garden**. There is a person in the background which some interpreters have seen as heightening the sensuality. However, others see it as a servant who is conventionally waiting to take care of the couple's every need. So it could be anything from titillating and erotic to the celebration of married love.
- The Romans had no words that distinguished between heterosexual and homosexual sex or love. The shame associated with looking at what we call pornography (a nineteenth century term) would have been quite alien to them. However, this did not mean that anything was accepted. Sex was based on power so a person of prestige would not engage in certain acts such as performing oral sex and male penetration as the receiving partner. Male writers took little interest in female sexuality and very few fragments written by women survive so there is little recorded of lesbian sex. Unlike the Greeks, public nudity was frowned upon and athletes kept their genitals and buttocks covered. This is probably because nudity was associated with defeat (defeated enemy was first stripped naked) and with slaves and servitude.

- Rape was illegal and the rapist was subject to execution, a rare penalty in Roman law. However, a slave could not be raped as he or she was considered property and not legally a person but a slave's owner could prosecute for property damage.
- The worst crimes in Roman law were the rape of a freeborn male, patricide, the rape of a female virgin and robbing a temple.



Wall paintings from the brothels of Pompeii

- A strong and active sex market was considered essential for the successful functioning of society and particularly for a successful marriage. Marriages were arranged and a husband was not expected to seek sexual pleasure from his wife and out of respect for her would pay for pleasurable sex.
- There were many brothels in Pompeii and some of them still contain the original wall paintings. It is thought these were to titillate clients or they acted as a form of menu. The women worked in cells barely big enough for a single bed and many have no window. Most sex workers were slaves and so property and so no one cared about their conditions. Freeborn women were not allowed to have intercourse with anyone except their husbands so the clients were exclusively men.

References

https://theconversation.com/the-grim-reality-of-the-brothels-of-pompeii-88853



Pompeii, House of the Vettii, Priapus wall painting, entrance, west wall, north part, 62-79 CE

- The most startling images to our eyes are the phallic images which appear everywhere (until they were locked away in the Archaeological Museum).
- The phallus was the symbol of the male dominated society and it was also a good luck token against evil spirits. It was completely devoid of shame or embarrassment and was used for everything from wind chimes to the shape of loaves as a sign of good health and good luck. It was displayed everywhere, as a shop sign, inside houses and as here, at an entrance
- The painted Priapus in the doorway guarded the house from evil spirits in two ways, by demonstrating male fertility and by provoking laughter. The phallus provides safety from demons thought to lurk in liminal spaces. The phallus also brought prosperity to businesses and often appeared in shops and bakeries.
- It was not sexual except in an obvious sense but represented a genial guardian god. We do not know to what extent it was humorous but here it is being used as a counterbalance of some scales that are being used to weigh a sack.
- In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries it was stored away so it could only be seen by male adults in the Naples National Archaeological Museum as it was

regarded as obscene.



Achilles Discovered on Skyros, House of Dioscuri (above), Achilles (top right), and Apollo (mosaic, bottom right), Pompeii

- Let us switch to a well-known classical story and see the different ways in which it was interpreted as this throws light on the way in which images were copied and used.
- Pliny the Elder is an important source of information about art. He mentions a
 work by Athenion of Maronae in northern Greece of 'Achilles concealed in girl's
 clothes as Ulysses finds him out'. Achilles was hidden by his mother as a girl
 among the daughters of a king on a remote island because she knew that if he
 went to Troy he would die. The other Greeks knew that only Achilles could help
 them win the war against Troy so they sent their most cunning representative,
 Ulysses (Odysseus in Greek) with a companion, Diomedes. Ulysses took gifts for
 the king's daughters and included a suit of armour. As the girls examine the gifts he
 blows a war trumpet and Achilles instinctively reaches out for the armour.
- Two paintings and a mosaic in Pompeii are thought to represent or be copies of the original Greek painting by Athenion.
- In all three we see **Achilles grabbing the shield** with Ulysses recognising him with a stare and Diomedes grabbing his arm. There is an **erotic charge** in the encounter

emphasized by the framing of the group by the frontal exposed woman in the paintings and the naked rear view of the girl on the left. The larger painting would originally have had the same girl on the left. **The aggression** shown in the painting **on the left** heightened by **implication of the rape of Achilles dressed as a girl** can be compared with the **softer rendering of the scene on the upper right**. The painting on the **upper right** is generally **seen to be inferior** to the one on the left. Another difference is that in one Ulysses holds a spear and in the other fingers a sword. The spear points to an image on the shield we can no longer see but the mosaic helps and it shows the **spear pointing to the young Achilles being taught the lyre by his mentor Chiron**. The **discipline and harmony of music were thought to be perfect training for his future role as a warrior** and so the spear can now be seen as a **pointer to his destiny** and the image can therefore be read as a statement of the inevitability of fate.

We are left with almost as many questions as when we started. How do we know these paintings are related to Pliny's brief description? We don't and there are other representations of the story in other quite different paintings in Pompeii. Even if we did know they were based on a, then ancient, Greek original which one is closer to the original? Would we chose the one we thought was 'best'? And how do we account for the differences we have seen, were there different versions of the painting in Greece or were the variations the inspiration of local Italian craftsmen working in Pompeii. We do not even know if the craftsmen were Italian as Greek craftsmen were often employed by Romans.

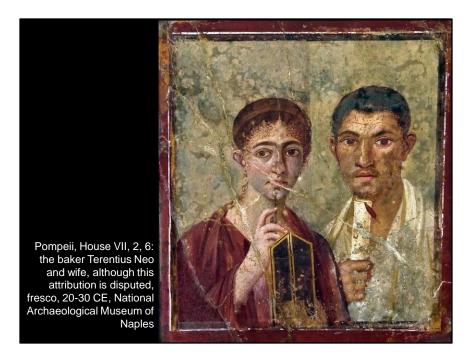


- This image of Leda and the Swan was discovered on Friday 16 November 2018 in the entrance to a bedroom in a villa on a main road in Pompeii. The image is very different from other more common portrayals of the story that were found in Pompeii and elsewhere, which don't often depict the sexual act and tend to show Leda standing while being pursued by the swan. The image of Leda has been painted to make it appear she is looking at whoever enters the bedroom.
- In Greek mythology Leda was an Aetolian princess who became a Spartan queen.
 She was seduced by Zeus in the guise of a swan while she lay in bed with her husband King Tyndareus and she gave birth to Helen ('Helen of Troy'), Clytemnestra, and Castor and Pollox. According to various accounts there were two eggs but which of her offspring were divine and which of her husband differs between accounts. Leda was a popular subject in ancient art and a common house decoration but we don't know exactly how she was regarded. We don't know why it was there or how it was regarded and the danger is that we interpret it in the light of modern culture and social and ethical assumptions.

<u>Notes</u>

Helen was said to have been the most beautiful woman in the world, who was

married to King Menelaus of Sparta, but was abducted by Prince Paris of Troy, resulting in the Trojan War when the Achaeans set out to reclaim her and bring her back to Sparta.



Pompeii, House VII, 2, 6: the baker Terentius Neo and wife, although this attribution is disputed, fresco, c. 70 CE, National Archaeological Museum of Naples Found in the exedra (a recess or alcove with a seat) opening off the atrium (a large enclosed space open to the sky) of the house.

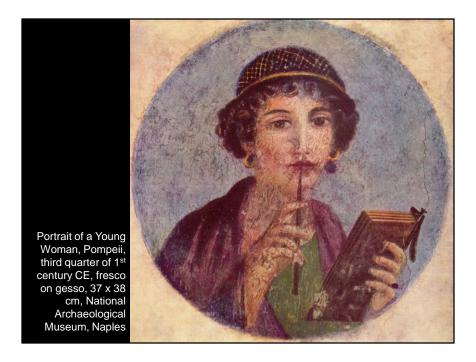
From the moment Pompeii started to be uncovered opinions varied on what was
mediocre art and what was fine art. Most of the 'pornographic' art could not be
classified or even shown in public so was hidden away in a secret room. A fashion
of Pompeii-style interiors swept Europe int h eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.
Victorian painters, such as Alma Tadema used the discoveries to construct what
they believed was a representation of everyday life in a Roman town. Some art
critics were bitterly disappointed by the lack of tonal range (chiaroscuro), limited
colour palette and by the numerous faults of draughtsmanship. Of course, it was
easy to write off all Pompeian art as the work expected to be found in a provincial
backwater and its merit was only to hint at the greatness of the art from which its
was derived.

The Portrait

• Overall the idea of portraiture and an exact representation was a minor motif in

wall painting and most pictures were of **historical**, **myth**, **comedy or genre scenes**. The historical figures were **often Greek** reflecting the overwhelming Hellenistic culture of contemporary Roman taste.

- Many supposed portraits were displayed in ancestor rooms and may therefore be **idealised representations**. Some include mythological figures and may be merely decorative figures or historical figures sometimes identified with labels.
- These figures are **clearly individualised** with the **man's wispy beard and moustache**, full lips and a slightly shifty expression. The man is protectively shielding his wife with his shoulder. The scroll held by the man has been identified as a **marriage contract**.
- "For a long time mistakenly considered the portrait of Paquio Proculo and his wife, in reality the fresco portrays the baker Terentius Neo with his wife. The two characters, of humble origins, climbed the social ladder, show him as a scholar (he holds a roll of papyrus in his hand), while she holds a waxed tablet (so she takes care of the bookkeeping of the bakery and the house)."
- It could be a wedding portrait or a portrait of the owners of the house showing they were literate and by implication erudite.

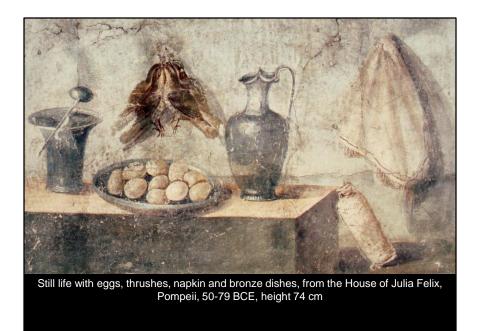


Portrait of a Young Woman, Pompeii, third quarter of 1st century CE, fresco on gesso, 37 x 38 cm, National Archaeological Museum, Naples

- It is sometimes assumed that painting progresses and over the years artist improve in their ability to depict nature and the human form. This work, I think, shows that in the classical period, if they wanted **they could paint with as much naturalism as** a modern painter. We do not know whether what remains is the work of the most skilled artist but it is likely that most of the work is by mediocre craftsmen. This work for example was found in Pompeii which was a provincial town and was unlikely to have works by the leading artists of the day.
- Tondo of Woman with wax tablets and stylus (so-called "Sappho"), National Archaeological Museum of Naples (inventory no. 9084). Roman fresco of about 50, from Pompeii (VI, Insula Occidentalis) - Discovered in 1760, is one of the most famous and beloved paintings, commonly called Sappho. Actually portrays a highsociety Pompeian woman, richly dressed with gold-threaded hair and large gold earrings, bringing the stylus to the mouth and holding the wax tablets, notoriously accounting documents which therefore have nothing to do with poetry and even less with the famous Greek writer.
- This tondo was balanced in the corresponding position in the other half of the

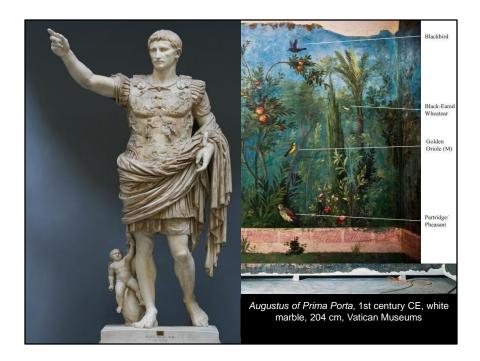
wall by a tondo of a man holding a scroll. We do not know if they are portraits but their features are particular and so portrait-like.

• **Sappho** (c. 630–c. 570 BC) was a Greek poet from the island of Lesbos known for her lyric poetry. Most of her poetry is now lost but was greatly admired through much of antiquity. She is well known as a symbol of love and desire between women and the word 'lesbian' comes from her island of Lesbos. However, in classical Athenian poetry she was caricatured as a promiscuous heterosexual woman.



Still life with eggs, thrushes, napkin and bronze dishes, from the House of Julia Felix, Pompeii, 50-79 BCE, height 74 cm

 Julia Felix was a wealthy property owner who inherited money from her family. She owned a large house that took an entire block but after the earthquake she rented it out a set of apartments. Her villa contains a unique series of paintings depicting daily life in the Pompeian Forum, including market stalls, an open-air school, conversation, and a beggar receiving alms from a lady with her maid.



Wall painting of the south wall of the 'Garden Room' in the imperial villa at Prima Porta, near Rome

Image of wall of the Garden Room at the Villa of Livia with bird species identification. Robert Vanderlinden

Augustus of Prima Porta, 1st century CE, white marble, 204 cm, Vatican Museums, currently housed in the Chiaramonte Museum, Braccio Nuovo and only accessible with special permission

- The Villa of Livia is an ancient Roman villa at Prima Porta, 12 km north of Rome along the Via Flaminia. It was probably part of Livia Drusilla's dowry she brought when she married the emperor Augustus, her second husband, in 39 BC. It was her country residence complementing her house on the Palatine Hill in Rome. The name Prima Porta came from an arch of the aqueduct that travellers saw as the first indication of having . reached Rome.
- In 1867 the famous heroic marble statue of Augustus, the *Augustus of Prima Porta*, was found, now in the Vatican Museum. It is a marble copy of a bronze original that celebrated the return in 20 BC of the military standards captured by the Parthians in 53 BCE.
- From three vaulted subterranean rooms, the largest contained superb illusionistic

frescos of garden views, where all the plants and trees flower and fruit at once, which have been removed to Rome where, following cleaning and restoration, they have been reinstalled in the Palazzo Massimo.

<u>Landscape</u>

References

https://commons.mtholyoke.edu/romancultureofbird/murals/villa-of-livia-atprimaporta/



Mau wall styles

Example of First Style painting, House of Sallust, Pompeii, built 2nd century, B.C.E. Example of First Style painting, House of the Faun, Pompeii, built 2nd century, B.C.E. Example of Second Style painting, cubiculum (bedroom), Villa of P. Fannius Synistor at Boscoreale, 50–40 B.C.E., fresco, 265.4 x 334 x 583.9 cm

Example of Second Style painting, cubiculum (bedroom), Villa of P. Fannius Synistor at Boscoreale, 50–40 B.C.E., fresco

Example of Second Style painting, view of the Dionysiac frieze, Villa of the Mysteries, before 79 C.E., fresco, 15 x 22 feet, just outside the walls of Pompeii on the Road to Herculaneum

Styles of Wall Painting

- With all this art historians began to try to assign dates in order to try to introduce some order into the chaos of the range of art discovered.
- One early critic was Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832) who was initially disappointed by the bare rooms he found on the site at Pompeii and he was then 'vividly transported back into the past' when he saw the objects in the National Archaeological Museum in Naples. This led to a realisation that the individual rooms and their images and objects must be viewed as a whole. The paintings and

mosaics are part of a complete decorative space. The paintings should not be seen in isolation (as I am showing them) but as one element of a decorative design of a complete room. Wall painting was exactly that, the **entire wall was painted** and the **pictures that were later cut out were just one element**.

- Analysis of many rooms using other methods to date them enabled the Pompeii expert August Mau (German, 1840-1909) to describe and name a chronological sequence of four main styles.
 - First style, Incrustation or imitation, 3rd-2nd century BCE, the wall is painted and sometimes moulded to represent blocks of stone. There are no figures scenes.
 - Second style, Architectural, c. 100 15 BCE, typically has illusionistic architectural vistas.
 - Third style, Ornate, c. 15 BCE 50 CE, delicate decorative designs with some small pictures, figures and landscapes.
 - Fourth style, Intricate, from 50 CE, uses the whole range of the previous three styles, decorative with architectural features and figures in panels.
- Paintings on wooden panels were also produced but have not survived except in a few cases. It is not clear if the fresco pictures surrounded by a dark frame were meant to imitate panel paintings.

<u>References</u>

https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/ancient-art-civilizations/roman/wallpainting/a/roman-wall-painting-styles



Mau wall styles

Example of Third Style painting, panel with candelabrum, Villa Agrippa Postumus, **Boscotrecase** ('bosco-trey-carzay'), last decade of the 1st century B.C.E Example of Fourth Style painting, Triclinium (dining room), **House of the Vetii**, Pompeii, 1st century C.E.

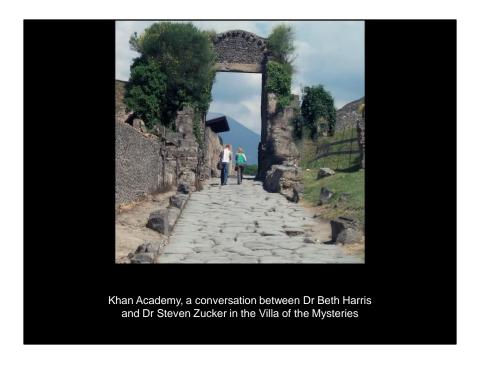
Example of Fourth Style painting, before 79 C.E., fresco, Pompeii

- Analysis of many rooms using other methods to date them enabled the Pompeii expert August Mau to describe and name a chronological sequence of four main styles.
 - First style, Incrustation or imitation, Second century BCE, the wall is painted and sometimes moulded to represent blocks of stone. There are no figures scenes.
 - Second style, Architectural, c. 100 15 BCE, typically has illusionistic architectural vistas.
 - Third style, Ornate, c. 15 BCE 50 CE, delicate decorative designs with some small pictures, figures and landscapes.
 - Fourth style, Intricate, from 50 CE, uses the whole range of styles, decorative with architectural features and figures in panels.

It needs to be understood that one style did not replace another as the old styles were retained. A house such as The House of the Fauns contains all the styles. This combination of the old and the new is what defines a typical Pompeian house and we assume all houses across Roman Italy. Their understanding of the new was therefore different from ours. We see the new replacing the old as progress as we expect continually technically innovations and improvements. In a static culture the new is another form of decoration to add to the old. Some of the art, such as the Alexander mosaic were hundreds of years old and so we assume they appreciated the old and did not see the new as a replacement but as an enhancement.

References

https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/ancient-art-civilizations/roman/wallpainting/a/roman-wall-painting-styles



Khan Academy, a conversation between Dr Beth Harris and Dr Steven Zucker in the Villa of the Mysteries



Three wall paintings from the cubiculum of the House of Jason, Medea (west wall), Phaedra (south wall) and Paris and Helen (north wall)

- In many rooms containing **mythological scenes** the various pictures in the room provide **theme that links them together**. For example, in the house of Jason there is a room with **three wall paintings** that seem to show **domestic bliss**. However, the story of **each one leads to tragedy**,
 - the first shows Medea and her children,
 - the second Phaedra with her nurse and servant girl and
 - the third Helen apparently looking at her husband.
- What all viewers at the time would know was that Medea is contemplating murdering her children, Pheadra is struggling with her passion for her stepson that will lead to the destruction of the family and Helen is looking at Paris and is planning to desert her husband.
- The stories are not connected in mythological terms so we must assume the viewer would read them as themes of infanticide, incest and adultery. This raises the question of why would a house have a room devoted to these subjects and, as we have seen, wall paintings could survive for generations, it was not the casual hanging of three paintings. As we know the Roman empire was male dominated

and founded on strict laws we can only speculate that they were **some form of moral lesson aimed at the females of the household in how not to behave**. But a more accurate answer is **we just don't know**.



Wall paintings from the 'Mythological Room' of the **villa at Boscotrecase** ('boscotrey-carzay'), *Polyphemus and Galatea* (west wall) and *Andromeda Rescued by Perseus* (east wall), Metropolitan Museum of Art. Brightness and contrast artificially enhanced.

- When looking at the paintings from Pompeii we must always be thinking but is this typical or is this just a small, unrepresentative, provincial Italian town? If Pompeii was provincial the surrounding countryside contained country estates and palaces that certainly were not. The top echelon of the Roman aristocracy lived in the surrounding area. There are a few sites in the area that contain wall paintings that were the best that money could buy. One was discovered by chance in 1902 when cutting into a hill for a new railway line.
- The owner of the site saw a get-rich-quick scheme and used a digger to rip the wall paintings from the walls to sell them without recording their location. However, ironically, it was just as well because four years later an eruption destroyed the site.
- Some of the rooms were vivid red and other pitch black, some had exquisite miniatures and the others large wall paintings. In one room there were the above two pictures, now in New York. One shows the Cyclops Polyphemus pining for

Galatea and the other Perseus saving Andromeda from the sea monster. In each picture the hero appears twice in order to illustrate the narrative. Polyphemus looses his heart to the sea nymph Galatea on sight, later he loses his single eye when Odysseus rescues his crew from the Cyclops cave. Perseus rescues Andromeda to be his bride but success turns to tragedy when her parents renege on the deal signified by the handshake on the right. Andromeda's uncle claimed she had already been promised to him in marriage so Perseus used the head of the Medusa (that he happened to have on him from an earlier encounter) to turn the uncle to stone and he then flew off with his bride.

- The themes that connect the pictures, that were on opposite walls of the same room, are the consequences of love, the rewards of trickery and the resulting punishment.
- We are lucky because these two scenes are also found in a dining room (triclinium) in the House of the Priest Amandus in Pompeii together with two other scenes. When art historians have compared them there is a natural tendency

References

https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/works-of-art/20.192.17/ https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/works-of-art/20.192.16/



Fresco of Perseus and Andromeda from the west wall of the triclinium of the House of the Priest Amandus in Pompeii, excavated mainly in 1924. Wall paintings from the 'Mythological Room' of the villa at Boscotrecase, Andromeda Rescued by Perseus (east wall), Metropolitan Museum of Art

- The wall painting on the left in **Pompeii** is usually treated as a **slightly inferior copy of the Boscotrecase masterpiece**. The colours are stated to be cruder, the larger figures spoil the fairy-tale atmosphere.
- However, the Pompeii painting Andromeda has turned towards Perseus adding drama to the encounter. The figures are larger within the landscape adding emotional impact. We must also remember that the Boscotrecase painting has been subject to much greater restoration. Does this mean the Boscotrecase painting is poorer? And how can this be in a house where money was no object and the best artists would have been used? Perhaps, the answer is the context of the respective rooms. In Pompeii the wall painting was in an enclosed dining room that contained four paintings. In Boscotrecase it was one of two (possible three paintings) in a room that looked out onto a terrace and a spectacular view of the bay of Naples. Maybe, one painting was a talking point over dinner with larger figures to make the story clearer and the other was a decorative element in a

room designed to impress through the view it provided.

<u>Notes</u>

 The beautiful Andromeda was the daughter of the Ethiopian king Cepheus and queen Cassiopeia. One day, the vain queen had bragged that her daughter Andromeda was more beautiful than the Nereids ('near-e-eds'), the sea nymphs. The sea nymphs fell angry to hear that and complained to Poseidon, the god of the sea. A furious Poseidon unleashed the sea monster Cetus to frequently ravage the coast and devastate the land of Ethiopia in order to avenge the insult to his wards, the Nereids. The desperate king Cephus appealed Zeus, who suggested the sacrifice of Andromeda as the only way to appease the wrathful Poseidon. One of the greatest heroes of Greek mythology, Perseus was flying by after killing the Gorgon Medusa by cutting off her head. He saw Andromeda chained helplessly onto the rocks, awaiting her doom and immediately fell in love and promptly killed the monster Cetus. Perseus then took Andromeda to her father Cepheus and asked for her hand in marriage. This infuriated Andromeda's uncle Phineus, to whom the maiden was already promised. During the ensuing quarrel, Perseus turned Phineus into a stone by showing him the head of the Gorgon Medusa. (see https://www.greeka.com/greece-myths/perseus-andromeda.htm)

References

https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/works-of-art/20.192.17/ https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/works-of-art/20.192.16/



Aldobrandini Wedding, Vatican Museums

- This is one part of a wall painting found in Rome about 1600 and installed by its first owner **Cardinal Aldobrandini** in a purpose built pavilion in his garden. It has been **heavily restored** over the years. It enjoyed **enormous fame and prestige** as it was one of the few and most influential paintings from the Roman empire. It and was copied or adapted by many artists from Anthony Van Dyck to Nicolas Poussin.
- It is not clear what the painting shows, a woman on a bed with her head veiled with female attendants. We do not know but from its discovery it has been assumed to show a wedding. Some think it is the wedding of the parents of Achilles, others the marriage of Alexander the Great, others a wedding scene from a play. All agree it is a wedding with a nervous bride comforted by Venus, bare chested with sandals. It could be the ceremony of water and fire that was used to welcome the bride into her husband's house.
- Its fame is based on being one of the earliest Roman masterpieces to be discovered but the re-emergence of Roman painting had begun in the late fifteenth century by the astonishing discovery of the 'Golden House' of emperor Nero.



Nero's Golden House

- Nero built his Domus Aurea (Golden House) in an area in the centre of ancient Rome that was devastated by a fire in 64 CE. Emperor Vespasian destroyed the palace and filled in the lake to gain popular support and the amphitheatre, the largest in the world, was paid for by the spoils from the sack of Jerusalem in 70 CE.
- Digging down through the foundations of the **Baths of Trajan** on the Esquiline hill opposite the Colosseum a void was discovered. It was realised that is was the ceiling vault of another palace underneath the baths. It was later realised that the earlier palace was Nero's Golden House, **a vast structure that pre-dated** the building of the **Colosseum**.
- Part of the palace encloses a **large lake** which was later **drained and replaced by the Coliseum**. The enormous **statue of Nero** had its **head replaced** to become **Apollo** and it was situated at the entrance to the Coliseum. The Coliseum was originally called the *Amphitheatrum Flavium* but by the 10th century CE it was known by the name of the colossal statue outside. The statue survived into the medieval period and came to symbolize the permanence of Rome. It was eventually pulled own, probably for the bronze, and the name was transferred to the amphitheatre.

- In one of Suetonius' description of the Domus Aurea, this is how the passage goes
 - _
- "A huge statue of Nero, 120 feet high, stood in the entrance hall; and the pillared arcade ran for a whole mile. An enormous pool, more like a sea than a pool, was surrounded by buildings made to resemble cities and by a landscape garden consisting of ploughed fields, vineyards, pastures and woodlands. Here every variety of domestic and wild animal roamed about. Parts of the house were overlaid with gold and studded with precious stones and mother of pearl. All the dining rooms had ceilings of fretted ivory, the panels of which could slide back and let a rain of flowers, or of perfume from hidden sprinklers, fall on his guests. The main dining room was circular, and its roof revolved slowly, day and night, in time with the sky. Sea water, or sulphur water, was always on tap in the baths."



Fourth Style wall paintings in Room 78 of the Domus Aurea (Golden House) of Nero, Rome, Italy

- Before his suicide in 68 CE, Nero was able to witness the extensive gold leaf that gave the villa its name and the extravagant elements of its decor. This included stuccoed ceilings faced with semi-precious stones and ivory veneers, frescoed walls, and major group of rooms having decorations coordinated into different themes for each.
- The Golden House was designed as a **place of entertainment**, as shown by the presence of **300 rooms without any sleeping quarter**. Nero's own palace remained on the Quirinal Hill. No kitchens or latrines have been discovered either.
- The palace had a 35-meter statue in its vestibule, 3 colonnades measuring **1.5** kilometers long, a revolving banquet hall, walls coated with gold and gems, and a man-made lake.



The likely remains of Nero's rotating banquet hall and its underlying mechanism were unveiled by archaeologists on September 29, 2009.

NEXT WEEK

- 1. Impressionism in London
- 2. Modigliani
- 3. Gothic Revival
- 4. Charles I: King and Collector
- 5. A Century of Painting Life
- 6. The Birth of Art Photography
- 7. Picasso 1932
- 8. Monet & Architecture
- 9. The Invention of Antiquity

10. Rodin and Ancient Greece

Term 1: Wed 26 September, to 5 December 2018

- 1. Art after World War One
- 2. The Summer Exhibition
- 3. Mantegna and Bellini
- 4. Burne-Jones
- 5. Klimt and Schiele
- 6. Lorenzo Lotto and His Portraits
- 7. The Turner Prize
- 8. Gainsborough's Family Album
- 9. Van Gogh and Britain
- 10. Michelangelo versus Leonardo

Term 2: Wed 9 January to 13 March 2019 (no half-term)

Art History Revealed – Wednesday 26 September – 5 December, Wednesday 9 January – 13 March (no half-term)

Exhibitions in Start Date Order

- 1. Impressionism in London, Tate Britain, 2 November 2017 7 May 2018
- 2. Modigliani, Tate Modern, 23 November 2017 2 April 2018
- 3. Charles I: King and Collector, Royal Academy, 27 January 15 April 2018
- All Too Human Bacon, Freud and a century of painting life, Tate Britain, 28 February – 27 August 2018
- 5. Victorian Giants: The Birth of Art Photography, National Portrait Gallery, 1 March – 20 May 2018
- 6. Picasso 1932 Love, Fame, Tragedy, Tate Modern, March 8 to September 9, 2018
- 7. Monet & Architecture, National Gallery, 9 April 29 July 2018
- 8. Rodin and the Art of Ancient Greece, British Museum, 26 April 29 July 2018
- Aftermath Art in the Wake of World War One, Tate Britain, 5 June 16 September 2018
- 10. The Great Spectacle: 250 Years of the Summer Exhibition, Royal Academy, 12 June 2018 19 August 2018
- 11. Mantegna and Bellini, National Gallery 1 October 2018 27 January 2019

- 12. Burne-Jones, Tate Britain, 24 October 2018 24 February 2019
- 13. Klimt/Schiele, Drawings from the Albertina Museum, Vienna, Royal Academy, 4 November 2018 – 3 February 2019
- 14. Lorenzo Lotto Portraits, 5 November 2018 10 February 2019
- 15. Gainsborough's Family Album, National Portrait Gallery, 22 November 2018 3 February 2019
- 16. Vincent van Gogh (1853-1890). Tate Britain, March 2019. Van Gogh and Britain will be the first exhibition to take a new look at the artist through his relationship with Britain. It will explore how Van Gogh was inspired by British art, literature and culture throughout his career and how he in turn inspired British artists, from Walter Sickert to Francis Bacon.

<u>Ideas</u>

- Gothic Revival, based on an Andrew Graham Dixon TV programme but without the references to the literature of the period
- The Invention of Antiquity refers to ideas in Mary Beard and John Henderson, *Classical Art from Greece to Rome*, Oxford History of Art Series, 2001, Nigel Spivey, *Understanding Greek Sculpture: Ancient Meanings, Modern Readings*, 1997 and John Boardman, *Greek Art*, Thames & Hudson, 1996
- The Painting War: Michelangelo versus Leonardo described in the novel Oil and Marble, released on 5 July, 2018, and The Lost Battles: Leonardo, Michelangelo and the Artistic Duel That Defined the Renaissance
- The Turner Prize

London Galleries

Wallace British Museum Hayward National Gallery National Portrait Gallery White Cube Serpentine Tate Britain Tate Britain Tate Modern Royal Academy Estorics