



Nemrut-Dagi, Eastern Turkey

ARCHITECTURE    ARCHAEOLOGY    ART    HISTORY    CULTURE    HORTICULTURE    LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE    GARDEN HISTORY

# Newsletter June 2014

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A Year of Lectures in Perth

in conjunction with Friends of the Gallery of WA

Melbourne and Sydney Lecture Series: May - August 2014

Stay In The Loop



**ASA**  
CULTURAL TOURS

AUSTRALIANS STUDYING ABROAD

## The Habsburg Cities: Budapest, Vienna, Prague & Bohemia

29 August - 19 September 2014

Lecturer: Dr John Wreglesworth &  
Dr Iva Rosario

**22 DAYS** Budapest (5 nights) • Vienna  
(7 nights) • Telc (1 night) • Cesky Krumlov  
(1 night) • Prague (7 nights)

**Includes** 4 Musical performances



Parliament Building, Budapest

## Bel Paese: The Ligurian Coast, Tuscany, The Veneto & The Italian Lakes

10 - 30 September 2014

Lecturer: David Henderson

**21 DAYS IN ITALY** Genoa (4 nights) • Lucca  
(2 nights) • Siena (2 nights) • Florence (3 nights) •  
Venice (3 nights) • Mantua (2 nights) • Como  
(2 nights) • Stresa (2 nights)

Study the fine artistic traditions of Genoa, Siena, Florence, and Venice • Take a ferry to the fascinating terraced mountain-sides and picturesque fishing villages of the rugged Cinque Terre • Visit the Etruscan city of Volterra, and Lucca with its 16th century city walls and Romanesque Churches • Attend a concert in the Church of San Giovanni, Lucca • Dine at two beautiful Tuscan villas • Enjoy the genius of Andrea Palladio's palaces and villas in the Veneto • Explore the Byzantine churches in Ravenna • Attend an evening drinks reception and private concert at the home of Rosemary Forbes-Butler in Venice • Visit some of the most beautiful villas and gardens of Northern Italy, especially in the Lake District around Como and Maggiore.

## Cultural Landscapes of the Midi Pyrenees & the Dordogne

Limited  
Room types

16 September - 1 October 2014

Leader: Christopher Wood &  
Shelley Meagher

**16 Days** Toulouse (2 nights) • Albi (3 nights) •  
Conques (1 night) • Saint-Jean-Lespinasse  
(1 night) • Sarlat (4 nights) • Condat-sur-Vézère  
(3 nights) • Bordeaux (1 night)



*For me the rich tapestry of the history and culture of this area was brought to life by Chris & Shelley our excellent, articulate and friendly lecturers. The rich variety of sites and experiences we encountered added to the grand landscapes and beauty of this region of France.*

*Anne, Participant 2013*



## Art and Culture in Spain:

20 September - 10 October 2014

Lecturer: Dr John Wreglesworth

Limited  
Room types

**21 DAYS:** Seville (4 nights) • Granada (3 nights) • Toledo (3 nights) • Ávila (2 nights) • Madrid (4 nights) • Barcelona (4 nights)

*This tour gave me a greater knowledge and understanding of Spanish history and culture. Our group leader John led us through the centuries of this diverse country.*  
John, Participant in 2010

## Uzbekistan: The Silk Road Cities, 23 September - 8 October 2014

Lecturers: Russell Casey & Iain Shearer

**16 DAYS** Tashkent (2 nights) • Samarkand (4 nights) • Bukhara (4 nights) • Khiva (2 nights) • Nukus (1 night) • Tashkent (2 nights)

*I thoroughly enjoyed my trip, Uzbekistan was a real surprise and I delighted in its colour and variety. What I found so important was the variation of the tour – from the history of Uzbekistan and the importance it played on the Silk Road to yurt buildings and fascinating architecture. The colour of textiles and tiles in the mosques, madras's, mausoleums and minarets were beautiful. The ceramics were wonderful and the countryside was dramatic.*

Participant 2012



## SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE

Join ASA Cultural Tours for a unique journey. We believe that learning is as much an act of imagination and experience as a gathering of information. Discover the joy of exploring the world with like minded travellers.

**Diverse destinations & Great selection of shorter programs**

**Fewer hotel changes**

**City Stays, Touring & Cruising**



## TALKING TURKEY

*By Judith Simpson, Sydney, September 2013 (Tour Participant)*

How fortunate we were to choose ***Ottoman Palaces and Poetry: Istanbul, Edirne, Bursa and Beyond*** from the tempting offerings in the 2013 ASA catalogue. We were led by Dr Susan Scollay, who is steeped in Turkish history and culture and has friends throughout the country, and our lively and articulate Turkish guide, Yasemin Bülbül, who both added fascinating information to the bare essentials of the guidebooks.

We began by briskly covering the main landmarks of teeming Istanbul and learnt to identify its skyline; we finished these busy introductory days with a leisurely cruise on the Bosphorus, sampling *mezze* and wine. Then our group became lucky thirteen in the skilful hands of Bülent, driver extraordinaire of a brand new “midi” coach. The main roads and roadhouses in the area were excellent and our vehicle small enough to take us to hill villages and ancient sites. Though Troy is still very incompletely excavated, it’s truly awesome to stand among its stones.

The weather remained hot for the fortnight. Above 30°C most days, it delivered blue skies, perfect evenings, a couple of brief showers and the Aegean warm enough for a dip at Assos. Our knowledge of the Ottoman Empire was extended from the superficial to a more satisfying depth. The mosques and palaces are variously spectacularly proportioned, beautifully decorated, dignified and/or opulent. We can now recognise the standout *çintamani* motif (leopard spots and tiger stripes) and other traditional designs woven into textiles and painted on ceramics. A highlight was a visit to the Iznik Foundation (Iznik is ancient Nicea) where the traditional methods of tile-making are replicated. In the village of Tirilye, Leila proudly sold us *oya*, the crochet-like work made by generations of Turkish women that is currently being revived in myriad forms.

Turkey is a sensual country. Fabrics feel delightful: slippery silks, soft towelling, fine linen and featherweight cashmere. Food looks fresh and tastes delicious. The calls to prayer are loud; caged canaries sing in hotel lobbies; crowds in Istanbul's Grand Bazaar chatter in numerous languages. The sweet fragrance of attar of roses pervades tombs and mosques; cooking odours are spicy and robust. Colours are often flamboyant: the red of the flag matched in heaps of tasty tomatoes and dominating ancient and modern designs; cobalt blue and turquoise splashed across ceramic surfaces; the exceptionally pure white of tile clay echoed by the shells of eggs piled in markets and on breakfast buffets; and touches of olive green, saffron yellow and dramatic pomegranate everywhere.

We'll all have different impressions and memories of our brief trip to this historically important corner of Turkey. Some of us were new to this Asian/European mix; others lured back by enduring curiosity. It was a journey packed with fun and surprises, abundant laughter, and much sharing and joy. And, in Susan's words: "I think it would be fair to say that you'd never have eaten dinner in the dark at a political gathering in the woods outside Edirne/Adrianople in Thrace if you hadn't come on the tour!"

ASA "Ottoman Palaces and Poetry" group on the road, September 2013



Waterfront, Assos, Turkey

## Ottoman Palaces & Poetry: Istanbul, Edirne, Bursa & Beyond 4 - 15 September 2014

**Lecturer: Dr Susan Scollay**

**12 DAYS** Istanbul (4 nights) • Edirne (1 night) • Assos (2 nights) • Bursa (3 nights) • Istanbul (1 night)



Temple of Athena, Assos, Turkey

# NORTHERN WALES



## Conwy Castle (Welsh: Castell Conwy) is a medieval fortification on the

north coast of Wales. It was built by Edward I, during his conquest of Wales, between 1283 and 1289. Constructed as part of a wider project to create the walled town of Conwy, the combined defences cost around £15,000, a huge sum for the period. Over the next few centuries, the castle played an important part in several wars. It withstood the siege of Madog ap Llywelyn in the winter of 1294–95, acted as a temporary haven for Richard II in 1399 and was held for several months by forces loyal to Owain Glyndŵr in 1401.

Following the outbreak of the English Civil War in 1642, the castle was held by forces loyal to Charles I, holding out until 1646 when it surrendered to the Parliamentary armies. In the aftermath the castle was partially slighted by Parliament to prevent it being used in any further revolt, and was finally completely ruined in 1665 when its remaining iron and lead was stripped and sold off. Conwy Castle became an attractive destination for painters in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Visitor numbers grew and initial restoration work was carried out in the second half of the 19th century.

UNESCO considers Conwy to be one of "the finest examples of late 13th century and early 14th century military architecture in Europe", and it is classed as a World Heritage site. The rectangular castle is built from local and imported stone and occupies a coastal ridge, originally overlooking an important crossing point over the River Conwy. Divided into an Inner and an Outer Ward, it is defended by eight large towers and two barbicans, with a postern gate leading down to the river, allowing the castle to be resupplied from the sea. It retains the earliest surviving stone machicolations in Britain and what historian Jeremy Ashbee has described as the "best preserved suite of medieval private royal chambers in England and Wales". In keeping with other Edwardian castles in North Wales, the architecture of Conwy has close links to that found in the kingdom of Savoy during the same period, an influence probably derived from the Savoy origins of the main architect, James of Saint George.

# Castle Harlech's

battlements spring out of a near-vertical cliff-face.

'Men of Harlech.' The nation's unofficial anthem, loved by rugby fans and regimental bands alike, is said to describe the longest siege in British history (1461-1468) which took place here during the War of the Roses.

Edward's tried and tested 'walls within walls' model was rapidly put together between 1283 and 1295 by an army of nearly a thousand skilled craftsmen and labourers. Edward liked to use only the best masons from Savoy and England's finest carpenters and blacksmiths. At the time this was one of the cheapest of Edward's castles. Costing a mere £8,190.



The structure, overseen by Master of the King's Works, James of St George, boasts two rings of walls and towers, with an immensely strong east gatehouse. It was impregnable from almost every angle. Its secret weapon was a 200-foot (61m) long stairway which still leads from the castle to the cliff base. Access via the stairway to the sea and crucial supplies kept the castle's besieged inhabitants fed and watered. When it was first built, a channel would have connected the castle and the sea. You could have sailed a boat up to the moat. Seven hundred years later, the sea has receded and you could say the castle appears almost stranded, waiting for the tide to turn once more.

# Bodysgallen Hall

This 17th century manor house is in Conwy county borough, north Wales, near the village of Llanrhos. Bodysgallen is surrounded by over 200 acres of its own parkland and beautiful gardens - both manicured and wild.

The gardens have been recognised for their award winning restoration. Featured within the estate's grounds are a rare 17th century parterre of box hedges filled with sweet-scented herbs, naturally occurring limestone outcrops, a rockery with a cascade, a walled garden, lily-pad ponds, and several follies. The gardens also include a formal rose garden and a number of well-established and interesting trees and shrubs including medlar and mulberry, which add further dimension to the gardens.

Various springs traverse the parklands, and there are several woodland walks such as the Terrace Walk, the Ladies Walk, the Eastern Covert Walk or the Pydew Village Walk that lead to a Gothic Tower and the obelisk located on top of Pydew mountain.



[ASA's Great Castles, Country Houses & Gardens of Yorkshire, Derbyshire and Wales tour concludes with a 3 night stay at this majestic Hall.](#)

# Portmeirion Village

Portmeirion stands on a rugged clifftop on its own private peninsula overlooking Cardigan Bay. It is surrounded by 145 acres of sub-tropical woodlands and miles of sandy beaches. Portmeirion was built by visionary Welsh architect, Sir Clough Williams-Ellis, who wanted to prove that development did not have to mean destruction of the natural environment.



He started work in 1925 and completed the village during the early 1970's. He died in 1978, aged 95. Portmeirion is now acknowledged as a unique architectural work of art.

## Great Castles, Country Houses & Gardens of Yorkshire, Derbyshire and Wales

**2 - 21 June 2014**

**Richard Heathcote**, Director of Carrick Hill, Adelaide, leads us on a fascinating tour through dramatic and picturesque locations to explore the ways in which British identity has been formed and moulded by her histories and landscapes. We'll visit medieval castles, country houses and gardens, many by exclusive private invitation, spanning time from the late Middle Ages, through the Tudor, Elizabethan, Jacobean, Georgian periods and culminating with the Arts and Crafts Movement. Dales and vales frame picturesque villages, spa towns and historic cities as we travel through more than half a dozen counties. History, laced with eccentricity, will be exposed and explored in our travels to the Sitwell's family home at Renishaw, grand Chatsworth House, spectacular Fountains Abbey, Newby Hall, Castle Howard and Harewood House. We'll experience exquisite timbered Elizabethan dwellings like Little Moreton Hall; York's finest Georgian town house (Fairfax House) and the city's sublime Minster. In Derbyshire we explore the stunning Peak District and James Bateman's amazing Victorian garden at Biddulph Grange; unearth the genesis of industrial England at Quarry Bank Mill; and attend a performance at Buxton's grand Edwardian Opera House. While based in the medieval and Roman walled city of Chester we visit the revitalized port city of Liverpool, home of world class fine art collections at the Walker Art Gallery and Tate Modern. Our journey through the wild beauty of North Wales includes a cogwheel train to the summit of Mount Snowdon and a study of the region's rich archaeological heritage with visits to Anglesey Island - last stronghold of the Celtic Druids - and Edward I's magnificently preserved castles at Conwy, Harlech and Caernarfon. It is no surprise that so many great BBC series, including *Pride and Prejudice*, *Brideshead Revisited* and *All Creatures Great and Small*, were filmed in places we visit, for this tour offers a stunning visual feast of the best of England with a dash of delightfully dramatic Wales.

**20 DAYS:** York (6 nights) • Buxton (4 nights) • Chester (3 nights) • Portmeirion (3 nights) • Conwy (3 nights)



## LAST MINUTE – RARE OPPORTUNITY

Join this extraordinary tour exploring the contemporary and classic art in China and Singapore with Norbert Loeffler and his visual arts students from the Victorian College of the Arts. This affordable program is designed to coincide with the **Singapore Biennale**.

### VCA Visual Arts Program Beijing, Shanghai & Singapore

with Norbert Loeffler

**19 September - 3 October 2014**

PHYSICAL ENDURANCE LEVEL ☆☆☆

**15 DAYS:** Beijing (5 nights) • Shanghai (5 nights) • Singapore (4 nights)



#### INTRODUCTION

This fifteen-day tour will visit major art centres in Beijing, Shanghai and Singapore. The focus of this tour is contemporary art, the art of Communist China, and classic Chinese art. We will visit the important museums, galleries and art centres in the above cities. Your tour leader, Norbert Loeffler, will take participants to the various locations and give commentaries on the available art - please note; in some galleries there are restrictions on talking to groups inside the galleries. Norbert will also present introductions to the history and unique culture of the cities and provide information on other places of interest within them. There will be a daily program, however, all organised activity is informal and voluntary on your part. You will be free to pursue a personal itinerary on any day.



A limited number of places for non-students have become available for this small group tour (max 20 participants). **Bookings close Tuesday 17 June.** Call ASA to obtain an itinerary and reservation application.

#### Tour Price

\$3890.00 Twin Share      \$850.00 Twin (as Single) Room Supplement

**Includes:** Economy class Airfares Melbourne/ Beijing/ Shanghai/ Singapore/ Melbourne • Accommodation • Breakfast daily • Airport-hotel transfers

**Tour price does not include:** Personal spending money for lunch, dinner, gallery entrance fees, public transport within cities etc, - \$1500.00 AUD approximately • Luggage in excess of 20 kg • Porterage at airports, hotels or railway stations • Travel insurance

# El Greco: Man of Two Worlds - and Beyond.

Here's a Trivial Pursuits question:

Can you name an artist and sculptor known universally by an ethnic nickname?

The answer is (of course!) Domenikos Theotokopoulos, who was born on Crete but found a home abroad for over forty years, continued to sign paintings with his full name in Greek letters, sometimes adding Kres (Cretan). In this way he kept in touch with his origins but, helpfully, eased a long life among strangers by adopting a simpler Italian, rather than Spanish, version of his name for everyday use. And in Spain, Dominico Greco was to create the masterpieces that would earn him artistic

immortality as El Greco (the Greek). A uniquely personal style, with distorted figures and hallucinatory colours, left no followers or artistic school. For over three centuries he was ignored as an eccentric footnote in Spanish art history before being hailed as an influence by Cézanne, Picasso and Jackson Pollock. Throughout 2014, the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of El Greco's death will be commemorated by international exhibitions as well as in Toledo, itself a living museum of his work.

Surprisingly little is known for certain about El Greco's life. It must be patched together from scattered documents and the tantalising notes written in the margins of books from his library with a liberal threadwork of 'possibly' and 'perhaps'. His family remains in the shadows. El Greco's father was a tax collector with shipping interests. Nothing is known of his mother nor of his first wife. Manoussos, an elder brother, who made a living as a merchant and, perhaps, a part-time pirate, ended his days in 1604 at El Greco's Toledan home. The artist himself was, probably, born in 1541 on Crete at Candia, now Heraklion, a self-styled second Venice.

His native homeland had long been a keystone of the Venetian maritime empire. A narrow, limestone island, some 90 miles long, Crete had been bought cheaply in 1205 and then ruthlessly exploited, at a great cost in blood and treasure, for the next 450 years. It straddled two great trade routes: one to Constantinople and the Black Sea, the other to Syria and Egypt. Enterprising and ruthless merchants created from Venice an empire of ports and fortresses that represented Europe's first full-blown colonial experiment. Despite vigorous action throughout their Stato da Mar (State of the Sea) to preserve a clear identity for Venetians, by the 16<sup>th</sup> century there was a clear blurring of the divisions between Greek Orthodox Cretans and their Catholic overlords in culture, education and religion.

El Greco's Crete was no cultural backwater. After the fall of Constantinople to the Ottoman Turks in 1453, it became one of the last beacons of Byzantine civilisation, with over 150 artists known to have worked there. Nothing is known about El Greco's education but he was clearly at ease with intellectuals, eventually amassing a library of over 100 scholarly books in Greek, Italian and Spanish. It is certain that he trained as an artist in the Byzantine style, learning the traditional techniques of icon production. Remarkably, one picture, the delicate *Dormition of*

Self portrait



*the Virgin*, signed with his Greek name, was discovered in 1983. Dated 1567, it was painted in tempera on wood, with human figures presented in traditional dress and style. But it already has intriguing hints of Italian influence with the signature itself and a picture composition which seems to include the different Greek Orthodox and Catholic doctrines on Mary's death.

Around 1568, while in his mid-20's, El Greco left Crete, never to return, for Venice, where he made an even more remarkable intellectual journey as an artist: from medieval Byzantium to Renaissance Italy. During 10 years in Venice and, more briefly, Rome, he abandoned wooden boards and tempera for canvas and oils. He adopted the fashionable 'Mannerist' style with its elongated figures and artificial poses. In terms of technique, El Greco became a Venetian painter, learning from Titian's colours and Tintoretto's lighting. During time spent in Rome, he experienced at first-hand the work of Michelangelo and Raphael.



Dormition of the Virgin

But the Cretan outsider had an uncompromising sense of his own ability: 'I was created', he claimed, 'by the all-powerful God to fill the universe with my masterpieces.', a boast which brought uncomfortable consequences. He offered to repaint Michelangelo's masterpiece *Last Judgement* in the Sistine Chapel, covering up the nude figures. Such disrespect as well as a spiky personality made El Greco enemies among the Roman artistic world. Worse, he fell out with Cardinal Alexander Farnese (1520-1589), the most influential patron of the arts in Rome, and came to reflect that, 'I suffer for my art and despise the witless moneyed scoundrels who praise it.' It was probably the search for rewarding commissions that led El Greco to quit Italy for good in 1577 and travel farther west, seeking his fortune in Spain, the wealthiest state in Christian Europe.

The migrant Cretan, now a mature artist in the prime of life, took up residence in the ancient capital city of Toledo which was to be home until the close of his life in 1614. El Greco's hopes of royal patronage rested with Philip II's ambitious plans to decorate the huge monastery-palace complex being built at El Escorial, north of Madrid. He submitted two paintings *The Dream of Philip II*, c. 1579, and *The Martyrdom of St Maurice and the Theban Legion*, c.1583. The second painting, especially, met with royal disapproval from a king with distinctive, and occasionally surprising, artistic tastes. (Unpredictably, he was the most important collector of Hieronymus Bosch.) The reasons for Philip's rejection are not clear although he did pay El Greco handsomely for a painting that was only considered appropriate for the chapterhouse rather than the intended high altar. Disappointingly for the artist, however, there were to be no further royal commissions.

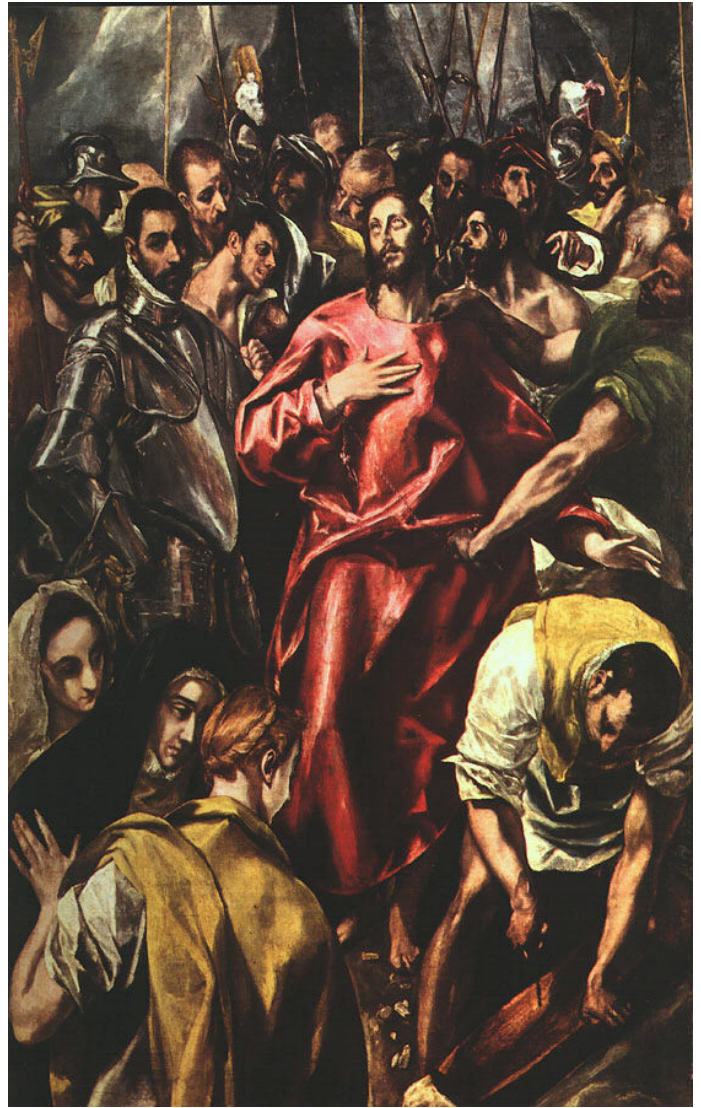
Failure to secure preference from the king strengthened El Greco's attachment to Toledo. Since arriving there in 1577, he had found a partner, Jerónima de las Cuevas, with whom he had a son, Jorge Manuel in 1578. Contracts show the artist renting a suite of rooms, with work area, in a palace belonging to the Marqués of Villena in the former Jewish quarter of Toledo. The property eventually collapsed although the current Casa Museo del Greco (House Museum of El Greco) offers a sympathetic recreation of 17<sup>th</sup> century Toledan architecture.

El Greco benefited from contacts made in Rome to secure work in Toledo with commissions for three altarpieces for the church of Santo Domingo el Antiguo. At the same time in 1577-1579, he was contracted to paint *The Disrobing of Christ* for the vestry of Toledo Cathedral. These impressive works were to be the foundation for later success.

At that time in Spain, payment for art works was reached by artist and client naming an expert who made a recommendation that was meant to be mutually acceptable. For the Santo Domingo paintings, El Greco himself dropped his proposed fee from 1500 to 1000 ducats. For *The Disrobing of Christ* he requested 900 ducats while the cathedral authorities offered only a much more modest 227 ducats. Eventually, in 1587, El Greco agreed to add a three-dimensional scene of the Virgin Mary for a final settlement of 535 ducats. No further contracts were offered by the cathedral authorities. It was, however, only the first in a series of lawsuits that followed almost all of his major commissions. Despite such frequent litigation and the handicap of royal rejection, El Greco's artistic career, with its increasingly personal style, thrived in the circle of monasteries, churches and collectors in Toledo.

El Greco's years in Toledo from 1579 to 1614, and especially after 1596, were prosperous and productive. An ambitious, scholarly loner with trenchant opinions and an acute sense of his own worth, he mingled with churchmen, lawyers, poets and free-thinking humanists. No evidence exists to suggest that El Greco belonged to any artistic guild or religious brotherhood in Toledo. On the other hand, he evidently maintained links with the city's Greek population: two professors witnessed his last will and testament. More controversially, El Greco acted as interpreter at sessions of the Spanish Inquisition in support of a Greek servant who had been accused of heresy (and was eventually acquitted.) There was also a delight in extravagant pleasure, as he dined to the usual accompaniment of a small orchestra. Such lavish tastes inevitably contributed to financial difficulties, possibly worsened by an unspecified but serious illness, at the end of El Greco's career. He was buried in the convent church of Santo Domingo el Antiguo, home for his earliest Toledan paintings. The tomb is still pointed out to visitors but El Greco has proved as elusive in death as in life. Characteristically, there was a dispute with the convent's nuns over the price to be paid for the paintings in his funeral chapel. In 1618 Jorge Theotokopoulos then removed his father's coffin elsewhere, to the church of San Torcuato. When the place was demolished in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, the physical remains were finally lost.

El Greco had a prolific rate of production as an artist, working principally as a painter but also as an architect and sculptor. An inventory of possessions at death included 143 largely unfinished pictures as well as 45 models in wax, wood and plaster. There have been the familiar disputes about whether paintings are attributable to El Greco or, more properly, to his workshop or, perhaps, that of his son, Jorge. The generally agreed figure for El Greco's output of paintings comes in at around 500. He also enjoyed a high reputation for complete altar composition as architect, painter and sculptor, with the convent church of Santo Domingo el Antiguo as his finest achievement.



The Disrobing of Christ (1583-84, canvas)

Most of El Greco's painting treated religious themes, apostles, saints and scenes from the life of Christ, as public or private commissions. He was also a noted portraitist, combining a study of the subject's appearance and inner character, especially through highly expressive eyes and hands. His *Noble with a Hand on his Chest* captured the essence of 16<sup>th</sup> century Spanish aristocratic dignity. In 1600 El Greco completed a portrait of Cardinal Niño de Guevara, chief Inquisitor of Spain. One element is curious. The subject is wearing round spectacles, held in place by threads. It is an intriguing artistic detail at a time when the propriety of wearing eyeglasses was under debate. Through this, El Greco depicts a powerful individual, confident in his authority, who could commission an artist rejected by King Philip II while publicly adopting the most controversial eyewear of his time.

Another revealing element of El Greco's work was the landscapes of Toledo, his adopted home, in its austere splendour. By contrast with the accurate depiction of the city drawn in 1563 by Anton de Wyngaerde as part of a series for Philip II, the Toledo portrayed by El Greco in two paintings from 1610 is a shimmering dream-like vision of a new Jerusalem beneath angry storm-bearing clouds. The city also forms an otherworldly background for El Greco's *Laocoön*, his version of the Greek myth in which a priest and two sons who opposed dragging the fabled Wooden Horse into Troy are killed by sea serpents.

El Greco's highly distinctive art flowered and flourished for 37 years in Toledo. His paintings are filled with elongated, often writhing, figures, startlingly acid colours, unreal perspectives and extravagant contrasts of light with shadow. This art moved from the flat symbolic world of Byzantine icons to the humanistic vision of Renaissance Italy but then turned back to Byzantium for a mystical conception of man's relationship with the world and with God. El Greco rejected the world of simple appearances for the realm of the intellect and spirit. (A long-standing interest in Greek philosophy, with its separation of the physical and material, was expressed in his art.) Bodies become shimmering pillars of energy, illuminated by an inner light. It has been suggested (but firmly rejected!) that he suffered from some form of eye defect or, even, madness. El Greco's religious pictures, with their dynamism and elegance, are art as a visionary experience. He worked on such subjects at a time when theology was a shifting quicksand. Having survived the Protestant Reformation, the Catholic church emerged with renewed vigour as a result of the Counter-Reformation, its own parallel process of revitalisation. The wealth of commissions for El Greco show that his style appealed to the artistic tastes of Counter-Reformation Toledo with its exaltation of religious zeal. His art was a visual counterpart to the deeply mystical writings of charismatic individuals such as St. Teresa of Ávila (1515-1582) or St. John of the Cross (1542-1591).

As an artist, El Greco might be said to have been born posthumously. His masterpieces were as remote from possible followers as the extraordinary works of William Blake in later centuries. The taste for Mannerism's elongated figures and artificial poses was overtaken by the drama and movement of Baroque art. El Greco was 'rediscovered' in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as a precursor to Cubism and Expressionism, with an influence on artists such as Cézanne and Picasso.

To mark the fourth centenary of El Greco's death, Spain is hosting many exhibitions of the highest quality, uniting many of his now-scattered works. His long-term home Toledo, especially, will be prominent in honouring its



Toledo 1610

adopted son. There is no better way to appreciate the immortal union of Cretan immigrant and adopted home than by exploring on foot the ancient heart of Toledo. Here you can find masterpieces in museums such as the Casa Museo del Greco or the Museo de Santa Cruz . You can still find some of his finest achievements in the place for which they were intended: The *Disrobing of Christ* in Toledo cathedral, *The Burial of the Count of Orgaz* in the church of Sao Tomé or the altarpieces of Santo Domingo el Antiguo. Perhaps most exhilarating, is to leave the city for a famous look-out point with a view of Toledo across the gorge of the river Tagus that is, essentially, still a vista that the artist himself would have recognised. And you may even experience a moment beneath an apocalyptic sky of purple thunderheads for the closest connection with El Greco's artistic vision.

*'Crete gave him life and art, Toledo a better home,  
where through death he attained eternal life.'*

by Dr John Wreglesworth



## Art & Culture in Spain

20 September - 10 October 2014

**Lecturer: Dr John Wreglesworth**

**21 DAYS:** Seville (4 nights) • Granada (3 nights) • Toledo (3 nights) • Ávila (2 nights) • Madrid (4 nights) • Barcelona (4 nights)

Closing soon  
Limited availability  
Operates bi yearly

## Andalucia:

Christians and Muslims  
in Southern Spain

26 April - 11 May 2015

**Lecturer: Dr John Wreglesworth**

**16DAYS:** Seville (3 nights) • Córdoba (2 nights) • Úbeda (1 night) • Almería (1 night) • Granada (3 nights) • Ronda (2 nights) • Cádiz (3 nights)

## A Travel Sketchbook: Painting Paris in Watercolour

11 - 20 May 2015

**Lecturer: David Henderson**

**10 DAYS:** Studio Apartments, Citadines Saint-Germain-des-Prés, Paris

\* This tour is limited to 18 participants

Short  
Program

Notre Dame, painting by David Henderson



This tour led by practising artist **David Henderson** will combine visits to major art collections with a series of watercolour painting workshops in specially chosen sites in and around this most evocative of cities: from the quais of the Seine to public squares and gardens. Artists of all levels of experience and those who do not wish to paint are welcome. Museum visits will highlight landscape painting and the development of the *plein air* tradition in France. In the Louvre, we discuss the landscape sketch and the way in which this relatively modest art form achieved a privileged status in the Romantic period, culminating in the sparkling lyricism of Corot. At the École des Beaux Arts we explore the ideals of

the academy as reflected in its outstanding collection. A visit to the Musée d'Orsay will provide the opportunity to study the techniques of artists who brought new ways of seeing to the world, including Manet, Cézanne and Degas. This will be complemented by a walking tour and painting session in Montmartre, an area steeped in associations with Renoir, Van Gogh, Modigliani and others. We also visit the studio of Thierry Duval, a French painter who manages to create highly realistic pictures using watercolors. We visit the little town of Auvers-sur-Oise where Corot and Daubigny set up studios before the fateful arrival of Vincent Van Gogh; afterwards, we travel to nearby Pontoise, where Cézanne and Pissarro worked side by side. At Les Andelys, a riverside town nestling in the shadow of a craggy fortress, we shall work alongside Parisian outdoor painting group 'Les Rats des Champs'. In the Musée de l'Orangerie, we focus on Claude Monet's epic series of waterlilies in preparation for a visit to his celebrated garden at Giverny, conceived as a kind of laboratory for research into the mysteries of light and colour. We stay at the Citadines Apart'Hotel Paris Saint-Germain-des-Prés, chosen for its ideal location on the Left Bank, opposite the Île de la Cité and a stone's throw from the Sainte-Chapelle, Notre-Dame and the buzzing Saint-Michel quarter with its maze of quaint little streets lined with restaurants, antique dealers and fashion boutiques.

# New Tour

Gypsy Girl Mosaic, Zeugma Mosaic Museum, Gaziantep



## Turkey Beyond the Euphrates: Discovering the Eastern Frontier

8 - 27 May 2015

**Lecturer: Iain Shearer & Susan Aykut**

**20 DAYS:** Gaziantep (2 nights) • Karadut (1 night) • Sanliurfa (3 nights) • Mardin (2 nights) • Midyat (1 night) • Van (4 nights) • Kars (2 nights) • Erzurum (2 nights) • Trabzon (1 night) • Istanbul (1 night)

## A Visual Essay

Urfa Balikli Gol



Harran

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Left: Kurdish Castle of Hosap, Güzelsu , Ancient city of Hasankeyf, Armenian Church of the Holy Cross, Akdamar Island  
Right: Mt Ararat, Ruined Armenian City of Ani, Midyat, Mardin

# GÖBEKLI TEPE

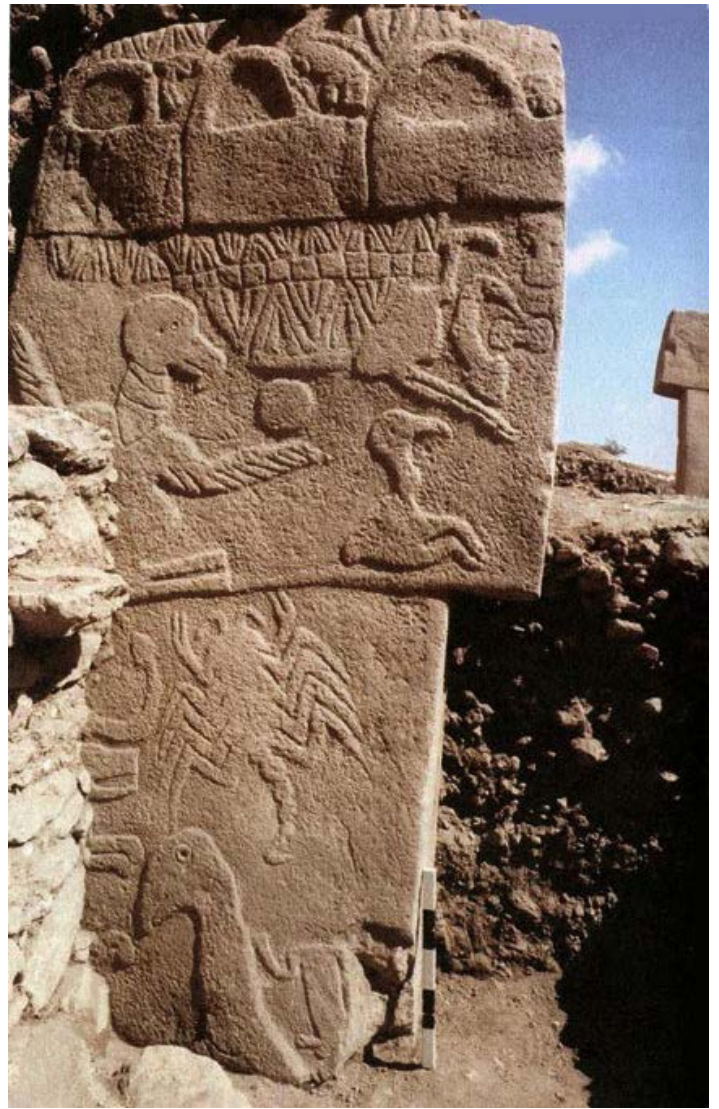
THE WORLD'S EARLIEST MEGALITHIC CIVILISATION ... DECIPHERED



Gobekli Tepe: not a name familiar to most of us as Stonehenge, Jerusalem or Giza, and yet Gobekli Tepe is the earliest known excavated religious site found anywhere in the world. A most extraordinary, even eerie place, that sits atop a blasted hill in the sun-scorched rolling landscape of south eastern Turkey, here 11,500 years ago people gathered and worked to the rhythm of the same ingrained human impulse that raised pillars and sculpture to Athena on Pericles' great temple on the Acropolis; a creative impulse that piled high millions of baked bricks under the scorching Mesopotamian sun to erect the Ziggurat at Ur; hewed, carved and chiseled to create a living monument to the glory of God – the beautiful cathedral at Chartres; At Gobekli Tepe, the same impulse drove people to hew from the living bedrock a circle of stone pillars, decorated with carved predatory beasts, to loom above the gathered multitude. The first stone circle at Gobekli Tepe predates Stonehenge by 8500 years, the Great Pyramid of Khufu by 9000 years and Hagia Sophia by 10,000 years - an almost unimaginable span of time and yet Gobekli Tepe is immediately recognizable as a human place, created by that understandable need shared by us all, to try and control, sculpt and dominate the landscapes of our lives.

Gobekli Tepe means "Pot-bellied Hill" and a more appropriate name couldn't be given, as the site had originally been identified and dismissed as a medieval Islamic necropolis during the 1960s by researchers from Istanbul University and the University of Chicago, before birthing her first secrets to a German archaeologist, Klaus Schmidt in 1995. Since Schmidt's original and correct identification of the site as a place of intense prehistoric activity, Gobekli Tepe has continued to reveal her further secrets, with 20 separate stone circles, some with megaliths standing 18 feet high and weighing 16 tons, all carved with extraordinary images. The various circles all follow the same basic plan of limestone T-shaped pillars surrounding a circular space, which supports two smaller central pillars. The T-shaped megaliths all "face" inwards towards the centre of the circle, linked to one another by low supporting walls, and carved with predatory and dangerous beasts: scorpions, lions and wild boar scuttle, prowl and charge frozen forever in this chthonic place. Schmidt suggests that the T-shape pillars represent a stylized human form and that the animal and abstract carvings are either protective symbols, or images of divine figures to be appeased. Even more extraordinary than the scale and age of Gobekli Tepe is that all the carved megaliths were hewn from the

bedrock with only flint and obsidian tools, at a time when humanity in the Near East was only just beginning to domesticate plants and animals. Even more bewildering than the original meaning of the carvings at Gobekli Tepe is that the creator's skill degraded over time and later stone circles are cruder in design and imagery than the earliest megaliths. Analysing ancient pollen trapped in the soil with which the builders of the stone circles gradually and systematically entombed and buried their own creations, Schmidt noticed a steady drying of the local climate up to the creation of the last stone circle around 8200 BCE. When the first stone circle was hewn and carved in 9000 BCE, the blasted, arid landscape of today's Gobekli Tepe was wildly different: a fertile, green landscape of rippling meadows of wild barley, wild wheat, countless flowers, herds of grazing gazelle, free flowing rivers filled with fish and flocks of wild duck, woodlands of fruit and nut trees and a balmy climate of warm sunshine and regular rainfall. A millennium later this paradise was gone, replaced by a harsher, hotter and dryer climate, a shift corresponding with the end of construction at Gobekli Tepe. Schmidt wonders if this "failure" of the divine powers led to the site's final abandonment and that as other stories recorded in the Bible including the Great Flood of Noah have their precursors in Sumerian myth, whether a dimly



recalled folk memory of Gobekli Tepe, a place that once overflowed with milk and honey and protected people from darkness, is commemorated in the very earliest book of the Bible: Genesis and the story of the expulsion from the Garden of Eden. Whether Schmidt's theory is true or not, Gobekli Tepe is one of the places in our world that demands engagement and imagining – a foundation brick in the edifice of human achievement.

**Written by  
Iain Shearer**

# Feature Hotel

## Valamar Riviera Hotel, Porec, Croatia

Location, Location, Location, Location.....



The elegant 4 star, Valamar Riviera, boutique Hotel is located on the Poreč waterfront promenade, only a few steps from the historic old town, providing panoramic views of St. Nikola island and the port. Just a short stroll from the hotel is the old town and heart of Poreč showcasing the fascinating culture Croatia is famed for. It's a town where history lives and breathes in its art, historical sights and remarkable architecture along its cobbled streets and lanes. You can visit the 1st century temples of Mars and Neptune or take in the splendour of classical concerts at the spectacular Euphrasian Basilica, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, with its remarkable mosaics and marble columns.



Top: View of the hotel and promenade, Left Outdoor lounge, bar at the hotel.  
Right: Guest Room, Right Bottom: Floor Mosaic Euphrasian Basilica

### An Adriatic Journey: from Trieste to Dubrovnik 4 - 20 May 2015

**Lecturer: Prof Frank Sear**

**22 DAYS:** Trieste (2 nights) • Porec (2 nights) • Plitvice Lakes (1 night) • Zadar (2 nights) • Split (2 nights) • Hvar (2 nights) • Mostar (1 night) • Dubrovnik (4 nights)

Emeritus Professor Frank Sear shows how Greek, Roman, Byzantine, Croat, Venetian, Austro-Hungarian & Turkish culture and trade travelled the sparkling Adriatic as you journey along Croatia's magnificent panoramic coastline.

*'Congratulations on masterminding a flawless tour. Some of our companions were repeat travellers with ASA and it was interesting listening to the glowing reports. My mind is still spinning with all the history and anecdotes taken on board during the trip.'* Wendy Stephens, participant 2014





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Melbourne and Sydney

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## Sydney

Lecture Theatre, The Australian Museum  
Cnr College & William Sts, Sydney, NSW

# ASA Free Public Lecture Series

## **Melbourne Saturday 31 May 2014**

## **Sydney Sunday 1 June 2014**

- 1.00 - 1.50pm Blood, Sweat & Tears: Southern Italy & Sicily in the Age of Baroque  
by John Weretka
- 1.50 - 2.20pm Break
- 2.20 - 3.10pm The Hidden Renaissance: Forgotten Masterpieces of Tuscany  
by Prof. Bernard Hoffert
- 3.20 - 4.10pm Mosaics and Magnificence: the Spectacle of Colour in Venetian Art,  
Architecture and Design by Prof. Bernard Hoffert

## **Melbourne Saturday 21 June 2014**

## **Sydney Sunday 22 June 2014**

- 1.00 - 1.50pm Bhutan: the Himalayan Kingdom of Gross National Happiness  
by Dr Alex McKay
- 1.50 - 2.20pm Break
- 2.20 - 3.10pm Eastern Turkey: Beyond the Euphrates by Iain Shearer
- 3.20 - 4.10pm India: Between the Mountains and the Plains by Dr Alex McKay

## **Melbourne Saturday 5 July 2014**

## **Sydney Sunday 20 July 2014**

- 1.00 - 1.50pm Glories of the Great Kings: the Wonder of Persia by Iain Shearer
- 1.50 - 2.20pm Break
- 2.20 - 3.10pm Dalmatia: the Cultural Heritage of Croatia's Adriatic coast  
by Prof. Frank Sear
- 3.20 - 4.10pm The Timurid Legacy: the Shaping of Central Asia by Iain Shearer

## **Melbourne Saturday 2 August 2014**

## **Sydney Sunday 3 August 2014**

- 1.00 - 1.50pm Noble and Ancient Places of Northern England and Wales  
by Richard Heathcote
- 1.50 - 2.20pm Break
- 2.20 - 3.10pm The Allure of Libraries and our Love Affair with Books by Shane Carmody
- 3.20 - 4.10pm In Search of Paradise: Artists and Writers in the South of France



# Perth - ASA Scholars Lecture Series - 2014

## ASA in conjunction with Friends of the Art Gallery of Western Australia

Tuesday 24 June | 6-7.15pm An evening with Professor Frank Sear



Interior Palazzo Farnese, Rome

### Lecture | HIDDEN TREASURES OF ROME

The eternal city is still as captivating today as it was in imperial times. Professor Frank Sear, archaeologist and world expert on ancient Rome, takes you on a visual tour of 'hidden' sites of the city. Many of Rome's most interesting sights are hidden from view, layered or accommodated into new buildings or uses. This is an evening of discovery to learn about the hidden antiquities of this impressive city.

Come and discover for yourself the ancient Rome you will not find in the guide books! On the journey discover some of the Rome's more recent artworks with little known works by Caravaggio, Bernini, Bramante and Raphael revealed.

### Tuesday 29 July | 6-8pm An evening with Dr Susan Scollay

#### Lecture | WOVEN TREASURES: ORIENTAL CARPETS IN EUROPEAN PAINTINGS - FROM HENRY VIII TO MATISSE

The symbolism of oriental carpets in western art has conveyed opulence and influence. Already a high-status component of church and palace inventories in Europe, they played a powerful role from the early Romanesque period, to elegant portraits of European royalty and prosperous members of the emerging middle class of the sixteenth century.

This lecture looks at paintings and history through the vehicle of oriental carpets, from German artist, Hans Holbein the Younger's paintings of Henry VIII standing astride an Ottoman carpet, through to nineteenth century paintings by Matisse.



Portrait of Henry VIII Workshop of Hans Holbein the Younger,

### Tuesday 11 November | 6-8pm An evening with Kenneth W Park

#### Lecture | GREAT ROYAL COLLECTIONS AND PALACE MUSEUMS OF EUROPE

This richly illustrated lecture examines some of Europe's finest palace museums and great royal collections. Come and learn of Kenneth Park's favourites.

We will crisscross Europe from London to Saint Petersburg and Prague to Paris on a grand journey highlighting some of the finest palace museums including the Château de Versailles; the Belvedere, Vienna; and Peterhof, St Petersburg. Kenneth will introduce extraordinary royal collections including the Royal Collection, UK; the Hermitage, St Petersburg; the Prado, Madrid; the Louvre, Paris; and many more.



Interior, Hermitage, St Petersburg

## Sunday 31 August | 2-4.30pm An afternoon with John Patrick



### Lecture 1 | GREAT HOUSES & GARDENS OF ENGLAND

The English have always looked to their country's landscapes as quintessential to their identity. These landscapes include delightful rural countryside but also the manicured 'natural' landscapes of the country's great estates, a paradise of great avenues of trees, lawns, lakes and architectural follies. English landscape gardeners like Capability Brown and Humphrey Repton, inspired by the paintings of Claude Lorraine, broke with the continental tradition of the grand formal garden. Later, Arts and Crafts movement gardeners such as Gertrude Jekyll created more organised, intimate masterpieces. John Patrick's illustrated lecture will chart the relationship between English landscape and gardening as shown in Seizingcote and Hidcote Manor in the Cotswolds, the Nicholsons' Sissinghurst and Great Dixter House and Gardens.



### Lecture 2 | GREAT VILLAS & GORGEOUS GARDENS OF ITALY

Spend an hour immersed in the inspiring gardens of Italy. Explore the northern lake district where strikingly beautiful masterpieces 'swim' in the scintillating azure of Lake Garda and Lake Orta and are framed by the dramatic profile of the Alps. Encounter the genesis of the Renaissance garden in Tuscany's lovely villas dotted along the Arno Valley. Discover the powerful Baroque of the Villa d'Este, Tivoli and be enchanted by what is arguably Italy's greatest masterpiece, the Villa Lante. John Patrick will show how architecture, carefully managed water features and highly organised plantings are orchestrated in the Italian garden tradition.

## Perth - ASA Scholars Lecture Series - 2014

ASA in conjunction with Friends of the Art Gallery of Western Australia

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Tel 08 9492 6750 Email [friends@artgallery.wa.gov.au](mailto:friends@artgallery.wa.gov.au)

### Tuesday 24 June | 6-7.15pm

Central Institute of Technology, Lecture Theatre, Building 1. (Museum Street Entrance)  
Member \$25 / Guest \$35 (No refreshments provided. Doors open 6pm. Lecture starts 6:15pm)

### Tuesday 29 July | 6-8pm

Central Institute of Technology, Lecture Theatre, Building 1 (Museum Street Entrance)  
Members \$30 / Non-members \$40. (inc. refreshments. Doors open 6pm. Lecture 6:45pm)

### Sunday 31 August | 2-4.30pm

AGWA Theatre, enter via James Street Mall

**One lecture:** Members \$30 / Non-members \$35 (inc. afternoon tea) /

**Both lectures:** Members \$50 / Non-members \$60 (inc. afternoon tea)

### Tuesday 11 November | 6-8pm

Central Institute of Technology, Lecture Theatre, Building 1 (Museum Street Entrance)  
Members \$30 / Non-members \$40. (inc. refreshments. Doors open 6pm. Lecture 6:45pm)

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