



Wednesday 8 December

Christmas Lecture and Drinks

Antonio Stradivari: 3 Violins and a Genius

Lecturer: Toby Faber

250 years after Antonio Stradivari's death, his violins and cellos remain the most highly prized instruments in the world, loved by great musicians and capable of fetching fabulous sums when sold. Their tone and beauty are legendary. Every subsequent violin-maker has tried to match them. Not one has succeeded. How can that be? This lecture explores that central mystery. We overview Stradivari's life and methods, and follow the stories of three extraordinary violins up to the present day.



The Bruce-Viotti Stradivarius, 1709

Visits

January, Friday 15 at 11.00am

Freemasons' Hall

A private guided tour of the Grand Temple, the Museum of Freemasonry and Vestibules.

February, Friday 19 at 11.00am

Quentin Blake Centre for Illustration

Come on a private tour of the UK's first centre for illustration founded by Quentin Blake.

March, Wednesday 10 at 2.30pm

Skinner's Hall

Join us for a tour of the stately rooms and courtyard of this historic grade 1 listed Guild Hall, home of the Worshipful Company of Skinners.

May/June, date TBC

Trinity House

Visit Trinity House with its maritime history and see its beautifully appointed state rooms, fine paintings and model treasures.

July, Tuesday 6 at 11.00am

Strawberry Hill House

Private tour of Horace Walpole's 18th century villa; Britain's finest example of Georgian gothic architecture, and its collection of paintings and objects.

September, date TBC

Royal Albert Hall

A behind the scenes tour of this 150 year old building, taking in its history, royal areas, stage and unique stories.

October, date TBC

The National Portrait Gallery

Join us for an exclusive highlights tour and hear behind-the-scenes stories of the sitters and the gallery.

November, Wednesday 17 at 11.00am

British Library

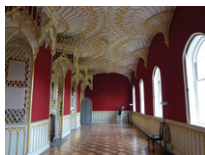
A guided tour of the collections, treasures, reading and book handling rooms and learn about the history of the library and its architecture.



Freemasons' Hall



Skinner's Hall



Strawberry Hill House

Tour

20 - 25 May 2027

The History and Art of Salamanca, Madrid, Segovia & Toledo

Join us for our 6-day tour to the World Heritage site of Salamanca, Madrid, Segovia and Toledo. Each day will include a full programme of excursions and guided visits taking in interesting places such as Museo del Prado, Reina Sofia Museum (home to Picasso's Guernica), San Lorenzo de El Escorial, Alcazar de Segovia, Toledo and much more.

Please visit our website for full details.



Toledo



Avila - Medieval City Walls



Royal Monastery of San Lorenzo de El Escorial

Lectures take place at

**The Sacred Heart Church Hall
Edge Hill, Wimbledon SW19 4LU**

8.00pm (coffee is served from 7.15pm)

Members are also able to view lectures on Zoom

The 10 lectures are included in the membership fee

Visitors/guests are welcome

As a registered charity a donation of £10 per visitor/guest is requested to support our ongoing work

Annual subscription for 2027

Individual membership £45

Joint membership £85 (two people at same address)

Under 30 membership £25

Please visit www.artsocwim.org.uk for application details or contact our Membership Secretary,

Beryl Steeden at b.steeden49@btinternet.com



Full details of all our activities are on our website

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Registered charity number: 1209911



**THE ARTS
SOCIETY
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2027 PROGRAMME



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Lectures

Wednesday 13 January

Murano Glass: The Jewel of Venice

Lecturer: Laurie Wickwire

Discover the remarkable story of Murano, the small island whose master craftsmen elevated glassmaking into one of the world's most celebrated art forms. Our journey begins with the origins of Venice itself, and the building of the 189 canals created to form the floating city. From there we go to Murano to learn of the many enduring styles of glass, the techniques, and delve into the lives of the ancient artisans whose skill is synonymous with excellence throughout the world.



Murano glass, Sommerso

Wednesday 10 February

The Gears of Conquest: The Bayeux Tapestry, Norman Horsemen and the Advent of Chivalry

Lecturer: Dr Tobias Capwell



Bayeux Tapestry, Scene 51

The Norman invasion is commonly understood as the stage on which the medieval knight made his

spectacular debut, trampling 'The Dark Ages' and ushering in 'The Age of Chivalry'. Whilst true, the reality is more complex. The Bayeux Tapestry employs armoured horsemen as a key visual element, but because Norman arms and armour are not well understood, many of the subtleties of the 'tapestry' have been overlooked. This lecture delves into the realities of war at that time to help us better appreciate it.

Wednesday 10 March

Masters and Moderns: Method, Mess and the Materials of Art

Lecturer: Alice White

This lecture gives us an artist's perspective on famous works from the 17th to 21st centuries. We will see Turner and Rembrandt revealed as artistic risk takers, whose new glazes, surfaces and pigments redefined the language of painting, leading the way for modern artists such as Pollock and Fontana. Explore the mess and methodology of the creative processes: from broken brushes to smudged thumbmarks, raw pigments and slashed canvasses and uncover a new angle on looking at paintings.



JMW Turner, *The Blue Rigi, Sunrise*, 1842, Tate

Wednesday 14 April

Tinker, Tailor, Artist, Spy:

Sir Peter Paul Rubens as a Diplomat and Agent

Lecturer: Matthew Wilson

Rubens was not only the most influential painter of his period but also a high-ranking diplomat, spy and negotiator. During his prestigious career, he travelled throughout Europe, was esteemed by the mightiest kings and queens of the age, and his career as an artist was an excellent cover for covert summits and meetings. Uniquely Rubens not only depicted the great events of his age but helped to shape them. You will never look at his art in the same way again.



Peter Paul Rubens, *The Consequences of War*, 1638-1639, Pitti Palace

Wednesday 12 May

Reimagining the Nation: 19th Century Danish Landscapes

Lecturer: James Vaux

In the 19th century, Denmark lost power and territory but produced its finest art. This lecture examines how the Danes used landscape art to re-imagine their new country and charts its rise as a major genre, featuring paintings from Denmark's Golden Age to those of its famous Skagen School. We explore how new motifs and styles were introduced and consider different ways of interpreting landscapes. For those unfamiliar with Danish artists, prepare for a revelation.



Harald Slott-Møller, *Danish Landscape*, 1891, Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen

Wednesday 9 June

Thomas Gainsborough A Life:

'surprising resemblance and perfection'

Lecturer: Dr Matthew Morgan



Thomas Gainsborough, *Mr and Mrs Andrews*, c1750, National Gallery

day, the genre that he truly loved was landscape. In this lecture, for his 300th anniversary year, we will look at his life, work and fraught relationship with portraiture.

Gainsborough was unquestionably one of the greatest portrait painters that Britain has ever produced. His ability to capture the inner lives of his sitters, dramatic use of paint and his remarkable approach to colour set him apart. Yet, although one of the pre-eminent portrait painters of his

Wednesday 8 September

There's more to Life than Lowry: Painting in Northern Britain in the 20th Century

Lecturer: Ed Williams

Lowry's works are the most immediately familiar of any 'provincial' British painter, but his popularity has perhaps cast a shadow over those contemporaries active in Northern Britain around the same time. Who were these often-forgotten artists, who sought



to challenge conventional wisdom, embraced modernism and recognised the urban and natural landscapes of the North? Offering an alternative vision, they invite us to perhaps consider that it might not be so grim up North!

L.S. Lowry, *Industrial Landscape*, 1955, Oil on Canvas, Tate.

Wednesday 13 October

Opium - seduction, greed and art

Lecturer: Amanda Herries

The source of dreams, a hypnotic bringer of sleep, delightful lethargy and relief from pain; Opium (from the Greek 'opion' - poppy juice) is also highly addictive. Greed led to its introduction first to China, and then to Europe. The beguiling seduction of its effects led not only to its use to quieten troubled minds and calm agitated children but also to the creation of great works in music, art and literature. Social and art history meet in this lecture.



Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *Beata Beatrix* c.1871-2, Art Institute of Chicago

Wednesday 10 November

Art in Antarctica: Heroes of the Ice

Dr Henrietta Hammant

For as long as people have been exploring Antarctica, they have made art to help them understand and share their discoveries. Some of the earliest artistic responses to the icy continent are watercolours and photographs, blending scientific documentation with creative interpretation. This lecture uncovers the men behind some of the earliest, and most iconic, images of Antarctica and asks how these artistic representations shape the heroic narratives surrounding its early explorers.



The Antarctic Peninsula. Photo: H Hammant