

# Museum School Classes Fall 2022

## ART AND CULTURAL HISTORY

### Did You Know? Fascinating Facts in the History of Art

Dr. Simon Sibelman; Wednesday, 10-11:30 am pm; October 19, 26; November 2, 9, 16, 30 (six classes); \$95, Members; \$115, nonmembers; Three classes: \$55, Members, \$65, nonmembers; DMFA.

From the ruins of the ancient world to the treasures of Europe, we'll explore some of art history's fascinating and lesser-known facts in six dynamic lectures.

*Co-sponsored by Life Lessons: The Wm. & Margery Sadowsky Center for Adult Learning at the Springfield JCC.*

#### October 19 - Lost Art? Theft, War & Nature

From the *Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum* art heist to the painful destruction by firebombing of precious art in Dresden's historical buildings to the disappearance of Pompei in the 79 CE eruption of Mount Vesuvius, human art has frequently disappeared. Some has reappeared, others remain missing or destroyed. The first lecture in this series will deal with a "museum of lost art," highlighting what has been lost and, what has been found.

#### October 26 - The Sunken Egyptian Cities of Thonis-Heracleion & Canopus?

One of the wonders of the ancient world, the celebrated Pharos (lighthouse) of Alexandria fell victim to a series of earthquakes between 956 and 1323 CE and eventually fell into the sea. Roughly two hundred years before that, two Egyptian cities, Thonis-Heracleion likewise suffered from a series of massive earthquakes before sinking into the Mediterranean Sea. Discovered early in this century, archaeologists have brought to the surface and catalogues over 300 objects that detail the daily and religious lives of these sites and their connection with Osiris.

#### November 2 - The Largest Privately Owned Historic Chateau in France?

Versailles, Chambord, Chenonceaux. Three chateaux in France well connected within the sweep of French history. All state owned. However, quite an inventory of historic homes remain in private hands. The largest in this category is Vaux-le-Vicomte. Nicolas Fouquet undertook construction of his private home utilizing the most talented architects, interior designers, artists, and gardeners. To celebrate the completion of this monumental task, Fouquet invited Louis XIV and the court to Vaux. Unfortunately, Louis was less than impressed. Indeed, he coveted what Fouquet had done as it outshone anything of his own palaces. Thus begins an amazing history of a splendid home across the span of 300 years.

#### November 9 - Benjamin West's Struggle for Modernity?

In the early years of the nineteenth century, Benjamin West was perhaps the best-known artist in the English-speaking world. Though born in the North American colonies, he would eventually make his way to London. His 1770 painting of *The Death of General Wolfe* was immediately considered a masterpiece despite its breaking so many treasured rules for art: paintings should be of religious topics, classical allegory, or convey moral/ethical lessons, or portraits of the "makers and shakers" of society. West sought to paint contemporary subjects using neoclassical style. He was admired by numerous British artists and by King George III. Indeed, West would be one of the voices that assisted in creating the Royal Academy of Art in London.

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### **November 16 - The American Expatriate Artists in Belle-Epoque France?**

At the end of the long nineteenth century, Paris emerged as the artistic capital of the world. During what has been labeled the *Belle-Epoque*, artists from across the globe were drawn to the "City of Lights" and the charged creative atmosphere. A significant number of Americans arrived to soak up the creative, artistic climate, in search of instruction, critical acclaim, and patronage. The names of some ring with clear familiarity: James McNeil Whistler, John Singer Sargent, Mary Cassatt. Others are less well known: William Merritt Chase, John Twachtman, Childe Hassam, and Thomas Wilmer Dewing. This lecture will explore the work of these expatriate artists.

### **November 23 – No Class**

### **November 30 - The Rape of Europa?**

Europa, a beautiful young woman, attracted the eye of Zeus who, transformed into a bull, invited her to mount his back before racing off with her to another land. In the ancient world, Europa came to symbolize graceful beauty. With the Second World War, that beauty transformed into the artistic treasures of Europe which the Nazis carted away from churches, museums, and private collections. This lecture will explore the blistering, marauding Philistinism as they looted Europe, the impact their vandalism inflicted on states and individuals, as well as the extraordinary work of the "Monuments Men" who endeavored to find and return that which had disappeared.