



Presentation Descriptions

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All presentations are researched, written and delivered by Denise Laurin, Fine Artist, Educator and M.A., Art History. All presentations are designed to be visually compelling and intellectually approachable. Each talk includes a question/discussion period at the end and a handout for participants. Some include special treats and estimates are provided. All lectures are appropriate for adult audiences and can be scheduled at any time of year. Denise brings her unique life experience as a professor of art and art history, fine artist and former graphic designer to her presentations. Please inquire for pricing: denise@deniselaurinvisualart.com.

African American Art: From Oppression to Free Expression

This presentation explores art that protested slavery in the Antebellum era, harmful art that perpetuated stereotypes, and African American artists who defied these stereotypes. Denise shares highlights from the full flowering of African American art in the 20th century are discussed, followed by contemporary examples of African American art.

This presentation is an ideal event for Black History Month in February,

Against All Odds: Women Who Triumphed in the Male-dominated World of Art

Women have always been active in the visual arts. For centuries, the men who dominated the discipline of art history often believed women to be inferior artists and did not include them in

their writings. Join Denise Laurin for this discussion that features a sampling of the gifted women who triumphed over the status quo and who emerged as equals in aesthetic and technical skill, despite the obstacles they were forced to overcome.

This presentation can be given at any time of the year, or during March, Women's History Month.

The Amarna Period: A Revolution in Egyptian Art

For armchair Egyptologists and everyone who is curious about the past, this presentation sheds light on a brief period in Egyptian history in which monotheism was introduced for the first time in human history. Through images of ancient artwork, Denise Laurin will weave a fascinating history of artistic and social revolution, and the King and Queen who led it.

This presentation can be given at any time of the year.

Ancient Origins of Christian Art

Where and when did Christian imagery begin?

How did the Christian images that are so familiar to us evolve?

In a period when paganism and Christianity coexisted, were there instances of cross-pollination between the two? This presentation seeks to reveal the ancient origins of Christian symbolism and provide a heightened understanding of early Christian art.

Denise Laurin will share ancient depictions, some of them the earliest ever found, of the Madonna and Child, the Crucifixion, and more.

This presentation can be given at any time of the year or coordinated with major Christian holidays.

Artists of the Harlem Renaissance

One of the most creatively expressive eras in American history, The Harlem Renaissance was the first Afrocentric cultural movement in American History. Encompassing literature, music, philosophy,

and visual art, this presentation focuses on major visual artists whose work has influenced African American art through the present day. Art historian Denise Laurin focuses on the beginning of the Harlem Renaissance in 1917 through the next generation of artists concluding in the 1970s.

This talk can be given throughout the year or during Black History Month in February.

Artistic “ISMs” of the 19th Century

Art during the Renaissance and Baroque periods remained mostly consistent in subject matter and general style. During the 19th century, Western artists began to experiment as the result of social, political and technological upheavals. The art world was splintered into various “isms,” or a vast array of styles. In this presentation, art historian Denise Laurin provides clues for recognizing these various styles:

- Neoclassicism
- Romanticism
- Realism
- Impressionism
- Post Impressionism

Counterculture: The Beatles and Art in the 1960s

Because their impact was felt primarily in music, no books specifically dedicated to

The Beatles and their relationship with the art world of the 1960s exists. In this compelling and meticulously researched visual presentation, Denise Laurin takes a rare look at the artistic thread that runs through their story. Denise will connect the dots between film, fashion, drug culture, activism, spirituality and art movements such as pop, psychedelic, and conceptual art with the Fab Four.

This discussion is appropriate for any time of year, and especially February to celebrate their appearance on the Ed Sullivan Show, or August to commemorate their last concert in the USA. The presentation includes carefully curated slides, video and sound. Optional: Have attendees come dressed in 60s attire; sponsor a raffle for Beatle memorabilia.

Dark Art: Haunting Imagery Across Time

Prepare yourself to experience themes of horror, gore and the supernatural in art. Denise Laurin, M.A., art history will lead the discussion that includes the work of a diverse range of artists and cultures such as Caravaggio, Fuselli, Goya and Redon. She will highlight the contextual circumstances that led these artists to create “dark art.”

This presentation is perfect for October or can be presented any time of year.

East Meets West: Cross-Cultural Influences across Hemispheres

European interest in Non-Western art was first stimulated by trade with the East in the 16th and 17th centuries. By the mid Nineteenth century, many Non-Western approaches to art, including Japanese, Chinese, and African, had found their way into the vocabulary of European art. Similarly, Western approaches to art including linear perspective and spatial volume began to influence non-Western cultures. In this presentation, Denise Laurin, M.A. art history, will explore prominent examples of this cross-cultural mix of artistic styles and learn how globalism contributed to far-reaching change in the Western art aesthetic.

Happy Birthday, Leonardo!

In this visual and sound celebration of the life of Leonardo da Vinci, we will probe the life circumstances that contributed to making Leonardo *Leonardo*. From his insatiable curiosity to his personal beauty, we will unlock the components of his special genius.

Ideal for April programming, as the Maestro's birthday is April 15. Optional: Birthday Cake for a special celebration. Estimate provided.

History of Fashion in Art

What did people wear before photography documented every aspect of life? We can find answers to this question in the art left behind by these cultures and eras. Often, modern fashion designers are influenced by art, and art and fashion play off each other. In this sight and sound presentation, Denise Laurin reveals how art informs us about fashion from earlier times and how fashion and art intertwine in our modern world. We will look at examples of clothing styles, accessories, jewelry, and even hairstyles in this hour-long walk down the runway of time through fashion.

Imaginary Journey to Giverny: Monet— Artist and Gardner

For those who have never been to Monet's garden in Giverny, and even those who have, this presentation will transport attendees to that serene paradise in the valley of the Seine River where so much of Monet's inspiration originated. We will discuss the artist's home and gardens and learn about Monet as both a passionate horticulturist and innovative painter. Through a carefully curated visual presentation, including slides, sound, and virtual tours, attendees will learn about the design of the garden, the plants that grew there, and the artworks they inspired. The presentation is approximately one hour and thirty minutes in length.

Ideal for Spring, Summer and Fall programming. Optional: French Pastries. Estimate provided.

The Last Supper

Art historian Denise Laurin's goal in this talk is to shed light on the origins of the commission for *The Last Supper* by Leonardo daVinci. She will demonstrate his concept, the painting's psychological content as expressed through gesture, and explore how he achieved his vision through composition and medium.

Ideal for the Easter season, but appropriate any time of year.

Picturing the Divine

How do images of the Divine differ among the major religions of our planet? Can representations from other religious traditions inform us and contribute to our own understanding of God? Denise Laurin, M.A. art history will explore the symbolism embedded in artwork from the Hindu, Buddhist, Islamic, and Christian faiths and thereby gain insight into belief systems that differ from our own.

Secrets of the Sistine

Conspiracy theories abound in the 21st century, but did you know one exists for the making of the Sistine ceiling? Using scholarly sources, Denise Laurin reveals the intrigue behind one of the greatest masterpieces in all Western art in four categories: the characters, the conspiracy, the commission, and the content. Even if you have been to the Sistine Chapel in person, this talk will illuminate your comprehension in a concise and understandable way.

This presentation can be given at any time of the year and can also coordinate with major Christian holidays.

Sweet Home Chicago: Our Architectural Gem

This presentation reveals the events leading to Chicago's leading role in modern architecture and its place as a rare architectural gem on the international stage. Art historian Denise Laurin will begin with the birth of the Chicago School and follow Chicago's architectural progress to some of the newest buildings gracing Chicago's magnificent skyline.

The Many Ways to Look at Art

Walking into a museum or gallery can be intimidating, but when we understand the language of art: the visual elements and the principles of design, our experience is greatly enhanced. In this discussion, art historian Denise Laurin focuses on the tools the artist uses to create memorable works of art from color, line and perspective, to balance, contrast and emphasis. Prepare to feel more knowledgeable the next time you go to an art museum!

Twentieth Century "Isms" — 1900-1950

The 20th Century was a revolutionary time for art. With so many "isms", or movements, how can we differentiate them? In this presentation, art historian Denise Laurin focuses on the most significant artists from this period and provides quintessential examples, artistic qualities, meaning and purpose for the following art movements:

- Fauvism
- Cubism
- Futurism
- German-Expressionism
- Dada
- Surrealism
- De Stijl
- Abstract-Expressionism

Visions of Love

What is love? The ancient Greek language developed specific words to describe its myriad aspects. In this talk, art historian Denise Laurin presents selected works of art that evoke the concept of love in a variety of meanings: contented, unrequited, passionate and eternal love. The examples range from ancient to modern and come from both the Western and Non-Western traditions.

This presentation is ideal for Valentine's Day programming and is appropriate for any time during the year.

What IS a Masterpiece?

In this practical guide, art historian Denise Laurin discusses the criteria that art historians use to determine whether a work of art can be designated as a masterpiece. Several works of Western art that were considered a break from tradition in their day, and even controversial, are featured.

New presentations are added regularly. Check back soon!

In development: more "Imaginary Journeys." Denise is planning visual and sound experience to the Great Pyramids, Teotihuacan, pyramids outside Mexico City, and Kyoto, Japan with an emphasis on Japanese prints. Two other presentations in the works include "All that Glitters Is Gold: Metal Leaf in Two-Dimensional Art," and "The Mirror of Time: Portraiture through the Ages."

If you don't see an art topic that fits for your organization, please contact

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