

A Journey through Landscape

We are surrounded by clouds, mountains, rivers, trees, plants etc, that which we refer to as the Natural World, which for centuries has inspired awe, wonder and joy. In this series, we will discuss how with time, the conception of landscape and the painting thereof has evolved. I hope you will be able to join me for the **first** of three parts, **From Pompeii & the Art of Symbols to Claude Lorrain and Nicholas Poussin, on Monday the 13th November.**

First we will explore how the Landscapes of Symbols from Pompeii and on through the 14th and 15th centuries and then with the development in Christian Imagery of the Hortus Conclusus, or Enclosed Garden, reached its apogee with Benozzo Gozzoli's, *The Journey of the Magi* of 1459.



The great leap forward with light, fact and topography brought together, was achieved in Hubert and Jan van Eyck's Flemish masterpiece, *Adoration of the Lamb, The Ghent Altarpiece*, of circa 1430-2. This is generally recognised as the first landscape painting on the grand scale, albeit not a pure landscape painting, but a Biblical narrative superimposed on a majestic vista.

The earliest influence of Flemish Art in Italy, is most evident in the work of

Antonio Pollaiuolo and Antonella da Messina, but it is with Giovanni Bellini, the Grand Master of Venetian Renaissance painting, born with the emotional response to light, who lifts the Christian narrative onto another plane, with his version of the *Agony in the Garden* of 1465. The 20th philosopher of art history, Kenneth Clark, stated in his book, *Landscape into Art*, 'Bellini's landscapes are the supreme instances of facts transfigured through love'.



Back in Northern Europe, it is the Renaissance period 'World Landscapes' of the Flemish painter, Joachim Patinir, but yet more importantly, the naturalistic compositions of his fellow countryman, Pieter Breughel, such as the renowned, *Winter Landscape with Skaters* and *a Birdtrap*, of 1565, which really advance the art of landscape painting.



Finally, in the 17th Century Italian Baroque period, we will explore the idealised landscapes of the Roman Campagna, by Claude Lorrain, suffused with the most beautiful light and the ever so carefully composed, strongly narrative based intellectual exercises in Landscape art of Nicholas Poussin, both arguably the greatest influences on succeeding generations of landscape painters.



Sunrise by Claude Lorrain, 1647