WEEK 27, 2019

THE EPOCH TIMES ARTS TRANSFORMED THE EPOCH TIMES

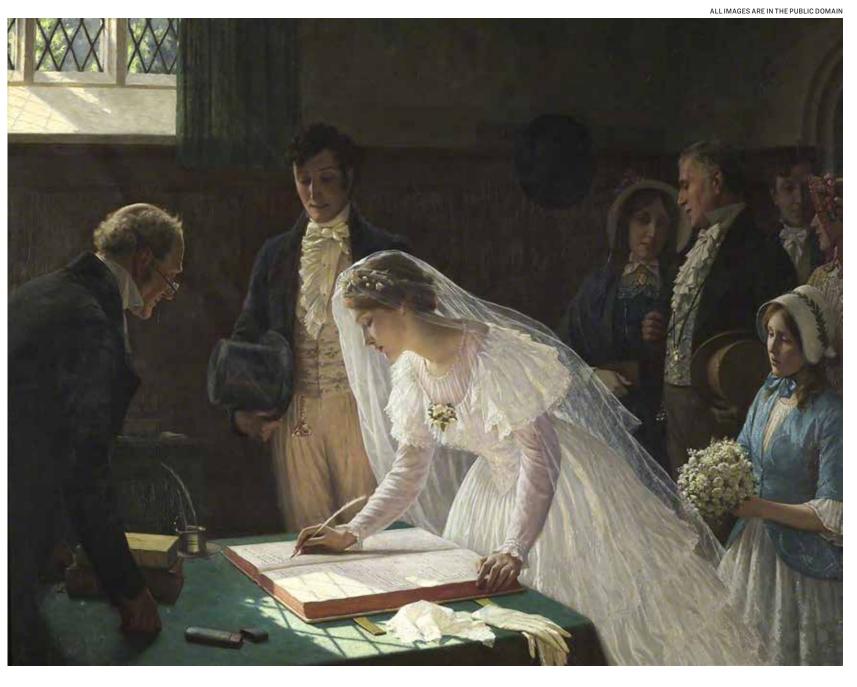


Stele of Nabonidus. Nabonidus, considered the first archaeologist, was the father of Ennigaldi-Nanna, who is considered the first curator. The king is here seen praying to the sun, moon, and Venus.

Ennigaldi-Nanna Curator of the World's First Museum...4



TRUTH AND TRADITION



LITERATURE

Luckily Ever After?

Is marital happiness in 'Pride and Prejudice' a matter of chance or character?

The character of

the spouses is at

the core of marital

happiness.

SUSANNAH PEARCE

inding a spouse has long been **Can't Buy Me Love** time, shrouded in mystery. "How did you two meet?" is a question often asked of couples. "How did they end up together?!" is one we may have wondered about others.

Achieving marital happiness has almost become an industry. It is not surprising that it is the central concern in Jane Austen's pinnacle work, "Pride and Prejudice."

In an early scene, Austen gives us a conversation between the protagonist Elizabeth Bennet and her good friend, Charlotte Lucas. Charlotte states, "Happiness in marriage is entirely a matter of chance. ... It is better to know as little as possible of the defects of the person with whom you are to pass your life." It just so happens that Charlotte ends up

passing her life with the most ridiculous and innocently self-centered character in the book: Mr. Collins. Somehow, we're not sure if we should pity her or think it serves her right.

Is Marital Happiness a Matter of Chance?

I would say yes-and no. There may be a generous portion of chance

involved in meeting and engaging the affections of a marriage partner, but there is much that a wise person can do to reduce the chance of marital strife. The foremost being to select a virtuous person of good character.

Young ladies during England's Regency period could only do so much to put themselves in the way of a good husband. The plot and theme of "Pride and Prejudice" largely center on the project of marrying well, set forth in the delightful first sentence of the book: "It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife."

With five grown daughters and their estate entailed away to a distant male relation, Mrs. Bennet's preoccupation with marrying off her daughters is somewhat understandable. She is of great hope, however, because her daughters are widely considered beautiful, and she herself raised her own social level by catching a gentleman by means of her good looks. It is lucky for her that she was not relying on her character and that Mr. Bennet did

not think to look beyond her pretty face!

among the most commonplace Austen reveals that looks, accomplishactivities and yet, at the same ments, social level, parentage, and circle of acquaintance are all factors in the courting game. But fortune, or lack thereof, seems to be the primary consideration for most of the characters in securing a spouse. With little to offer financially, a young woman must hope that her other attributes and a portion of good luck will fill the gap.

It's not only women this affects, either. As Colonel Fitzwilliam, a younger son of an earl, admits, "Younger sons cannot marry where they like. ... there are not many in my rank of life who can afford to marry without some attention to money." With all this concern about marrying up financially, where does the question of

actual happiness come in? It comes up in the conversation with Elizabeth in which Charlotte expresses her opinion that

happiness in marriage is a matter of chance, insisting that, "If the dispositions of the parties are ever so well known to each other, or ever so similar beforehand, it does not advance their felicity in the least. They always continue to grow sufficiently unlike afterwards to have

their share of vexation." On the other hand, Elizabeth is vehement that the character of the person must be determined in order to make a good choice.

The character of the spouses is at the core of marital happiness. Elizabeth has her convictions tested throughout the story, being presented three suitors whose characters she must decipher. Is it mere chance or careful investigation into the inner content of the person that guides her choice and determines Elizabeth's future felicity?

Enter Shakespeare

The question of chance and character among suitors brings to mind the test of caskets to win fair Portia's hand in Shakespeare's "The Merchant of Venice." The casket of gold, bearing the inscription "Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire," drew the vain, but yielded not Portia's hand. Rather it contained a skull of death and the message, "All that glisters is not gold. / Often have you heard that told. / Many a man his life hath sold / But my outside to behold."

The casket of silver offered this clue: "Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves." Inside it, the disappointed suitor found a jester's face, showing that it is the fool who picks what he thinks he deserves. The third casket is lackluster lead, bearing the warning, "Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath." In choosing this humble casket, the suitor found him-

self worthy to be Portia's groom. The casket test appears to be a game of chance, but is in reality a sifter of character designed by Portia's father.

Elizabeth is pursued by three men. Hand-

Chance or Character?

The right match: Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy, in an 1894 illustration by Hugh Thomson for "Pride and Prejudice."

"The Wedding Regis-

Leighton. A gift from

Lady Lennard, 1948;

Bristol City Museum

and Art Gallery.

ter," 1920, Edmund Blair

Mr. Denny asks for

permission to introduce

his friend, Mr. Wickham.

An illustration for "Pride

and Prejudice" by C. E.

Brock, 1895.

some Wickham flirts with her, drawing her in to a false image of himself. Slowly, she apprehends his true character and is revolted by him. Elizabeth's superficial youngest sister, Lydia, with visions of redcoated officers dancing in her head, falls for the glistering Wickham, bringing near ruin to her family.

The unctuous Mr. Collins makes Elizabeth an offer of marriage that is completely focused on his reasons for desiring marriage and why he has chosen her. For him, it is simply a matter of what he deserves, without consideration of her desserts or desires. Him, she flatly refuses.

But Charlotte, in keeping with her beliefs about marriage, put herself in the way of this wife-seeking buffoon, fulfilling the silver casket's inscription, getting as much as they each deserve.

Charlotte's own reflections on her situation may excuse her self-inflicted life sentence. "Without thinking highly either of men or of matrimony, marriage had always been her object; it was the only honourable provision for well-educated young women of small fortune, and however uncertain of giving happiness, must be their pleasantest preservative from want. This preservative she had now obtained; and at the age of twenty-seven, without having ever been handsome, she felt all the good luck of it."

Elizabeth's third contestant in the game of love is the misunderstood and brooding Mr. Darcy. It is only through the gradual unveiling of his character that she comes to see that he, who at first seemed lackluster lead, is the one willing to "give and hazard all he hath" for her love, and thus he wins her heart-and hand.



Lucky in Love

Having the good luck of being the object of Mr. Darcy's persistent love and the guarantee of his excellent character, Elizabeth's chance of happiness in marriage is likely to beat the odds given by Charlotte. By observing his character through tests that circumstances provide, she knows him to be good and virtuous to his core.

While spouses may change over time in superficial ways, the essentials remain constant. A virtuous man, generally remains so. While one may hope for the conversion of a scoundrel or a fool, it is not worth banking on.

It is no surprise that 'Pride and Prejudice' has remained a favorite for over two centuries.

Satisfaction Ever After

It is no surprise that "Pride and Prejudice" has remained a favorite for over two centuries. It provides not just a happily-everafter ending, but several. And even more satisfying endings, if not entirely happy in each case. Almost everyone got what they hoped for in marriage.

Elizabeth and Jane both enter marriage with handsome men of good character-in possession of large fortunes. Mrs. Bennet is over the moon with three daughters married. And she will very likely get her wish that the remaining two daughters will benefit from being "thrown in the path of other rich men.'

Lydia and Charlotte found just the sort of marital situation they sought, and each seems satisfied.

To crown these happy resolutions, Austen allows us to gloat over the two "well-bred" characters who remain utterly unsatisfied. The bossy and snobbish Lady Catherine De Burgh and the arrogant mean-girl Caroline Bingley are left to sulk over unlikely Elizabeth's achievement in engaging Mr. Darcy's love while all their designs on him for their own purposes have come to naught. It warms the heart.

Susannah Pearce holds a master's degree in theology and writes from her home in South Carolina.



TRUTH and **TRADITION**

COVERING IMPORTANT NEWS OTHER MEDIA IGNORE

LEADING REPORTING ON THE CHINESE COMMUNIST THREAT

FOR THE PAST 18 YEARS

The Epoch Times not only reports reliably on U.S. politics and the Trump administration, but also publishes authoritative China news, covering topics including:

- Impact on the United States Business and economy
- Communist infiltration of our government, businesses, schools, universities, popular culture, and more
- Disinformation surrounding U.S.-China trade relations
- Security and espionage Influence on media and Hollywood
- Overseas interference and United Front activity

The Epoch Times has also championed a new method of investigative journalism, steeped in the discipline's traditions of truth and responsibility. Combining this method with quality design, our journalists expose corruption and subversion in U.S. politics, and other important issues. Our investigative infographics have included:

- Illegal Spying on President Trump
- Hillary Clinton and the
- Uranium One Deal China's Military Expansion
- Into Space • The Secret Propaganda War
- on Our Minds • Spygate:
- The True Story of Collusion Clinton Foundation 'Pay to Play'
- Model Under Investigation

Download infographics ReadEpoch.com/infographics

FREE newsletter signup

EpochNewsletter.com

Subscribe to the paper (print/epaper) ReadEpoch.com

More information

TheEpochTimes.com/about-us

Ennigaldi-Nanna's



LOUISE PRYKE

"It belongs in a museum." With these words, Indiana Jones, the world's best-known fictional archaeologist, articulated an association and contained, Woolley noted, between archaeologists, a "terrific curse" on anyone antiquities, and museums that has a very long history. Indeed, even Jones himself would likely marvel at the historic setting of the world's first "museum," and the remarkable woman who is believed to have been its curator, the Mesopotamian princess Ennigaldi-Nanna.

Ennigaldi-Nanna was the priestess of the moon deity Sin and the daughter of the Neo-Babylonian king Nabonidus. In the ancient Mesopotamian years old, was centered on city of Ur, around 530 B.C., a cultural heritage, and it is small collection of antiquities thought to have perhaps was gathered, with Ennigaldi-Nanna working to arrange and Along with her other roles, label the varied artifacts.

This collection was considered by the British archaeologist Sir Charles Leonard Woolley to be the earliest known example of a "museum."

In 1925, Woolley and his team were excavating at Ur (now in the Dhi Qar gov- the close connection between ernate of southern Iraq). They religious specialists and edudiscovered a curious collection cation. He also commented of artifacts among the ruins of a Babylonian palace. Especially unusual was that while the items were from different geographical areas and historical settings, they were neatly the Neo-Babylonian period. assembled together.

The items ranged in dates **A Family Fascination** from around 2100 B.C. to 600 B.C. They included part of a Indeed, Ennigaldi-Nanna's apstatue of the famous early king preciation for the past seems Shulgi of Ur, who ruled around to have been a family trait. 2058 B.C., a ceremonial mace- Her father, Nabonidus, had a head made of stone, and some texts. The statue, Woolley ob- led him to conduct excavations served, had been carefully re- and discover lost texts. Many stored to preserve the writing. of the items in the collection

There was also a Kassite boundary stele (called a "kudurru"), a written document used to mark boundaries and make proclamations. The stele was dated to around 1400 B.C. who removed or destroyed the record it contained.

Many items were accompanied by labels giving details about the artifacts. These were written in three languages, including Sumerian. The labels have been described in modern scholarship as early examples of the "metadata" that is so critical to the preservation of antiquities and the historical record.

The museum, over 2,500 had an educational purpose. Ennigaldi-Nanna is believed to have run a scribal school for elite women.

When considering the discovery, Woolley noted that the discovery of a museum associated with the priestess was not unexpected, given on the "antiquarian piety" of the time of the museum's construction-an interest in history was a common feature among monarchs from

With History

fascination with history that

One of the earliest artifacts in the "museum." an example of Sumerian script on a foundation tablet, 2144-2124 B.C. (Lagash II; Ur III). The Walters Art Museum.

 \mathbf{T}

were discovered by him, with Nabonidus sometimes described in the modern day as the world's first archaeologist. Nabonidus was the last king of the Neo-Babylonian Empire, and a religious reformer. His eldest son, Belshazzar, ruled as his regent for many years but is perhaps best known for his appearance in the biblical Book of Daniel. In a famous scene, the unfortunate regent sees the end of the Neo-Baby-





lonian kingdom coming when it is foretold through the writing of a disembodied hand on a wall

King Nabonidus's interest in history didn't end with archaeology. He also worked to revive ancient cultic traditions relating to the moon deity, Sin (Sumerian Nanna). His daughter Ennigaldi was an important part of these efforts; indeed, her name is an ancient Sumerian one, meaning "the priestess, the desire in what he conof the Moon god."

galdi as high priestess in Ur reinvigorated a historical trend made famous by Sargon of Akkad, who installed his daughter, the poetess Enheduanna, in the role over 1,000 years earlier.

Archaeologist C. Leonard Woolley (L) and T.E. Lawrence at archaeological excavations in Syria, circa 1912-1914. Woolley discovered a curious set of artifacts collected and arranged sidered the first museum.

The appointment of Enni-

By the time of Ennigaldi-Nanna's appointment, the religious role she would inhabit had long been unoccupied, and the rituals associated with the post had been forgotten. Nabonidus, however, describes finding an ancient

ANCIENT CULTURE

Remembering the Beauty of the Ancient Middle East

The Metropolitan Museum of Art's exhibition: 'The World Between Empires: Art and Identity in the Ancient Middle East'

J.H. WHITE

NEW YORK–I'm glad I had the chance to visit The Metropolitan Museum of Art's exhibition "The World Between Empires: Art and Identity in the Ancient Middle East" before it closed on June 23. The exhibition showcased priceless artifacts and art-such as the oldest known depictions of Jesus Christ-

between about the first century B.C. and A.D. 250, across the historic trade region from the Middle East to Mesopotamia. It was an era of tremendous cross-pollination of cultures and ideas, bridging the two great kingdoms of the Roman Empire in the West and Iran's Parthian empire in the East.

But the exhibition's objects are priceless for another reason altogether-their



Incense burner, second to first century B.C., southwestern Arabia, Aden. Limestone, 3³/₄ inches high. The Trustees of the British Museum, Department of the Middle East, London, ME.



Incense burner, first century B.C. to A.D. second century, southwestern Arabia, Timna. Limestone, 91/16 inches high. The Trustees of the British Museum, Department of the Middle East, London, ME.



Baptistery wall painting "Christ Walking on Water," circa 232, Syria, Dura-Europos. Paint on plaster, 54 3/4 inches high by 39 3/8 inches wide. New Haven, Yale University Art Gallery.

extreme scarcity after ISIS's destruction of the region's culture. "When ISIS entered Palmyra (mod-

ern-day Syria) in 2015, every prominent building was blown up," says Michal Gawlikowski in a video on the exhibition's website. Gawlikowski is a professor emeritus at the University of Warsaw and the former director of the Polish archaeological mission in Palmyra.



Baptistery wall painting "Christ Healing the Paralytic," circa 232, Syria, Dura-Europos. Paint on plaster, 571/16 inches high by 345/8 inches wide. New Haven, Yale University Art Gallery.

ARTS & TRADITION 5

CC BY SA 2.0



"King Nabonidus, who collected many of the museum's items, was also a religious reformer. This artifact is a boundary stele or ""kudurru"" showing King Melishipak I (1186-1172 B.C.) presenting his daughter to the goddess Nannaya. The crescent moon represents the god Sin, the sun the god Shamash, and the star the goddess Ishtar. Louvre.

stele belonging to Nebuchadnezzar I, and using it to guide his actions.

The historic aspects of the appointment of Ennigaldi-Nanna were further emphasized by Nabonidus when noting his research into the requirements of her role. The king describes consulting the writings of a previous priestess, a sister of the ruler Rim-Sin named En-ane-du.

Rim-Sin reigned over 1,200 doubt Nabonidus's discovery I, his recovery of the writings

greater acceptance.

Little Known Today Ennigaldi is largely unknown in the modern day. An exception to her modern anonymity may be found in the luxury fashion line Ennigaldi, which creates pieces inspired by ancient Babylonian architecture. While relatively little is known

of the life of Ennigaldi, there are other well-known women in her family tree. Ennigaldi's grandknown in the present day from of the priestess En-ane-du has her "autobiography," a cunei-

form account of her life, written in the first person. Adadguppi's autobiography records the blessings she received from the moon deity such as living to the age of 104 with a sound mind and body.

The city of Ur and its museum were abandoned around 500 B.C., due to deteriorating environmental conditions. These included a severe drought, along with changing river and silt patterns. years before Nabonidus came mother, Adad-guppi, was also The prevalence of drought to power. While some scholars a powerful priestess involved has also been cited as a like- and literature of ancient Isin the political world of her son, ly cause of the falls of many of the stele of Nebuchadnezzar Nabonidus. Adad-guppi is best earlier kingdoms from the Bronze Age.

The story of the world's first

known museum, its curator, and her family, shows the timeless appeal of conserving the treasures of the past. At the same time, the disappearance of this early institution of learning over two millennia ago demonstrates the significant overlap in the important areas of cultural heritage and environmental conservation.

Louise Pryke is a lecturer in the department of languages rael at Macquarie University in Australia. This article was first published on The Conversation.



Ruins in the town of Ur, Southern Irag, photographed in 2006. Around 530 B.C., a small collection of antiquities was gathered here, with Ennigaldi-Nanna working to arrange and label the varied artifacts.



"Belshazzar's Feast," 1635-1638, by Rembrandt van Rijn. National Gallery, London.

An interest in history was a common feature among monarchs from the Neo **Babylonian period.**

ISIS's destruction included the region's heritage sites, antiquities, and museums. "They were against everything that reminded [people] of centuries before Islam," Gawlikowski says.

A Willingness to Destroy Culture

ISIS's destruction of culture reminded me of the Cultural Revolution in China during the 1960s and '70s. The communist regime's goal was to eliminate 5,000 years of spiritually rich culture, to force its own ideology onto the Chinese people. ISIS seemed to have the same objective.

Gawlikowski says that the Syrian people and school children loved visiting the ancient Semitic city of Palmyra, to learn about their ancient history. "That was something that ISIS wanted to destroy, because they wanted to destroy the very notion of the Syrian state," he says in the video.

In the face of the destruction of culture in recent times, showcasing these ancient works is even more essential so that the region's heritage isn't forgotten. "It's a complicated patchwork of communities, cities, temples, and individuals, but coming at it through the lens of art, we often have a chance to look at how people chose to represent themselves, to represent their families, their cities, their religious identities," says co-curator Michael Seymour in the exhibition's audio guide (also available online).

The Prevalence of Faith

One of the most inspiring aspects of this ancient era is its depiction of spirituality. From the exhibition's many religious works, it's clear that spiritual faith

was deeply ingrained in those passing through or living in the region. "[With] archaeology, ancient history, and art history, often the ultimate goal

is to put oneself inside an ancient person's head," Seymour told me after the guided exhibition tour. "How did this ancient person feel about the divine?"

Incense and incense burners, both popular trade items, offer insight to the prevalence of faith. Incense was burned in temples, shrines, and private homes throughout the region, with the sweet, woody aroma of frankincense from South Arabia revered as the best of its kind.

Two wall paintings showcased in the exhibition are the earliest images of Jesus Christ ever discovered.

In the show, "you will also see representations of people offering incense as a gift to gods and goddesses, and so it's instrumental as part of religious ritual," says co-curator Blair Fowlkes-Childs, research associate of the museum's department of Ancient Near Eastern Art, in the exhibition's audio guide (also available online).

The design of the incense burners also reflected religious devotion, as they would mimic the architecture of ancient southwestern Arabian temples.

Cross-Pollination of Culture

Though spirituality was deeply ingrained in both the Eastern and Western cultures, the beliefs and depictions of faith were also changing. The exhibition's statuette of "Standing Nude Goddess," crafted sometime between the first century B.C. and the first century, embodies the ancient region's religious complexity.

"At first glance, [the] statuette may remind you very much of Aphrodite or Venus," says Fowlkes-Childs in the audio guide. The alabaster goddess's feminine form resembles the Greco-Roman deities of beauty and love, which were worshiped in Mesopotamia and the Middle East.

But the rubies inlaid in the navel and oversized eyes suggest it came from Burma (also called Myanmar), attesting to Mesopotamia's links with Indian Ocean trade.

"I think the strongest candidate for this statuette is Ishtar of Babylon, who'd been an extremely important goddess in the city for many centuries, in fact, but in this period is perhaps being represented in new ways," Seymour says in the audio guide.

The exhibition also shines light on the transition from polytheism to monotheism during this era. Two wall paintings showcased in the exhibition are the earliest images of Jesus Christ ever discovered. One shows Jesus walking on water; he's accompanied by Peter and several disciples who watch from a boat. The second wall painting shows Jesus healing the paralytic.

"The figures may have been important to the newly baptized to inspire them to have faith in Jesus's power," Fowlkes-Childs says in the audio guide. Both wall paintings were found in Dura-Europos (today's eastern Syria) inside an early

third-century Christian house church, located near several other ancient religious buildings

"The existence of an ancient synagogue and the earliest Christian house church in close proximity to temples dedicated to so many different gods gives us a window into understanding how polytheists-those who worshiped multiple gods or different gods-and monotheists existed within the same town at the same time," Fowlkes-Childs says in the audio guide.

The exhibition's art depicts, for me, the literal and figurative journey that these ancient people traveled. Over centuries and long distances, the region's culture developed gradually, sharing influences from its two parents-the Roman and Parthian empires. As long and as much painstaking effort as that cultural quest took, it took only a few years to tear it down. Building beauty always takes far longer than destroying it.

"People and their monuments and their works of art are entangled in this region. And to wipe out or destroy the heritage, the landscape, the monuments, is a way of destroying people," says Zainab Bahrani in the exhibition's online video titled "Conversations on the Destruction of Cultural Heritage in Iraq and Syria." Bahrani is an Iraqi professor of Ancient Near Eastern Art and Archaeology at Columbia University. "So we can't really separate the two. In order to protect all the communities in the region, we have to protect their heritage, as well."

J.H. White is an arts, culture, and men's fashion journalist living in New York.

FINE ARTS Truth, Beauty, and Goodness

Some Observations From an Amateur

JEFF MINICK

First up, my lack of credentials. Though I have visited museums and galleries of art in France, Italy, Switzerland, Germany, England, and the United States, I have not set foot in such a museum or gallery in five years. In college and graduate school, I took only one class in the history of art, a course on medieval painting and sculpture. I have known few artists, and of these only the work of one-Henry Wingate, a representational painter-aroused my full admiration. In short, like most Americans, I have no license, no degree, no training as a critic in "les beaux-arts," the fine arts. But should that lack of expertise matter?

Does This Art Serve a Common Ground? In the 2008 "Local Color" (R for language), a movie pitting representational art against its abstract offspring, an aged Russian artist, Nicholi, has several arguments with his friend, Curtis, a professional critic and a promoter of modern and postmodern art. At one point, with Nicholi's student John and Curtis's date Sandra seated at the table, the two men exchange these thoughts:

Should we require a graduate degree in the fine arts to understand modern painting and sculpture?

NICHOLI: I think it's madness. **CURTIS:** And what is that, my friend? NICHOLI: That you need a doctorate to appreciate painting. I mean, you don't need a diploma to appreciate music.

CURTIS: Well, art has moved from what was once a communication to the masses, to what it is now, which is communication to a far more select few.

CURTIS (SMIRKING): The farmer down the road has far different interests than you or I. **NICHOLI:** But art is a common ground. When you, Sandra, John, farmer down the road take a pause for a moment and

as he, she, farmer down the road.

NICHOLI: And when did this happen? You

are just as much a member of the masses

"The Hunters in the Snow," 1565, by Pieter Bruegel the Elder.

appreciate something that connects us all, it is the beauty of being alive, this art. Art that divides is not art. Nicholi raises some excellent questions. Should we require a graduate degree in the fine arts to understand modern painting and

sculpture? Does the art of the last 50 years remind us of the "beauty of being alive"? Has it served as a common ground?

A Few Encounters With 'Art'

In 1978. in a Swiss museum, I viewed a display of stones on the floor, with several local people regard it as a pile of scrap metal." paragraphs fixed to the wall above explaining the significance of the stones.

Years ago, I toured an exhibition of abstract art at the University of Tennessee–Knoxville. In another room was a display of drawings and paintings by local high school students. The abstracts left me unmoved: the works of the teenagers, however amateurish, were at least, for the most part, attempts to capture beauty on a canvas.

Outside the public library in Waynesville, North Carolina, is a large sculpture titled "The Time Space Voyager." Some observers see this piece as a tilted sailing boat, others as a drawn bow with its arrow pointed toward the mountains. Some of us wonder what it has to do with the library. Why not a bronze of a mother and child reading together? Why not a statue of Sequoyah, the tribe whose descendants still live nearby?

At least "The Time Space Voyager" induces questions. Outside of the Federal Building in nearby Asheville, we find "Passage," a mas-As one online commentator wrote, "many In May 2019, "The Rabbit" by sculptor Jeff Jeff Minick has four children and a grow-Koons sold for over \$91 million, a record sale for a living artist. Gushing art critics describe the stainless steel three-foot bunny as playful. Some of us might think it's the critics who are being played, as "The Rabbit" calls to mind the kitsch lawn ornaments

goodness all in one piece of art. Michelangelo's "Pietà." Basilica di San Pietro. Vatican, Holy City State. (Below) "David," 1501-1504, by Michelangelo. Florence, Galleria dell' Accademia.

(Top R) Truth, beauty, and







we've seen in Kmart. In many ways, "The Rabbit" is the quintessence of art in the 21st century: meaningless, clumsy in its execution, and without emotion.

Or maybe, like "farmer down the road," we of the hoi polloi lack the equipment to understand so great a sculpture.

Ihree Transcendentals

From the time of the Greeks until some time in the 19th century, philosophers embraced the three transcendentals: truth, beauty, and goodness. We hear today that politics is downstream from culture, but as one young man recently and wisely instructed me, culture is downstream from philosophy.

Botticelli's "The Birth of Venus," Michelangelo's "David," Bruegel's winter landscapes, Rembrandt's portraits-these and thousands of other paintings and sculptures derive from a philosophy based on the transcendentals, works that offer consolation in our suffering and gratification in our desire for beauty.

For the last century–some would say since the Enlightenment-this trinity of truth, beauty, and goodness has been savaged by relativism. As a consequence of this philosophy, Western civilization today promotes ugliness rather than beauty, not only in the arts but also in architecture, music, literature, even in fashion and personal appearance.

Here and there amid the ruins we find beauty, flowers in the rubble; but in general, modern art offers disfigurement, obscurity, and titillation–and always, of course, the push to break taboos, to follow the old inventor of an alphabet for the Cherokee, a battle cry "épater les bourgeois," to shock the bourgeoisie.

> Unfortunately for our artists, the bourgeois were epatered a long time ago.

Until art and, by extension, philosophy resive tangle of jagged steel with no discern- turn to truth, goodness, and beauty as their ible meaning other than, perhaps, chaos. watchwords, then we must content ourselves with "The Rabbit" rather than the "Pietà.

> ing platoon of grandchildren. For 20 years, he taught history, literature, and Latin to seminars of homeschooling students in Asheville, North Carolina. Today, he lives and writes in Front Royal, Virginia. See JeffMinick.com to follow his blog.

THEATER REVIEW

An Attempt to Escape One's Past

DIANA BARTH

EW YORK-"The Mountains Look Different" presents a look at the farming class of a rural place not far from the metropolis of Dublin.

This particular farm is owned by Martin Grealish (Con Horgan), a domineering, smug man who is used to having things his way. He is paid a visit by Matthew Conroy (Paul O'Brien), who is the uncle of a young woman, Bairbre (Brenda Meaney), who has recently married Grealish's son.

Conroy means to pave the way for Bairbre's imminent arrival, assuring Grealish that Bairbre, who has spent the last 13 years in London, is a fine young woman and will make a fine wife for the son, Tom (Jesse Pennington).

When the couple arrives, Grealish has gone inside, and Bairbre refuses to enter the house until she has been invited. She is unsure of herself, and desperate to make a favorable impression on her husband's father. She does her best to appear demure, but somehow her inner vivacity and worldly experience peek through.

When Mr. Grealish finally ap-

pears, he registers shock on seeing Bairbre and tells her she must leave the next day.

There begins a series of painful cat-and-mouse encounters between the two, which ultimately reveal that Bairbre's life in London had been less than pristine. The necessity to simply survive had brought her to do things she now regrets. And, through odd events, Grealish, a hypocritical moralist, knows it.

Playwright Mac Liammoir was an icon of Irish theater.

Here Micheal Mac Liammoir's work proves itself to be a kind of morality play, taking it beyond the realm of fiction and pointing out the difficult role of women in former times, and even in some places today. With few opportunities for a woman to be self-supporting, and not many career opportunities, the best a good woman could do was to find a good man.

Bairbre has done just that, but



Tom Grealish (Jesse Pennington) and his bride, Bairbre (Brenda Meaney), in the Mint Theater's production of "The Mountains Look Different."

tragic circumstances bring about her failure

Other characters help create an entire community: the young girl Bridin (McKenna Quigley Harrington); the serving-man Bartley (Daniel Marconi); Maire, an old woman (Cynthia Mace); her peculiar grandson Batty Wallace (Liam the demanding role of Bairbre, Forde); and a priest (Ciaran Byrne).

are supported by the realistic set by Vicki R. Davis, appropriate costumes by Andrea Varga, lights by Christian DeAngelis, and sound and original music by M. Florian Staab.

But the weight of the play is carried by the trio of Brenda Meaney, who creates a vivid character in Con Horgan's overbearing Mar-Director Aidan Redmond's efforts tin Grealish, and Jesse Pennington's sometimes clueless but lov-

ing Tom. Playwright Mac Liammoir was an icon of Irish theater; he was described by the Irish Times as "the dominant figure in the Irish theatri-

cal world for almost half a century." He was co-founder, with Hilton Edwards, of the famed Gate Theatre in Dublin (where I had the privilege of seeing Sebastian Barry's "The Steward of Christendom," with the inimitable Donal McCann, some years ago). "The Mountains Look Different"

is very dark but compelling.

Fhe Mountains Look Different' **Theatre Row**

410 W. 42nd St., New York

Tickets 212-239-6200 or MintTheater.org

Running Time 2 hours (one intermission)

Closes Julv 14

Diana Barth writes for several theater publications, including "New Millennium." She may be contacted at diabarth99@gmail.com

ALL PHOTOS IN THE PUBLIC DOM



Mark Jackson grew up in Spring Valley, N.Y., where he attended a Waldorf chool. At Williams College, his proessors all suggested he write proessionally. He acted professionally for 20 years instead. Now he writes professionally about acting. In the movies.

(Right) Rose-Lynn Harlan (Jessie Buckley) and her family in "Wild Rose.' (Below) Rose-Lynn Harlan (Jessie Buckley) singing in "Wild Rose.



'WILD ROSE' MOVE OVER GAGA, ANOTHER STAR IS BORN

MARK JACKSON

hy can't this particular Epoch Times film critic shut up about the Hero's Journey already? Every. Single. Movie. Review, he talks about it.

Fair enough. But that's because so many movies have this as their theme. Scholar Joseph Campbell made one particular type of Hero's Journey famous-that of staying true to one's talent(s) and living one's bliss by having that particular thing that you'd be happy to do

for free–as your paid career. The early Greeks and Eastern philosophers' take had more to do with there being only two fundamental human stories to tell: Either you live your life as an everyday person, or you discover "The Way" and practice one of 84,000 different enlightenment paths, morph into a deity, and never have to reincarnate as a human again. While one of these options is

more mundane, both start with a person having initially to surmount a safe, comfortable life inside the confines of the village compound. "Wild Rose" is not just about realizing one's bliss at the expense of others, but instead by embracing the full scope of the difficulty of this path, choosing to even sacrifice the dream in order to live with integrity, authenticity, and responsibility.

Not Country and Western

The young Scotswoman Rose-Lynn Harlan (Jessie Buckley, who's actually Irish) got caught on a one-off drug-smuggling gig. She claimed she didn't know it was heroin, but it's likely she did, because she was in a young, wild, reckless, irresponsible, quickfix, entitled phase of trying to break out of the starving-artist stereotype.

When she gets released from prison, she goes to pick up her ent will out," and soon Susannah, kids, Lyle (Adam Mitchell) and Wynonna (Daisy Littlefield), from her long-suffering mom (an out-

Retired assassins in the movies

tend to like to live way out in the

wilderness, in rustic yet techno-

logically well-appointed cabins.

list of examples, but I'm bored by

Very cliché by now. I could run a

And so here's that exception-

ally Gallic-nosed 70-year-old

Frenchman Jean Reno, reprising

his wheelhouse role of playing

an assassin. This time he's an ex-

assassin named Henry, who lives

in some generic Pacific Northwest

on stilts, where he can ice-fish off

The hit-man way of life is still

his sole reading material is Sun

Tzu's "The Art of War." Had it

been Steven Pressfield's "The War

of Art," this English-language

thriller "Cold Blood," by French

director Frédéric Petitjean, might

have been interesting.

MARK JACKSON

the prospect of it.

his deck.

Lyle and Wynonna? Care to venture a guess as to what Rose-Lynn's

standing Julie Walters).

passion is? That's right, she lives to sing Country music at a moment's notice. And not Country & Western music, as she reminds everyone. Did you know it wasn't called that anymore?

Rose-Lynn's shackled with a probationary electronic ankle bracelet that, if she doesn't get home and within range of the bracelet monitor by 7 p.m., it will notify her probation officer, indicating she's not being responsible.

Jessie Buckley's performance moves grown men to actual tears.

So it's a challenge to find evening employment. It's also a challenge to fit the bracelet inside her cowgirl boot. But off she goes to see if she can get her old job back at the Grand Ole Opry. No, not that one. The one in Glasgow, Scotland. Did you know Glasgow, Scotland, had a Grand Ole Opry?

But our Rose-Lynn is quite feisty; she's got a mouth on her, and she's soon cursing out the bartender, throwing drinks, and trying to throttle the low-talent former band.

of raising her wayward daughter's rich your surroundings. kids, and issues the ultimatum that Rose go get a job-any job-and take her kids back. And so she gets a job cleaning house for a well-todo couple.

There are then cliché scenes of pushing a vacuum cleaner around while singing and dancing, oblivious to onlookers. As they say, "talher employer (Sophie Okonedo), not only knows where Rose-Lynn's heart really resides, but she also

desperately wants to assist Rose-Lynn on her Hero's Journey dream to go to Nashville. In the parlance of the Hero's Journey, Susannah is known as "the Ally."

Susannah is well-connected and sets up Rose-Lynn with an audition for the legendary disc jockey Bob Harris (played by Bob himself).

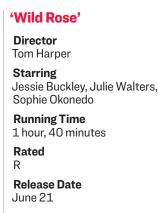
The thing with Rose-Lynn is that she's her own worst enemy. On the way to London and the BBC to audition for Bob, Rose-Lynn's mind is completely blown over the amenities that go with riding first-class. She starts a little party with the complimentary snacks therefrom, for a group of young proletariat types much like herself, and ends up getting her belongings stolen. Susannah, furthermore, sets up a benefit party for Rose-Lynn, and invites all her wealthy friends. Will Rose-Lynn choke at the crucial moment? Will she realize the Hero's Journey necessarily takes a different tack if one already has kids, and all the more excruciating if one has been in denial aboutand lying about–that particular, minor fact?

Will she get to Nashville? And if she does, and sees that it's a very, very big pond, kicking off the classic debate of whether it's more satisfying to be a little fish in a big pond or a big fish in a little onewhich way will she lean? Keep in band-member who's gone and mind the classic outcome of the made himself leader of her house Hero's Journey is that you bring your hard-earned gold back to the Now, her mom is sick and tired village compound and thereby en-

Makes Grown Men Bawl

"Wild Rose" is entirely similar to another recent movie about a different young Scotswoman going to America on a Hero's Journey to be a World Wrestling Entertainment wrestler, in "Fighting With My Family." That was a satisfying (and true) tale.

"Wild Rose" is even more satisfying. Even more satisfying than seeing Lady Gaga finally take her



place as a bona fide movie star in "A Star Is Born," and hearing Gaga sing as only she can. Jessie Buckley is actually more impressive in that she's coming

more or less out of nowhere, and is, I have to say, even more charismatic and spellbinding as both a singer and an actress. She moves grown men to actual tears. I've personally witnessed it happen. I managed to miss all the press

screening invitations and ended up seeing "Wild Rose" at 11:15 a.m. on a Sunday in a completely empty theater. And it's a good thing, too.

Now, I leg-press half a ton, ride a Harley, and know a thing or two about bar-fighting, so I'm not ashamed to say this movie made me bawl my head off. Yup. Bawled like a baby; frequent loud nose-blowing. Especially every time Jessie Buckley started singing. Immensely cathartic! I would have felt so emotionally constipated had there been other people around. I guarantee she will affect you likewise.

What's Good

Luc Besson usually directs Jean Reno ("La Femme Nikita," "Léon: The Professional") and so Besson's photographer, Thierry Arbogast, provides some beauteous photography of snowcapped wilderness, with some nice wolves sniffing around.

But your main takeaway will be shots of the Pacific Northwest (actually shot in the Ukraine), and a story about a lonely girl who searched in vain for the warm heart of a cold billionaire father, only to find that warm heart at the core of a cold-blooded assassin.

'Cold Blood'

Director

Jean Reno, Sarah Lind, Joe Anderson,

Running Time 1 hour, 31 minutes July 5

Snowmobile Skedaddle

of Assassin With Heart of Gold

Jean Reno Reprises Role

Melody (Sarah Lind) is a young woman who is setting off on a snowmobile version of a walkabout. She's fixing to cross wintry mountain ranges all the way to the ocean, all by her lonesome.

Except that backwoods solosnowmobiling is X-Games-level dangerous, and she eventually caroms off a few trees, retaining many massive splinters. She crawls away from the scene of the crash, leaving a blood trail a mile wide for wolves to stroll leisurely after her.

The other thing in Reno's wheelmountain range, in a rustic cabin house is playing a father figure to young, comely girls. The character could easily have at them in all kinds of bad ways, but he would how he rolls; you can tell because appear not to even need to exercise restraint, as deep in the core of his assassin being is a highly upright, nurturing individual. It's a reassuring feeling. Which is why I believe Reno gets to do this role a lot. Naturally, Henry pulls out Melody's mega-splinters, and gauze, character of Mike Damone in "Fast of poorly dubbed speaking roles.

bandages, and water boiling on the woodstove abound. She convalesces nicely. Meanwhile, we go back in time to when Henry was a stone-cold pro, whacking billionaires with dissolving chemical bullets in saunas.

One particular billionaire, it turns out, only has one heir to his fortune. Who might that be? The snowmobile walkabout might be a clue; "trustafarians" like to do things like treks to find out who they are sans daddy's bank account. Revenge might also be a key issue in this movie.

Keystone, er, Yellowstone Kops Some cops are naturally on the case of the slain billionaire, but who the heck is this motley crew? British actor Joe Anderson plays a New York cop (wait, why is he in the Pacific N.W.?) and does a ably African-French, judging by his serviceable yet over-the-top New name and the general French-ness Yawk accent sounding exactly of this endeavor. In addition to all like (and just as annoying as) the the bad accents, there are a bunch



GOLDCREST FILMS INTERNATIO

man, who takes care of a girl who had a snowmobile accident near his home, in "Cold Blood."

Times at Ridgemont High."

He and his older boss (whose accent is completely bizarre) are here to connect the dots for the audience, except that they take all film long to get to the point, and you already got to the point after 10 minutes

They're joined by an Africanmaybe-American with an equally untraceable, odd accent. He's prob-

 \star \star \star \star

Jean Reno plays Henry, a retired hit

Frédéric Petitjean

Starring

David Gyasi, Ihor Ciszkewycz, François Guétary

Not Rated **Release Date**

FILM REVIEW

A Sobering Account of a Real–Life Tragedy in Russia's Post–Soviet History



(L–R) Kristof Coenen, Matthias Schoenaerts, and Chris Pascal play characters trapped aboard the stricken Russian nuclear-powered submarine, in "The Command."

IAN KANE

Russia. Year 2000. It's summer, but you wouldn't know it from the dreary northern landscape that greets us as the new disaster film "The Command" opens up. Although outside it may be frigid, the houses in a small, Russian naval town on the coast of the Barents Sea are warm.

One such home belongs to submariner Mikhail Averin (Matthias Schoenaerts, "The Mustang") and his pregnant wife, Tanya (Léa Seydoux, "Zoe"). We witness scenes of familial love as the two lovebirds chase their young son around the house, and Mikhail shows the boy how to hold his breath underwater for long periods of time.

The year 2000 also marks nearly a decade after the collapse of the Soviet Union, when economic woes had engulfed Mother Russia. It's against this backdrop that we are introduced to the other members of the Kursk's crew. Funds are so tight that the navy isn't able to pay the men their proper wages. As a result, Mikhail has to pawn his special mariner's watch in order to be able to afford enough champagne and vodka for his best friend's wedding. The wedding itself functions as an excellent plot device to show the strong sense of brotherhood among the men.

The following morning, the crew sets out into the icy waters of the Barents. A couple of the crew members are in the torpedo bay, tending to some of the munitions, when one of them detects some unusual heat signatures. A hydrogen leak is emanating from one of the torpedoes.

Captain Averin relays this information to his superiors, but it's too late. Not only does the first torpedo explode, but also the entire torpedo bay becomes engulfed in flames, which detonates the rest of the Kursk's payload, instantly killing most of the crew.

The vessel sinks in relatively shallow waters (around 350 feet), and as the front of the nuclear-powered submarine hits the sea floor, the remaining crew scramble toward the raised, still-dry aft compartments. They successfully seal this last safe zone off, but for how long? The water levels are rising and the pumps aren't working properly. Not only that, but their precious air supply is running thin as well.

The Rescue Efforts

Back at headquarters, the crew's superiors detect rather quickly the anomalous sonic dispersions caused by the explosions and immediately dispatch a full rescue detachment. However, it takes over 16 hours to locate the Kursk.

What's more, when their rescue submersible attempts to latch onto the submarine's top hatch, its dilapidated equipment is unsuited for the critical task at hand.

The British are quick to offer their own naval aid to the Russian naval brass. After lots of balking on the Russians' part, the Brit team eventually receives a reluctant go-ahead and is finally allowed onto the site of the unfolding disaster. Colin Firth plays British Commodore David Russell, who heads the Brits' rescue effort.

The Russians' main concern seems to be not wanting the Kursk–one of the most advanced nuclear submarines in the world–to fall into foreign hands. But that's just part of the picture.

During that period of time, the Russians had been feeling rather crestfallen as a nation. To these proud people, the fall of the USSR represented a kind of fall from the world's stage. One of the last vestiges of projecting power, at least to the outside world, was the Russians' facade of maintaining a peerless military. As a result, pride sometimes outstripped common sense, and in many cases, proper safety measures.

The Kursk itself had not come into the world easily. It had been built during the collapse of the USSR. Its construction was finally completed in 1994, and it was launched to little fanfare. Nevertheless, the Kursk represented the apex of Russian technology. It was able to remain submerged for up to 120 days at a time and could break through Arctic ice if need be. It was an absolute beast. Meanwhile, many of the older Russian navy ships and submarines were sold off as scrap metal or repurposed for civilian duties.

Film Keeps You Glued to the Screen (and Spoiler Alert)

The film's acting is pretty decent across the board, particularly Schoenaerts's as the Kursk's

beleaguered captain. But Colin Firth turns in an exceptional performance as the intrepid British commodore who becomes increasingly frustrated by the Russian navy's balking brass. He captures the film's moments of glee and hopefulness when the Kursk's crew members are heard by rescue crews, banging on the interior of the sub's hull. He also broods in abject frustration and deep despair when it eventually becomes clear that the crew is doomed.

Ultimately, "The Command" is a tense film that is hard to watch in places. However, Thomas Vinterberg's skills as a director must be commended in keeping eyes glued to screen.

A special nod should also go to Oscarwinning cinematographer Anthony Dod Mantle ("Slumdog Millionaire," "127 Hours") whose cogent shots manage to capture the dreary, claustrophobic conditions in the Kursk perfectly.

A True Story

The real tragedy lies in actual history itself. Only 27 at the time, Lt. Capt. Dmitry Kolesnikov, the real-life commander of the Kursk, apparently foresaw his own death. According to The New York Times report on the event:

"And the captain's widow, Olga Kolesnikova, her face covered with tears, said her husband had a premonition of death before leaving on the Kursk's last voyage and left his dog tags, a crucifix, and a poem as a remembrance.

"The couple had married only this year.

"And when the time comes to die,' he wrote in the poem, 'though I chase such thoughts away, I want time to whisper one thing: My darling, I love you."

Ian Kane is a filmmaker and author based out of Los Angeles. To see more, visit DreamFlightEnt.com

'The Command' (originally titled 'Kursk')

Director Thomas Vinterberg

Starring Matthias Schoenaerts, Colin Firth, Léa Seydoux

Running Time 1 hour, 57 minutes

Rated PG-13

Release Date June 21

 \star \star \star \star \star



TIMES

RISKING EVERYTHING TO GET YOU THE TRUTH

IN DECEMBER 2000, a few months after we began publishing, more than a dozen of our reporters were arrested in communist China. They were given 3 to 10 year prison terms for the crime of reporting the truth. All were tortured.

Since then The Epoch Times continues to bring truthful and uncensored news to people oppressed by the lies and violence of communism. We've grown to publish in 23 languages and in 35 countries, with our headquarters being in New York. All this time, we've maintained a serious and rigorous approach to news: report truthfully, dig deep, and remain non-partisan. **Go to ReadEpoch.com to find out more.**

66

It's the only sane newspaper amidst all this insanity. STAN KRZYSTON, PASTOR

56

It's broad. It's inclusive and it's truthful.

PAUL TAYLOR, CANDIDATE FOR U.S. SENATE



SUBSCRIBE NOW AND GET THE REAL NEWS!

LEARN MORE: ReadEpoch.com

FOR THE

FIRST MONTH