

SPHINX! SACRED MONSTER, CELEBRATED MARVEL

Saturday 9 & Sunday 10 May 2020

11.00-16.00

Course Leader: Justine Hopkins

Seminar Room 3, Sackler Centre, Level 4



From the courts of the Egyptian Pharaohs to the pages of modern fiction the mystery of the Sphinx has tantalised mankind through the ages. Sometimes male and sometimes female, he/she has been invoked in connection with the Philosopher's Stone of the alchemists, the mysteries of Freemasonry, the dreams of the Surrealists and Freudian psychoanalysis, to say nothing of the vast array of objects and buildings decorated with Sphinxes of all descriptions, or the innumerable paintings, verses, essays, novels and dramas of stage and screen graced by the splendour and dread of this most spectacular of mythical beings.

The V&A's collection of Sphinxes of all descriptions is extensive and makes an inspiring starting point for an investigation of the way in which, through centuries and civilisations, this creature first born from a human brain has surpassed our wildest imaginings.

Programme

Saturday 9 May

FATHER OF DREAD, MOTHER OF MYSTERY: CLASSICAL SPHINXES FROM EGYPT TO ETRURIA

10.30-11.00	Welcome and Registration
11.00-12.00	Lounging through Eternity: The Sphinx - History and Mystery
12.00-12.15	Break
12.15-13.00	Ancient Egyptian Sphinxes - <i>Ben Hinson, V&A Assistant Curator specialist Egyptologist</i>

13.00-14.00	Lunch (not provided)
14.00-15.00	The Sphinx in Ancient Greece - <i>Steve Kershaw, lecturer at Oxford University and specialist in Classical civilisations</i>
15.00-16.00	Half Terror and Half Grace: Sphinxes from the Renaissance to the Age of Reason

Sunday 10 May

FATE AND FORTUNE: OEDIPUS AND THE SPHINX FROM SOPHOCLES TO PRATCHETT

11.00-12.00	Explaining the Enigma: Oedipus, Man Against Monster
12.00-12.15	Break
12.15-13.00	Caresses of the Sphinx: Oedipus and the Symbolists
13.00-14.00	Lunch (not provided)
14.00-15.00	Free Interpretations after Sophocles - Jean Cocteau and the Sphinx: A spoken performance of the Sphinx scene from Cocteau's play, <i>La Machine Infernale</i> , illustrated. Followed by discussion
15.00-16.00	Not Being Oedipus: Sphinx v Modern Man

Justine Hopkins

Justine Hopkins read English and Drama at Bristol University, followed by an MA at the Courtauld Institute. After a year as an archaeological illustrator, she took a PhD at Birkbeck College exploring relationships between science, religion and landscape painting in the nineteenth century. Her biography of twentieth century painter and sculptor Michael Ayrton appeared in 1994. She has contributed articles to a wide variety of periodicals and dictionaries; a recent article on the Serb sculptor, Ivan Meštrović, appeared in *Sculpture Journal* in 2016. She works as a freelance lecturer in Art History for institutions including the Victoria and Albert Museum and Oxford and Cambridge Universities; she is a registered lecturer for the Arts Society.

****Programme subject to change*