

Summer, 2026


ARTSNATIONAL
Blue Mountains
Connect, Enrich, Inspire

Newsletter

Lectures 2026



Di Bentley, Chair

Hello, everyone.

Welcome to the new year and an exciting series of ArtsNational Blue Mountains talks.

Most of you will already have our current brochure and be aware of the variety of topics scheduled for 2026, but if not, we always have plenty at our lectures or you can find the program on our website.

Now is a good time to remind you of the benefits of being a member of ArtsNational Blue Mountains.

While you can pay on the day for individual lectures that interest you, it is significantly cheaper per lecture to be a member.

Additionally, my experience is that even if the topic doesn't seem immediately appealing, the talk is usually enjoyable and interesting because the lecturers are specialists in their fields and skilled speakers.

In addition to the savings from membership, ArtsNational Blue Mountains members are welcome to attend any of the 37 societies across Australia at a discounted fee.

The next time you're travelling around Australia, visit the national website to see if any societies are in the area you're visiting.

Our membership increased to 118 in 2025, and we are eager to surpass that in 2026.

Many in the community are unaware of ArtsNational, and we've found that word-of-mouth is the most effective way to introduce us to them.

Please speak to your friends and feel free to take as many brochures as you need to raise awareness of ArtsNational and encourage others to join us.

The afternoon tea after the lecture is also very enjoyable, offering a lovely chance to catch up with friends and chat with the lecturer if you wish.

We look forward to seeing you soon.

Di Bentley
Chair

AGM and Christmas Party
Fairways, Leura
04 December, 2026

27 February 2026

Ian Swankie

Great Railway Stations: Evoking the Spirit of Romance and Adventure

Ian will showcase the architecture and engineering of famous railway stations and explore the many depictions of railway stations in art.

10 April, 2026

Claudia Chan Shaw

Art Nouveau: Ahead of the Curve

Art Nouveau was a style that dominated the late 1800s and early 1900s: a 'new art' that foreshadowed the arrival of a new century. It influenced architecture, fine art, illustrations, advertising, jewellery, glass, and furniture design.

1 May, 2026

Joanne Rhymer

Two New Visions: Paris and Impressionism

This lecture will explore how Paris was transformed during the reign of Napoleon III, through the artistic lens of Manet, Renoir, and Caillebotte. In particular, we will examine how art at the time expanded to explore new painting techniques, creating a new artistic language that changed art forever.

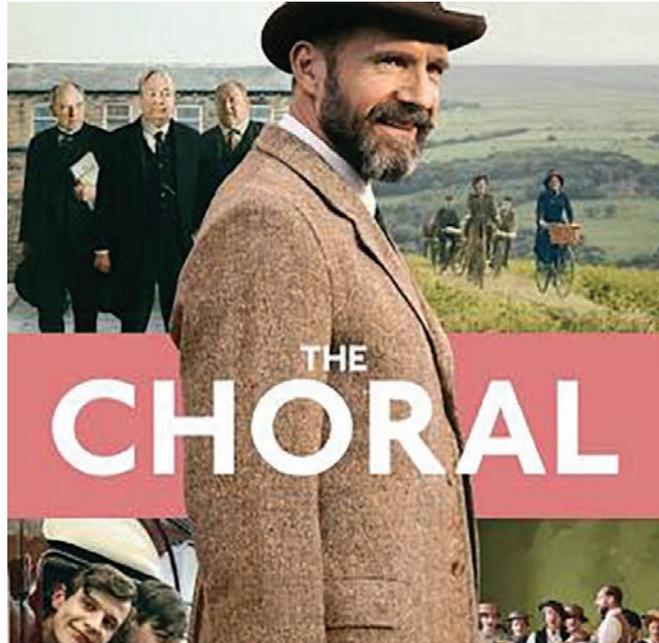
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Dr Guthrie (as played by Raph Fiennes) in The Choral.

In the film 'The Choral,' when a traumatised soldier laments, 'life's f**king s**t, choirmaster Dr Guthrie replies, 'So sing'.

Whilst the film was set during the First World War, and the exchange was fictional, it nonetheless points to the yearning in the human psyche for relief from the world's uncertainties, a need we still feel keenly today.

The idea that music can fulfil that desire was noted by one critic to become the film's credo: 'music as both defiance and survival, a way to hold despair at bay.'

The sentiment behind the conversation may recall a similar statement, often attributed to Winston Churchill, made during the Second World War.

The story goes that when Churchill was asked to cut funding to the arts to support the war effort, he responded, 'Then what are we fighting for?'

While there is no definitive evidence that Churchill actually uttered those words, other remarks of his suggest he could have.

In a speech to the Royal Academy on 30 April 1938, referring to painting and sculpture, he said, 'the arts are essential to any complete national life.'

He mentioned the UK Prime Minister at the time, Neville Chamberlain, who had said elsewhere, 'it is by art man gets nearest to the angels and farthest from the animals.'

Churchill continued to say that, 'with a dozen blobs of pigment [a painter] makes a certain pattern on one or two square yards of canvas, and something is created which carries its shining message of inspiration not only to all who are living...on the world, but across hundreds of years to generations unborn.

It lights the path and links the thought of one generation with another, and in the realm of price holds its own in intrinsic value with an ingot of gold.'

As members of Wentworth Falls ArtsNational, we are privileged to have access to a wide range of the fine arts in the lectures programmed for 2026.

Once a month, in the beautiful ambience of the School of Arts, we can temporarily step away from the everyday world and its drama and experience our own 'shining message of inspiration.'

Sharryn Ryan



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Come to monthly arts related lectures at
Wentworth Falls School of Arts

For more information: adfas.org.au or find us

