



## THE ANNIVERSARY IN QUESTION NAPOLEON

Tuesday 17 December

When Napoleon Bonaparte was born 250 years ago in Corsica. By the age of 26 he was commander of the French Revolutionary army in Italy, winning every battle against the Austrians and eventually conquering the entire Italian Peninsula in a year. His forces confiscated more than three hundred works of art, later to find their way to the Louvre, and this began the link between art, propaganda and Napoleon's career. In 1798 he led a renowned military expedition to Egypt, accompanied by artists, mathematicians, naturalists, chemists, and geodesists. Egyptian motifs appeared overnight on furniture, architecture and porcelain. In 1799 he orchestrated a coup and made himself First Consul, on the Roman Republican model. From 1804 he declared himself Emperor, shattered his enemy the Third Coalition at Ulm and Austerlitz, dissolved the Holy Roman Empire, defeated the military machines of Prussia, Poland and the Fifth Coalition at Jena, Auerstedt, Friedland, and Wagram. Meanwhile he had invaded Spain and declared his brother Joseph King there, resulting in the Peninsular War. Only the resistance of Russia's winter called a conclusive halt to his advances. Physically unprepossessing. Napoleon relied on paintings by Jacques-Louis David, Ingres, Baron Gros and many others to give him an imperial image: magnificent paintings of the hero on horseback crossing the Alps, the tall general, the Christ like figure curing the plague-ridden of Jaffa, the ardent administrator. His palaces were filled with furniture on the Roman Model, now seen as 'Empire' style. We discuss how Napoleon's astonishing life inspired major works of art, and how art furthered his ideals.

All Culture in Question lectures take place in the Art Workers Guild, Queen Square, Bloomsbury, unless otherwise indicated. Coffee is served at 10.30, the lecture begins at 11, and a light lunch with wine is served at 1 pm. The event ends by 3.30 p.m.

£85 INSCAPE members, £95 non-members.