



The Arts Past and Present: Ireland

How can we read an image to tell us more about its ancient maker? In this album a mosaic artist, Catherine Parkinson, visits the splendidly-preserved ancient Roman mosaics at Brading Villa on the Isle of Wight. With the help of two archaeologists she discovers that the iconography reveals important clues about the villa inhabitants' world view, taste, and aspirations. Their leisure pursuits, the value placed on learning, and their views on men and women are just some of the themes revealed in the mythological narratives. Did the craftsmen bring pattern books to the villa owner so he could choose how to decorate his house, much like today? Catherine's own practical experience of mosaic-making also helps us understand the methods the Romans used to lay the mosaics. In the audio track, Open University classicist Jessica Hughes explores some of the issues surrounding interpretation of these mosaics' meanings. This material forms part of the Open University Course AA100 The arts and past and present.