

THE ART OF THE FRESCO

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Dove with Apples

In 79AD Mount Vesuvius near Naples erupted and covered the ancient town of Pompeii and its surrounding countryside in lava and ash. Although the disaster devastated the city at the time, killing its citizens and burying everything, the buildings and works of art were preserved for centuries under the ash. Since few paintings have survived from this era, Pompeii is one of the few precious sources for much of what we know about ancient painting and decoration.

This scene is taken from a wall in Room 32, House VI (Insula Occidentalis) in Pompeii which was brought to light in 1979.

The garden paintings from this room express the Roman love of Nature. Both birds and plants are very carefully observed and accurately depicted but the plants grow in different seasons and could never have physically co-existed in a real garden. The birds too are encountered only in certain regions at certain times of year often not in the same place at all.

This detail comes from the entrance wall of Room 32, and shows a pigeon with two apples. The pigeon is a monogamous bird and therefore symbolises fidelity.

£450 - 32cm x 50cm

£250 - 23cm x 37cm

Room 32, House VI (Insula Occidentalis), Pompeii, Italy

c.50 AD