Around 500 BC two streams of art emerged in Europe: so-called Celtic art appeared in Europe north of the Alps and is an art of shape-shifting and complexity that might be broadly labeled as ‘animist’; in the Classical world of first Greece and then Rome more realistic art forms came into being within an urban milieu. Animist art is found across a broad swathe of Eurasia from Europe to the borders of China, while realistic art occurs in a broad band from Rome to India. I will outline contrasts in the two art forms, concentrating on the former, considering in each case what art did within each cultural milieu.

Chris Gosden is Professor of European Archaeology at the University of Oxford and a fellow of the British Academy. He has carried out fieldwork in Europe, Papua New Guinea and Borneo and is currently developing interests in China. Recent books include: Archaeology and Colonialism (2004), Knowing Things: exploring the collections at the Pitt Rivers Museum 1884-1945 (Gosden, C. and F. Larson, 2007), Histories in the Making. Excavations at Alfred’s Castle 1998-2000 (Gosden, C. and G. Lock. 2013), and A Technology of Enchantment? Exploring Celtic Art 400 BC – AD 100 (Garrow, D. and C. Gosden. 2012).