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CASVA

Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts

Current Research at the Center

From its creation, the Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts (CASVA) was envisioned as bringing together within the National Gallery of Art a community of scholars for the advancement of knowledge of art, architecture, urbanism, and film. The most visible CASVA community is the group of visiting members brought to the Center each year. Less evident is the community of researchers working within CASVA on several long-term projects. Directed by the dean and associate deans of the Center, these projects have been designed to support innovative work that will also result in a resource for the wider field. The Center's original A.W. Mellon grant made it possible to establish small teams of research associates working together on a rotating basis, and the last two years have witnessed the culmination of several ambitious projects and the advancement of others.

Guide to Documentary Sources for Andean Studies, 1530–1900

One of these projects is the *Guide to Documentary Sources for Andean Studies, 1530–1900*, published in 2008 by the University of Oklahoma Press in collaboration with CASVA. This three-volume work was conceived and organized by Joanne Pillsbury, who served for four years as associate dean of the Center and is now director of pre-Columbian studies at Dumbarton Oaks, Washington, DC. The Center has had a long-standing interest in Latin American studies, especially in connection with the exhibitions of Olmec, Moche, and Mayan art at the Gallery, and this ref-

erence work—supported by the Getty Grant Program, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the British Academy, and the Lampadia Foundation—makes rare historical sources accessible to scholars in a field of growing interest and importance.

Keywords in American Landscape Design

For more than a decade, CASVA associate dean Therese O'Malley, widely respected for her research on the history of the National Mall, has worked with a team of associates and advisors to compile *Keywords in American Landscape Design*, a richly illustrated historical dictionary of the vocabulary of landscape design and garden planning used in North America from the seventeenth to the mid-nineteenth century. Ranging from *alcove* and *arbor* to *walk* and *wood*, one hundred terms are defined through extensive documentation and imagery. The broad geographic scope of the texts reveals patterns of regional usage—the *piazza*, for example, was once synonymous with the veranda or porch, but by the late nineteenth century this meaning survived only in Louisiana, while elsewhere the term came to be associated with the public square. The wide chronological range of the sources, including newspapers, diaries, treatises, letters, and much ephemera, shows how design practice and landscape vocabulary in the United States changed over time. Mount Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge, Massachusetts, for instance, was the first “rural cemetery,” a picturesquely landscaped park that transformed the burial ground into a public urban amenity.

O'Malley and her colleagues have also catalogued thousands of images, with more than one thousand in the volume. Some are well-known classics, such as the sketches made by Benjamin Henry Latrobe, architect of the Capitol, of the gardens and landscapes he designed and visited. Others, including George Washington's own drawings for his plantation and greenhouses, are either rarely seen or completely unknown. *Keywords*, published this year by Yale University Press in association with CASVA, reveals that landscape history is integral to cultural history, and it will be of immense value for the study of American landscape painting and of landscape itself from colonial times.

In addition to the Center's own grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and Paul Mellon Endowment funds, support for this project came from the Getty Grant Program, the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts, and the Terra Foundation for the Arts.

The History of the Accademia di San Luca, c. 1590–1635

Documentation of the history of the Accademia di San Luca, a Roman academy established in the late sixteenth century and the model for future academies, has been notoriously hampered by the inaccessibility of the academy's archive. CASVA associate dean Peter Lukehart, who has studied the education and professional organization of artists in early modern Italy for many years, undertook a concentrated program of research in the Archivio di Stato di Roma instead, hoping to recover

the early history of the Accademia by other means. Through tracking the various notaries who acted as legal agents for artists in the academy, he found many documents not seen since they were signed and witnessed four centuries ago. Supported by the A. W. Mellon grant and the Center's Paul Mellon endowment, Lukehart designed a project that would bring interested scholars together to create an online database, in tandem with a publication on the foundations of the Accademia.

Scholars gathered at the National Gallery and in Rome for three intense and productive meetings, which, with the support of CASVA's Robert H. Smith Grant, resulted in the second volume in the Center's Seminar Series. *The Accademia Seminars: The Accademia di San Luca in Rome, c. 1590–1635* appeared in paperback in 2009. Like *The Dada Seminars*, the first in the series, this second volume of essays attests to the value of the sort of extended collaboration and debate that CASVA can provide. The result is an accessible reference work that provides material for further research and teaching in an affordable format.

The second part of the project is a Web site, launched this year. "The History of the Accademia di San Luca, c. 1590–1635: Documents from the Archivio di Stato di Roma" brings together transcriptions and digital images of some four hundred notarial documents from the early decades of the Accademia in a searchable and publicly accessible reference database (www.nga.gov/casva/accademia). Also included are images of works by members of the Accademia now in the collections of the National Gallery of Art, together with selected bibliographies. Such links to the Gallery's collection and library databases mean that the Web site will attract new visitors, both virtual and real.

Malvasia's "Felsina Pittrice"

The title "Father of Art History" is often awarded to Giorgio Vasari, whose *Lives of the Artists* remains the most popular account of Renaissance artists. Vasari's Tuscan-based approach was, however, quickly criticized, especially by writers from other regions. Among the most vehement of these was Count Carlo Cesare Malvasia, whose *Felsina Pittrice*, published in Bologna in 1678, undertook to rewrite the history of the Renaissance and to record the work of such contemporary artists as Guido Reni and Guercino. This work has never been translated into English in its entirety, and there is no modern Italian edition. CASVA dean Elizabeth Cropper, who has long been interested in early art criticism, has embarked on a project with an international team of colleagues to translate, annotate, and edit Malvasia's text, together with his rough notes, as a series of monographs. The first volume, to be completed this year, will be devoted to the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, drawing attention to such Bolognese artists as Simone dei Crocefissi, whose *Madonna and Child with Angels and Giovanni da Piacenza*, c. 1378, demonstrates all the liveliness of works by Florentine and Siense contemporaries. Robert H. Smith provided support for research and editorial work just last year, and the Center is determined to fulfill his wish to see the project move forward. • Elizabeth Cropper, *Dean, Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts*

Simone dei Crocefissi, *Madonna and Child with Angels and Giovanni da Piacenza*, c. 1378, oil on panel, Pinacoteca Nazionale di Bologna, Bologna



Thomas Chambers, *Mount Auburn Cemetery*, mid 19th century, oil on canvas, National Gallery of Art, Gift of Edgar William and Bernice Chrysler Garbisch



Pietro Francesco Alberti, *A Painter's Academy* (detail), c. 1625, etching, Research Library, The Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles

