

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WASHINGTON, D.C., April 11, 1961: John Walker, Director of the National Gallery of Art, announced today that the award of the A. W. Mellon Lectureship in the Fine Arts for 1961 has been given to André Grabar, Membre de l'Institut. The tenth Mellon Lecturer to be designated will give a series of six lectures in the auditorium of the National Gallery, beginning on Sunday, April 16, at 4 p.m., and continuing on successive Sundays through May 21. Admission is free to the public and no tickets are required.

Professor Grabar is generally recognized as the leading authority on the relation between art, culture, and religion in the early Christian world. His archaeological researches have ranged over a field that extends from the Near East to the Latin countries of Europe, and from the end of classical antiquity to the sixteenth century.

His lectures at the National Gallery, entitled "Christian Iconography and the Christian Religion in Antiquity", will deal with the forms which religious expression took among believers in Christianity during the religion's earliest and most perilous days.

Professor Grabar has been awarded some of the top academic honors of his native France. Born in Kiev, Russia, in 1896, he fled the Communist regime to settle in France in 1922, becoming a naturalized citizen there in 1928. He was called in 1937 from the University of Strasbourg, where he had been since his arrival in France, to teach at the École des Hautes Etudes in Paris. In 1946 he was elected Professor of Early Christian and Byzantine Archaeology at the Collège de France, a research institute of study so advanced that the titles of the professorships are not pre-determined but depend on the specialty of the professors.

He is a rare two-time winner (1942 and 1948) of the Schlumberger Award of the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres, for the best book in the field of Medieval Studies. In 1955 he was given his country's highest academic rank, being made a member of the Institut de France.

Professor Grabar has also received much international recognition. The Universities of Princeton in America, and Uppsala in Sweden, have given him honorary degrees. He is a Corresponding Fellow of the Medieval Academy of America, and of the Academies of Norway, Denmark, and Great Britain. In addition, he is on the Board of Scholars of Dumbarton Oaks Research Library in Washington.

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The list of Professor Grabar's publications numbers some 16 books and over 71 articles. Most widely known in America are his contributions to no less than three of the "Great Centuries of Painting" series published by Skira: Byzantine Painting (1953), Early Medieval Painting (1957), and Romanesque Painting (1958).

Perhaps his most significant contribution has been a trilogy of works stretching over the past two decades. The Emperor in Byzantine Art appeared in 1936; Martyrium: A Study of the Cult of Relics and the Art of Christian Antiquity appeared in two volumes between 1943 and 1946; and Byzantine Iconoclasm appeared in 1957. These three works alone are reported by specialists in the field to have changed the course of Byzantine scholarship.

This is the tenth anniversary of the annual Mellon Lectureship, inaugurated in 1952 "to bring to the people of the United States the results of the best contemporary thought and scholarship bearing on the subject of the Fine Arts." The standards of the National Gallery's choice are kept as rigorous as possible, "in keeping with its position as the Art Gallery of the Nation." If scholars of sufficiently high standard are not available in any one year, the award of the lectureship is to be waived.

The lectures are subsequently published in book form in the Bollingen series. Three of the books that have appeared so far as a result of the Mellon Lectures have since been republished in paperback form: Sir Kenneth Clark's The Nude, Jacques Maritain's Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry, and Étienne Gilson's Painting and Reality.

A complete checklist of previous Mellon Lecturers and their subjects is attached.

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THE A. W. MELLON LECTURES IN THE FINE ARTS
Chronological List of Lectures

<u>Date</u>	<u>Lecturer</u>	<u>Subject</u>
1952	Prof. Jacques Maritain	<u>Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry</u>
1953	Sir Kenneth Clark	<u>The Nude: A Study in Ideal Form</u>
1954	Sir Herbert Read	<u>The Art of Sculpture</u>
1955	Prof. Etienne Gilson	<u>Painting and Reality</u>
1956	Prof. E.H.J. Gombrich	<u>Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation</u>
1957	Prof. Siegfried Giedion	<u>Constancy and Change in Early Art and Architecture</u>
1958	Sir Anthony Blunt	<u>Nicholas Poussin</u>
1959	Mr. Naum Gabo	<u>On Divers Arts</u>
1960	Mr. Wilmarth S. Lewis	<u>Horace Walpole: The Man</u>
1961	Prof. André Grabar	<u>Christian Iconography and the Christian Religion in Antiquity</u>

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