

SIXTH STREET AT CONSTITUTION AVENUE NW WASHINGTON DC 20565 • 737-4215 extension 224

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1976 MELLON LECTURES GIVEN BY
CLASSICAL SCHOLAR PETER VON BLANCKENHAGEN

WASHINGTON, D.C. March 15, 1976. The eminent classical scholar Peter von Blanckenhagen will lecture on "Aspects of Classical Art" for the 1976 Andrew W. Mellon Lectures in the Fine Arts at the National Gallery of Art.

Professor von Blanckenhagen's lectures will also serve as background to the Gallery's major Bicentennial exhibition The Eye of Thomas Jefferson, opening June 5. The lectures will be devoted to the classical tradition which was "re-discovered" in the Enlightenment of the eighteenth century and which became the aesthetic and intellectual preoccupation of the society in which Thomas Jefferson was active.

For six consecutive Sundays from March 21 through April 25, Professor von Blanckenhagen will lecture on the following topics: "Gods and Heroes" (March 21); "Demons and Monsters" (March 28); "Legends and History" (April 4); "Individual and Society" (April 11); "Program of the Parthenon" (April 18); and "Classical Art in Ancient Views" (April 25). The lectures begin at 4:00 p.m., are held in the National Gallery Auditorium, and are open to the public at no charge.

Professor von Blanckenhagen has been Professor of Fine Arts at New York University's Institute of Fine Arts since 1960 and The Robert Lehman Professor of Fine Arts since 1965.

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He has personally directed excavations of two Roman Villas at Francolise, near Capua, Italy, in collaboration with the British School at Rome.

In addition to delivering the forthcoming Mellon Lectures, Professor von Blanckenhagen has lectured as visiting Professor at the Christian Gauss Seminars, Princeton University, in the spring of 1969, and delivered the Semple Lectures in Cincinnati, Ohio, in the spring of 1972. Among numerous other associations outside New York University are membership on the Editorial Board of the Princeton Directory of Classical Archaeology, membership in the Academy of Arts and Sciences, Boston, membership on the board of Trustees of the American Academy in Rome, and membership in the Archaeological Institute of America and the Deutsches Archäologisches Institut (Berlin).

He has authored many books, among them Flavische Architektur und ihre Dekoration, Das Bild des Menschen in der Römischen Kunst, and The Paintings from Boscotrecase, and has contributed numerous articles to fine arts publications in the United States and Europe.

In his analysis of classical art for the Mellon Lectures, Professor von Blanckenhagen will explore the basis for the eighteenth-century rebirth of the classical tradition. Eighteenth-century educators and statesmen such as Jefferson began turning to the ancient civilizations of Greece and Rome for inspiration in the formation of a framework for a new society. In the spirit of the Enlightenment Jefferson avidly pursued his quest for understanding of ancient cultures through study of their literature, art and architecture.

The Gallery's Bicentennial exhibition, The Eye of Thomas Jefferson, will exhibit many of Jefferson's own architectural designs inspired by the classical ruins of Rome, Nîmes, and Palestrina. On view as well will be the renowned sculpture of the Venus de Medici, on loan from the Uffizi Gallery in Florence, a replica of which Jefferson envisioned in the sculpture galleries of Monticello. The exhibition is supported by a grant from Exxon Corporation.

The purpose of The Andrew W. Mellon Lectures in the Fine Arts is to "bring the people of the United States the best contemporary thought and scholarship bearing on the subject of the fine arts." The series is in its 34th year and is supported by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION contact Katherine Warwick, Assistant to the Director, or Margaret Estabrook, Information Office, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. 20565, area code 202, 737-4215, ext. 224.