

# NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

RENAISSANCE SCHOLAR ANDRÉ CHASTEL

TO GIVE 1977 MELLON LECTURES

WASHINGTON, D. C. March 3, 1977. Professor André Chastel, eminent French authority on the Italian Renaissance, will give the 1977 Andrew W. Mellon Lectures in the Fine Arts at the National Gallery of Art on six consecutive Sundays from April 17 through May 22. His subject will be "The Sack of Rome: 1527." The lectures, held in the National Gallery's Auditorium at 4 p.m., are open to the public at no charge.

The sack of Rome in May 1527 was a key event in a time of intense artistic creativity and political turmoil. Under Pope Clement VII (1523-1534), work in Rome was progressing on St. Peter's, the Sistine Chapel, and a host of other projects. Michelangelo and Cellini were in the midst of their careers, and Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael, and Bramante had created their major works during the preceding thirty years.

Ten years before the sack, in 1517, Martin Luther had posted the Ninety-five Theses, and in 1519, Charles I of Spain had been elected Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire as Charles V. His total rejection of Luther's Reformation led to a series of religious wars throughout Europe and eventually left Italy and the Papacy under Spanish control.

The sack, carried out by mercenaries of Charles V, devastated Rome and marked the decline of that city's pre-eminence in the Renaissance. Many

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great works of art were destroyed or severely damaged, the Vatican loggias designed by Bramante and decorated by Raphael were used as barracks, and the Sistine Chapel became a stable.

Professor Chastel will discuss the following topics during the lecture series: "Misera Caput Mundi: Visual Records of the Sack" (April 17); "Rome - Babylone: Propaganda before 1527" (April 24); "Works of Art and Holy Relics in Trouble" (May 1); "Italians and Barbarians: Polemics after 1527" (May 8); "Clementine Artists Dispersed" (May 15); and "Papal Retrieval and Imperial Triumph" (May 22).

Since 1975 Professor Chastel has been a member of the Institut de France (Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres), the most prestigious academic organization in France, and since 1970, a Professor of the Collège de France, specializing in the Art and Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy. He has also served as Art Critic for Le Monde and as Associate Professor, then Professor of the History of Modern Art at the Faculté des Lettres de Paris since 1955.

He is a member of the Comité des Travaux historiques et scientifiques; the Société Nationale des Antiquaires de France; the Istituto Veneto delle Scienze, Arti e Lettere, Padua; the Accademia Toscana di Scienze e Lettere "La Colombaria," Florence; and the Accademia dei Lincei, Rome. In addition, he has served as the President of the Comité français d'Histoire de l'Art (1973) and as Vice President (1964) and President (1972) of the Commission Nationale pour l'Inventaire des Monuments et des Richesses artistiques de

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la France. In 1974 he became a Foreign Honorary Member of the American Academy of Arts and Science and in 1975 a Corresponding Fellow of the British Academy, London.

Professor Chastel's many publications include La Mythe de la Renaissance: 1420-1520 (1969), La Crise de la Renaissance: 1520-1600 (1968), Renaissance méridionale, Italie 1460-1500 (1965), Le Grand Atelier d'Italie 1460-1500 (1965), L'âge de l'humanisme: l'Europe de la Renaissance (with R. Klein, 1963), and Art et Humanisme à Florence au temps de Laurent le Magnifique (1959).

The Andrew W. Mellon Lectures in the Fine Arts began in 1952 and are supported by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Their purpose is to "bring to the people of the United States the best contemporary thought and scholarship bearing on the subject of the fine arts."

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