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Craig Clunas to Present *Chinese Painting and Its Audiences* for the 61st A. W. Mellon Lectures in the Fine Arts at the National Gallery of Art, Washington



Craig Clunas, professor of the history of art, University of Oxford, and 61st A. W. Mellon Lecturer in the Fine Arts

Washington, DC—**Craig Clunas**, professor of the history of art, University of Oxford, will present the **61st A. W. Mellon Lectures in the Fine Arts** series, entitled ***Chinese Painting and Its Audiences***, this spring at the National Gallery of Art in Washington.

The series will include the following lectures:

Beginning and Ending in Chinese Painting

March 11

The Gentleman

March 18

The Emperor

March 25

The Merchant

April 1

The Nation

April 15

The People

April 22

All lectures take place Sunday afternoons at 2:00 p.m. in the East Building Auditorium. The programs are free and open to the public, and seating is first come, first served.

Craig Clunas is only the second Mellon Lecturer to turn to China for his subject. The first was Lothar Ledderose, whose 1998 series was published as *Ten Thousand Things: Module and Mass Production in Chinese Art*. Clunas' starting point is a statement by Ernst Gombrich in *Art and Illusion*—the best-selling volume based on Gombrich's own 1956 Mellon Lectures—about the work of the mind of the beholder in completing the forms so briefly suggested by the brush in Chinese painting. Where Ledderose studied mass production of unique objects by the hand of a maker, Clunas thinks about the production of painting, whether from the Ming dynasty (1368–1644) or the People's Republic of China, by the mind of the viewer. In the not-so-distant past, art historians in the West felt free to talk about a general category of "Chinese painting." Clunas, however, insists that, just as in cultures with which we are more familiar, different audiences produce different kinds of art; different ideal viewers—whether gentlemen, emperors, merchants, the nation, or the people—are in turn constructed by works of art.

The A. W. Mellon Lectures in the Fine Arts

The A. W. Mellon Lectures in the Fine Arts were established in 1949 to bring to the people of the United States the results of the best contemporary thought and scholarship bearing upon the subject of the fine arts. The program is named for Andrew W. Mellon, the founder of the National Gallery of Art, who gave the nation his art

collection and funds to build the West Building, which opened to the public in 1941.

Craig Clunas

Craig Clunas has been professor of the history of art, University of Oxford, since 2007. He received his BA and MA degrees in Chinese studies from the University of Cambridge and his PhD from the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. He served for 15 years on the staff of the Far Eastern department of the Victoria and Albert Museum. Subsequently, he taught art history at the University of Sussex, where he was appointed professor of history of art in 1997. In 2003 he returned to the University of London as Percival David Professor of Chinese and East Asian Art.

Clunas has written numerous books on the art history and culture of China, a selection of which will be available for purchase from the Gallery's bookshop on the Concourse. Much of his work concentrates on the Ming period (1368–1644), with additional teaching and research interests in the art of 20th-century and contemporary China. His books include *Art in China* (1997; second edition, 2009) in the Oxford History of Art series, *Elegant Debts: The Social Art of Wen Zhengming, 1470–1559* (2004), *Pictures and Visuality in Early Modern China* (1997), *Fruitful Sites: Garden Culture in Ming Dynasty China* (1996), and *Superfluous Things: Material Culture and Social Status in Early Modern China* (1991). His most recent book, based on his 2004 Slade Lectures, is *Empire of Great Brightness: Visual and Material Cultures of Ming China, 1368–1644* (2007). He is completing a book on the cultural role of the Ming regional aristocracy and is co-curator of an exhibition on the early Ming period, *Ming China 1400–1450: Courts & Contacts*, scheduled to open at the British Museum in 2014.

Clunas received a DLitt (honoris causa) from the University of Warwick in 2010. He was the Slade Professor of Fine Arts, University of Oxford, in 2003–2004 and Edward H. Benenson Lecturer, Duke University, in 2003. In 1999 he was awarded the R. C. Hills Gold Medal of the Oriental Ceramic Society for outstanding contribution to the study of Oriental art.

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General Information

The National Gallery of Art and its Sculpture Garden are at all times free to the public. They are located on the National Mall between 3rd and 9th Streets along Constitution Avenue NW and are open Monday through Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Sunday from 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. The Gallery is closed on December 25 and January 1. With the exception of the atrium and library, the galleries in the East Building will be closing gradually beginning in July 2013 and will remain closed for approximately three years for Master Facilities Plan and renovations. For specific updates on gallery closings, visit www.nga.gov/renovation (<http://www.nga.gov/renovation>) .

For information call (202) 737-4215 or the Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD) at (202) 842-6176, or visit the Gallery's website at www.nga.gov. Follow the Gallery on Facebook at www.facebook.com/NationalGalleryofArt and on Twitter at twitter.com/ngadc.

Visitors will be asked to present all carried items for inspection upon entering. Checkrooms are free of charge and located at each entrance. Luggage and other oversized bags must be presented at the 4th Street entrances to the East or West Building to permit x-ray screening and must be deposited in the checkrooms at those entrances. For the safety of visitors and the works of art, nothing may be carried into the Gallery on a visitor's back. Any bag or other items that cannot be carried reasonably and safely in some other manner must be left in the checkrooms. Items larger than 17 by 26 inches cannot be accepted by the Gallery or its checkrooms.

For additional press information please call or send inquiries to:

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