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Anthony Grafton of Princeton University to Present the A. W. Mellon Lectures in the Fine Arts at the National Gallery of Art, Washington



Anthony Grafton, 63rd A.W. Mellon Lecturer in the Fine Arts at the Center for Advanced Studies in the Visual Arts, National Gallery of Art, spring 2014.

Washington, DC—Anthony Grafton, Henry Putnam University Professor of History at Princeton University, will present the 63rd annual A. W. Mellon Lectures in the Fine Arts with a series entitled *Past Belief: Visions of Early Christianity in Renaissance and Reformation Europe*.

Grafton is one of the foremost historians of early modern Europe and has authored ten books on aspects of this subject, including *New Worlds*, *Ancient Texts: The Power of Tradition and the Shock of Discovery*, which won the Los Angeles Times Book Prize in 1993. In his capacity as the Henry Putnam University Professor of History at Princeton University, he is currently engaged in a large-scale study of chronology in the 16th and 17th centuries and attempts by scholars of that time to assign dates to past events, reconstruct ancient calendars, and reconcile the Bible with other competing accounts.

In his A. W. Mellon Lectures, Grafton will focus on the efforts of artists and scholars to recreate the early history of Christianity, which underwent a crisis from the 15th to the 17th century. During that time, humanist scholars and Protestant reformers argued that the Catholic church of the Renaissance had lost any semblance of the tenets of early Christianity. Catholic scholars countered that their central beliefs and rituals were anchored in tradition that dated back to the Apostles. Out of this discord emerged teams of scholars who created divergent histories of the church, edited early Christian texts, and excavated early Christian sites. In theory, Catholics insisted that the church had been *semper eadem* (always the same); but across Europe visions of early Christianity—in scholarship and art alike—would never be the same again.

Grafton will explore how this shift was manifested in the art and scholarship of Renaissance and Reformation Europe with the following lectures:

March 30: *How Jesus Celebrated Passover: The Jewish Origins of Christianity*

April 6: *Bearers of Memory and Makers of History: The Many Paths to Christian Antiquity*

April 13: *Christian Origins and the Work of Time: Imagining the First Christians*

April 27: *Relics and Ruins: Material Survivals and Early Modern Interpretations*

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May 4: *Martyrdom and Persecution: The Uses of Early Christian Suffering*

May 11: *Constantine and Conversion: The Roles of the First Christian Emperor*

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 seated.

About the A. W. Mellon Lectures in the Fine Arts

Since 1949, the A. W. Mellon Lectures in the Fine Arts have presented the best in contemporary thought and scholarship on the subject of fine arts to the people of the United States. The program itself is named for Andrew W. Mellon, 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.

About Anthony Grafton

Anthony Grafton is widely published as an author, coauthor, editor, and translator on the history of Renaissance Europe; the history of books and readers; the history of scholarship and education in the West from antiquity to the 19th century; and the history of science from antiquity to the Renaissance.

He has been the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship (1989), the Balzan Prize for History of Humanities (2002), and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation's Distinguished Achievement Award (2003). He is a member of the American Philosophical Society and of the British Academy and a former president of the American Historical Association (2011).

He holds a BA, an MA, and a PhD in history from the University of Chicago, as well as an honorary doctorate from the University of Leiden.

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 at 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 remain closed for approximately three years for Master Facilities Plan and renovations. For specific updates on gallery closings, visit <http://www.nga.gov/content/ngaweb/Collection/modern-art-during-renovation.html>.

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