Coming Soon!

Still Life and Landscape

Gudrun Bühl

This exhibition of paintings and furniture juxtaposes two distinct yet related artistic genres. In a still life, the artist depicts the world up-close and in detail. In a landscape, the world is viewed from afar. Despite these differences, the two art forms share common ground—they represent the world around us. The artworks in Still Life & Landscape, all from the Dumbarton Oaks historic House Collection, range in date from the early sixteenth to the early twentieth centuries. Artists in the exhibition include Claude Lorrain, Jan van Huysum, David Roentgen, Odilon Redon, and Pierre-Auguste Renoir.
Oral History Project at Dumbarton Oaks

James Carder

Oral history interviews offer an organization the opportunity to recapture its past and increase its institutional memory. In such interviews, people formerly associated with the institution speak of their past experiences, of their successes, and perhaps even of their failures. The record of these memories, captured on audio- and videotape, often provides a more personal, even colorful addendum to what is otherwise the drab official record preserved in the minutes and office correspondence of an institution’s archives. From oral history interviews, an organization can gain a better sense of what it looked like at certain points in time, and, indeed, where it thought it was headed at those times. Of course, in these interviews, memories and perceptions sometimes prove to be at odds with the historical record. But even differing perspectives are invaluable, as they bring to light a sense of what could have been, according to the person interviewed. Unfortunately, the human life span puts boundaries on the institutional memory that can be collected with oral history interviews. With each obituary notice of someone not interviewed comes the sad realization that this person’s memories have become irretrievable.

Jan Ziolkowski, Director of Dumbarton Oaks, inaugurated the Dumbarton Oaks Oral History Project in 2008. To date, the project has logged 94 interviews. These include sessions with former directors, directors of studies, fellows and scholars, staff members, gardeners, and people who knew Mildred and Robert Woods Bliss and the residential period of Dumbarton Oaks. Most of these were undertaken by nine Harvard University summer interns who researched, conducted, and transcribed the interviews.

An expected, but nonetheless still remarkable benefit of oral history interviews is the inevitable cross-referencing of people, places, and events that occurs over successive interviews. For example, we learned from former director Giles Constable how Dumbarton Oaks endeavored to bring the great Byzantine historian Alexander Kazhdan from the Soviet Union to Washington, D.C. Constable remembers being alarmed when parcels containing Kazhdan’s library began to arrive at Dumbarton Oaks, as he was certain that this would alert the Soviets to Kazhdan’s intention to leave the country for America. When he saw Kazhdan in Vienna, he said “‘Alexander, how can they possibly allow this? They’ll know you’re not really going to Israel.’ But Kazhdan said, ‘Oh, the post office will never tell them.’ And he was quite right,” Constable concluded. “In a great massive bureaucratic government, you can do things where the left hand has no idea what the right hand or any other hand is doing.” The story of Kazhdan’s coming to Dumbarton Oaks and the Kazhdans’ lives in America was further explained by his widow, in an interview conducted by Alice-Mary Talbot, former director of Byzantine Studies.

This year, with the inauguration of the new Dumbarton Oaks website, transcriptions of the oral history interviews will for the first time become available on the web. Through their web publication, they will not only serve to augment the institutional memory, but they will also add significantly to the greater humanistic record of intellectual life in the twentieth century.
Primeros Libros

Bridget Gazzo

The Dumbarton Oaks Research Library has been asked to contribute imaging of two of our books to Primeros Libros, a collaborative effort to digitize sixteenth-century books from Mexico. Primeros Libros (First Books) was initiated in 2010 by a consortium of libraries led by the Benson Latin American Collection at The University of Texas at Austin, Biblioteca Histórica José María Lafragua at the Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla, and the Cushing Memorial Library and Archives at Texas A&M University. Our two “First Books” are:

Vocabulario en lengua mexicana y castellana / compuesto por Alonso de Molina. Mexico: Antonia de Spinosa, 1571.

Advertencias. Para los confessores de los naturales / compuestas por el padre fray Ioan Baptista, de la Orden del seraphico padre Sanct Francisco, lector de theologia, y guardian del Conuento de Sanctiago Tlatilulco: dela Provincia del Sancto Euangelio ...1a parte (1600). Imprint: En Mexico. En el Conuento de Sanctiago Tlatilulco, Por M. Ocharte. Año 1600. Mostly in Latin and Spanish; parts of the text in Nahuatl and Spanish in parallel columns.

Primeros Libros is remarkable for its scope, access, and the project’s custom viewer (page delivery system). Texas A&M developed a comparative book reader that allows users to view multiple exemplars simultaneously. At least a dozen libraries from Spain, Mexico, Chile, and the United States will participate. To date, the project has identified 369 surviving exemplars of 135 titles of the 220 distinct works produced in Mexico before 1601. The website and its digital collection will be explicitly in the public domain, freely available for any and all uses. Permission is not and will not be required.

"Before the Memorial"

A Public Lecture by Peter Walker

Jane Padelford

For many years, Peter Walker and his firm, PWP Landscape Architecture, have been exploring the artistic issue of flatness or horizontality as a metaphor for the earth, an abstraction of the way we perceive the landscape. His talk on February 8 addressed some of
these explorations and their relation to the World Trade Center Memorial recently dedicated in New York City, for which PWP were the landscape architects. Mr. Walker discussed the context of the project within his own firm’s work and within the recent history of memorials, and also addressed the complexities of reconciling his vision with the architectural and urbanist ambitions of this particular project. A high-profile process fraught with political and emotional challenges, the World Trade Center Memorial required making a place from absence, from a void, or, as Mr. Walker says, making “something from nothing.”

Peter Walker is the co-founder of the firm Sasaki, Walker and Associates established in 1957. Walker opened its west coast office, which became The SWA Group in 1976. In 1983, he formed Peter Walker and Partners, now known as PWP Landscape Architecture. Walker has served as consultant and advisor to numerous public agencies and institutions: the Sydney 2000 Olympic Coordination Authority; the Redevelopment Agency of San Francisco; the Port Authority of San Diego; Stanford University; the University of California; the University of Washington; and the American Academy in Rome. He played an essential role in the Graduate School of Design at Harvard University as the chairman of the Landscape Architecture Department and as the acting director of the Urban Design Program. He was head of the Department of Landscape Architecture at the University of California, Berkeley from 1997 to 1999. A Fellow of the American Society of Landscape Architects and the Institute for Urban Design, Walker has been granted the Honor Award of the American Institute of Architects, Harvard’s Centennial Medal, the University of Virginia’s Thomas Jefferson Medal, the ASLA Medal, and the IFLA Sir Geoffrey Jellicoe Gold Medal.

Image courtesy of PWP Landscape Architecture.

Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library

Angela Kinney

Since the publication of its inaugural three volumes in Fall 2010 (and four more volumes in Spring 2011), the Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library has continued to flourish under the aegis of the general editor and director of Dumbarton Oaks, Jan Ziolkowski. The volumes published in Fall 2011 included a number of strong additions to the Medieval Latin subseries. The third installment of the Vulgate Bible (edited by Swift Edgar with Angela M. Kinney) presents a new edition of the Old Testament poetical books. The first English translation of the Satires of Sextus Amarcius and the epic poem Eupolemius are combined in a lively volume produced by Jan Ziolkowski and Ronald Pepin. Finally, Justin Lake’s two-volume set of the Histories of Richer of Saint-Rémi provides the first English translation of this work.

Yet there is no need to dwell upon past triumphs, as DOML eagerly awaits the cornucopia of volumes soon to be published in Spring 2012. The harvest includes volumes in all three subseries: Byzantine Greek, Medieval Latin, and Old English. The Byzantine Greek subseries will welcome its inaugural
Miracle Tales from Byzantium, translated by none other than our own Alice-Mary Talbot and Scott Fitzgerald Johnson. The Medieval Latin subseries stands to gain two exciting volumes: Angela Kinney’s new edition of the major prophetical books of the Vulgate Bible, and Benjamin Garstäd’s edition and translation of the Apocalypse of Pseudo-Methodius (including both Greek and Latin texts). The Old English subseries will acquire a volume of religious and didactic poems by Christopher A. Jones.

While unceasing work continues, there is cause for celebration as each long-anticipated volume emerges. Yet formal celebration, too, is on the horizon: DOML plans to commemorate its first anniversary in March 2012 along with the tenth anniversary of its sister series, the I Tatti Renaissance Library, in a reception to take place in the Dumbarton Oaks Museum.

Off the Press

Dumbarton Oaks is pleased to announce the publication of Interlacing Words and Things: Bridging the Nature-Culture Opposition in Gardens and Landscape, edited by Stephen Bann. Interlacing Words and Things contains nine essays based on papers presented at the symposium “The Interlacing of Words and Things in Gardens and Landscapes: Beyond Nature and Culture” held at Dumbarton Oaks in May 2009. These essays examine the various ways in which the natural world has been transformed through the creative use of language. The contributors do not assume that there is an opposition between nature and culture, but rather emphasize that forms of language are embedded in our understanding and appreciation of the natural environment. Their illustrated essays consider the relationship between language and the natural world as it has been mediated in different cultures and at different periods by broad notions such as landscape and the garden.

Digital Humanities

Joel Kalvesmaki

We were joined on February 15 by Will Noel, from the Walters Art Museum. Using the Archimedes Palimpsest as a catalyst, Will spoke broadly about manuscript digitization at the Walters. Hundreds of their manuscripts are being photographed, catalogued, and made available online free of charge, and with non-commercial reuse allowed. Will discussed the workflow, catalog techniques, and strategies for preservation and dissemination. The primary repository is the digital archive, which contains high-resolution images, but secondary venues include the interfaces, where the material is better read and understood. These interfaces range from innovative tools developed in conjunction with the Maryland Institute for Technology in the Humanities to commercial sites such as Issuu and Flickr. Discussion around Will’s presentation was lively and engaging, and touched on issues of file naming, cataloguing, and presentation. Before Will’s presentation, Clare Moran discussed briefly our extensive Robert L. Van Nice holdings in the Image Collections and Fieldwork Archives, which document the large-scale architectural survey of Hagia Sophia in Istanbul during the twentieth century. She pointed out the
challenges the ICFA team has faced in researching the material, interviewing those who were connected to the survey, and making the panoply of our collection available online. The materials in this collection include photographs, original drawings, field notes, and administrative records. If you haven't seen the working blog, check it out [here](#).

On February 24 Lucie Stylianopoulos, from the University of Virginia, gave a presentation in the Founders’ Room on metadata standards and database design for archaeological material. Lucie is in the conceptual phase of a new project called ArchaeoCore, which is intended to provide data standards suitable to archaeologists who wish to document the interrelationship of artifacts and sites. Her lively talk provided a sense of the limitations of current models as well as the possibilities in new descriptions. More information can be found [here](#).

Digital humanities lunches are held the last Tuesday of each month, noon, at the refectory (basement or, in good weather, outside). Our next gathering is on March 27.

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**From the Archives**

**James Carder**

In 1937, Mildred Barnes Bliss commissioned Igor Stravinsky to compose a chamber concerto in celebration of the Blisses’ thirtieth wedding anniversary in 1938. The result was the Concerto in E-flat, which Mrs. Bliss requested be subtitled *Dumbarton Oaks 8-v-38* in honor of the place and date of its premier. On April 25, 1947, Stravinsky conducted the concerto in the Dumbarton Oaks Music Room as part of the Friends of Music series and in honor of the tenth anniversary of the concerto’s composition. Three days later he and the chamber orchestra recorded the concerto for the first time at the Reeves Beaux Arts Studios in New York City for the Keynote label. The two-disc 78-rpm recording (the cover is shown above) is preserved in the Dumbarton Oaks Archives. The instrumentalists on the recording are: Alexander Schneider, violin; David Sackman, violin; Edwin
Bachmann, violin; Bernard Milofsky, viola; Frank Brieff, viola; Conrad Held, viola; Bernard Greenhouse, cello; Anthony Saphos, cello; Harry Grossman, bass; Albert Whistler, bass; Samuel Baron, flute; Harold Freeman, clarinet; James Dickie, bassoon; Arthur Holmes, horn; and Ralph Brown, horn. To make the recording, a single microphone was placed approximately thirty feet from the orchestra.

The DO Conversations Series Returns

Deb Stewart

Following great success in the fall, the DO Conversations series will continue during the spring term. As before, one-hour weekly sessions will offer opportunities for interested fellows and staff to participate in cross-disciplinary and interdepartmental discussions. The series resumed on February 24th with a presentation by librarian and Byzantine art historian Lucie Wall Stylianopoulos from the University of Virginia (see above). In March, the series will offer three sessions:

**Wednesday, March 7, 1pm**
The Library’s technical services will have an “Open House” from 1 to 2pm on Wednesday, March 7. Fellows and staff are invited to learn about behind-the-scenes work in cataloging, acquisitions, ILL, and processing from the library staff who work on level 2.

**Friday, March 9th, 1pm**
GLS Fellow Robin Veder will lead participants in experiments that involve pacing the formal walks and enjoying the kinesthetic experience of the Dumbarton Oaks gardens.

**Friday, March 23, 1pm**
Gudrun Bühl and museum staff invite fellows and staff to visit Museum storage. Please let Gudrun know in advance if there are specific items you would like to see during this special visit.

Members of the Dumbarton Oaks community are welcome to post images and discussion topics on the [DO Conversations blog](#), which is curated by Sarah Burke.

Friends of Music

Valerie Stains

The Friends of Music series is enjoying a season of classical works flavored periodically with world music elements. February’s concert featured the brilliant Mexican ensemble [Cuarteto Latinoamericano](#) (pictured at left) performing string quartets from Mexico, Brazil, and Uruguay. Later in the evening, the quartet was joined by Daniel Binelli, an Argentine composer and master of the *bandoneón*. (This was perhaps the first time an instrument resembling an accordion has been welcomed to the Music Room!) The five musicians played virtuoso, tango-style compositions by Astor Piazzolla (1921–1992) and a hauntingly beautiful work by Binelli himself. As a member of Piazzolla’s celebrated New Tango Sextet in Argentina, Mr. Binelli worked closely with the composer, a connection that served to infuse the performances with authenticity. Our new staging platform happily accommodated all five musicians and provided great sight lines to an appreciative audience.
The next Friends of Music concert, on March 11th and 12th, presents the celebrated Fine Arts Quartet. In its 66th anniversary year, this distinguished ensemble will offer a stunning program of classics from the string quartet repertoire, including music by Mozart, Saint-Saëns, and Schumann.

New Faces

Jen Christensen

In January, I joined the Dumbarton Oaks team as an intern in the Docent Office. Currently, the Docent Coordinator is preparing for a busy season of guided tours of the gardens as well as of the museum collection. We are also developing new tours with the aim of attracting new audiences to Dumbarton Oaks. One of the new tours will focus on portraiture in the Dumbarton Oaks collections, and will address some of the learning standards indicated by the Washington, D.C. Public School System. A second new tour will look closely at the architecture of Dumbarton Oaks. We have also been working on a docent training session which will focus on new technologies being used in museums. We are in the midst of a busy season, and I am happy to be a part of the team.

Introducing the Dumbarton Oaks Tyler Fellows

In 2010, Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection inaugurated a new pre-doctoral fellowship scheme, the William R. Tyler Fellowships. Eligible applicants are Harvard graduate students working on dissertations in art history, archaeology, history, or literature of the Pre-Columbian or Mediterranean/Byzantine worlds. Last month we introduced the first of four Tyler Fellows Konstantina Karterouli, and this month we are pleased to tell you about the second.

Kuba Kabala

"Frontier Spaces: Eastern Europe, 800-1000 A.D."

I am writing my dissertation on the emergence and development of the Slavic world between Byzantium and Latin Christendom during the ninth and tenth centuries. My research is in large part a philological and archaeological analysis of Slavic borderlands: Byzantium’s northern frontier on the one hand and the Carolingian/Ottonian eastern frontier on the other. I take a two-pronged approach. First, I investigate how Byzantines, Slavs, and Latin westerners imagined and understood borders and space in their written works, how this imagination developed over time, and how it differed across the languages of my sources: Greek, Slavonic, and Latin. Second, I am studying the ninth- and tenth-century archaeological remains of the area to trace movement, contact, and confrontation in the borderlands. I am spending 2011-2012 as a visiting scholar at the Institute of Archaeological Sciences at the Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität in Frankfurt am Main. Early in the fall I worked briefly on the excavation of Tarquimpol, a fortified city near the late antique Roman border in France. The library of the Römisch-Germanische Kommission has provided a great environment especially for my archaeological research. I continue to build geodatabases of
archaeological finds in the Slavic borderlands, including Byzantine coin finds in ninth- and tenth-century Bulgaria, a subject I began to investigate at the Dumbarton Oaks Coins & Seals Summer School in 2011.

Staff Achievements

Promotions

Arthur Goggins was promoted to Lead Security Officer position for third shift. We are very excited about his new role and wish him all the best. Carlos Mendez is now Events and Services Coordinator and supervises event management at Dumbarton Oaks along, with having primary responsibility for mail room duties. Mario Garcia is now Facilities and Services Coordinator and supervises all the building assistants in managing the daily housekeeping and janitorial care of the Dumbarton Oaks buildings.

Thank you all for your service and commitment to Dumbarton Oaks, and congratulations!

Farther Afield

Günder Varinlioğlu was awarded the Loeb Classical Library Foundation Fellowship for the Boğsak Archaeological Survey in Southern Turkey. In 2010, Günder launched an archaeological and architectural survey of the late antique settlement on Boğsak Island (pictured at left) and its environs to explore the formation, expansion, and end of rural settlements in the province of Isauria during the first millennium C.E. Thanks to this generous grant, the third season of the survey in 2012 will bring together an interdisciplinary team of architects, archaeologists, geologists, and geomatics engineers.

The Director of Dumbarton Oaks, Jan Ziolkowski, gave the keynote address “We Philologists” at the Eighth Annual ASSC Graduate Student Conference of The Anglo Saxon Studies Colloquium on “Philology” at the University of California, Berkeley, on February 24. A week later, the Director opened the Thirty-Third Medieval Colloquium of the Centre for Medieval Studies at the University of Toronto with the keynote address “Medieval Images of Imitation.”

Gifts

The Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection gratefully acknowledges the generous donation of Janet M. Fesler. The gift will support our constant efforts to enhance and preserve the Dumbarton Oaks gardens.
Upcoming Events

Friends of Music Concert
Fine Arts Quartet
March 11 & 12

Byzantine Spring Colloquium
"The Social Network"
March 16-17

Joint Reception with Villa I Tatti
In celebration of the first anniversary of the Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library, and the tenth anniversary of the I Tatti Renaissance Library
March 22