Now on View
In the Garden:

Cloud Terrace

Dumbarton Oaks announces the creation of Cloud Terrace, a new contemporary art installation in the Dumbarton Oaks Gardens by artists Andy Cao and Xavier Perrot of Cao|Perrot studio, Los Angeles and Paris, in collaboration with J.P. Paull of Bodega Architecture. Cloud Terrace takes the form of a hand-sculpted wire mesh cloud suspended over the Arbor Terrace and embellished with 10,000 Swarovski ELEMENTS water-drop crystals mirrored in a reflecting pool.

The Arbor Terrace is one of the most modified spaces in the Dumbarton Oaks Gardens. Originally designed by Beatrix Farrand in the early 1930s as a simple rectangular herb garden, bordered on the west by a wisteria-covered arbor and on the east and north by a hedge of Kieffer pears, it was refashioned by Farrand’s former associate Ruth Havey in the 1950s as a pot garden centered on a Rococo-style parterre with low, Doria stone parapet walls. The space can be hot and bright; and Cao|Perrot’s installation is a response to these conditions, extending the shade of the arbor across the terrace and animating the space inside the parterre with an oval pool surrounded by bluestone pebbles.

Cao|Perrot studio have a stunning list of projects to their credit, including temporary site-specific installations at the American Academy in Rome, at the Potager du Roi, Versailles, at the Tuileries, Paris, at the Medici Fountain in the Luxembourg Gardens, and at many of the world’s leading garden festivals. Cao|Perrot studio are also responsible for the winning design of the 600-acre Guangming
New Town Central Park in Shenzhen, China, a collaboration with Lee + Mundwiler Architects, which received an AIA 2009 National Honor Award for Urban Design.

Image: Cloud Terrace, on the Arbor Terrace in the gardens at Dumbarton Oaks. Photo by Jane Padelford.

In the Museum:

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 often 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 pieces 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. Still Life and Landscape can be viewed in the Special Exhibition Gallery during the Museum’s opening hours, 2pm-5pm, Tuesday to Sunday.

In the Bliss Gallery:

From Clearing to Cataloging: The Corpus of Tunisian Mosaics

The Image Collections and Fieldwork Archives (ICFA) presents From Clearing to Cataloging: The Corpus of Tunisian Mosaics, an exhibit that highlights the Margaret Alexander Collection at Dumbarton Oaks. The Collection contains documents and photographs that relate to the fieldwork and publication of the Corpus des Mosaïques de Tunisie (CMT), or Corpus of Tunisian Mosaics. The CMT was launched in 1967 to create a catalog
of Roman and Late Antique mosaics in Tunisia and was co-directed by Margaret Alexander until 1994. The project focused on clearing, preserving, and cataloging pavement mosaics found in private residences and Christian basilicas. Reliable dates were obtained through evidence buried in or near the mosaics, including coins and pottery fragments. The CMT team carried out the archaeological work at four major sites in Tunisia—Utica, Thuburbo Majus, El Jem, and Carthage—before publishing a four-volume catalog of over 1,000 mosaics dating from the first to the fifth centuries CE.

The exhibit includes selections from the Margaret Alexander Collection in ICFA, dating from the 1960s to 1990s, and can be viewed in the Bliss Gallery during the Museum's opening hours. The exhibit was developed to coincide with the Dumbarton Oaks Byzantine Studies symposium in April 2012, "Rome Re-Imagined: Byzantine and Early Islamic Africa, c. 500-800."

Exhibit Team: Robin Pokorski, ICFA Intern, Rona Razon, Archives Specialist, Hillary Olcott, Museum Exhibitions and Programs Coordinator, Christopher Harrison, Senior Exhibits Technician and Cabinetmaker


In the Library:

Rome Re-Imagined: Antiquarianism and Colonialism in the Nineteenth-Century Maghreb

Deb Stewart

Historical and archaeological research into the ancient and medieval periods of the Maghreb must confront the legacy of nineteenth-century colonialist enterprises. In honor of the Byzantine Studies spring symposium, “Rome Re-Imagined: Byzantine and Early Islamic North Africa, 500-800,” a new rare-book exhibition in the Library invites viewers to reflect on the nineteenth-century authors and publications that contributed to the creation of this legacy. Featured items include Alphonse de Lamartine’s Voyages en Orient, Charles Tissot’s Exploration scientifique de la Tunisie, Nathan Davis’s Carthage and her remains, the Beechey brothers’ Proceedings of the expedition to explore the northern coast of Africa, Smith and Porcher’s Discoveries at Cyrene, and items by Adrien Berbrugger, Stephane Gsell, and other influential nineteenth-century scholars of Roman Africa. The exhibit can be viewed on level 4 of the Library through July 15.

The New Dumbarton Oaks Website

Lisa Wainwright

We are thrilled to announce the launch of our new website. After months of planning, organizing, designing, coding, and uploading content, we hope that everyone loves the new look as much as we do. The new site uses a content management system called Plone, which was implemented by the excellent developers at Jazkarta. We also have a beautiful new site design, custom-made for us by Kevin Brooks at Might & Main. Plone allows our staff to edit and manage the content of their departments' pages, and makes background tasks such as linking, cross-referencing, and uploading images incredibly simple. It has also allowed us to reorganize our website navigation and begin digitally cataloguing our assets. In the last several months, Plone has helped us to refine our web presence, and it will continue to streamline the way we distribute information to scholars and to the public. We hope that everyone finds the new site as useful as it is beautiful, and look forward to your comments!

Byzantine Symposium

"Rome Re-Imagined: Byzantine and Early Islamic Africa, ca. 500–800"

The short period of Byzantine rule in the Maghreb belies the region’s importance to the empire in the sixth and seventh centuries. Given the profound economic and strategic significance of the province of “Africa,” the territory was also highly contested in the Byzantine period (by the empire itself, Berber kingdoms, and eventually also Muslim Arabs) as each of these groups sought to gain, retain control of, and exploit the region to its own advantage. In light of this charged history, scholars have typically taken the failure of the Byzantine endeavor in Africa as a foregone conclusion. The symposium sought to reassess this pessimistic vision both by examining those elements of Romano-African identity that provided continuity in a period of remarkable transition, and by seeking to understand the transformations in African society in the context of developments in the larger post-Roman Mediterranean. An international group of researchers from North America, Europe, and North Africa, including both well-established and emerging scholars, addressed topics including the legacy of Vandal rule in Africa, historiography and literature, art and architectural history, the archaeology of cities and their rural hinterlands, the economy, the family, theology, the cult of saints, Berbers, and the Islamic conquest, in an effort to consider the ways in which the imperial legacy was re-interpreted, re-imagined, and put to new uses in Byzantine and early Islamic Africa.

Informal Talk by Bernard Frischer

Joel Kalvesmaki
On Friday, April 6, the Dumbarton Oaks community enjoyed a visit from Bernard Frischer, Professor of Art History and Classics at the University of Virginia, where he is also Director of the Virtual World Heritage Laboratory. Professor Frischer gave an engaging multimedia presentation in the Founders’ Room on his team’s application of 3D digital tools to the simulation of cultural heritage artifacts and sites. The talk was timely, since the VWHL projects help identify issues and challenges that Dumbarton Oaks will want to consider as it develops its own 3D digital models. One of the 3D models presented by Professor Frischer was of fourth-century Rome, digitally rebuilt and designed to be a pedagogical tool. He noted that the process of assembling the model prompted scholars to make new observations and discoveries. Other examples of his models are part of the Digital Sculpture Project, which tackles the barriers often faced by 3D modeling when attending to the complex geometry characteristic of sculpture. Showcasing sculptures from the University of Virginia (Caligula) and the Dresden State Museum (Pan-Nymph), Professor Frischer demonstrated how difficult art-historical questions of interpretation can be illuminated using computer modeling.

Introducing the Dumbarton Oaks Tyler Fellows

Lisa Trever, "Moche Mural Painting and Practice at Pañamarca: A Study of Image Making in Ancient Peru"

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. Lisa Trever, the fourth of our incoming Tyler Fellows, is a Pre-Columbianist studying Moche murals. She writes:

My dissertation project is an art historical study of the mural paintings found within the adobe temples of the late Moche center of Pañamarca (c. 600-900 CE), located on the north-central coast of Peru. Mine is a contextualized study of the relationships between painted images and architectural spaces that includes mural paintings known since the mid-twentieth century and others discovered by my dissertation fieldwork. Continued analysis in 2011-12 focuses on visual and stratigraphic analysis of the multiple, superimposed layers of painting observed on temple walls as well as residue analysis of liquids splashed on the walls as libations. The paintings of Pañamarca form part of an ancient Moche visual and ritual tradition wherein mimesis and pictorial narrative were central representational concepts. I ground this study in a discussion of the philosophical foundations of mimesis, both in the west and as might be recovered from visual and material evidence that underscores the importance of corporeality and embodiment in ancient Moche artistic and ritual practice. I interpret the Pañamarca paintings as images to be seen, experienced, and physically engaged with in real social spaces and during different moments in time. In particular this study
Analyzes the phenomenological effects and performative capabilities of canonical Moche mural paintings within the site’s Ceremonial Plaza, Platform II, and newly discovered Recinto de los Pilares Pintados. These temple paintings served to model ritual behavior and embody religious doctrine as they effectively participated in the instantiation of the late Moche presence at the southern frontier.

Image: Lisa Trever examining mural painting stratigraphy within the Recinto de los Pilares Pintados at Pañamarca, Peru.

An Interview with Allen Grieco, Visiting Scholar

Michael Lee

Allen Grieco (PhD École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales) is Lila Acheson Wallace Assistant Director of Gardens and Grounds & Scholarly Programs as well as Senior Research Associate in History at Villa I Tatti (The Harvard University Centre for Italian Renaissance Studies). In April 2012 he was Visiting Scholar in Garden and Landscape Studies at Dumbarton Oaks. Dr. Grieco has published extensively on the cultural history of food in Italy from the fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries, and has co-edited several collective volumes, amongst which are: *Food Excesses and Constraints in Europe*, special issue of *Food & History* (2006), *Dalla vite al vino. Fonti e problemi della vitivinicoltura italiana nel medioev*o (Bologna, 1994), and *Le Monde végétal (XIIe-XVIIe siècles): savoirs et usages sociaux* (Vincennes, 1993). Currently co-editor-in-chief of *Food & History* (Turnhout, Brepols), he is also in charge of a bibliographic project on the history of food in Europe funded by the Mellon Foundation and the Bibliothèque Nationale de France. He has taught at Harvard, Florence, and Bologna, and has created an English-language graduate program at the Università delle Scienze Gastronomiche, Pollenzo (Italy).

Q. Dr. Grieco, you have come to Dumbarton Oaks to conduct research on the gardens of Cecil Pinsent (1884-1963). How have your responsibilities as director of the gardens at Villa I Tatti led you to pursue this project?

I have been at I Tatti for 23 years, where I spend about half my time overseeing the gardens and grounds. These include not only the gardens proper (7 acres) but also a surrounding agricultural landscape of about 66 acres that includes olives and vines. Careful management requires making historically-informed decisions regarding maintenance and restoration in order to ensure that the original character of the landscape is respected, even as it is allowed to evolve. So from both a practical and a scholarly point of view, it is essential to understand the history of the site as it was designed through the collaboration of the patrons with their landscape architect and architect. However, we are at a great disadvantage in reconstructing this history because Pinsent burned the vast majority of his papers and drawings before he died.

Q. With so many gaps in the primary materials related to Pinsent’s work, what are you hoping to find in the Dumbarton Oaks library?

My research at Dumbarton Oaks focuses not so much on Pinsent’s work at I Tatti, but rather on
the contextualization of his design approach within the broader world of landscape architecture during the early twentieth century. For this purpose, the library’s holdings have been especially helpful because of their depth—not only in early twentieth-century monographs on garden design but also in garden and design periodicals of that period. It is this broader view that I have had difficulty constructing elsewhere and that the time here at Dumbarton Oaks has been so useful in addressing.

Q. **What is the potential scholarly significance of the project?**

I plan to publish this research as a series of articles on the gardens of I Tatti, or perhaps as a monograph on Pinsent’s work as a whole. I am hoping to draw attention to Pinsent’s qualities as a designer, and to reassess his significance for early twentieth-century landscape architecture.

To learn more about Allen’s work, read the full interview available on our website.

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**Off the Press**

Publications is pleased to announce the arrival of *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 64. This issue continues the journal’s tradition of presenting pathbreaking and enduring scholarship in Byzantine Studies at the highest standards of production. The joint project of former and current directors of Byzantine Studies Alice-Mary Talbot and Margaret Mullett, volume 64 of the journal also includes a contribution from Scott Fitzgerald Johnson, Post-Doctoral Teaching Fellow in Byzantine Studies. Congratulations to all!

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**From the Archives**

**The Bliss Anniversary Book**

*James Carder*

On April 14, 1958, Mildred and Robert Woods Bliss, the founders of the Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, celebrated their fiftieth wedding anniversary. For the occasion, 516 of their friends had their names inscribed in a book that the artist and calligrapher Enid Eder Perkins (1896-1973) illuminated in the manner of an eleventh-century Byzantine manuscript. The book’s blue leather binding is embossed in gold with the Bliss coat of arms—sheaves of wheat and the motto *Quod Severis Metis* (as you sow, so will you reap). Following the frontispiece and a French dedication written by the poet and diplomat Alexis Léger (Saint-John Perse) (1887-1975) are the names of the 516 friends, including Bernard Berenson, Nadia Boulanger, Beatrix Farrand, Duncan Phillips, Eleanor Roosevelt, Arturo Rubinstein, and Igor Stravinsky. Léger’s text was read to the Blisses by Henry B. Hyde, Robert Bliss’s godson, at a reception in honor of the Blisses held on April 14, 1958, at the home of Virginia Bacon (Mrs. Robert Low Bacon). This anniversary book remains part of the Dumbarton Oaks Archives.
Staff and Fellows Accolades

Professor Elizabeth Boone, Dumbarton Oaks Senior Fellow in Pre-Columbian Studies and Professor of Art History in the School of Liberal Arts at Tulane University in New Orleans, was recently elected to both the Academia Mexicana de la Historia and the American Academy of Art and Sciences. These are both very prestigious organizations, and we couldn't be more happy for her!

In April, Jack Tannous, Post-Doctoral Teaching Fellow in Byzantine Studies, accepted the post of Assistant Professor of Late Antiquity in the Department of History at Princeton University. Jack will begin at Princeton on September 1st. The Byzantine Studies program, and the entire community of Dumbarton Oaks are immensely proud of this achievement, and wish Jack all the best in his new post.

Friends of Music

A Far Cry Closes the 2011–2012 Season

Valerie Stains

On April 22nd and 23rd, the Boston-based chamber orchestra A Far Cry performed the final concerts of the 2011-2012 Friends of Music season. The self-conducted group of young musicians (who call themselves the Criers) made its Washington, D.C. debut last year right here at Dumbarton Oaks. We were so impressed by their musicianship, energy, and freshness, that we immediately invited them to play for us again this season, and they did not disappoint. Their impressive performances of music by Heinrich Biber (Battalia), Ludwig van Beethoven (the “Serioso” String Quartet, arranged for string orchestra by A Far Cry), Osvaldo Golijov (Tenebrae), and Benjamin Britten (Variations on a Theme of Frank Bridge) were warmly received by the Friends of Music audience. The Washington Post’s Stephen Brookes attended and reviewed the concert.

According to the New York Times, A Far Cry “brims with personality or, better, personalities, many and varied.” The orchestra was founded in 2007 by a tightly-knit collective of seventeen young professional musicians, and since the beginning has fostered those personalities, developing an innovative structure of rotating leadership both on stage and behind the scenes. The Criers maintain strong roots in Boston, rehearsing at their storefront music center in Jamaica Plain and fulfilling the
role of Chamber Orchestra in Residence at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum.


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**Farewell to Tylka**

The entire Dumbarton Oaks community, and the library staff in particular, will be sorry to see a beloved colleague retire this month. Tylka Vetula, Serials and Acquisitions Librarian extraordinaire, will leave behind an undeniable void, and will be truly missed when she leaves Dumbarton Oaks at the end of April after eight years of service. Friends and colleagues gathered on April 23 to bid a fond farewell to Tylka, and to wish her a very happy retirement.

Image: Photo by Joe Mills.

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**Social Media**

Dumbarton Oaks Library and Archives are pleased to announce the launch of the official Dumbarton Oaks Library and Archives Facebook page, created by the library and archives staff. This page represents the wide variety of collections and projects from the Research Library, Rare Book Collection, Image Collections and Fieldwork Archives, and the Dumbarton Oaks Archives. Through this page we hope to further the overall mission of Dumbarton Oaks by sharing information about our multi-formatted collections, as well as about the institutional history of Dumbarton Oaks. Our page officially on April 14, on the 104th wedding anniversary of Robert and Mildred Bliss, who were married on April 14, 1908. Please visit, “Like”, and share our new Facebook page.

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**Blogs from Dumbarton Oaks**

Blogs are a great way to communicate with a large and geographically disparate audience. They can also provide up-close and in-depth examinations of materials, processes, and events that aren’t accessible to the general public. Dumbarton Oaks has several blogs that achieve all these goals, with plans for more in the works.

- Want to learn more about how a large collection of research and fieldwork papers is processed, or get a sneak peek at some great archaeological records? The Robert L. Van Nice Collection, a processing blog for the Robert L. Van Nice Records and Fieldwork Papers (1937-1985) at the Image Collections and Fieldwork Archives, is full of interesting finds and descriptions of archival processing work.
- The online component for and record of The DO Conversations series, which offers opportunities to staff and fellows to participate in cross-disciplinary and interdepartmental
discussions on a weekly basis, has an online component too! Check the DO/Conversations blog to learn more about this series of events.

- Managed and authored by the Dumbarton Oaks Gardens staff, What's Blooming at DO is the official Dumbarton Oaks gardens blog. Featuring stunning photos of plants, insects, and garden architecture, this blog is a great way to experience the beauty of the Dumbarton Oaks Gardens whether you are able to visit them in person or not.

Miracle Fruit Fête

To bid farewell to this year’s fellows, Special Projects Librarian Sarah Burke and Fellowships Coordinator Kathleen Lane organized, in connection with the library exhibition Mirabilia, a Miracle Fruit Fête. All staff and fellows were invited to try a berry that changes the flavor of the food that is eaten after it. The lively event took place on the bowling green on May 2. Firsthand reports indicate that the berry lived up to its miraculous propaganda—those who tried it claim that for at least 30 minutes after eating the fruit sour foods like rhubarb and lemon tasted sweet.


Good Ink

- Dumbarton Oaks was featured in the Washingtonian’s April cover story, 61 Hidden Gems. The article highlighted the Museum’s “impressive collection of pre-Columbian art, artifacts from the Byzantine Empire, and European masterpieces.” You can peruse the list here, and find Dumbarton Oaks in the item titled Don’t Bypass the Byzantine.
- The recent article in the Washington Post, Music Review: A Far Cry at Dumbarton Oaks in Georgetown, favorably reviewed performances at Dumbarton Oaks by the Boston-based ensemble, A Far Cry. The 17-member string ensemble performed in the Music Room at Dumbarton Oaks on the evenings of April 22nd and 23rd as part of the Friends of Music Concert Series. The back-to-back performances by A Far Cry marked the end of the current concert season at Dumbarton Oaks.
- Local public gardens were the subject of a recent online edition of the Washington Post’s Going Out Guide. Entitled Flora to Fawn Over, the piece features Andy Cao’s and Xavier Perrot’s Cloud as item number 39.