Dumbarton Oaks and JSTOR Launch Plant Humanities Initiative

Supported by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation

Dumbarton Oaks and JSTOR are launching the Plant Humanities Initiative: a new model of integrating digital humanities with scholarly programming that has received generous support from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. The Initiative will run from October 2019 to September 2021 and has three main goals: to provide innovative research and professional development opportunities for early-career humanists; to create a digital tool informed by the insights and needs of teachers and students as well as librarians and technical experts; and to supplement existing digitized resources with new primary source material from the Dumbarton Oaks Rare Book Collection. Content for the digital tool will be developed by intergenerational teams of researchers whose contributions will be supported by a post-doctoral fellowship, academic-year fellowships, and summer programs in 2019 and 2020.

Learn more about the Initiative and how to apply for fellowships.

Juggling the Middle Ages Now Open

Director Jan Ziolkowski opened the new exhibition with a captivating lecture
In manifold retellings ranging from a 12th-century manuscript to Christmas stories and children’s books, the story of *Le jongleur de Notre Dame* (Our Lady’s Tumbler) illustrates how cultural memory and the humanities connect past and present. The story’s journey through the centuries is the focus of a new exhibit at Dumbarton Oaks, *Juggling the Middle Ages*. In the opening lecture, Director Jan Ziolkowski traced the original medieval tale’s path to 1870s France, the Gothic Revival in America, 1950s film and TV, and even children’s book author Tomie dePaola. 

Discover the story behind the story.

Reconsidering the Chavín Phenomenon in the 21st Century

Colin McEwan reflects on the 2018 Pre-Columbian Studies Symposium
Held October 5 and 6, the annual Pre-Columbian Studies Symposium was organized by Richard Burger (Yale University) and Jason Nesbitt (Tulane University). Director of Pre-Columbian Studies Colin McEwan writes that the talks covered different geographical areas on the coast, highlands, and cloud forests of Peru and examined themes central to understanding one of the first civilizations to emerge in Latin America. Speakers highlighted new archaeological discoveries such as unknown subterranean galleries, a Manchay-style polychrome frieze, and a sunken circular plaza. Read the précis.

Scholars in the Spotlight

Catch up with our recent speakers and their research

Toru Mitani, professor in the Graduate School of Horticulture at Chiba University and partner in the Tokyo landscape architecture firm Studio on Site, explores useless use in urban landscape architecture. Learn why he considers space without program or function to be so important.
Katherine Rinne analyses fluidity and failure in 16th-century fountains. Rinne, an adjunct professor of architecture at the California College of the Arts, considers these Baroque fountains as full-scale models for exploring the properties of water.

Mark Pawlowski, uncovers information about Byzantine daily life by studying medieval village remains in the southern Peloponnese. A PhD candidate in art history at UCLA, Pawlowski takes a synthetic approach that combines art, architecture, and archaeology.

Digital Tools and Online Treasures

The Botany of Empire in the Long Eighteenth Century

The movement of plants across oceans exploded in the 1700s—from the 7,000 plant species brought to Britain by King George III to the colorful South American plants that Maria Sibylla Merian painted for a European audience. Online exhibit The Botany of Empire in the Long Eighteenth Century offers scholars curated access to the Rare Book Collection and the imperial history of botany. Color scans of rare images are arranged into eight categories such as “Linnaean Names,” “Botanical Personalities,” and “Gardens.” Particular strengths are garden history and early texts about the Americas. Explore the exhibit.

Upcoming Programs
Music at Dumbarton Oaks—Blue Heron
Merry music from 15th-century Europe
The Sunday, December 2 concert is sold out, but tickets are still available for 
Monday, December 3, 8 pm!

Boutet de Monvel’s Joan of Arc and the Beauty of Books in Fin-de-Siècle Paris - a panel discussion at the National Gallery of Art
Wednesday, December 12, 2-4 pm

Anatole France and Gaston Paris - a public lecture by Professor Michel Zink at Dumbarton Oaks
Thursday, December 13, 6-7 pm

Music at Dumbarton Oaks—ZOFO
Grammy-nominated piano duo
Sunday, January 13, 7 pm & Monday, January 14, 8 pm