



ALBANY MUSEUM OF ART

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FAITH AND RENAISSANCE ART TO BE EXPLORED AT ALBANY MUSEUM OF ART

Dr. Elissa Auerbach Will Present 'Art for Faith's Sake' at European Splendors Lecture

[For Release Nov 9, 2021 – Albany, GA] — Just as the disintegration of the Roman Empire led to the Medieval style of thought, the erosion of the Middle Ages led to a new way of looking at life and religion that came to be known as the Renaissance period.

The scholasticism of the Christian Middle Ages that had melded Aristotle and Christian dogma was disrupted, with theology taking a direction of faith and mysticism and philosophy heading toward what would become experimental science. For artists, the question became how the sacred should be represented in their art.

On **Thursday, Nov 18**, Dr. Elissa Auerbach, professor of art history at Georgia College & State University in Milledgeville, will speak on *Art for Faith's Sake! How Religious Art Divided Europe in Early Modernity*. Her lecture starts at **5:30 pm** and is free and open to the public.

"How should the sacred be represented visually? After all, what does the divine look like and who even has the authority to decide? These have arguably been among the most vexing questions in the history of art, particularly in the aftermath of the Protestant Reformation in 16th century Europe," Auerbach said.

"Many of the paintings in the *European Splendors* exhibition tell the fascinating story of this explosive chapter of art history when Protestants and Roman Catholics harshly condemned one another through the vehicle of art to cement divisions between the two faiths," she said. "This lecture will examine case studies from the exhibition that cast light on how early modern art functioned to make arguments for and against the depiction of the divine and how the problem remains relevant today in contemporary art."

Her lecture is part of the European Splendors Lecture Series, which serves to provide context for the exhibition *European Splendors: Old Master Paintings from the Kress Collection* that is on view in the AMA Haley Gallery through Dec 23, 2021.

Auerbach is a specialist in Dutch and Flemish art of the 17th century, with an emphasis on religious pictorial themes and devotional practices that transformed after the Protestant Reformation in Northern Europe.

She is particularly interested in the phenomenon of early modern spiritual pilgrimage to places of worship that were forbidden to Dutch Catholics through the aid of altarpieces, prints, illustrated books and maps. Her publications have studied the various topics of religious visual culture in the Netherlands, including the domesticated Virgin Mary in scenes of the Holy Family; Marian Piety in post-iconoclasm Haarlem in Hendrick Goltzius's print series, *The Life of the Virgin*, and challenges to conventions for the Virgin Mary's traditional representation in Rembrandt's print, *The Death of the Virgin*.

Auerbach, who has a Ph.D. from the University of Kansas, teaches courses in Medieval, Renaissance, and Baroque art history, and is coordinator of the university's Digital Humanities Collaborative.

The Renaissance was the result of a movement that began around 1280 in Italy. Art, religion, culture, society, and politics rekindled the humanism that fell by the wayside centuries earlier with the decline of Rome. The rediscovery of ancient culture that dominated the 15th and 16th centuries transformed into an age of expansion in the 17th and 18th centuries. Known as the Baroque period, it was an era when artists explored deeper colors, dramatic imagery, and greater contrast between light and shadows.

The primary goal of the European Splendors Lecture Series, funded with a \$2,725 Education Program Grant from the Georgia Council for the Arts, is to share information on Renaissance and Baroque works of art, and to provide context. The series is especially aimed at high school students in rural South Georgia. Those in attendance learn from art historians how to interpret the works of the Kress Collection, and how the art relates socially and culturally. In addition, students and others attending the lectures will explore analytical skills through close viewing, visual thinking strategies, description, and historical context.

The series of five lectures will conclude on **Thursday, Dec 9**. Dr. Joyce de Vries, professor and Department of Art & History chair at Auburn University, will speak on *Living with Art: Paintings from the European Splendors Exhibition in the Renaissance Household*.

If you missed any of the previous lectures in the series, they can be found on the AMA's YouTube and Facebook pages, and on the AMA website at www.albanymuseum.com/european-splendors-lectures. They include:

- Keaton Wynn, professor of art history and ceramics at Georgia Southwestern State University, who spoke on *Spiritual Realities within the Immanent Frame*;
- Charles Williams, professor of visual art, art appreciation and art history at Albany State University, who spoke on *Multi-culturalism and the Artist Perspective in Renaissance Art*;
- Dr. Grace Harpster, assistant professor of art history at Georgia State University, who spoke on *Material and Meaning in the European Splendors Exhibition*.

European Splendors: Old Master Paintings from the Kress Collection is organized by the Columbia Museum of Art, South Carolina, with support from the Samuel H. Kress Foundation, New York. Its exhibition at the AMA was made possible by the Walter and Frances Bunzl Family Foundation.

CURRENT AMA EXHIBITIONS

- *European Splendors: Old Master Paintings from the Kress Collection* is in the Haley Gallery Aug 26-Dec 23, 2021.
- *Horse Power: Works by Cedric Smith* is in the East Gallery July 10-Dec 23, 2021.
- *Essay Topic: Write Down the Word WOMAN One Hundred Times, New works by Sanaz Haghani* is in the McCormack Gallery July 10-Dec 23, 2021
- *Escape Plan*, installation by Elinor Saragoussi, is in the West Gallery.

ABOUT THE ALBANY MUSEUM OF ART

The Albany Museum of Art is located at 311 Meadowlark Drive in Albany, Ga., adjacent to Albany State University West Campus just off Gillionville Road. The museum is accredited by the American Alliance of Museums. The Albany Museum of Art is open to the public 10 am-5 pm Tuesdays through Saturdays. Admission is free.

For more information about the AMA please visit our website, www.albanymuseum.com or call 229.439.8400. Be sure to follow the @AlbanyArtMuseum on Twitter, AlbanyMuseum on Instagram and AlbanyMuseumOfArt on Facebook.

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