THE ART of RIVALRY

Book Talk with Pulitzer Prize-winning art critic Sebastian Smee

Monday, November 28, 6-7 pm
Registration begins November 14 at 9 am
Members $15  Non-members $30

Art critic Sebastian Smee’s new book tells the captivating story of four pairs of artists — Manet and Degas, Picasso and Matisse, Pollock and de Kooning, and Freud and Bacon — whose fraught, antagonistic friendships impelled them to achieve new creative triumphs. Smee argues that rivalry is at the heart of some of the most famous and fruitful artistic relationships in history. For these artists, competition with a contemporary of equal ambition, but sharply contrasting strengths and weaknesses, spurred creative output.

Sebastian Smee has been the Boston Globe’s art critic since 2008. He won the Pulitzer Prize for Criticism in 2011. Smee joined the Globe’s staff from the Australian, where he worked as a national art critic. Prior to that, Smee spent four years in the UK, where he wrote for the Daily Telegraph, the Guardian, the Art Newspaper, the Independent, Prospect, and the Spectator. Smee is the author of six books: five on Lucian Freud and one on Matisse and Picasso. He teaches nonfiction writing at Wellesley College.

DIRECTOR’S NOTE

November, as Emily Dickenson noted, is a liminal month, whose “few prosaic days” are poised “A little this side of the snow / And that side of the haze.” The Athenæum’s nuanced offerings suit this subtle mood. The ongoing exhibition Daniel Chester French: The Female Form Revealed explores a new aspect of the sculptor’s work, while a three-part series chronicles lesser-told stories of life, culture, and commerce in the burgeoning US nation. Book talks and lectures shed fresh light on age-old topics: fruitful artist rivalries, contemporary religious pluralism, the politics of memory in modern-day Vienna, Bostonian public art, the quarter-century-long Nabokov-Wilson correspondence, and domestic material culture in the Athenæum archives. We hope you’ll join us for an event, a discussion, or a good read one of these days between the snow and the haze.

Elizabeth E. Barker, PhD
Stanford Calderwood Director

GLIMPSED AT 10½

Architects from Gensler’s Boston office visited the Athenæum on August 25 to make sketches for Architectural Record’s annual Cocktail Napkin Sketch Contest. We’re crossing our fingers that 10½ Beacon inspired a winning design!
COLLECTIONS CORNER
Recently Acquired

The Athenæum’s special collections, like those of all great institutions, are built on the generosity and focused collecting of our benefactors. This month, we’re pleased to spotlight a spectacular gift from Jody S. Gill: *Picturesque Views of American Scenery*, engraved by John Hill from drawings by Joshua Shaw, 1820. This rare book contains seven hand-colored, engraved plates depicting magnificent American landscapes. For Shaw, “in no other quarter of the globe are the majesty and loveliness of nature more strikingly conspicuous than in America.” Make an appointment to view *Picturesque Views* in the Vershbow Special Collections Reading Room.

ATHENÆUM AUTHOR
First Lady of the Library

Did you know that Caroline Hewins, a key player in the establishment of free public libraries and the first woman to address the American Library Association, began her career at the Boston Athenæum?

Inspired by a visit to the Athenæum as a high school student, Hewins (1846-1926) worked as an assistant to renowned librarian William Frederick Poole following graduation. In 1875, she moved to Hartford, where she pioneered the transformation of the Young Men’s Institute from a subscription library to a free public library. The Hartford Public Library was established in 1892, with Caroline Hewins hired as its first librarian.

Hewins was a keen advocate of dedicated children’s library services and opened one of the country’s first children’s libraries in Hartford in 1904. Her bibliography of books for children—the first of its kind—offered story recommendations which “broaden the horizon[s] of children [and] cultivate their imagination and love of nature.”

The Athenæum is indebted to Hewins for her devotion to cultivating a love of books from an early age and her lifelong service to librarianship.
ROOKIE REPUBLIC
Early America and Its Place on the Global Stage

Since its earliest years, the Boston Athenæum has sought to document the history and culture of Boston, New England, and the United States, amassing a collection that includes the libraries of George Washington and Henry Knox, ship logs, and maps documenting European exploration and the settlement of North America. Inspired by these holdings, we are pleased to present a three-part series that highlights diverse and lesser-told stories of life, culture, and commerce in the burgeoning nation.

LECTURE

GEORGE WASHINGTON’S LIBRARY AT THE ATHENÆUM

Transatlantic Dialogues of Slavery and Freedom

Lecture with Professor of History François Furstenberg

Wednesday, November 2, 6-7 pm
Registration begins October 19 at 9 am
Members $15  Non-members $30

A selection of tracts from George Washington’s personal library, housed in the collections of the Boston Athenæum, reveals a broad transatlantic conversation about slavery and freedom. Johns Hopkins Professor of History François Furstenberg will explore the early history of the abolitionist movement from the perspective of book history, using these leaflets to link Mount Vernon to a global network of early abolitionists.

TASTING EVENT

BLACK PEPPER
Taste a Revolutionary Story

Black pepper in the history of American cuisine

Wednesday, November 16, 5:30-7:30 pm
Registration begins November 2 at 9 am
Members $40

Join us for a signature cocktail and three small bites that celebrate black pepper and its place in American cuisine. Food blogger Sarah Lohman will examine the cultural and culinary impact of black pepper and its surprising connections to Boston’s history.

LECTURE

MUSLIMS IN AMERICA SINCE 1619

Lecture with Muslim Chaplain Shareda Hosein

Tuesday, December 13, 6-7 pm
Registration begins November 29 at 9 am
Members $15  Non-members $30

Community Muslim Chaplain and retired US Army Reserves Lieutenant Colonel Shareda Hosein will chronicle the experiences of free and enslaved Muslims who served in US wars, including the Revolutionary War and the Civil War. Hosein will also explore connections between the Founding Fathers and global Muslims, and the impact of these relationships on US history.

EXHIBITION

DANIEL CHESTER FRENCH: THE FEMALE FORM REVEALED

For nearly half a century, from the late 1870s to the late 1920s, Daniel Chester French (1850-1931) was America’s foremost sculptor of public monuments. His outdoor masterpieces adorn cosmopolitan centers as well as rural American towns. French’s fame for male-oriented masterpieces is well deserved, but he was equally proficient at modeling the female figure, especially in its classicizing, idealized form. This aspect of French’s work has been little acknowledged and even less in scholarship. "Daniel Chester French: The Female Form" of the female form primarily through a group of preliminary public commissions, but also for a number of his more intimate and personal works.

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Daniel Chester French, The Spirit of the Waters, Maquette (Trask Memorial), 1913, plaster, 11 7/8 x 9 1/4 x 5 1/8 inches. Chesterwood, a National Trust Site, Stockbridge, Massachusetts, Gift of Daniel Chester French Foundation. Photograph by Paul Roscheule, courtesy Chesterwood.

ONGOING EXHIBITION
October 7, 2016–February 19, 2017
Norma Jean Calderwood Gallery

The Female Form Revealed

In the 1920s, Daniel Chester French (1850-1931) was far more than a public sculptor. He was also a highly private artist who created many intimate and personal works. French's work has been little acknowledged and even less studied. It is the goal of this exhibition to highlight the female form and its fulfillment of a sensual, tactile, and cerebral narrative commemorating great human experiences.

CURATOR’S LECTURE
Thursday, November 10, 6-7 pm
Registration begins October 27 at 9 am

Exhibition co-curators David Dearinger, PhD, the Athenaeum’s Director of Exhibitions and Susan Morse Hilles Senior Curator of Paintings & Sculpture, will speak about French's allegorical, idealized representation of the female form and its fulfillment of a sensual, tactile, and cerebral narrative commemorating great human experiences.

DOCTOR-LED GALLERY TALKS
Thursday, November 17, 2-3 pm
Registration begins November 3 at 9 am

Monday, December 12, 5:30-6:30 pm
Registration begins November 28 at 9 am

Gallery talks are limited to eight participants.

MUSEUMS WITHOUT WALLS
The Sculpture Collection of the Boston Common, the Boston Public Garden, and the Commonwealth Avenue Mall

Illustrated lecture with curator David Dearinger

Tuesday, November 29, 12-1 pm
Registration not required

Greater Boston boasts a number of art museums, each of which, naturally, is constructed of walls and floors and ceilings. Even more naturally, however, the city has another art museum, whose floor is the earth, whose ceiling is the sky, and whose walls are the trees. This special museum has three major galleries: the Boston Common, the Boston Public Garden, and the Commonwealth Avenue Mall. In this illustrated lecture, David Dearinger will give a brief overview of Boston’s “museum without walls” and the role that sculpture plays in its history and aesthetics.

A CELEBRATION

THE VICISSITUDES OF PLURALISM

William Orville Thomson endowed lecture with Professor Emeritus Peter L. Berger

Tuesday, November 15, 6-7 pm
Registration begins November 1 at 9 am

In The Many Altars of Modernity: Toward a Paradigm for Religion in a Pluralist Age, Berger argues that, contrary to popular belief, we don’t live in a secular age—we live in a pluralist one. Put differently, our problem is not that God is dead, but that there are many gods. Join us for this consideration of religion in the modern day.

A CEMETERY’S LAMENT

Desecration and Responsibility along Vienna’s Gürtel

Presentation by archeologist and art historian Diane O’Donoghue

Tuesday, November 22, 12-1 pm
Registration not required

Along the bustling roadway known as the Gürtel extends a stretch of wall that encloses Vienna’s oldest surviving Jewish cemetery. This presentation will focus on the issues raised by advocating for the cemetery’s repair and the challenges in creating an urban space of restitution, restoration, and rest.

This is the final event in Memory: Mine and Ours, a series that examines individual and collective memory.

A CONCERT IN HONOR OF AWARD-WINNING PIANIST YEHUDI WYNER

Monday, November 21, 6-7 pm
Registration begins November 7 at 9 am

This musical evening with the Ecce Ensemble, a community of culturally and socially engaged performing artists, is dedicated to Pulitzer Prize-winning American composer and pianist Yehudi Wyner. This event will feature a performance of selected works by Wyner followed by a discussion moderated by composer Martin Brody.
EYE OF THE EXPERT

Home and Garden:
Domestic Material Culture
in the Collections of the
Boston Athenæum

Wednesday, November 30, 5:30-7:30 pm
Registration begins November 16 at 9 am
Registration is limited to twelve participants.
Members $35

Monday, December 12, 12-1:30 pm
Registration begins November 28 at 9 am
Registration is limited to twelve participants.
Members $20

What does the appearance of a home, both inside and out, say about its residents and their position in society? Join members of our expert staff for a conversation about how Americans have used the domestic environment as a form of personal expression, to project status, and to transform a house into a home.

JUST for KIDS

FIGURE DRAWING WORKSHOP
Saturday, November 19, 1-2 pm

Registration begins November 4 at 9 am
Members $3  Non-members $5

Join teaching artist Nicole Gsell in an exploration of Daniel Chester French: The Female Form Revealed to discover how the artist’s work commemorates important events and ideas. After visiting the exhibition gallery, young participants will try their hands at figure drawing, working independently on a small drawing or collaboratively on a life-sized drawing while experimenting with different poses, shapes, and other artistic details. Recommended for children ages 6 and up.

OF YEHUDI WYNER
CONCERT FEATURING THE BACK BAY STRING QUARTET
Sunday, December 11, 1-3 pm
Registration begins November 22 at 9 am
Members $25   Non-members $35

The Back Bay String Quartet will showcase the classical guitar as a solo and chamber instrument capable of standing on its own in concert. Selected works include Bach’s “Prelude from Cello Suite No. 1 BWV 1007” and Schubert’s “Der Müller und der Bach,” along with original works from Tye Austin, award-winning guitarist and composer.

NATHANIEL BOWDITCH AND THE POWER OF NUMBERS
Book talk by Professor of History Tamara Plakins Thornton
Thursday, December 15, 6-7 pm
Registration begins December 1 at 9 am
Members Free   Non-members $15

Professor Tamara Plakins Thornton will present her engaging biography of Nathaniel Bowditch (1773-1838): a mathematician, astronomer, navigator, seafarer, business executive, and transformational Trustee of the Boston Athenæum.

DEAR BUNNY, DEAR VOLODYA
Dramatic reading featuring author and editor of The Feud: Vladimir Nabokov, Edmund Wilson, and the End of a Beautiful Friendship
Thursday, December 8, 6-7 pm
Registration begins November 22 at 9 am
Members $15   Non-members $30

Boston Globe contributing columnist Alex Beam and Random House Executive Editor Gerald Howard will perform a dramatic reading of Terry Quinn’s poignant “dramatic dialogue” Dear Bunny, Dear Volodya: The Friendship and the Feud based on the quarter-century-long correspondence between novelist Vladimir Nabokov and the New Yorker editor and critic Edmund Wilson.

POP-UP HOLIDAY BOOKSTORE
Sunday, December 4, 1-3 pm
Registration not required

Cathryn Mercier, Director of the Children’s Literature Program at the Simmons School of Library and Information Science, and Athenæum librarians Dani Crickman, Carolle Morini, and Mary Warnement will recommend holiday books to purchase and have gift-wrapped. Enjoy tea, cocoa, and cookies while you shop.

THE BRIDGE BETWEEN STRINGS
Sunday, December 11, 1-3 pm
Registration begins November 22 at 9 am
Members $25   Non-members $35

ART AND ARCHITECTURE TOUR
Sundays, 1-2 pm
Mondays, 5:30-6:30 pm
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 3-4 pm
Call Circulation at (617) 227-0270 ext. 221 to register.

Join a Boston Athenæum docent for an hour-long tour focused on the architectural history of the Athenæum’s building and its art collection. The tour will highlight select paintings and sculptures displayed throughout the building.

TOUR D’ART ET D’ARCHITECTURE
Monday, November 21, 4 pm / lundi 21 novembre, 16h
Wednesday, December 7, 4 pm / mercredi 7 décembre, 16h
Ce tour sera donné en français. Cette visite est ouverte au public. Inscription obligatoire.

Para inscribirse, llame al: 617-227-0270 ext. 221.

VISITA DE ARTE Y ARQUITECTURA
Tuesday, November 22, 4 pm / martes 22 de noviembre, 16:00
Monday, December 5, 4 pm / lunes 5 de diciembre, 16:00
Esta visita será dada en español. Este evento está abierto al público. Inscripción obligatoria.

Para inscribirse, llame al: 617-227-0270 ext. 221.