

ACMRS NEWS

JUNE 2013

ACMRS SUMMER PLANS!

Just like you, ACMRS is using the summer to recharge and to plan for an exciting fall. You can look forward to these and other exciting events:

Fearless Females: Audacious and Feisty Women of the Middle Ages and Renaissance

We are beginning to plan for our fall lineup in this very popular series. This fall, we will highlight a few women who had an impact on medieval and Renaissance science. If there is a fearless female you would like to see featured, please email us and let us know.

Visiting Professor Jaime Lara ACMRS and the Hispanic Research Center (HRC) will co-host Jaime Lara, Lecturer in Christian art and architecture and chair of the program in religion and the arts at Yale University, for the next academic year. We are excited to bring this world-renowned scholar to ASU and hope you will join us in welcoming him this fall.

Bagwyn Books June Launch of *Faces in the Fire*, a novel by Donnita Rogers

"The detail with which Donnita Rogers draws us into her early Scandinavian world is astonishing. She presents the Freawaru of Beowulf as a seeress with involuntary and nightmarish visions who is skilled in the use of herbs and runes (giving clear instructions for the use of each), and she also appropriates recent archaeological discoveries at Lejre in Denmark to create a tangible material setting. But above all, lively conversations erupting into action propel us through Freawaru's life story to a surprising conclusion that invites us to look forward to Rogers' next novel: Book II of 'The Women of Beowulf'." —Marijane Osborn, University of California at Davis

Click here to see more about this new release: <http://acmrs.org/publications/catalog/faces-fire>

Travel

We are in the process of planning travel and excursions to areas relevant to the study of the Middle Ages and Renaissance. Watch our upcoming newsletters for information about trips that promise to thrill, delight, surprise, and enlighten you with an in-depth experience that only ACMRS can provide.

Madrigal Dinner

Celebrate the end of the year with us and experience the magic, the music, and rollicking fun of our inaugural madrigal dinner. Watch our newsletter for the exact date in December.

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DAVINCI SCHOLAR SERIES LEONARDO DA VINCI, HIS CONTEMPORARIES, AND MEDIEVAL STEM INITIATIVES

ACMRS and the Arizona Science Center (ASC) reprised their successful collaboration to bring the Da Vinci exhibit and a unique series of lectures to our area. Over four consecutive Wednesday nights in May, a record three hundred people attended lectures at the ASC IMAX theatre. Participants were treated to programs that explored Leonardo da Vinci's genius from four very different perspectives.

ACMRS is deeply grateful to:

- **Karl Brooks**, who spoke on weaponry and showed how da Vinci combined science, aerodynamics, engineering, and physics to lay the technological foundation for weapons used today. Da Vinci, Brooks argued, also understood that our humanity's attitudes toward combat and war and used these insights to design weapons that would strike with significant force but ultimately end battles in a shorter amount of time, reducing the total number of lives lost.
- **Dr. Rachel Geschwind** (Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts), who showed how Da Vinci productively integrated the seemingly disparate fields of anatomy and the arts. Da Vinci's insatiable curiosity about how things work and his potentially life-threatening decision to study cadavers allowed him to become the first to document how the body actually works and to depict muscle structure, bones, and organs realistically in his paintings. Furthermore, da Vinci was among the first to study the physical structure of the female body in its own right.
- **Dr. Kirstin Hendrickson** (Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry), who discussed medieval chemistry and alchemy and made the convincing, if surprising, claim that alchemists were technically correct: one can turn a common metal into gold. Furthermore, Hendrickson showed that, because there were no CVS or Walgreens pharmacies, alchemists played an important role in their respective towns and in society as a whole.
- **Dr. Brad Allenby** (Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering), who revealed how the great minds of the Middle Ages were able to design and build cathedrals, castles, and weapons without the aid of computers and the qualitative knowledge used by today's engineers. Dr. Allenby, in spectacular style, demonstrated the importance of studying history and medieval engineering to help us understand and advance all aspects of engineering.

ACMRS, ASC, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, the Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts, and the Ira A. Fulton Schools of Engineering worked together to bring a unique, exciting, and highly informative series to our community. The Da Vinci Scholar Series truly represents collaboration at its best.



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PROF. BOB BJORK, ACMRS DIRECTOR, ON KAET'S ARIZONA HORIZON – MAY 23, 2013

ACMRS Director Dr. Robert Bjork was interviewed on the popular PBS news show, Arizona Horizon on May 23, 2013.

To read about the interview, please visit:

https://asunews.asu.edu/20130529_inthenews_davinciexhibit

You can also watch the interview online at:

<http://www.azpbs.org/arizonahorizon/detailvid.php?id=14385>



NEW ACMRS ACQUISITIONS

Through the generosity of donors Kevin and Yolanda McAuliffe and Ginger Weise, ACMRS was able to acquire new items for our collection. These items are proudly displayed in the ACMRS offices and will be put to good use in a new educational outreach program, the ACMRS Traveling Classroom. We are profoundly grateful to Kevin, Yolanda, and Ginger for their support, without which we could not have acquired these valuable items.

- An authentic manuscript leaf from the 14th century
- A harp
- Coins

Please watch the ACMRS newsletter for updates about the official launch of the Traveling Classroom. <http://acmrs.org/news/newsletter>



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III

MODERN-DAY DA VINCI REVEALS THE REAL MONA LISA

By Michele Peters

During the run of the Da Vinci – The Genius exhibit, the Arizona Science Center was able to bring Pascal Cotte, an inventor and the engineer of a groundbreaking multi-spectral camera, from Paris to Arizona. Cotte was able to give only two lectures departing again for Kiev and other cities around the world. While he was in Arizona, however, I was fortunate to have the privilege of interviewing this most affable inventor about his magnificent invention, which reveals how a centuries old masterpiece appeared as it left the master's hand.

Below is an excerpt from my forthcoming article about Pascal Cotte's fascinating journey and a discovery that rocked the art world.

If you mention the *Mona Lisa*, most people will know exactly which da Vinci painting you are referring to and will have an image in their mind's eye as well. But do we really know the *Mona Lisa*? Do we really know Leonardo da Vinci? Until the Arizona Science Center brought the exhibit Da Vinci – The Genius to Arizona, most people would have answered, "Of course." And therein lies the magic of this exhibit. The exhibition gives the visitor a magnificent overview of the breadth and depth of da Vinci's genius. From da Vinci's model of the perfect city, to his inventions (which include a diving suit, a bicycle, a movable piano, and a tank), and, not least, his art, the visitor can only wonder at how one person could conceive of so many inventions that served as precursors to so many items we use today. This is only one reason why the medieval and Renaissance cultures were the original STEM initiative.

Da Vinci would have admired and been proud of the man who invented a remarkable camera that could digitally peel back centuries of varnish, dirt, and restorations (both good and bad) to reveal the true colors underneath – that could, in other words, show how this iconic painting looked as it left the master's hand. To view the *Mona Lisa* in her true splendor is breathtaking. However, the visual splendor is only the beginning of the story.

Cotte's journey to his discovery is filled with human interest, luck, perseverance, and unimaginable surprise.

Cotte has long been fascinated by computers. He translated Apple manuals in France before starting his own business in 1988 after designing a cylinder that allowed pictures from a camcorder to be downloaded and printed.

Cotte's breakthrough came when a customer required a higher resolution with more details in each picture. He could not find one to suit his needs, so, in true da Vinci style, Cotte invented one. After many trials, many failures, some successes, and spending over a million dollars of his own on research, Cotte finally developed the camera he needed.

Here, I will skip over many details that can be read in the full article. Continued on next page.



Cotte had digitized several paintings in a small museum near Toulouse, France, when the Louvre heard about his invention. In September 2004, they asked him if he could digitize painting #739. Eager to prove the value of his invention, he agreed to digitize this numbered painting. When he recounts this story, he smiles and says, "Why not? I did not know what the painting was... but yes, I agreed." At that time, he says, "I couldn't even give you the name of ten painters, let alone the names of paintings. I am an engineer, an inventor, not an artist or an art historian."

At the Louvre, though, Cotte could not believe his eyes. He explains, "Nothing in my life prepared me for this – nothing!" There on the table was painting #739: the *Mona Lisa*. It was as if da Vinci himself had just walked in the room.

The camera revealed many "secrets," including a da Vinci fingerprint. It also showed that the woman depicted did, in fact, have eyebrows and eyelashes as well as a veil around her head and shoulders. Of course, these are only a few of the twenty-four secrets of the *Mona Lisa* visitors will see at the ASC exhibit. But for this interviewer, the most breathtakingly spectacular findings were the true colors of the painting and the true genius of this one man – genius that has had profound effects that echo throughout our world today.

The exhibit runs through June 9th at the Arizona Science Center.

Pictured above: Pascal Cotte (left) and Michele Peters, ACMRS (right)

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FOR MEDIEVAL AND RENAISSANCE
NEWS & EVENTS
"ON THIS DAY IN HISTORY" &
"MEDIEVAL WORD OF THE DAY"



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COMING JUNE 13 IN TEMPE:

Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies
Public Programs Series



Fearless Females:

Audacious and Feisty Women of the
Middle Ages and Renaissance



"A Single Woman's Guide to Renaissance London:
Isabella Whitney, a Very Early Female Poet"
Cora Fox, Assoc. Prof. of English, ASU

THURSDAY, JUNE 13 AT 7:00 PM

CHANGING HANDS BOOKSTORE
6428 SOUTH MCCLINTOCK DRIVE TEMPE, AZ 85283

FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Women and Gender Studies
ASU SCHOOL OF SOCIAL
TRANSFORMATION
ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

THE ARIZONA CENTER FOR
MEDIEVAL &
RENAISSANCE
STUDIES

ASU project
humanities
ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

changing hands
BOOKSTORE

Seating is limited. Please RSVP to <http://isabella.eventbrite.com>

This program is generously
co-sponsored by:
Project Humanities and
Women & Gender Studies in the
School of Social Transformation at ASU
This program will be held at
Changing Hands Bookstore
in Tempe, Arizona.

Join us for another great Fearless Females event on Isabella Whitney! Isabella Whitney, who served as a maidservant in a wealthy household in London, was the first female writer to publish secular poetry in English. She was also one of Europe's first female professional poets. She published two volumes of poetry (in 1567 and 1578) in an age when women had few public rights and very limited access to formal education. This is remarkable enough, but what is even more remarkable is that in her poems she asserts her right to be compensated for the labor of writing. In her most famous poem, called "Will and Testament" by critics of her poetry, she ironically bequeaths London to itself and describes in lavish detail its streets filled with butchers and bookbinders, the poor and disenfranchised, and the riotous young men of the Inns of Court. Biting and critical, but linked in obvious kinship with her vibrant city, Whitney offers us a rare look at everyday life for a woman writer when there was really no such thing.

<http://acmrs.org/public-programs/public-lecture-series>

Seating is limited. Please RSVP at
<http://isabella.eventbrite.com/>

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THE BOOK HISTORY WORKSHOP AT TEXAS A&M

Assistant Director Erin McCarthy and John Henry Adams, a Ph.D. Candidate in English, recently attended the twelfth annual Book History Workshop at Texas A&M University. In the course of a single week, workshop participants and faculty painstakingly set type, imposed and printed pages on an English common press, corrected proofs, made rag paper, carved woodblocks, and folded and stab-stitched the resulting sheets together to create a letter-for-letter facsimile of



Thomas Paine's *Thoughts on the Peace* (1789). Students also had the opportunity to create marbled endpapers, carve woodcut illustrations, and cast type using a hand mould and 500-degree lead. Morning seminars and evening lectures helped contextualize these hands-on activities. The workshop concluded with McCarthy's victory in a cutthroat game of quadrats (a traditional printing house game that involves rolling bits of metal type like dice) and a wayzgoose (a reenactment of an annual printers' celebration). A good time was had by all, and only minor injuries were sustained.

For more information about the Book History Workshop, see:

<http://cushing.library.tamu.edu/events/book-history-workshop/> or contact ACMRS Assistant Director Erin McCarthy at erin.a.mccarthy@asu.edu.



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UPCOMING ACMRS EVENTS

JUNE

"The Single Woman's Guide to Renaissance England:
Isabella Whitney, a Very Early Female Poet"
Fearless Females Part X

Thursday, June 13, 2013 at 7:00 pm

Cora Fox, Associate Professor of English
Department of English, ASU
Changing Hands Bookstore
6428 South McClintock Drive
Tempe, AZ 85283

<http://isabella.eventbrite.com/>



June 18th

Official Bagwyn Books Release

Faces in the Fire

Book One of the *Women of Beowulf* series

By Donnita L. Rogers

For more information about ACMRS news and events, visit our website at
<http://acmrs.org/news/events> or send an email to acmrs@acmrs.org.



Questions? Please feel free to contact ACMRS with any questions or suggestions you might have. Send all correspondence by email to acmrs@acmrs.org or by mail to this address. We'd love to hear from you!

ACMRS
P.O BOX 874402
TEMPE, AZ 85287-4402
(480) 965-5900
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VII