

The Speaker

ANDREW CASPER received his B.A. in 2001 from the University of Michigan “with distinction” in Spanish and History of Art, and with High Honors in History of Art. He earned his Ph.D. at the University of Pennsylvania and is currently Assistant Professor of art history at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, where he specializes in Renaissance and Baroque art in southern Europe. He is the author of numerous articles on sixteenth-century icons and the religious paintings from El Greco’s Italian period. His book *Art and the Religious Image in El Greco’s Italy* (Penn State University Press, 2014) uses El Greco’s early paintings to advance new ideas concerning the conception of religious imagery after the Council of Trent. His current research examines the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century artistic conception of the Shroud of Turin as a divine painting. His research and publications have been supported by grants from the American Philosophical Society, Art History Publication Initiative, College Art Association, Fulbright, Italian Art Society, National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Newberry Library. Professor Casper is the winner of the 2014 Miami University Distinguished Teaching Award.

The Lecture

Born in Crete around 1541, there is no doubt about the ethnic origins of the painter Domenikos Theotokopoulos, better known as “El Greco” (“The Greek”). And yet the issue becomes much more complex when we take into consideration the painter’s artistic output and the multicultural path that he followed throughout his career. For an artist whose career spanned Crete, Venice, Rome, and Toledo (Spain), the issue of his “Greekness” results in something of a conflict between his own self-conception and the expectations of his audiences. This paper will examine the diversity of El Greco’s painting styles as well as the communicative goals of his signatures to explore the fraught issues of his Greek identity in late sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Europe.

Suggested Reading

Andrew R. Casper:

Art and the Religious Image in El Greco’s Italy (2014)

David Davies:

El Greco (Exhibition catalogue) (2003)

El Greco: Themes and Variations (Exhibition catalogue) (2001)

El Greco of Toledo (Exhibition catalogue) (1982)

José Álvarez Lopera:

El Greco: Identity and Transformation. Crete, Italy, Spain (Exhibition catalogue) (1999)

Richard G. Mann:

El Greco and His Patrons: Three Major Projects (1986)

Fernando Marías:

El Greco: Life and Work — A New History (2013)

Fernando Marías:

El Greco of Toledo (Exhibition Catalogue) (2014)

Nikolaos Panagiotakes:

El Greco: The Cretan Years (2009)



The Lecture Series

A gift agreement, negotiated between the Foundation for Modern Greek Studies and the Regents of the University of Michigan for the benefit of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, established the Dr. Dimitri and Irmgard Pallas Annual Lecture in Modern Greek Studies. Its purpose is to provide an annual lecture “to promote greater awareness of modern Greek history and its artistic, scientific, philosophical, ethical, political, and other contributions to civilization. Drawing on its ancient (classical) and Renaissance (Byzantine) traditions, Greek culture has continued to explore and disseminate the values of logos, cosmos, polis, episteme, techne, philia, phronesis, metron, and above all anthropos. These values are of central importance to the contemporary quest for a shared, meaningful world.” The lecture will bring annually to Michigan an eminent speaker of international reputation who offers new views on significant phenomena by drawing on the Greek experience since the end of the Byzantine era.

The Donors

Dr. Dimitri Pallas, a native of Greece, studied at the University of Athens and did graduate work in the United States. He was Senior Staff Cardiologist at the Division of Cardiology in the Henry Ford Health System at Fairlane. He is a Founding Member of the American Hellenic Congress and Founder and President of the Foundation for Modern Greek Studies. Irmgard Baier Pallas is a native of Germany and fluent speaker of Greek. She has taught German Language and Literature at the Goethe Institute in Athens and at Wayne State University.

PREVIOUS PALLAS LECTURES

- 2014 — Neovi M. Karakatsanis**
(Indiana University South Bend) Fact or Fiction: What More Do We Know about American Involvement in the 1967 Greek Military Coup?
- 2013 — Stathis Gourouris**
(Columbia University) Cavafy's Debt
- 2012 — Alexander Kitroeff**
(Haverford College) Ethnicity Beyond the Ethnic Enclave: Greek Americans in Brooklyn
- 2011 — Gregory Jusdanis**
(Ohio State University) On Greek Friendship
- 2010 — Karen Van Dyck**
(Columbia University) Translations, Anthologies, and their Critical Excess
- 2009 — Fani-Maria Tsigakou**
(Benaki Museum, Athens) Reconstructing History: Images of Romantic Hellenism
- 2008 — Andre Gerolymatos**
(Simon Fraser University) The Struggle for Greek Independence and the International Diplomatic War in the 1820s
- 2007 — Maestro Constantine Kitsopoulos**
(Queens Symphony Orchestra, Director/Chatham Opera, Founder and Director) Toward a Greek National Music
- 2006 — Helen C. Evans**
(The Metropolitan Museum of Art) Byzantium Revisited: The Mosaics of Hagia Sophia in the Twentieth Century
- 2005 — Kevin Featherstone**
(London School of Economics and Political Science) Why is Greece Becoming So Hard to Govern?
- 2004 — Dan Georgakas**
(CUNY) The New and Future Greek America
- 2003 — Stathis Kalyvas**
(Yale) Violence and Civil War: the 1940s in Greece Seen "From Below"

THE MODERN GREEK PROGRAM

The Modern Greek Program at the University of Michigan (established in 1990) covers language, literature, and culture, offers an introduction to the Greek world of the last ten centuries, and focuses on its contemporary social reality and intellectual achievements. The Program promotes contextual study, both local and global, of contemporary Greek culture, placing particular emphasis on literary studies, critical theory, cultural politics, ethnicity, and diaspora (especially Greek-American).

MISSION

Teaching | A range of courses provides a broad, liberal arts education for undergraduates and research training for graduate students.

Research | Faculty and students pursue their own scholarly research, actively participate in conferences, serve as editors and on editorial boards of journals, and regularly publish their work.

Events | Each year the program organizes or co-sponsors lectures, conferences, performances, film screenings, concerts, art exhibits, and readings of Greek literature in a variety of venues.

Collections | In cooperation with the University Library, the program acquires books, archives and other materials in Greek and other languages to develop a collection of modern Greek sources and add to an already rich collection of English language books on Greek society, history, and the arts.



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13TH ANNUAL DIMITRIS & IRMGARD PALLAS MODERN GREEK LECTURE

HOW GREEK WAS EL GRECO?

ANDREW R. CASPER

ASST. PROFESSOR OF ART HISTORY MIAMI UNIVERSITY

JANUARY 22, 2015 7:00 PM

