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★THE VALLEY SCOPE★



Virginia's Travel Information Service

Art of portraiture, evolution explored in 2 lectures at SU

Star Staff Report

Winchester — Two lectures at Shenandoah University this week will deal with the art of portraiture.

Dr. Sarah Bevan Meschutt will address “How Portraiture Evolved in Europe and America, 1500—1900” at 7 p.m. today in Hester Auditorium of Henkel Hall, on the school’s main campus.

Her overview of this field will show how identities were crafted and how fashion pervades portraiture. She will examine the functions and forms that portraits have taken, and how styles of dress and formal poses have evolved.



Sarah Bevan Meschutt

Tara Leigh Tappert will present a lecture, “Out of the Background: Cecilia Beaux and the Art of Portraiture,” at 7 p.m. on Thursday, also in Hester Auditorium.

Her talk will show how painting became the life work of Cecilia Beaux, and how and why the artist came to regard her career as a “sacred calling” made at the exclusion of marriage.



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Tara Leigh Tappert

Both lectures are free and open to the public.

Meschutt is curator of collections at the Museum of the Shenandoah Valley in Winchester.

Particular attention will be given to portraiture in Britain and America in the century before 1850.

Her areas of specialty are European and American painting, decorative arts, and architecture, European sculpture, European arms and armor, and historic art collections.

The portrait has been the most popular category of representational art in domestic settings in Europe and America since the late 1600s.

A portrait speaks to a family's pride and sense of self-identity. It often reveals a person's status and ambitions.

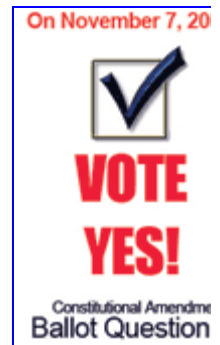
Sometimes a family commissions a portrait to mark a particular moment. Portraits often celebrate college graduations, marriages, professional appointments, or the birth of children.

Portraits have also been commissioned to honor and record official images of presidents, national heroes, dignitaries, and celebrities. More often than not, they have been exchanged between individuals as a token of love or friendship.

A portrait shows what is in front of the artist's eye and what is in his or her mind.

A portrait is both a picture of a person and a work of art formed by the artist's imagination, experiences, and formal training.

For example, look around the portraits at the Museum of the Shenandoah Valley and Historic Glen Burnie House and observe the variety of poses and styles of dress. What do these aspects of portraiture tell us about the artists as well as the sitters?



Meschutt will provide some answers in the course of her talk.

Tappert is an independent scholar, archivist, and art consultant.

Her areas of specialty include American art, craft, and decorative arts, with particular interest in women artists and authors, portraiture and the bibliographical history of craft.

During the course of her career, Tappert has held positions in museums, libraries, archives, and academic institutions. She has lectured at the Smithsonian, Sotheby's, the Columbus Museum of Art, and many other institutions.

She has also served as a guest curator and as a researcher for exhibitions at the Smithsonian's National Portrait Gallery in Washington, at the American Craft Museum (now the Museum of Arts and Design) in New York City, at the Biggs Museum of American Art in Dover, Del., at the Washington County Museum of Art in Hagerstown, Md., and at Olin Gallery, Roanoke College, in Salem.

Tappert's work on American portrait painter Cecilia Beaux is available in the Smithsonian exhibition catalogue, "Cecilia Beaux and the Art of Portraiture" (1995); in the July 2000 issue of Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, for which she served as the guest co-editor; in the award-winning publication, "Philadelphia's Cultural Landscape: The Sartain Family Legacy" (Temple University Press, 2000); in an essay titled "William Sartain and Cecilia Beaux: Influences of a Teacher," and in a forthcoming online e-book titled "Out of the Background: Cecilia Beaux and the Art of Portraiture."

She has also contributed essays on various American art topics for publications of the Detroit Institute of Arts, Williams College and the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts.

Other examples of her writing may be found in American National Biography, the Dictionary of Women Artists, American Art Review, Victoria magazine and Pennsylvania Heritage magazine.

Tappert holds a doctorate in American civilization from

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the George Washington University, a master's degree in library and archives administration from Wayne State University, and a bachelor's degree in history from Hope College.

Her dissertation on Cecilia Beaux was funded by graduate fellowships from the Smithsonian Institution, Winterthur Museum, and George Washington University.

Tappert owns Tappert and Associates, Archives and American Art Consultants, which offers heirloom research, writing, editing, teaching, and organizational services (including collections management) to academic and cultural institutions, corporate clients, private individuals and families.

She also serves as adjunct faculty in the master's program in the History of Decorative Arts at the Smithsonian.

Recent projects include dissertation formatting and rights and reproduction picture research for a private client just outside of New York City, cataloguing an art collection for a retreat center in Flintstone, Md., exhibition research for the Museum of the Shenandoah Valley and Glen Burnie Historic House Museum in Winchester, and research and appraisal preparation for Sumpter Priddy III Inc., a fine and decorative arts gallery in Alexandria.

The lectures at Shenandoah, a component of Dr. Geraldine Kiefer's course "Art 216: American Art," are supported by a gift from Virginia-Wojno Forney. Admission is free and open to the public.

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