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National Gallery of Art Announces Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts Dean Elizabeth Cropper to Retire in 2020



Elizabeth Cropper, dean, Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts

Washington, DC—(September 30, 2019) The National Gallery of Art announced today that Elizabeth Cropper, dean of the Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts (CASVA) since 2000, will retire from the museum in 2020. Only the second dean in CASVA's forty-year history, Cropper has led the institution in strengthening the fellowship program with a deepened commitment to primary research, producing more publications, embracing digital tools for research and communications, and growing its endowment and other financial resources during her tenure spanning two decades. Cropper has also been recognized for her commitment to diversity and inclusion across CASVA's programs.

"Dean Cropper's service and dedication to this renowned institution has been remarkable. She has inspired and helped to shape hundreds of scholars in art history, many of whom went on to become leaders in the museum and academic world. She is a force not only in her specialty of Italian and

French Renaissance and Baroque studies, but also in the field of art history broadly conceived," said Kaywin Feldman, director, National Gallery of Art, Washington.

"The Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts at the National Gallery of Art is a unique national asset, linking the international worlds of higher education and museums, and scholarship and interpretation, in a way that is thoroughly collegial and always in close proximity to works of art. I have been honored to contribute to the fulfillment of Paul Mellon's vision for the Center, and to participate in the exchange of ideas, knowledge, and experience among generations of outstanding, generous historians and critics of art and architecture. It has been a special privilege to work with so many talented and dedicated colleagues across the Gallery, and to work so closely and productively over the course of two decades with the extraordinary staff of CASVA, who have developed and sustained our fellowships, publications, research, and meetings over the years," said Cropper.

CASVA 2000–2019

During Dean Cropper's tenure, CASVA has sponsored fellowships for 620 scholars from 46 countries and published 22 volumes in the series *Studies in the History of Art*, which documents papers from ambitious scholarly symposia for the purpose of stimulating further research. Seeing an opportunity to explore different kinds of meetings and publications, Cropper also initiated a new Seminar Papers Series in 2005 to incorporate the results of critical art historical debate generated at smaller gatherings.

Cropper has expanded the academic community from which CASVA draws its fellows, establishing a commitment to diversity across programs. The most recent special initiative on African American Art History is dedicating attention and resources to research in the visual arts and culture of African Americans, Africa, and the African diaspora through distinguished appointments, fellowships, meetings, and publications.

CASVA celebrated the 25th anniversary of the fellowship program in 2005 with the realization of a longstanding plan to provide housing for CASVA scholars, made possible with the generous support of Robert H. Smith, president emeritus of the Board of Trustees, and further support from the Paul Mellon Bequest. The acquisition of apartments within walking distance of the Gallery has helped to build a closely knit community within the Center, while also enabling the fellowship program to thrive in the surrounding urban environment of the nation's capital.

Under Cropper's leadership, CASVA expanded its endowment, especially in connection with a \$30 million Mellon Foundation challenge grant awarded to the National Gallery of Art in 2016 on the occasion of the Gallery's 75th anniversary. An endowment for senior professorial appointments at CASVA was established, including the new Edmond J. Safra Visiting Professor and the Kress-Beinecke Professor, visiting positions that had previously been supported by grants. The first post-

doctoral fellowships at CASVA were created, also with support from the Mellon Foundation. New endowments established with the support of private donors will allow CASVA to create visiting senior fellowships for underrepresented constituencies.

As dean, Cropper facilitated interactions between visiting scholars and Gallery staff, especially concerning work on the permanent collection that combines the history of art with conservation science and curatorial expertise. She also promoted policies making CASVA's research more accessible to the public through an enhanced website presence, online publication of research reports, and video productions of notable lectures such as the A.W. Mellon Lectures and presentations by Edmond J. Safra Visiting Professors.

Cropper has shown a commitment to supporting sustained scholarship at CASVA, including her own project to publish edited and annotated translations of artists' biographies in Carlo Cesare Malvasia's *Felsina pittrice* (Bologna, 1678), as well as scholarly research published digitally by CASVA's associate deans. The Center's exemplary models for digital art history include Associate Dean Peter Lukehart's project on the history of the Accademia di San Luca, Rome, and Associate Dean Therese O'Malley's project devoted to the history of early American landscape design.

Elizabeth Cropper

Elizabeth Cropper holds a BA and MA from Cambridge University, England, and a PhD from Bryn Mawr College. She has lectured and published widely in her specialty of Italian and French Renaissance and Baroque art. Prior to her present post as dean of the Center for Advanced Studies in the Visual Arts at the National Gallery of Art, she was professor of art history at The Johns Hopkins University and director of the Johns Hopkins Charles S. Singleton Center for Italian Studies at Villa Spelman in Florence. Dean Cropper has held several distinguished visiting appointments, including the Slade Professorship at Cambridge University and the National Gallery of Art's first Andrew W. Mellon Professorship. She has been a visiting professor at the Collège de France and the École des Hautes Études in Paris. Cropper has been a fellow at Villa I Tatti, the Harvard University Center for Italian Renaissance Studies, and the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, New Jersey.

Among her many publications are *The Ideal of Painting: Pietro Testa's Düsseldorf Notebook* (1984), *The Domenichino Affair: Novelty, Imitation, and Theft in Seventeenth-Century Rome* (New Haven and London, 2005), and *Pontormo: Portrait of a Halberdier* (1997). *Nicolas Poussin: Friendship and the Love of Painting*, co-authored with Charles Dempsey (Princeton, 1996), was awarded both the Mitchell Prize for the best book in English that year, and the Charles Rufus Morey Prize of the College Art Association. Dean Cropper also received the Arthur Kingsley Porter Prize for the best article in the *Art Bulletin* by a younger scholar while a professor at Temple University in 1976.

Cropper is a member of the American Philosophical Society, currently serving as vice president, and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. She was appointed chair of the Fachbeirat for the two Max-Planck-Gesellschaft art history institutes in Italy—the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florence and the Bibliotheca Hertziana in Rome. She also served as president of the Renaissance Society of America for the 2010–2012 term, and is a member of the National Committee for the History of Art. In September 2011, she was awarded the Mongan Prize by Villa I Tatti for her scholarship and service to the field. Cropper held the Prado Chair from 2015 to 2016. Her Prado lectures were published as *La Pintura boloñesa en el Prado. Tras las huellas de Malvasia como crítico de la Pintura* in 2018. At CASVA, she directs the Malvasia research project with Lorenzo Pericolo of the University of Warwick serving as co-editor. This endeavor will provide a critical edition and annotated translation of Carlo Cesare Malvasia's *Felsina pittrice*. Volume 1, *Early Bolognese Painting*, was published in 2012; volume 13, *Lives of Domenichino and Francesco Gessi*, was published in 2013; and volume 2, part 2, *Life of Marcantonio Raimondi and Critical Catalogue of Prints by or after Bolognese Masters*, was published in 2017. Most recently, volume 9, devoted to Malvasia's *Life of Guido Reni*, was published in 2019. She is currently a contributor to the 2020 Artemisia Gentileschi exhibition at the National Gallery, London.

After her retirement from CASVA, Cropper will remain in Washington DC, where she plans to continue to write and conduct independent research, especially in connection with the Malvasia project.

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General Information

The National Gallery of Art and its Sculpture Garden are at all times free to the public. They are located on the National Mall between 3rd and 9th Streets at Constitution Avenue NW, and are open Monday through Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Sunday from 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. The Gallery is closed on December 25 and January 1. For information call (202) 737-4215 or visit the Gallery's Web site at www.nga.gov. Follow the Gallery on Facebook at www.facebook.com/NationalGalleryofArt, Twitter at www.twitter.com/ngadc, and Instagram at <http://instagram.com/ngadc>.

Visitors will be asked to present all carried items for inspection upon entering. Checkrooms are free of charge and located at each entrance. Luggage and other oversized bags must be presented at the 4th Street entrances to the East or West Building to permit x-ray screening and must be deposited in the checkrooms at those entrances. For the safety of visitors and the works of art, nothing may be carried into the Gallery on a visitor's back. Any bag or other items that cannot be carried reasonably

and safely in some other manner must be left in the checkrooms. Items larger than 17 by 26 inches cannot be accepted by the Gallery or its checkrooms.

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