



American Icons and Monuments

International Conference
25 January 2013

Organizer: Vivien Green Fryd
Free and open to the public. No advanced registration is required.

This conference will address the icons and monuments in American visual and textual art and culture. Monuments are public, usually but not always, permanent visual structures - traditionally sculpture, architecture, or both, and sometimes painting - that are intended to symbolize something about a human deed or event or commemorate a great human being. In a broader sense, monuments function as one of the means civilization has devised to reinforce its cohesiveness and create a shared historical memory and national identity. Monuments are a way to transmit communal emotions, a medium of continuity and interaction between generations, not only in space, but also across time. Icons can be broadly defined as a person or thing regarded as a representative symbol or as worthy of veneration. Sometimes a monument can become an icon; and icon can be monumental but not necessarily a monument. Monuments and icons continue to develop in the modern and post modern era, but now, as Erika Doss notes, they “deliberately contain irony, ambivalence, interruption, and self-criticality.”

This conference will explore why particular images, texts, and monuments in the U.S. have become renowned throughout the world. What do they say about national identity, historical memory, and/or political ideologies? How and why do different social groups contest certain monuments, icons, and texts? How and why do certain images of people, historical events, and/or national symbols become iconic? Does one national symbol, text, or icon mean different things over different times and in different locations of the world? If so, what contributes to this?

Conference Location & Contact:

Room 340, John F. Kennedy-Institute
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Conference Program

9:00 **Winfried Fluck** (Freie Universität Berlin): Introduction

Keynote: **Vivien Green Fryd** (Vanderbilt University and Terra Foundation Visiting Professor of American Art, Freie Universität Berlin): "The *Statue of Liberty*: A Chameleon-Like Hollow Icon"

10:15 Coffee Break

Panel 1: American Icons: Thoreau, Whistler's Mother and Gertrude Stein

10:45 **Eva Ehninger** (University of Bern, Switzerland): "Life in the Woods. Thoreau's Cabin as American Icon and Monument"

11:30 **Hélène Valance** (Independent Scholar, France): "Whistler's Mother: an International Misunderstanding"

12:15 **Ulla Haselstein** (Freie Universität): "Gertrude Stein's Image"

13:00 Lunch Break

Panel 2: Twentieth-Century Icons: Iconic People and Consumer Objects

14:30 **William McManus** (Terra Foundation Postdoctoral Teaching Fellow in American Art at the Courtauld Institute of Art, London): "The Corrosion of Memory: On Warhol and Painting"

15:15 **Martin Lütke** (Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München): "Michael Jordan as an American Icon"

16:00 Coffee Break

16:30 **Frank Mehring** (Radboud University, Netherlands): "Iconic Silhouettes: The Transnational Promise of Aesthetic Empowerment in the Apple Universe"

18:00 Dinner at the Italian Restaurant Piaggio