

Academy News

NEH Grant to Support Visiting Scholars

The Academy's efforts to support younger scholars through its Visiting Scholars Program (VSP) have received a major boost from a National Endowment for the Humanities Challenge Grant. The NEH award, which must be matched on a 3:1 basis, will help the Academy raise \$2.4 million in funding for Visiting Scholars in the humanities and related activities. Gifts to the Academy for the VSP can be used for the match.

Now in its second year, the VSP is providing much-needed career development and research opportunities for promising postdoctoral scholars and junior faculty. Humanities scholars in the early stages of their careers face enormous challenges in establishing themselves professionally. The academic job market now generates only one full-time, tenure-track position for every two new Ph.D.s in the humanities; postdoctoral fellowships outside the sciences are in short supply; and junior faculty are under pressure both to publish original research and to shoulder full-time teaching loads.

The VSP provides younger scholars working in the humanities, social sciences, and science policy a chance not only to pursue research full time for a year but also to interact with Fellows in Academy programs and activities. These fellowships provide an important opportunity to assist younger scholars in advancing on the path to a tenured position. "The Academy is offering postdoc opportunities of the most desirable kind," says David Laurence, who as director of English programs for the Modern Language Association is responsible for the MLA's studies of job placement for Ph.D.s in English.



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The postdocs who have spent a year in residence at the Academy have responded enthusiastically to the program. As Joseph Entin, a postdoctoral scholar at the VSP last year, remarked: "The Academy offers one of the most exciting opportunities available for emerging scholars to develop as thinkers and writers. The opportunities to interact with Fellows and to present our work at research seminars provided wonderful occasions for intellectual discussion and critique, helping me to see my own work in a larger context." Entin is now an Assistant Professor of English at Brooklyn College.

Visiting Scholar Crystal Feimster, on leave this year from her post as Assistant Professor of History at Boston College, describes the benefits of the Academy's program for a scholar in a tenure-track job. Feimster says that securing outside support was the only way that she could have taken a full year's sabbatical at more than half-pay to work on her book manuscript

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Winter Events in Cambridge

Music and light were the motifs of two winter events recently held at the House of the Academy: a Stated Meeting and holiday concert in early December and a New Year celebration in January to view a lighting sculpture on the Academy's grounds.

On December 3, Academy Fellow Lewis Lockwood (Harvard University) addressed the Academy's 1877th Stated Meeting on the topic "Beethoven and His Royal Disciple." Over 250 people filled the Academy's auditorium to hear Lockwood speak about the relationship between Beethoven and his royal patron the Archduke Rudolph (1788–1831), to whom the composer dedicated over a dozen works. Lockwood's talk, which will be reprinted in the Spring 2004 issue of the *Bulletin*, included an analysis of the "Archduke" Trio, Opus 97, with musical illustrations by the Boston Trio. The evening concluded with the ensemble's performance of the Archduke Trio in its entirety.

At a reception on the evening of January 15, Academy Fellows and guests gathered to view John Powell's lighting installation in



Lighting installation in Norton's Woods

Norton's Woods. Powell spoke about the sculpture, which uses sodium- and mercury-vapor light sources to create paths of light across the Academy's grounds, and about the application of the scientific principles of color vision in his work. He told the group that had gathered indoors to view the exhibition on a subzero evening that he was attracted to the Academy's site because he likes "the interface between urban and rural" that the House, the woods, and the surrounding neighborhood represent. ■



Allison Eldridge, Lewis Lockwood, Irina Murisanu, and Heng-Jin Park

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(a study of the varied roles played by white and black women in the history of lynching in the American South). “I’ve got two years before I come up for tenure, and this is giving me a year to actually bang out the book,” she explains. “I feel really lucky that the Academy has given me a place to work, as well as a community of schol-

ars with whom I can discuss my field, my work, and the process of writing.”

The current group of Visiting Scholars represents the fields of American literature, American history, African American studies, law, political science, and international relations, with research topics ranging from race and ethnicity in America to refugee repatriation after civil war.

In addition to helping advance the VSP, the NEH grant will help fund Academy efforts to extend knowledge and appreciation of the humanities in America through symposia, lectures, and other means of public education and outreach. These programs will complement the Academy’s ongoing Humanities Indicators database project and its preparation of a two-volume study, which maps the

history of, and trends within, the humanities in America over the last one hundred years. ■