
MetSpeaks

Symposium—Fictions of Emancipation: Carpeaux Recast

Thursday, April 28, 2022, 10:15 am–5 pm

The Grace Rainey Rogers Auditorium

The Metropolitan Museum of Art



THE
MET

Symposium—Fictions of Emancipation: Carpeaux Recast

Welcoming Remarks

10:15 am

Heidi Holder

Frederick P. and Sandra P. Rose
Chair of Education, The Met

Introduction

Sarah E. Lawrence

Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Curator in
Charge, Department of European
Sculpture and Decorative Arts,
The Met

Elyse Nelson

Assistant Curator, Department of
European Sculpture and Decorative
Arts, The Met

Wendy S. Walters

Guest Curator, Concentration Head
in Nonfiction and Associate Professor,
Writing Program, School of the Arts,
Columbia University

Session One: Looking at Slavery

10:30 am–12 pm

*The following presentations explore
the complexities that arise through acts
of witnessing and representing slavery.*

Bearing Witness: Fictions of Abolition

Sarah Thomas

Director, Centre for Museum Cultures,
and Senior Lecturer, History of Art,
Birkbeck, University of London

Speak, Mammary

Farah Peterson

Professor of Law, The University
of Chicago Law School

Carpeaux and the Erotics of Slavery

David Bindman

Emeritus Durning-Lawrence Professor
of the History of Art, University College
London, and Visiting Fellow, Hutchins
Center for African and African American
Research, Harvard University

Discussion

Chaired by **Natasha Lightfoot**,

Associate Professor, Department of
History, Columbia University

Break/Exhibition Viewing

12–1 pm

Session Two: Figuring Freedom

1–2:30 pm

*The following presentations examine
how liberty has been represented and
misrepresented in Western art.*

*The ici (here) and là-bas (over there)
of Enslavement and Liberty*

James Smalls

Professor and Chair of Visual Arts,
University of Maryland, Baltimore County

*“Moi libre aussi”: Liberty as Mimicry
and Ambivalence in French Post-Abolition
Imagery in 1794*

Susan Libby

Professor of Art History, Rollins College

*Seeing Double: White Supremacy
and the Emancipation Lie*

Kirsten Pai Buick

Professor of Art History, Associate Dean
of Equity and Excellence for the College
of Fine Arts, and Inaugural Chair of
the Department of Africana Studies,
University of New Mexico

Discussion

Chaired by **Lisa E. Farrington**,

Associate Dean of Fine Arts, and Director,
Gallery of Art, Chadwick A. Boseman
College of Fine Arts, Howard University

Break

2:30–2:45 pm

Session Three: Beauty and Difference

2:45–4:15 pm

*The following presentations examine the
representation of beauty in depictions
of the Black figure in nineteenth-century
Western art.*

*Blackness, Beauty, and Diasporic
Selfhood*

Cécile Bishop

Associate Professor of Francophone
Post-Colonial Literature and Cultures,
University of Oxford, and Tutorial
Fellow in French, Oriel College

Why Born Enslaved! A Portrait Type

Edouard Papet

Chief Curator of Sculpture,
Musée d'Orsay, Paris

*Miscegenation in Marble and Blackness
in Bronze: Race, Slavery, and Beauty in
the Sculpture of John Bell*

Mia L. Bagneris

Associate Professor, Art History &
Africana Studies, and Director, Africana
Studies Program, Tulane University

Discussion

Chaired by **Judy Sund**, Professor of
Art History, Queens College and the
Graduate Center, City University of
New York

Keynote Introduction

4:15 pm

Denise Murrell, Associate Curator,
Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Art,
The Met

Keynote

*“He is remarkable for...wearing a
Handkerchief tied round his Head”:
Resistance as Escape and Cultural
Retention in Art and the Fugitive
Slave Archive*

Charmaine A. Nelson

Professor of Art History and Tier I
Canada Research Chair in Transatlantic
Black Diasporic Art and Community
Engagement, Department of Art History
and Contemporary Culture, Nova Scotia
College of Art and Design University

Closing Remarks

4:45 pm

MetSpeaks

metmuseum.org/metspeaks

The symposium is free with Museum admission, though advance registration is required. Please note: Space is limited; first-come, first-served. Registration does not guarantee admission once the auditorium reaches capacity. The symposium will be recorded and available to view after the event.



Assistive listening devices are available from the ushers.

The symposium is made possible by Mr. and Mrs. Richard Lockwood Chilton, Jr.

It is presented in conjunction with the exhibition *Fictions of Emancipation: Carpeaux Recast*, on view at The Met Fifth Avenue in Gallery 521, Wrightsman Exhibition Gallery, through March 5, 2023.

The exhibition is made possible by the Iris & B. Gerald Cantor Foundation.

Additional support is provided by Allen R. Adler and Frances F. L. Beatty.

Cover: Jean-Baptiste Carpeaux (French, 1827–1875). *Why Born Enslaved!* (detail), modeled 1868, carved 1873. Marble, H. 22 7/8 in. (58.1 cm), W. 16 in. (40.6 cm), D. 12 1/2 in. (31.8 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Purchase, Lila Acheson Wallace, Wrightsman Fellows, and Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Foundation Gifts, 2019 (2019.220)