

*On the Eve of Independence:  
Art and Architecture in the British Empire*  
May 31 – June 2, 2024

In 1774, on the eve of the American Revolution, George Washington began a major expansion of his home, a building whose foundations dated to the 1730s. It was a project that he maintained throughout the war and that he continued after his triumphant return to Mount Vernon. Inspired by the work that began 250 years ago, and that endures today through the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association, the George Washington Presidential Library is hosting an international and interdisciplinary symposium in the spring of 2024 that explores the art and architecture of the British Atlantic in the long-eighteenth century. The symposium is especially interested in exploring the Atlantic connections between and comparisons of British and American practices in the years preceding and surrounding the American Revolution.

The symposium organizers invite applications from scholars from any field whose work can bear new insight into the art and architecture of the British Empire, especially its North American colonies, during the colonial era and the American Revolution.

Potential topics include, but are not limited to:

- The role of cultural emulation and ideas of independence in colonial North America before and after the American Revolution
- Artistic and architectural taste-making in the eighteenth-century Atlantic World
- Styles of British and American artwork, and changes to them, in the age of the American Revolution
- The training and practice of artists in the eighteenth century
- British influences on American art, and the creation of distinct American styles
- House and building design and use in the 18th-century Atlantic World
- Regional differences in architecture, and the environmental, social, and cultural factors that created these differences
- The practices, skills, and trades behind housebuilding in colonial America
- The role of labor and gender in art, architecture, and uses of space
- The effect of urban and rural landscapes on architecture
- The influence of Indigenous and African practices and knowledge on American art and architecture in the Atlantic World
- Influences outside of the British Empire on American art and architecture
- Analysis of current historic preservation practices at seventeenth- and eighteenth-century sites and homes and discussions of what this work has revealed and continues to reveal about the past

Presenters are asked to submit a detailed 500-750-word proposal for their talk along with a CV. Each presenter will be asked to deliver a thirty- to forty-minute lecture with PowerPoint encouraged. The audience is a mix of scholars, professionals, highly informed collectors and specialists, and history enthusiasts. Proposed talks should be delivered with this type of audience in mind. Selected presenters will have travel expenses covered and receive an honorarium. Mount Vernon may commission a volume after the symposium, and presenters may have an opportunity to publish in it. Conference organizers may compose panels, but they are not accepting panel proposals at this time.

Proposals are due by the end of day November 15, 2023. Decisions will be made by early 2024. Please direct questions and email complete packages to [SymposiumCFP@MountVernon.org](mailto:SymposiumCFP@MountVernon.org).