Notre-Dame: Nine Centuries in the Life of a Cathedral

Notre-Dame of Paris is the Gothic cathedral par excellence. It set the architectural bar high from its inception in the second half of the twelfth century and maintained this authority during the following centuries through a series of spectacular renovations that have rendered the building as complex to parse as it is compelling.

Notre-Dame is also a cathedral of living stones, in the image of 1 Peter 2:4-5; the cathedral church is at once the house of God, a representation on earth of Heaven, and the home of the faithful, the Church. The building is not an historical artifact; it continues to exist in the lives of those who come here to visit or to pray.

In the end, Notre-Dame stands as the edifice to which more poetry, more prose—more words tout court have been addressed than any other: an enigmatic monument of words offered to a quintessential monument made of stone.

In response, we propose a new history of the cathedral church of Paris, made explicit not in words but images; these recount, using state of the art imaging technology, the construction, reconstruction and continued life of the cathedral of Paris over nine centuries.

The point of departure is a three-dimensional laser scan of the cathedral created by Andrew Tallon, Assistant Professor of Art at Vassar College, in January of 2010 in the context of a documentary film co-produced by PBS/Nova and Arte entitled Les cathédrales dévoilées. With over a billion points of data, each precise to within five millimeters, it supplies a highly accurate spatial map of the building, itself readily anatomized and rebuilt—virtually, in the able hands of Laurence Stefanon—in order to tell the story of the construction and reconstruction of Notre-Dame over the past 850 years in visual terms.

Andrew Tallon
Assistant Professor of Art / Vassar College
www.gothicstructure.org

Paris, Notre-Dame
Photograph of the west façade
by Éduoard Baldus, 1860s
Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center
6:30 P.M.
RECEPTION WITH SUPPER HORS D’OEUVRES
EAST GARDEN OF THE CATHEDRAL CLOSE

8:00 P.M.
REMARKS
THE CHOIR
Dany Sandron
PROFESSOR OF THE HISTORY OF THE
ART AND ARCHITECTURE OF THE MIDDLE AGES
UNIVERSITY OF PARIS - SORBONNE

AND
Andrew Tallon
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF ART / VASSAR COLLEGE
AND EXHIBITION CURATOR

8:45 P.M.
EXHIBITION VIEWING
AMBULATORY

9:15 P.M. – 10:00 P.M.
DESSERT & COFFEE
THE TREASURY

Monsignor Patrick Jacquin
RECTOR-ARCHPRIEST
CATHEDRAL OF NOTRE-DAME OF PARIS

AND
Catharine Hill
PRESIDENT / VASSAR COLLEGE

REQUEST THE PLEASURE OF YOUR COMPANY
FOR THE OPENING OF THE EXHIBITION

Notre-Dame:
Nine Centuries in the
Life of a Cathedral

SATURDAY, MAY THIRTY-FIRST
6:30 P.M. UNTIL 10:00 P.M.
CATHEDRAL OF NOTRE-DAME OF PARIS

R.S.V.P. BY MAY 12
On-line at alums.vassar.edu/programs/regional

Please enter the Cathedral via the gate on the
rue de Clôîtres de Notre-Dame.
Do not use the front or side entrance to the Cathedral.
This personal invitation card, valid for two persons only,
will be requested at the entrance.

INQUIRIES
Programs@vassar.edu

The exhibition is made possible by the
President’s International Advisory Council and
select alumnae and alumni of Vassar College.