

NATIONAL CONSTITUTION CENTER

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FRANKLIN AND DA VINCI: THE WORLD'S RENAISSANCE MEN A DISCUSSION AT THE NATIONAL CONSTITUTION CENTER

Philadelphia, PA (March 28, 2006) - They are two remarkable men with diverse interests and careers: Benjamin Franklin, politician, inventor, diplomat, humorist, journalist and raconteur; and Leonardo da Vinci, artist, scientist, inventor, engineer and a man of intense controversy, even today. On April 13, 2006 at 6:30 p.m., seventeen days before the close of the *Benjamin Franklin: In Search of a Better World* exhibition, the National Constitution Center will explore how these inventive men searched for a better world in *Franklin and da Vinci: The World's Renaissance Men*. Tickets are free, but reservations are required and can be made at 215.409.6700. This event is co-sponsored by The Franklin Institute in partnership with The American Italy Society.

The distinguished experts who will discuss the intricate lives of Franklin and da Vinci include **Dr. Jonathan Pevsner**, a neuroscientist at Kennedy Krieger Institute and a passionate expert on the life and work of Leonardo da Vinci, and **Joyce E. Chaplin**, Professor of History in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at Harvard University and author of *The First Scientific American: Benjamin Franklin and the Pursuit of Genius*. **Steven L. Snyder**, Ph.D., Vice President of Exhibit and Program Development at The Franklin Institute, will moderate.

Dr. Jonathan Pevsner is a longtime student of da Vinci's work, having written articles and delivered lectures on da Vinci's studies of the brain for more than a decade at venues such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City, the Getty Museum in

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ADD ONE/FRANKLIN AND DA VINCI

Los Angeles and the Philadelphia Museum of Art. da Vinci was especially intrigued by the brain because he believed it was the key to understanding the relationship between the senses and the soul.

Joyce E. Chaplin believes that Franklin showed the world that he was uniquely suited to solve problems in every realm, notably in science, ranging from the famous kite experiment to charting the Gulf Stream. Chaplin's book, *The First Scientific American: Benjamin Franklin and the Pursuit of Genius*, comes out in April 2006. Her research and teaching interests include the history of early America, especially topics in the history of science, race, and cultural encounter.

This program is the last of the National Constitution Center's *Benjamin Franklin Legacy Series*, which is underwritten by Mellon Private Wealth Management. A book sale and signing of Chaplin's book will follow the event, courtesy of Joseph Fox Bookshop.

Benjamin Franklin: In Search of a Better World, a blockbuster exhibition celebrating Franklin's 300th birthday, makes its world premiere at the National Constitution Center from December 15, 2005, through April 30, 2006. Created by the Benjamin Franklin Tercentenary, this exhibition is being hosted locally by CBS 3. Tickets for the exhibition, which also include regular museum admission, are \$14 for adults; \$12 for children ages 4-12, seniors, and college students; and \$8.50 for groups of 20 or more. For advance tickets, call 215.409.6700 or visit www.gophila.com/ben.

The National Constitution Center, located at 525 Arch St. on Philadelphia's Independence Mall, is an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to increasing public understanding of the U.S. Constitution and the ideas and values it represents. Opened on July 4, 2003, the Constitution Center is a museum, an education center, and a forum for debate on constitutional issues. The museum dramatically tells the story of the Constitution from Revolutionary times to the present through more than 100 interactive, multimedia exhibits, film, photographs, text, sculpture and artifacts, and features a powerful, award-winning theatrical performance, "Freedom Rising".

ADD TWO/FRANKLIN AND DA VINCI

The Center also houses the Annenberg Center for Education and Outreach, which serves as the hub for national constitutional education and debates, and is a partner of NPR's "Justice Talking," a program of the Annenberg Public Policy Center. Also, serving as a nonpartisan forum for constitutional discourse, the Center presents – without endorsement – programs that contain diverse viewpoints on a broad range of issues. For more information, call 215.409.6600 or visit www.constitutioncenter.org.

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