

For Immediate Release

Contact:

Grayson Morley
Communications Manager
American Philosophical Society
gmorley@amphilsoc.org
215-701-4427

Susanna Berger Awarded the 2026 Barzun Prize from the American Philosophical Society

The \$10,000 prize is awarded annually to the author whose book exhibits distinguished work in American or European cultural history

Press Kit

CHICAGO, IL (September 23)—The **American Philosophical Society (APS)** has awarded the **2026 Jacques Barzun Prize in Cultural History** to **Susanna Berger** in recognition of her book, [*The Deformation: Attention and Discernment in Catholic Reformation Art and Architecture*](#) (Princeton University Press). Berger will receive the \$10,000 prize on September 29 in Chicago, Illinois, at a joint event held with **Phi Beta Kappa (PBK)** and the **American Academy of Arts and Sciences (AAA&S)**, the second of three such partnerships, which will culminate with the November Membership Meeting of the APS.

“I feel deeply honored to have been awarded the Barzun Prize, particularly so, since I often turn to the books written by previous winners and the prize’s judges for inspiration,” said **Susanna Berger**. “I am grateful and encouraged to see my work recognized in this way by the American Philosophical Society and the Barzun Prize Committee.”

Berger, the Walter Burke Associate Professor of Art History at Columbia University, is a scholar of 16th- and 17th-century art and architecture in Europe, whose writings focus on the interrelations between visual culture and intellectual history. She will accept the Prize as part of “Free Expressions: Academic Freedom and the Public Good,” a joint conference of the APS, PBK, and AAA&S on September 29 from 6:30–9:00 p.m. CDT at the Chicago Cultural Center.

“Berger demonstrates that the development in Baroque Europe of arts that deny easy comprehension to the beholder—often called *anamorphoses*—was of religious

as well as technical significance,” said the **Barzun Prize committee**. “While Berger’s analysis of a huge inventory of art objects is itself a formidable achievement, what most sets her work apart from other scholars who have written about this episode in art history is the epistemological and theological depth of her analysis.”

To learn more and to register for “Free Expressions: Academic Freedom and the Public Good,” click [here](#).

#

ABOUT THE JACQUES BARZUN PRIZE IN CULTURAL HISTORY

The [Jacques Barzun Prize in Cultural History](#) honors Jacques Barzun (1907–2012), the distinguished historian who helped establish the modern discipline of cultural history. Jacques Barzun was elected a Member of the American Philosophical Society in 1984. The prize was established and funded by Roger Williams, a former student of Professor Barzun. The prize is awarded annually to the author whose book exhibits distinguished work in American or European cultural history.

ABOUT THE AMERICAN PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

The **American Philosophical Society (APS)**, the oldest learned society in the United States, was founded in 1743 by Benjamin Franklin for the purpose of “promoting useful knowledge.” The APS sustains this mission today by engaging leading scholars, scientists, and professionals through elected Membership, supporting research and discovery via grants and fellowships, sparking conversation through its programs, conferences, and books, and by making its research library available to scholars at all stages of their careers. The APS continues to reflect the founders’ spirit of inquiry, to provide a forum for the free exchange of ideas, and to convey the conviction that intellectual inquiry and critical thought are inherently in the best interest of the public. To learn more about the APS, visit amphilsoc.org.

###