

NEWS

from Bennington College

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Oleg Grabar, Professor of Fine Arts at Harvard University, will lecture on "The Use of Decoration in Islamic Art" at Bennington College on Tuesday evening, October 18, in Barn 1 at 8:30 PM. He has served as Director of the American School of Oriental Research and Director of the Michigan-Harvard excavations in Syria. Mr. Grabar's work is based on his extensive travels and excavations in the Middle East, and on his exceptional knowledge of artistic and written sources. The nature of early Islamic art, which grew out of the contact between a new faith and many disparate artistic traditions, has fascinated and baffled generations of art historians. In his book The Formation of Islamic Art (Yale Press, 1974) "he concludes that the originality and unity of Islamic art derive from the new signifying power that its forms acquired. By using old forms in ambiguous and flexible ways, the Muslims were able to avoid the potent symbolism of traditions they sought to replace, especially Christianity, and thus to create a physical setting for Islam's conscious attempts at self-definition."

The public is invited.