

About the French American Chamber of Commerce in Houston Constance Bost, Executive Director



The French American Chamber of Commerce is a non-profit, non-governmental, 100% independent, member-driven organization, made by companies for companies. Our mission: foster the French-American business community, support businesses in their settlement and development in Houston and build bridges for US companies with France. The FACC Houston is a place to exchange, learn and network.

Each year in March, the Cultural Service of the French Embassy in Houston organizes the French Cultures Festival (FCF) in Texas, Oklahoma, and Arkansas. A celebration of the diversity of "la francophonie", it brings together people who not only speak French, but also feel, in one way or another, connected to French cultures and the Francophone community.



About the International Friends of the Kunsthistorisches Museum Vienna

The **Kunsthistorisches Museum Vienna** brings together one of the largest, most complex collections in the world, spanning over 5000 years. The collections reflect diverse global cultures and are housed in a palace of fine arts, which is an artwork in itself and in 2016 celebrates the 125th anniversary of its grand opening. The wide-ranging collections are the result of centuries of passionate collecting by a long succession of Habsburg family members and are open to all who wish to be inspired by and enhance their understanding of art.

The **International Friends of the Kunsthistorisches Museum Vienna (IFKHM)** is a dynamic group of patrons, collectors, and connoisseurs, joined by their love of the museum's extraordinary imperial collection and masterpieces of European art, with a desire to see them properly cared for and passed on to future generations.

International Friends
of the
Kunsthistorisches Museum Vienna

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No Time Toulouse – The Origins of Modern Corporate Governance in Medieval France

March 30, 2016
L'Etoile Cuisine et Bar
Uptown Park, Houston



About Today's Presentation

In the early 14th century, a group of well-heeled citizens of Toulouse, in southwestern France, fashioned a way to pool their capital, spread their risks, and provide a healthy return on their investments in water-powered mills that ground wheat into flour, sawed timber into boards, and mechanized the process of dyeing the cloth at the heart of the region's flourishing textile industry. Through a decades-long process of trial and error, an ingenious system was developed for controlling the greedy instincts that could threaten any long-term business plan, giving birth to corporate institutions in use to this day such as the board of directors, the annual general meeting, and the independent auditor.

What they created stayed in use, virtually unchanged, until the French Revolution while the mill companies built the generators powering the industrial revolution and eventually the hydro-electric plants of 20th century France. These mill companies would be with us today had they not encountered an immovable force in the aftermath of World War II -- the French government's nationalization of the electrical grid and the public utility known as Electricité de France.

Today's Presenter -- Meril Markley



Meril Markley has spent more than 25 years in Public Accounting, advising business enterprises on the tax aspects of crossing borders and expanding internationally. Assignments outside the U.S. have included two years with a Big Four accounting firm in Paris, France, shorter stints in Germany and the U.K. as well as throughout Latin America. Fluent in two foreign languages (French and Spanish), she can order a beer in several more. But it is her first career, as an opera singer, that compels her to work harmoniously with her clients at RSM and their advisors.

713.350.6109 Meril.Markley@rsmus.com

Next Time – Andrius Kontrimas on Looted, Lost, and Stolen Art



Andrius Kontrimas is the Global Head of Tax for Norton Rose Fulbright as well as Head of its Art Law Practice. He represents domestic and foreign clients (including foundations, museums, galleries and dealers) regarding the ownership, sale or charitable disposition of works of art; offers substantial expertise in resolving looted art claims that arise from World War II. Andrius serves on the Board of Trustees of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston and the Board of Directors of the University of St. Thomas.

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About *The Art of Business*

The Art of Business is a luncheon series featuring business people presenting a topic of interest highlighting how commercial enterprise spurred and funded artistic endeavors. Emphasis is on the history of Europe from Ancient Greece to the mid-20th century with topics showcasing the intersection of culture and commerce, such as --

- Looted, lost, and stolen art and legal steps to get it back
- Double-entry bookkeeping and its importance for the luxury goods market across Renaissance Europe
- International banking and credit facilities from the Knights Templar to the Bruges-Florence axis
- Tax policy and its role in disseminating Viennese culture throughout the Habsburg Empire
- Commissioning new operas and attracting the businesses who sponsor them

Have an idea for a presentation?

Contact Meril Markley at 713.350.6109 or Meril.Markley@rsmus.com

About RSM (Tom Rourick, Office Managing Partner, Houston)



Carrying on the 600-year old institution of the independent auditor, RSM is a leading provider of audit, tax and consulting services.

We guide our clients through today's complex business environment by understanding their needs and bringing together the right teams to address them. We are a world leader in providing audit, tax, and consulting services to middle market enterprises. Our motivation is to help them think ahead and prepare for the future of their business as they grow and expand domestically and abroad. At RSM, we build strong relationships based on deep understanding of what matters most to our clients.

With more than 8,000 professionals in more than 80 U.S. cities and access to nearly 37,500 people in over 110 countries through our membership in RSM International, we can meet your needs wherever in the world you do business.

For over 50 years, RSM has been taking the middle market to the global market.