



The Anniversary In Question  
**THE FIELD OF CLOTH OF GOLD**

Friday 14 February

Since 1520 the Field of Cloth of Gold has become legendary. One of the greatest diplomatic events in English history, it was intended to increase the bonds of friendship between Henry VIII and Francis I of France and to outlaw war forever among Christian nations. Arranged by the charismatic diplomat Cardinal Wolsey, who usefully was papal legate at the time and therefore had immense power to bring nations together in the name of Pope Leo X, it was held at a spot which was then controversially considered part of England, and is now in France, near Calais. The event, which stretched over two and a half weeks, represented the diplomacy of magnificence: both monarchs, ambitious to be seen as Renaissance princes, trying to outdo one another in lavishness, with dazzling tents and clothes, huge feasts, music, jousting and games. The more lavish the displays, the greater the potential for peace and respect between nations that had been traditional enemies. A temporary palace 328 feet square was erected for Henry and his retinue. 2800 tents were erected in the surroundings for lesser dignitaries. Wine flowed from fountains. In a month 2200 sheep were consumed. Henry lost a wrestling match to Francis. But 13 years later he was able to rely on Francis' support in his separation from the Church of Rome. We explore Henry, Wolsey and Francis's relationships with the Continental Renaissance, the purposes to which its language of decoration were put, and compare this 'summit conference' to those of our own times.

Culture in Question lectures take place in the Art Workers Guild, Queen Square, Bloomsbury, unless otherwise indicated. Coffee is served at 10.30, the lectures begin at 11, and a light lunch with wine is served at 1 pm. The event ends by 3.30 p.m. £90 members, £100 non-members.