



## NEWS RELEASE

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# **THE FRICK PITTSBURGH PRESENTS *THE FRICK COLLECTS: FROM RUBENS TO MONET***

***Major exhibition on view October 29, 2016–May 14, 2017 celebrates the works of fine and decorative arts at the heart of the Frick experience and is accompanied by new handbook of collection highlights***

PITTSBURGH, PA, October 21, 2016—This fall the exhibition galleries at The Frick Art Museum are being taken over by the permanent collection for the first exhibition in eight years to focus exclusively on the works of fine and decorative art in the Frick Art & Historical Center’s own collection. *The Frick Collects: From Rubens to Monet* celebrates the works of fine and decorative art at the heart of the Frick experience. It will be on view from October 29, 2016–May 14, 2017. Admission is free.

Designed to bring renewed attention to the depth and breadth of the Frick’s collection—from bachelor purchases by Henry Clay Frick, through his daughter Helen’s work to ensure the creation of The Frick Art Museum and the preservation of Clayton, and to more recent museum acquisitions, *The Frick Collects: From Rubens to Monet* features many of the museum’s most significant objects and tells the story of the Frick today and how it has evolved from its founding collections.

Frick Director Robin Nicholson comments, “Regular visitors to the Frick are familiar with the spectacular Rubens portrait that is regularly on view at The Frick Art Museum and likely know the dazzling Monet that typically hangs in the sitting room at Clayton. *The Frick Collects* features these iconic works and other extraordinary paintings and decorative arts from the collection, as well as more recent

acquisitions, such as Meissonier's *1806, Jena*. By bringing these works together in our exhibition galleries, we are putting the spotlight on our own world-class collection, and taking the opportunity to tell more of our own stories—both about individual objects and about the Frick as a whole.”

## **THE FRICK PITTSBURGH STORY: THE FORMATION OF THE COLLECTION**

The Frick Pittsburgh's story is a multifaceted one. It is a family story; it is a story about Pittsburgh; and it is a story about life at a time when Pittsburgh was the industrial heart of the United States. It is also a story about aspirations—aspirations to create a place of beauty, and for learning about history, and above all to provide public access and enjoyment of fine art and beautiful objects.

The collection at the Frick begins with the foundation of industrialist and world-renowned art collector Henry Clay Frick (1849–1919)—his early collecting, his taste, and his roots in Pittsburgh, and continues through his daughter Helen Clay Frick (1888–1984), adding to his legacy her interest in preservation and her own particular love of 18th-century French art and early Italian Renaissance painting.

*The Frick Collects: From Rubens to Monet* will change the experience of The Frick Art Museum's galleries and of Clayton. A selection of Italian and French paintings will be highlighted in the exhibition, while those that stay in their customary galleries will receive new labeling and signage. A number of works of art, decorative items, and furnishings from Clayton will be brought to The Frick Art Museum. Knowing that removing objects from Clayton could create perceived gaps in the domestic atmosphere of the home, the Frick worked collaboratively with Iontank, a creative design and technology firm in Pittsburgh, to create “ghosted” representations of some of the works being removed—allowing the objects to be “present” for visitors to Clayton, who can then understand their place in the domestic context. At the same time, visitors to the exhibition will have the opportunity to appreciate the objects as works of art in a gallery setting at The Frick Art Museum.

The earliest acquisitions in the collection date to Henry Clay Frick's bachelor days. Before his marriage (and for the first months after his marriage) he lived in downtown Pittsburgh at the fashionable Monongahela House. Mr. Frick bought his first paintings and decorative objects for his rooms there: an elaborate rococo revival clock and candelabra set purchased through Tiffany's, an ebonized cabinet, and his first documented painting purchase, a landscape by Pittsburgh artist George Hetzel.

When they moved into Clayton, Henry Clay Frick and his wife furnished it as many young couples do—most of the purchases were new, fashionable and of the period. Frick had met his wife, Adelaide

Howard Childs (1859–1931) in February 1881. Adelaide was the sixth daughter of the wealthy Pittsburgh Childs family, who were manufacturers and importers of shoes and boots. For young couples during America's Gilded Age like the Fricks, art collecting was not simply a way to exercise taste and create a suitable environment—although these were important considerations. More subtly the right objects gave their owner a sense of history and pedigree. Collecting was a personal pleasure and an indicator of status, discernment and good taste.

The rise in American collecting of this period also coincided with the establishment of the first museums in the country, including the Wadsworth Athenaeum of Hartford, Connecticut in 1842, the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston in 1870, New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1872, and in 1896, Pittsburgh's Carnegie Institute. As the century progressed, forming collections and bequeathing them to the public became one way to put wealth and the accumulation of a collection to public service.

Although the Frick Pittsburgh is the direct legacy of Helen Clay Frick, it is also, by extension, the legacy of Henry Clay Frick. After his death, the family's New York home and its contents were transformed into The Frick Collection. The family's other homes, Clayton and Eagle Rock (in Prides Crossing, Massachusetts), were eventually inherited by Helen, and Clayton remained a Pittsburgh touchstone for the family, even after 1905, when their main residence was in New York. The paintings and decorative arts from Clayton and Eagle Rock form a unique reflection of Henry Clay Frick's development as a collector. Any consideration of Henry Clay Frick as a collector must take into account his collection in Pittsburgh.

Helen Clay Frick's vision led to the restoration of Clayton as a house museum and the construction of The Frick Art Museum, which was opened to the public in 1970. Helen even had the family cars and carriages carefully preserved and brought back to Pittsburgh from the family's Massachusetts summer estate. When The Frick Art Museum opened it was devoted to Helen's greatest interests—early Italian Renaissance paintings and 18th-century French fine and decorative art.

Since Helen's death in 1984, the collection has continued to develop—through generous donations and acquisitions that reflect the same quality as that evinced by the founding collection. One of the first gifts after Helen's death came from the estate of a close friend of hers, Katherine McCook Knox. Knox had grown up nearby, the daughter of Willis McCook, one of Henry Clay Frick's lawyers, and as an adult she had worked with Helen at the Frick Art Reference Library, developing an expertise in American painting.

It is fitting then, that her gift to Helen Clay Frick's Pittsburgh museum was an iconic American genre painting by Eastman Johnson, *The Wounded Drummer Boy*, which will be on display as part of the exhibition for the first time since 2014.

The Frick Art Museum also owns significant pieces of contemporary art, including a Sèvres porcelain Madame de Pompadour soup tureen designed by Cindy Sherman, featuring the artist's characteristic role-playing with a self-portrait in the guise of arts patron, porcelain lover, and mistress to Louis XV, Madame de Pompadour. Contemporary art has also been supported through The Frick Art Museum's exhibition program, which since the year 2000 has periodically invited artists to make work inspired by the collections and experiences of visiting the multi-acre site.

## **ABOUT THE EXHIBITION**

The exhibition, which includes 42 paintings, 26 decorative arts pieces, nine pieces of furniture, six works on paper, and three examples of sculpture, is organized by acquisition date, allowing visitors to perceive the development of the collection, from Henry Clay Frick's earliest purchases to recent museum acquisitions. Thematic sections include: *From Apartment to Starter Home: The Collecting Begins*, covering the years 1881 to 1892; *The Confident Collector*, encompassing purchases made through the 1890s to around 1906; *Collecting with Ambition*, which includes important purchases made from other collections and covers the years when Frick was purchasing with the intention of creating a public gallery; *Her Father's Daughter*, which elucidates Helen Clay Frick's collecting interests; and, *Expanding the Legacy*, which includes the establishment of The Frick Art Museum and acquisitions made since the museum's founding.

Removing objects from Clayton, the historic house museum, for this exhibition has provided unusual opportunities to juxtapose objects that are typically displayed separately. Early in the exhibition, the Fricks' first dining room chair, made by American manufacturer D. S. Hess & Company, is displayed next to the 1892 dining room chair custom-designed by Pittsburgh architect Frederick Osterling, allowing for a unique opportunity to make side-by-side comparisons. Similarly, the Fricks owned a small group of fine examples of Rookwood pottery, all of which are typically displayed at a distance from each other in Clayton—in the galleries, visitors will have the opportunity to see all four pieces at once.

A selection of the Frick's extraordinary works on paper by Jean-François Millet will be included in the exhibition. These fragile works in pastel and charcoal are displayed rarely and for limited time to avoid

handling and light exposure. Here, the Millets from a collection within the collection, and connect to Frick's other acquisitions by artists of the Barbizon school. Millet's late-life pastel landscapes show him embracing color and atmosphere, closely connecting his approach to that of the younger Impressionist artists who emerged a decade later. This exhibition provides the opportunity to view some of Frick's Millets juxtaposed with a quintessentially Impressionist landscape by Monet, *Banks of the Seine at Lavacourt*.

A particular highlight of the exhibition will be the return to Pittsburgh of a spectacular George I (1714-1727) Secretary cabinet in the Japanned style, which formerly was in Henry Clay Frick's New York bedroom. The cabinet, considered one of the finest examples in existence, has been on loan to the Metropolitan Museum of Art since 1995. This exhibition marks the perfect occasion to welcome it home. The cabinet is grand in scale and ornately decorated in red and gold the exotic and fashionable Asian-inspired style with figures in exotic eastern landscapes and pagoda and bird motifs.

The main story of the exhibition unfolds in the Museum's temporary exhibition galleries, but the permanent collection galleries will also feature signage and re configured installations of artworks to enhance their connection to the exhibition.

## **NEW GUIDE TO THE COLLECTION**

Accompanying *The Frick Collects: Rubens to Monet* is a new published guide to the collection, produced in collaboration with Scala, specialists in museum publications. The guide features an introduction by Frick Director Robin Nicholson, and contextual essays by Director of Curatorial Affairs Sarah Hall and Associate Curator of Decorative Arts Dawn Reid Breen. It is available for purchase at The Frick Museum store for \$16.95 retail (\$15.26 for members). The accompanying publication is generously underwritten by The Richard C. von Hess Foundation.

## **ABOUT THE FRICK PITTSBURGH**

Located on the Pittsburgh estate of late-19th-century industrialist Henry Clay Frick, The Frick Pittsburgh is the steward of collections left as a legacy to the people of Pittsburgh by Frick's daughter, Helen Clay Frick. The permanent collections include fine and decorative arts, cars, carriages, historic objects, and buildings. The Frick experience includes The Frick Art Museum, the Car and Carriage Museum, Clayton, the Frick family Gilded Age mansion, and six acres of beautifully landscaped lawns and gardens. Also

included are an Education Center, the Frick children’s playhouse (designed by renowned architects Alden & Harlow), a large working greenhouse (also designed by Alden & Harlow), The Café at the Frick, and the Grable Visitor Center, which houses the Frick Museum Store.

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

The Frick Pittsburgh is located at 7227 Reynolds Street in Pittsburgh’s Point Breeze neighborhood. Free parking is available in the Frick’s off-street lot or along adjacent streets.

The Frick is open 10:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Tuesday–Sunday; 10:00 a.m.–9:00 p.m. Friday; and is closed Mondays and major holidays. The public should call 412-371-0600 for information, or visit the Frick online at [TheFrickPittsburgh.org](http://TheFrickPittsburgh.org).

For additional information or images, please contact Greg Langel, Media and Marketing Manager, at 412-342-4075 or [GLangel@TheFrickPittsburgh.org](mailto:GLangel@TheFrickPittsburgh.org)

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*The Frick Art & Historical Center, a museum, historic site and cultural center serves the public through preservation, presentation, and interpretation of the fine and decorative arts and historically significant artifacts for all residents of and visitors to Western Pennsylvania.*