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## **ELIZABETH E. BARKER APPOINTED EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE FRICK PITTSBURGH**

*First woman to lead the institution to further efforts to increase access and inclusion*



PITTSBURGH, PA, September 26, 2019—The Board of Trustees of The Frick Pittsburgh today announced the appointment of Elizabeth E. Barker, Ph.D., as the museum’s next Executive Director. The appointment as the institution’s fourth executive director, and the first woman, follows a nine-month national search, which began in early 2019, following the announcement of former Executive Director Robin Nicholson’s departure to lead the Telfair Museums in Savannah, GA. Judith Hansen O’Toole has served as Interim Executive Director since February 2019. Barker will assume her position on December 1, 2019.

Barker brings to Pittsburgh twenty-five years’ leadership and curatorial experience at renowned museums including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the British Museum and Yale Center for British Art. During her tenure at the Met, from 1994–2005, where she served as Associate Curator of Drawings and Prints, Barker led efforts to digitize collections and engage new audiences. Her 2001 William Blake retrospective featuring the Met’s first audio tour for families with children and a reading and concert performance by the writer and musician Patti Smith became one of the year’s most highly attended exhibitions.

A specialist in British Art of the eighteenth century with a Ph.D. in Art History from the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, and B.A. from Yale, Barker's publications have addressed a range of art, from Italian Renaissance to contemporary art.

David Burstin, Chair of The Frick Pittsburgh's Board of Trustees said, "Barker distinguished herself throughout the interview process with her extensive background at a variety of cultural organizations, scholarship, track record of innovation and creativity, dedication to inclusiveness, and enthusiasm for the position—and for the city of Pittsburgh. Her exceptional attributes and experience—particularly her career-long focus on increasing access and inclusion—are perfectly aligned with the museum's needs. We are pleased she will bring her talents and energy to lead The Frick Pittsburgh into the future, while building on the superb work of Judy O'Toole, the museum's previous directors, and our dedicated staff."

"I am delighted to be joining The Frick Pittsburgh and honored to be able to build on the remarkable work of my predecessors—founding director DeCourcy McIntosh and his successors, Bill Bodine and Robin Nicholson—as well as the important contributions of interim director Judy O'Toole, the dedicated Board of Trustees and talented staff," said Barker.

"The opportunity to continue to help to feed the cultural soul of those who know and love the Frick, while welcoming, engaging and inspiring new audiences to this exceptional museum is tremendously exciting. I am also humbled and inspired to become part of the Pittsburgh community, with its rich and diverse cultural resources, and join in a shared commitment to ensuring that this region continues to thrive as a vibrant and robust destination for the arts. The energy here is palpable. The instant I set foot in this beautiful city I fell in love."

Barker has fourteen years' experience as a museum executive. From October 2014 through March 2019, she served as Stanford Calderwood Director of the Boston Athenæum, the distinguished independent library, exhibition center and cultural venue founded in 1807. Under her leadership, the Athenæum raised \$13.5 million, increased annual giving by 28% and expanded membership by 78%. During her tenure, Barker established Education and Visitor Services departments, spurred a significant expansion of programs and events and launched new partnerships with more than 40 regional cultural organizations. And, as part of an effort to increase public access to the 230,000-item special collection,

Barker oversaw the initiative to publish the institution's celebrated painting and sculpture collection online.

Commenting on the news of Barker's appointment as the Frick's new Executive Director, Boston Athenæum Board President John S. Reed characterized her leadership of the Boston Athenæum as defining and important. Reed remarked, "She increased access, attracted new audiences, and executed the board's vision for the future. Her energy, experience, creativity, and collaborative approach will be a great asset to the Frick and the city of Pittsburgh."

Prior to her tenure at the Boston Athenæum, Barker served as Director of the Mead Art Museum at Amherst College, Amherst, MA. During her seven years at the Mead, an encyclopedic college art museum, Barker led a successful AAM reaccreditation process, doubled hours of operation and dramatically increased attendance. By raising funds to endow new positions and expand the museum's technology, use of the Mead's collection for teaching, research and enjoyment increased tenfold.

Barker's earliest experience as a museum director was at Colgate University's Picker Art Gallery in Hamilton, NY. Under her direction from 2005–2007, the museum expanded its offerings and became more accessible for students and the general public. Barker raised \$2.3 million for museum facilities and collections during her tenure, built docent, internship and fellowship programs and developed and executed a strategic plan, all while co-curating more than a dozen installations and two traveling exhibitions.

## **ABOUT THE FRICK PITTSBURGH**

Located on a 5.5-acre garden estate in Pittsburgh's Point Breeze neighborhood, The Frick Pittsburgh is the steward of collections left as a legacy to the people of Pittsburgh by Helen Clay Frick (1888–1984), daughter of industrialist Henry Clay Frick (1849–1919). Comprising a complex of museums, historical buildings, and gardens, the institution provides free admission to its grounds and permanent collections at The Frick Art Museum and the Car and Carriage Museum, attracting more than 125,000 visitors annually. The Frick has significantly expanded its visibility and audiences in recent years, in part through the presentation of a series of engaging touring exhibitions, for which the museum charges admission, including several highly successful fashion-focused presentations at The Frick Art Museum. The

permanent collections, numbering several thousand pieces, include the historic contents of Clayton, the 19th-century Frick family home; the car and carriage collection; and a substantial collection of paintings, works on paper, furniture, and decorative arts acquired by both Mr. Frick and Miss Frick. Collection highlights include early Italian Renaissance panel paintings, 18th-century French paintings and furniture, important bronzes and sculptures, and a significant group of Chinese ceramics.

## **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, Director of Marketing & Communications, at 412-342-4075 or [GLangel@TheFrickPittsburgh.org](mailto:GLangel@TheFrickPittsburgh.org).**

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