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First American Touring Exhibition of Important German Drawings From the Winterstein Collection Comes to New York

Works Rarely Seen in The United States are Featured

June 23 through September 6, 1998

For the first time, New York audiences will view a selection of major works from one of the most important private collections of German drawings and watercolors of the period c. 1750 through 1850. Known as the Age of Goethe, this era is considered to be one of the greatest in German draftsmanship. Nonetheless, such works on paper are exceedingly rare in both public and private collections in the United States, making this traveling exhibition a particularly rich and unusual opportunity. On view this summer at **The Frick Collection**, this presentation of approximately eighty works by forty-seven artists is drawn from the celebrated holdings of Munich attorney Alfred Winterstein (1895-1976). The exhibition explores the range and significance of German draftsmanship from the Enlightenment, Romantic, and Realist periods, and includes landscapes and nature studies by **Caspar David Friedrich** and preeminent writer and artist **Johann Wolfgang von Goethe**, architectural studies by **Karl Friedrich Schinkel** and **Friedrich Gilly**, and portraits by **Joseph Karl Stieler** and **Ludwig Emil Grimm**. Among the other notable artists featured are **Henry Fuseli**, **Carl Philipp Fohr**, **Philipp Otto Runge**, **Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld**, **Moritz von Schwind**, **Johann Georg von Dillis**, and **Adolph Menzel**.

Never before have so many works from the Winterstein collection been on view outside of Germany, where it made its last major tour four decades ago, in 1958. This first American tour is limited to only three venues: the Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Harvard University Museums, Cambridge, MA; The Frick Collection; and the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles, CA. ***Fuseli to Menzel: Drawings and Watercolors from the Age of Goethe*** is curated by Hinrich Sieveking, curator of the Winterstein Collection. The exhibition was initiated and organized by the Busch-Reisinger Museum, Harvard University Art Museums, Cambridge, MA, and has been made possible by the generous support of Merck, Finck & Co., Privatbankiers, a member of the Barclays Group, with additional support from the Friends of the Busch-Reisinger Museum. Presentation of *Fuseli to Menzel* at The Frick Collection has been coordinated by Associate Curator Susan Grace Galassi.

A Remarkable Private Collection

Samuel Sachs II, the recently-appointed Director of The Frick Collection, comments, “We are thrilled to join New York audiences in experiencing this remarkable body of work. Dr. Winterstein’s legacy is informed by his well-trained eye and deep appreciation for draftsmanship. Equally admirable was his generous desire to share these works and his knowledge with a wider public, which continues through this marvelous touring exhibition of the collection, so long anticipated in the United States.”

The inspiration for Winterstein’s collection began early in the century when he viewed several exhibitions of Romantic period drawings. He was strongly attracted to the music, literature, and visual arts of the time and felt a particular affinity with the work of Goethe. Winterstein, in fact, created a “Goethe Room” at his country home with period furniture, decorative art, and literature, and collecting drawings naturally followed. His active interest flourished for five decades with limited competition at auction and from only a small number of connoisseurs. Winterstein maintained active connections with other collectors, art historians, museum professionals, and art dealers who were particularly knowledgeable in the field of drawing. He considered the collecting of drawings to be an important cultural activity, which he shared through public speaking and loaning his works to institutions. The collection continues to grow today through the efforts of the next generation of the family, following the high standards set by its founder.

The Age of Goethe

The title of the exhibition refers to two notable personalities, Fuseli and Menzel. Opposites as artists, they lived, respectively, at the beginning and end of the Age of Goethe. Living and working during a time of intellectual, social, economic, and political transformation, Goethe and his contemporaries witnessed the Enlightenment, the absolute and constitutional monarchies, the French Revolution, the Napoleonic wars, and the restoration of the monarchy, as well as the Sturm und Drang movement, and the Biedermeier period. Outstanding cultural achievements in the areas of music, philosophy, and literature marked the era. Indeed, its strong cultural foundation is indicated by the fact that historians refer to the entire period in terms of its preeminent literary figure, rather than a statesman or historic event.

Drawing as the Dominant Visual Medium

The visual arts of the Age of Goethe, as with the period around the life of Dürer (c. 1500), show strong graphic tendencies. Hinrich Sieveking notes in the catalogue that there existed a “huge number of talented draftsmen in the Goethe period...unique in the history of German art and comparable only to the appearance of the many outstanding painters in the Netherlands during the seventeenth century.” He also comments on the “phenomenon of countless dilettante draftsmen among the nobility. Drawing lessons were as much a part of traditional education as music lessons.” Among the middle class, as well, private drawing lessons had been established as an important aspect of education. During the Age of Goethe, there developed a sense of the medium as an autonomous art, worthy of appreciation for its own sake, rather than as an auxiliary output of the creative process. Many of the sheets in the exhibition were, indeed, produced and collected as independent works of art, rather than as studies for works in other media.

Highlights Represent Quality and Depth

Caspar David Friedrich (1774–1840), considered to be the greatest landscapist of the period, is represented by three works, a portrait in chalk of his brother Christian, a finished landscape, and a sepia interior. Featured in *Fuseli to Menzel* is an image of great natural beauty, his watercolor *The Source of the Elbe in the Riesengebirge*, c. 1830. Depicting a desolate mountain meadow, the work invites reflection upon the site's significance as the origin of a mighty river. Also on view is a sepia drawing *Entrance to a Chamber in the Convent Church of the Holy Cross near Meissen*, c. 1835–37, which depicts a doorway leading from a dark room to a sunlit churchyard. This captivating work evokes spiritual qualities characteristic of Friedrich's oeuvre, which is noted for allusions to transience, death, and rebirth.

Adolph Menzel (1815–1905) is represented in the exhibition by three bold, early works bearing his characteristic gestural stroke and experimental mixture of media. In *Choir of the Former Abbey Church in Berlin*, completed at the age of twenty-two, Menzel achieves a pastel effect with watercolor. The work exudes an original, willful, and totally effortless handling of a technique of his own invention. His study for the lithograph *Molière*, c. 1849, reveals the same technically innovative hand at work in an engaging contemporary portrait of his own brother, as does *The Opera Glass*, in pastel.

The silhouette, with its essential characteristics of pure outline reduction to a single color, became a popular visual art form during the era of Neoclassicism and Romanticism, influenced by materials published on the excavations of Herculaneum and Pompeii. Visitors will see three works by **Philipp Otto Runge** (1777–1810), including a fine cut-out, *Rose, Thistle, and Pear*.

Winterstein was not concerned with simply amassing masterpieces, but was intrigued by distinctions between each artist's characteristic touch, which can be evident in works of all sizes and media. He compiled small, specialized holdings of works by certain draftsmen, finding fine representative examples of their various developmental stages. In addition to purchasing works by the major figures of German Romanticism, such as the Northern artists **Friedrich** and **Runge**, Winterstein felt a particular attraction for the early Southern, Catholic-influenced Nazarenes group who looked to the Christian art of the Middle Ages for inspiration. Outstanding portraits by Nazarene artist **Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld**, including *Portrait of Johannes Metzger* and *Portrait of Max Seitz*, are to be shown, as well as **Ferdinand Olivier's** study of the Hohensalzburg Citadel, and works by **Friedrich Overbeck** and **Peter Cornelius**.

First Comprehensive Catalogue on this Collection now Available in English

The fully illustrated catalogue by Hinrich Sieveking features drawings and watercolors by the artists represented in the exhibition (169 illustrations, 93 in color). Essays survey aspects of German drawing during the period and trace the development of the collection formed by the Winterstein family. Biographies of the artists are also provided in this volume, which is the most comprehensive publication on this collection available in English. Distributed by Prestel, the soft cover catalogue is now available for retail purchase for \$35.00 in the Museum Shop of The Frick Collection.

Public Program

Drawing the Experience of the New: German Artists in the Age of

Goethe

Wednesday, June 24, at 5:30pm

Franoise Forster-Hahn, University of California at Riverside, delivers a lecture inspired by the special exhibition *Fuseli to Menzel: Drawings and Watercolors in the Age of Goethe*. Forster-Hahn takes as her theme Philipp Otto Runge's dictum: "Art of all periods teaches us that humanity changes, and that a period, once past, never returns."

This lecture is open to the public without charge beginning at 5:00pm. Those who arrive earlier, wishing to attend, are expected to pay the regular gallery admission charge. This lecture is made available through the generosity of the Fellows of The Frick Collection and other donors.

International and National Tour

The exhibition debuted in Germany, showing at three venues before coming to the United States as follows:

- **The Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Harvard Art Museums, in Cambridge, MA** April 4 through June 7, 1998
- **The Frick Collection, New York, NY** June 23 through August 30, 1998
- **The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, CA** September 15 until November 29, 1998

Basic Information

Where: 1 East 70th Street, around the corner from New York's famed Fifth Avenue

When: Tuesday-Saturday, 10:00am-6:00pm; Sunday, 1:00-6:00pm; Closed Mondays, January 1, Lincoln's Birthday, July 4, Election Day, Veteran's Day, Thanksgiving Day, December 24, and December 25.

Admission: \$7.00, general public; \$5.00, senior citizens and students; children under the age of 10 are not permitted and those under the age of 16 must be accompanied by an adult.

General Information: (212) 288-0700.

Subway: Lexington Avenue #6 to 68th Street Station.

Bus: M1, M2, M3, or M4 buses (Limited or Local) on Fifth Avenue to 72nd Street and on Madison Avenue to 70th Street.

#2

April 23, 1998


For further press information, please contact Heidi Rosenau, Communications Officer

Phone: (212) 547-6866

Fax: (212) 628-4417
e-mail: Rosenau@Frick.org

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