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THE FRICK COLLECTION

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Three Major New York City Art Museum Libraries Announce Plans for a Shared Library System

The **Frick Art Reference Library** and the libraries of the **Brooklyn Museum** and **The Museum of Modern Art** have received a grant of \$669,000 from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to bring their respective online catalogs together in an integrated library system. In addition to providing economic benefits, this collaborative effort will broaden access to the renowned research collections of each library and will provide a platform for future collaborative efforts in collections development and information delivery services. Researchers will be able to search for materials from the three libraries in many formats, covering the entire span of art history, from ancient to contemporary. “We are extremely pleased to be a part of this pioneering enterprise,” comments Anne L. Poulet, Director of The Frick Collection. “It will reap enormous benefits for the art historical community, a group that includes students; educators; collectors; journalists; independent scholars; staff members of museums, galleries, and auction houses; and the interested public.”

This exciting initiative is the outcome of a planning grant, also sponsored by the Mellon Foundation, that identified new ways to improve the discovery and delivery of research, coordinate core activities, and sustain shared resources. This effort resulted in the formation of the New York Art Resources Consortium (NYARC), of which the three libraries, together with The Metropolitan Museum of Art, are founding members. The implementation of a shared library system was targeted as a key element for moving into the future. James G. Neal, Vice President for Information Services and University Librarian at Columbia University, who helped develop the *Plan of Action* for the consortium, states, “Libraries

often project an energetic spirit of collaboration, but true partnerships are difficult to achieve. This initiative of deep cooperation among three of the world's leading art museum libraries will enable improved access to collections, set the stage for exciting new joint programs, and serve as a model for the wider library and museum communities." Under the terms of the agreement, The Frick Art Reference Library will host and administer the shared system.

Each library possesses rich and varied resources that support research on art and cultural history. These resources, many uniquely held, include thousands of exhibition and art collection catalogs, photograph collections, artist and vertical files, auction sale catalogs, and archival materials. Brought together virtually through a shared online catalog, the distinguished collections of each library will be mutually enriched. One-stop searching over the entire spectrum of art history will be possible, creating a gateway to material that has heretofore remained elusive to the public and scholarly communities. "This synergistic effort will allow us to serve the information needs of our increasingly diverse communities well into the future," says Patricia Barnett, the Andrew W. Mellon Librarian of the Frick Art Reference Library. "Although cooperation is central to our consortium," she adds, "so is the ability to provide library-specific customization and identity. The new system will allow users to search all three libraries' resources through a unified interface, while continuing to provide collection-specific searching using Database (MoMA's online library catalog), FRESCO (Frick Research Catalog Online), and the Brooklyn Museum Online Catalog."

The two-year project will not stop at the development of a shared online catalog. The grant mandates using the system to develop innovative ways to share cataloging, acquisitions, circulation, serials management, and licensing agreements. A business plan will be developed in the second year of the grant to support future program initiatives. This plan will be shared with the library community with the expectation that new and expanded collaborative partnerships will result.

ABOUT THE BROOKLYN MUSEUM LIBRARY

The Brooklyn Museum Libraries and Archives have been developed to encourage understanding of the Museum's encyclopedic collections and the broader areas of art and cultural history. The holdings encompass approximately 275,000 volumes of books, periodicals, auction catalogs, artists' files and pamphlets, documentary photographs, fashion sketches, rare books, artists' books, and over 1,600 linear feet of archival collections. The research collection, dating to 1823, covers the fine arts (painting, sculpture, prints, drawings, photography, decorative arts, costumes, and textiles), museum anthropology,

archaeology, and ethnology, with particular strengths in the arts of the Americas, Africa, Asia, and Islam. An additional collection, The Wilbour Library of Egyptology, based on the personal library of Charles Edwin Wilbour, who assembled the Museum's extensive Egyptian antiquities collection, is today one of the world's most important resources for textual and visual information about the history of ancient Egypt. The Museum Archives contain institutional records, curatorial correspondence, expedition reports, and other related textual and visual records dating to the founding of the institution.

<http://library.brooklynmuseum.org/>

ABOUT THE FRICK ART REFERENCE LIBRARY

Each year, the Frick Art Reference Library, established in 1920 by Helen Clay Frick (daughter of Henry Clay Frick, founder of the adjacent museum), serves approximately six thousand individuals with a serious interest in art, primarily scholars, museum and art market professionals, collectors, and graduate students. One of the world's most valued art research centers on art in the Western tradition, it is also one of the most complete resources for the study of collecting and patronage. The Library's book and photograph collections relate chiefly to the fine arts and selected categories of the decorative arts from the fourth to the mid-twentieth centuries by artists of Europe and the Americas. Known internationally for its rich holdings of auction and exhibition catalogs, the Library is a leading site for provenance research. Its renowned Photoarchive of more than one million photographs documents the work of 36,000 artists. Archival and special collections supplement over 350,000 volumes of textual materials, microforms, and online resources. The Library's active research program of lectures, exhibitions, and academic affiliations was recently expanded with the opening of The Center for the History of Collecting in America in January 2007. <http://www.frick.org/library/>

ABOUT THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART LIBRARY

Established in 1932, The Library and Museum Archives of The Museum of Modern Art comprises one of the world's largest and most comprehensive research centers on modern and contemporary art. Housed in the newly inaugurated Lewis B. and Dorothy Cullman Education and Research Building in midtown Manhattan, it serves 4,500 researchers and processes over 5,000 requests for information annually. The Library's resources encompass over 413,000 serial titles, bound periodical volumes, artist exhibition catalogs and monographs, general exhibition catalogs, artists' files, artists' books, pamphlet files, auction catalogs, and special collection items, all documenting visual arts from 1880 to the present. Collection highlights include works on Dada and Surrealism, The Franklin Furnace Artist Book Collection, and the Political Art Documentation and Distribution Archive. <http://moma.org/research/>

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