



# PRESS RELEASE

*from*

## THE FRICK COLLECTION

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### **TWO NEW ONLINE DATABASES LAUNCHED TO AID AND STIMULATE RESEARCH ON COLLECTORS**

#### **THE ARCHIVES DATABASE OF THE CENTER FOR THE HISTORY OF COLLECTING IN AMERICA AND THE MONTIAS DATABASE**

The Frick Art Reference Library is pleased to announce the launch of two new electronic resources available online and at no charge. One is a directory of particular interest to those researching the history of collecting art in the United States, and the other is a database of inventories from the Dutch Golden Age. Comments Inge Reist, Director for the Frick's Center for the History of Collecting in America, "We are thrilled to introduce these two resources, knowing that art historians and others will find them fascinating and rich in information. Nothing comparable to the Center's new Archives Directory has ever existed—surprising given the increasing number of exhibitions based on individual collectors, among them William Randolph Hearst, the Clark Brothers, Grenville Winthrop, and Ambrose Vollard. Such a consolidated and easily searched online source as the new Archives Directory will prove invaluable to this deepening field of study and will ensure that researchers can locate primary documents such as letters, bills of sale, and other transaction records that are so essential to reliable scholarship. Indeed, users will more readily find their way to all manner of repositories, from those that are well-known to utterly unexpected caches, which in turn may lead to new discoveries and inspire fresh perspectives."

#### **DUTCH COLLECTORS IN THE GOLDEN AGE**

The complete Montias database, currently accessible only through the Frick's website, offers an unprecedented look at ownership of art during the seventeenth-century in Holland, known as the "Golden Age." It is a trove of searchable information about buyers, sellers, and prices, including comprehensive

information on over 50,000 objects (paintings, prints, sculpture, furniture, and so forth) listed in nearly 1,300 Amsterdam city inventories. Approximately half were created in preparation for auctions, almost an equal portion were notarial death inventories for estate purposes, and the remaining documents relate to bankruptcy cases. Although the database, which specifically addresses records from 1597 through 1681, is not a complete record of all inventories made in Amsterdam, it contains a vast amount of information that can elucidate patterns of buying, selling, inventorying, and collecting art.

John Michael Montias was an eminent economist at Yale University who began recording details of ownership of works of art from inventories held in the Amsterdam municipal archive, or Geementearchief (now known as the Stadsarchief), in the early 1980s as part of his own work on the prices of Dutch paintings at seventeenth-century auctions. In 1986, he was given a grant by the Getty Art History Information Program (now the Getty Research Institute) in conjunction with its Provenance Index. Montias was one of the earliest contributors to the Index, which had been established only a few years earlier, and he eventually provided information from over 300 inventories. After his association with the Getty ended, he continued inputting material on his own and added data from nearly 1,000 more documents, all of which he gave to the Frick Art Reference Library to host. The Rijksbureau voor Kunsthistorische Documentatie serves as a co-sponsor. Visit this Frick Collection web site link to view the Montias Database:

<http://research.frick.org/montias/home.php>

## **A UNIQUE DIRECTORY DRAMATICALLY AIDS RESEARCHING AMERICAN COLLECTIONS**

From its inception in 2007, the Frick's Center for the History of Collecting in America has worked to broaden and deepen scholarly research in this field of study, in an effort to expand the related body of literature. The Center's new Archives Directory, the first online database of its kind, speaks directly to that vision by consolidating into one place a wealth of information about the location and nature of documents and archives available on American collectors. Until now, scholars have had to comb through multiple websites, and, if permitted, sift through analog data held at library, museum, and university archives to construct their own plans for research—a time-consuming and imprecise process. The Center's new Directory is, by contrast, accessible around the clock via the institution's website, presenting the information in a manner that allows for greater flexibility in searching for and organizing information. Its use will help scholars worldwide as they approach research projects, guiding them beyond existing publications and standard paths to overlooked repositories, including primary source materials.

Currently, the Archives Directory guides researchers to more than 5,000 collections held in more than 300 repositories worldwide, which together have bearing on the lives and activities of more than 1,500 American collectors. Information in the Archives Directory was culled from various online and printed materials ranging from federated and individual online library catalogues to Google Books to published literature in the field. By launching the Directory with this critical mass of material in place, the Center for the History of Collecting in America moves its development to the next phase, that of welcoming contributions of additional information for this online resource. Indeed, it will be through the combined efforts of professionals and researchers who are aware of lesser-known archives that the Directory will continue to grow and become an increasingly valued resource for art and cultural historians. To explore the Archives Directory, visit the web site via this link: <http://research.frick.org/directoryweb/home.php>

## **ABOUT THE FRICK ART REFERENCE LIBRARY**

The Frick Art Reference Library was founded in 1920 by Helen Clay Frick as a memorial to her father, Henry Clay Frick (whose art and mansion were bequeathed to the public, later becoming The Frick Collection, one of the world's most treasured house museums). In founding the Library, she vowed to provide a curious and growing public of art researchers with resources as valuable to them as her father's art collection came to be to the world's art lovers. The mission of the Library was, and remains, to make available to a broad community of researchers materials for the study of art in the Western



tradition from the fourth to the mid-twentieth century. With its emphasis on object-oriented research, the Library amassed a photoarchive that now boasts images of more than one million works of art, many of which are unpublished. The Library owns over 350,000 books, periodicals, online resources, and annotated auction and exhibition catalogues. The collection is unrivaled in the United States and is one of the world's most valued art research centers and the most comprehensive resource on the history of collecting and patronage.

## **BASIC INFORMATION**

**General Information Phone (Collection):** (212) 288-0700

**General Information Phone (Library):** (212) 288 8700

**Web site:** <http://www.frick.org>

**E-mail:** [info@frick.org](mailto:info@frick.org) (for general public inquiries, not press inquiries)

**Where (Collection):** 1 East 70th Street, near Fifth Avenue.

**Where (Library):** 10 East 71<sup>st</sup> Street, between Fifth and Madison Avenues

**Hours (Collection)** open six days a week: 10am to 6pm on Tuesdays through Saturdays; 11 am to 5pm on Sundays. Closed Mondays, New Year's Day, Independence Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas Day. Limited hours (11am to 5pm) on Lincoln's Birthday, Election Day, and Veterans Day.

**Hours (Library):** 10:00am to 5:00pm, Monday to Friday, and 9:30am to 1:00pm Saturdays. Closed Sundays, Holiday weekends, Saturdays in June and July, the month of August. Following its August closing, the Library will re-open to the public the day after Labor Day.

**Admission (Collection):** \$18; senior citizens \$12; students \$5; "pay as you wish" on Sundays from 11 am to 1pm.

**Admission (Library):** use of the Library is free

**PLEASE NOTE TO YOUR READERS: Children under ten are not admitted to the Collection**

**Subway:** #6 local (on Lexington Avenue) to 68th Street station; **Bus:** M1, M2, M3, and M4 southbound on Fifth Avenue to 72nd Street and northbound on Madison Avenue to 70th Street; crosstown M72 stopping eastbound on Madison at 70<sup>th</sup> Street or westbound on Fifth Avenue at 72<sup>nd</sup> Street or 69<sup>th</sup> Street

**Collection Tour Information:** included in the price of admission is an Acoustiguide Audio Tour of the permanent collection, provided by Acoustiguide. The tour is offered in six languages: English, French, German, Italian, Japanese, and Spanish.

**Museum Shop:** the shop is open the same days as the Museum, closing fifteen minutes before the institution.

**Group Visits to the Collection:** Please call (212) 288-0700 for details and to make reservations.

**Public Programs:** A calendar of events is published regularly and is available upon request.

#155, February 12, 2010

For further press information, please contact Heidi Rosenau, Head of Media Relations & Marketing, or Alexis Light, Media Relations & Marketing Coordinator

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