



PRESS RELEASE

from

THE FRICK COLLECTION

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IMPORTANT GIFT OF DRAWINGS PRESENTED IN A CABINET EXHIBITION THIS WINTER

A PASSION FOR DRAWINGS: CHARLES RYSKAMP'S BEQUEST TO THE FRICK COLLECTION

February 14 through April 8, 2012



Pierre-Joseph Redouté (1759–1840), *Plum Branches Intertwined*, 1802–4, watercolor on vellum, 31.9 x 26.3 cm, The Frick Collection, bequest of Charles A. Ryskamp, 2010; Photo: Michael Bodycomb

Over the course of fifty years—from the 1950s until his death in 2010 at the age of eighty-one—former Frick Collection Director Charles A. Ryskamp (1928–2010) assembled an extraordinary personal trove of European drawings. Reflecting on his pursuits in 2009, Dr. Ryskamp remarked, “I have always believed that giving, as much as acquiring, is the principle of my collecting.” This spirit of sharing is embodied in a group of ten superb drawings that he bequeathed to the Frick, selected from among his large and varied collection by Anne L. Poulet, Director Emerita, and curators Colin B. Bailey and Susan Grace Galassi. Other sheets were donated to The Morgan Library & Museum, where Dr. Ryskamp served as Director from 1969 to 1987, or auctioned at Sotheby’s for the benefit of Princeton University, where he began his career as a professor of literature. The works bequeathed to the Frick transform the museum’s holdings in drawings, enlarging them by nearly a third, while complementing the permanent collection’s focus on landscape and figural subjects.



George Stubbs (1724–1806), *Portrait of Warren Hastings*, c. 1791, watercolor over graphite, cut to an oval, 13.8 x 10.9 cm, The Frick Collection, bequest of Charles A. Ryskamp, 2010; Photo: Michael Bodycomb

This winter and spring the Frick celebrates Charles Ryskamp’s generosity—and discerning taste—with an exhibition of the works from his bequest. The drawings, which have never before been shown at the Frick, will be presented in the Cabinet, a space created by Dr. Ryskamp during his tenure as Director from 1987 to 1997 and intended especially for the display of works on paper. The installation is accompanied by two oil-on-paper studies of clouds by John Constable, which Dr. Ryskamp was instrumental in bringing to the Collection. *A Passion for Drawings: Charles Ryskamp’s Bequest to The Frick Collection* was organized by Katie L. Steiner and Nicholas Wise, Curatorial Assistants, The Frick Collection.

A COLLECTOR DRAWN TO BRITISH AND BRITISH-SCHOOL WORKS

A precocious collector of books and prints in his youth, Charles Ryskamp turned his attention to drawings in the mid-1950s. His tastes tended toward eighteenth- and nineteenth-century British works, in keeping with his academic pursuits in the fields of late neoclassical and Romantic English literature. A drawing from the bequest by William Blake, for example, embodies the unorthodox approach to subject and technique that often characterized the Romantic tradition in Britain. With cascading streams of graphite lines, Blake portrays the wavy hair, furrowed brow, and stern gaze of Owen Glendower, a Welsh prince who led uprisings against the English crown in the early fifteenth century. The exhibition also features a double-sided sheet by the draftsman Henry Fuseli, on which a biblical scene of Satan and Job opposes a view of the Germanic hero Siegfried grappling with a monstrous serpent. Fuseli’s use of twisted forms, energetic pen lines, and dramatic washes typifies his inventive approach to traditional themes.



Edwin Henry Landseer (1802–1873), *Otterhounds*, 1838–44, watercolor and gouache with graphite framing lines, 29.2 x 45.7 cm, The Frick Collection, bequest of Charles A. Ryskamp, 2010; Photo: Michael Bodycomb

Drawings concerned with the natural, observable world—central to artistic practices in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries—held great appeal for Dr. Ryskamp. In the exhibition, Edwin Henry Landseer’s drawing of otterhounds, at left, pursuing their quarry along a riverbank demonstrates the artist’s acute facility with light, as he conveys the transitions from bright sun to shadow with strokes of watercolor and gouache. David Wilkie handles atmospheric effects with similar dexterity in his study of two figures safeguarding Scottish royal treasure, using chalk and

gouache to suggest the glow of the regalia in a gloomy castle interior.

Joining these works is a small but arresting watercolor portrait by George Stubbs of Warren Hastings, the first Governor-General of India (page 1). The artist records the sitter’s features and stoic expression, as well as the textures of fabric, hair, and skin, with the same careful precision that marks his renowned animal paintings and

anatomical studies. This important sheet is one of the few works on paper by Stubbs in the United States outside of the Yale Center for British Art in New Haven.

CONTINENTAL DRAWINGS CAPTURE HIS ATTENTION

Charles Ryskamp's interests as a collector gradually extended beyond Britain to the Continent. Among the four French works bequeathed to the Frick is a luminous botanical study by Pierre-Joseph Redouté of two different varieties of plums (page 1). Redouté's highly finished watercolor may have been preparatory for an illustrated volume of the Empress Josephine's gardens at Malmaison, although the present composition was never engraved. The artfulness with which Redouté composes the specimens is matched by his scientific precision in documenting their features. Using delicate washes of blue, green, and gold, the artist depicts the fruits' subtle gradation of tones and conjures the powdery "bloom" coating their skin.

Redouté's lyrical response to the natural world is echoed in the exhibition, albeit in a different key, by Pierre-Étienne-Théodore Rousseau's *plein air* sketch of a pond at the edge of a wood, which captures the sunny Barbizon countryside through swift, energetic pencil strokes. A sketchbook sheet by Rousseau's contemporary Eugène Delacroix offers a similarly spontaneous view of a scene he encountered during a trip to North Africa in 1832, below. In his drawing of a domestic interior, the artist delights in the bold color combinations and novel shapes of Moroccan architecture, which would later inform his Orientalist paintings.

An early work by Edgar Degas in the exhibition shows the artist applying his keen skills of observation to the figure. Using a hard graphic line—influenced by Ingres, whom he much admired—Degas expertly renders the anatomy of a classical sculpture (perhaps one of the famous horse tamers in the Piazza del Quirinale) that he observed as a young artist in Rome. This carefully studied work finds a foil in the sole Italian drawing in the bequest, Giovanni Battista Tiepolo's *Young Man Holding a Book* (c.1758), which was dashed off in a few calligraphic strokes of brown ink and wash.



Eugène Delacroix (1798–1863), *Moroccan Interior*, 1832, watercolor and gouache over graphite on wove paper, 9.7 x 14.9 cm, The Frick Collection, bequest of Charles A. Ryskamp, 2010; Photo: Michael Bodycomb

The varied subjects and styles of the works in the exhibition speak to Dr. Ryskamp's vibrant intellect. A scholar and a museum director, he equated the collecting of art with the acquisition of knowledge. Through his generous gift to the Frick, his remarkable drawings will continue to delight, inspire, and stimulate the curiosity of all.

RELATED LECTURE AND RECEPTION

Wednesday evening lectures are free and do not require reservations, although seating is limited. Doors open at 5:45 p.m. (if those planning to attend arrive earlier, they are expected to pay the regular museum admission fee). This lecture will be followed by a reception.

Date Wednesday, February 15, 6:00 p.m.
Speaker Matthew Hargraves, Associate Curator for Collections Research, Yale Center for British Art
Title Charles Ryskamp: A Life in Arts and Letters

Charles Ryskamp served as the Director of The Frick Collection from 1987 to 1997. Under his leadership the Frick underwent a profound evolution and embarked on a new era of growth and innovation. In conjunction with the exhibition, this lecture will explore the fascinating life and collecting interests of this remarkable scholar, teacher, connoisseur, and collector through the magnificent drawings he bequeathed to the institution.

ALSO ON VIEW AT THE FRICK THIS WINTER AND SPRING:



RENOIR, IMPRESSIONISM, AND FULL-LENGTH PAINTING

February 7 through May 13, 2012

Pierre-Auguste Renoir (1841–1919), *Dance at Bougival*, 1883, oil on canvas, 71 5/8 x 38 5/8 inches, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Boston Picture Fund; Photo: © 2012 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

BASIC INFORMATION

General Information Phone: 212.288.0700

Web site: www.frick.org

E-mail: info@frick.org

Where: 1 East 70th Street, near Fifth Avenue.

Hours: open six days a week: 10am to 6pm on Tuesdays through Saturdays; 11am 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.

Admission: \$18; senior citizens \$15; students \$10; "pay as you wish" on Sundays from 11am to 1pm; see page 7 for information on timed ticketing for this special exhibition.

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

Tour Information: included in the price of admission is an Acoustiguide Audio Tour of the permanent collection. 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: 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.

#192, January 17, 2012

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

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