

# PRESS RELEASE

from

## THE FRICK COLLECTION

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### SPRING EXHIBITION FEATURES ICONIC MASTERPIECES FROM LONDON'S DULWICH PICTURE GALLERY

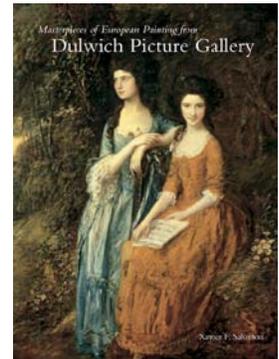
REMBRANDT, GAINSBOROUGH, CANALETTO, POUSSIN, WATTEAU & OTHERS

*March 9 through May 30, 2010*



Rembrandt van Rijn (1606–1669), *A Girl at a Window*, 1645, oil on canvas, 81.6 x 66 cm, Bourgeois Bequest, 1811, © The Trustees of Dulwich Picture Gallery

This spring, the Frick presents a special exhibition of loans from Dulwich Picture Gallery, one of the major collections of Old Master paintings in the world. Heralding the London museum's bicentenary in 2011, the exhibition will introduce American audiences to this institution's holdings and history through nine of its most important and best-loved works. Indeed, *Masterpieces of European Painting from Dulwich Picture Gallery*, to be shown exclusively at the Frick from March 9 through May 30, 2010, includes signature works that seldom travel, many of which have not been on view in the United States in recent years, and, in some cases, never in New York City. Featured are Anthony Van Dyck's *Samson and Delilah*, c. 1619–20; Nicolas Poussin's *Nurture of Jupiter*, c. 1636–37; Rembrandt van Rijn's *Girl at a Window*, 1645; Peter Lely's *Nymphs by a Fountain*, c. 1650; Gerrit Dou's *Woman Playing a Clavichord*,



c. 1665; Bartolomé Esteban Murillo's *Flower Girl*, c. 1665; Jean-Antoine Watteau's *Les Plaisirs du bal*, c. 1717; Canaletto's *Old Walton Bridge*, 1754; and Thomas Gainsborough's *Elizabeth and Mary Linley—The Linley Sisters*, 1771–72. On view in the Oval Room and Garden Court, the exhibition is co-organized by Colin B. Bailey, Associate Director and Peter Jay Sharp Chief Curator of The Frick Collection, and Xavier F. Salomon, Arturo and Holly Melosi Chief Curator at Dulwich Picture Gallery.

Comments Colin B. Bailey, “As Dulwich Picture Gallery approaches the celebration of its bicentenary, we at The Frick Collection are the happy beneficiaries of a loan of nine of the collection’s finest old master paintings. This extraordinary group of 17<sup>th</sup>- and 18<sup>th</sup>-century works, to be mounted in the Frick’s Oval Room and Garden courtyard, is the latest in an well-regarded series of dossier exhibitions, devoted to great works of art from collections that may be less familiar to New Yorkers.”

Principal funding for the exhibition is provided by Christie’s and Melvin R. Seiden. Additional support is generously provided by John and Constance Birkelund, Mr. and Mrs. Walter A. Eberstadt, Fiduciary Trust Company International, Barbara G. Fleischman, Francis Finlay, and Hester Diamond. The accompanying catalogue is made possible by Jon and Barbara Landau. This exhibition is supported by an indemnity from the Federal Council on the Arts and the Humanities.

## THE OLDEST PUBLIC ART GALLERY IN ENGLAND

Four miles south of Westminster and the Thames, Dulwich Picture Gallery sits amid verdant surroundings at the heart of Dulwich village, encircled by the ever-expanding fabric of London. Founded in 1811, it is the oldest public art gallery in England and to this day it retains the feel of a characteristically English Regency gallery, where paintings are densely hung along the walls in ornately decorated gilded frames. The collection is housed in one of Sir John Soane’s architectural masterpieces, especially built for the paintings that once belonged to the French art dealer Noel Desenfans (1744–1807) and his Swiss associate, Sir Francis Bourgeois (1753–1811).

In 1769, French-born Noel Desenfans moved to London, where he established himself as a successful language teacher. There he met Margaret Morris, the aunt of four of his pupils, whom he married in 1776; Desenfans was thirty-one and Margaret forty-five. She came from a prosperous Welsh family and brought with her a substantial dowry that helped Desenfans establish himself on the London social scene. Probably funded largely by Margaret, Desenfans embarked on a career as an art dealer. Before his marriage, Desenfans had met the young and handsome Peter Francis Bourgeois, the son of a Swiss watchmaker practicing on St. Martin’s Lane in London. Abandoned by his father after his mother’s death, Bourgeois fell into the care of Desenfans. The two became close friends and, later, business partners. In 1790 the two men were commissioned to create a national collection for Stanisław Augustus of Poland, but, with the partition of Poland among Russia, Prussia, and Austria five years later and the king’s abdication, Desenfans and Bourgeois found themselves with a substantial group of paintings. Bourgeois proved to be an insatiable buyer and, over the years, these holdings became even more noteworthy. Desenfans died in 1807. On Bourgeois’s own death in 1811, he bequeathed the collection to Dulwich College—an institution founded during the seventeenth century that already owned an interesting collection of pictures—with the stipulation that it be put on view to the public. Dulwich Picture Gallery consequently became England’s first public art gallery, opening its doors in 1817.

## DULWICH WORKS SEEN IN A NEW LIGHT AMONG THOSE COLLECTED BY HENRY CLAY FRICK



Sir Anthony Van Dyck (1599–1641), *Samson and Delilah*, c. 1618–20, oil on canvas, 151.4 x 230.5 cm, Bourgeois Bequest, 1811, © The Trustees of Dulwich Picture Gallery

Anthony Van Dyck is known for his stylish and flamboyant portraits of the Flemish, Genoese, and English aristocracy. Henry Clay Frick owned eight important examples of Van Dyck's work, including *James, Seventh Earl of Derby, His Lady and Child* (1632–41) and *Anne, Countess of Clanbrassil* (1636). Van Dyck painted religious and mythological subjects as well, and one of his most significant early canvases, *Samson and Delilah*—painted when the artist was in his twenties—is included in the upcoming exhibition. The work is a

fascinating illustration of the grandiose and luxurious style that Van Dyck had assimilated from his master, Peter Paul Rubens, the ultimate court painter and the most important and celebrated artist in Antwerp. For several years, from about 1617 until about 1620, Van Dyck worked closely with Rubens, not strictly as a pupil but as a collaborator. In 1610 Rubens painted a large work of the same subject (now in The National Gallery, London), which Van Dyck must have known well. Both Rubens and Van Dyck chose to represent the last act of Samson's misguided love affair with Delilah, recounted in the Book of Judges in the Old Testament. Samson's mortal enemies—the Philistines—offered Delilah 1,100 pieces of silver to find out the source of his incredible strength, which she discovered to be his hair. Van Dyck depicts Samson fast asleep in Delilah's lap as a menacing Philistine looms over him with a pair of shears while armed soldiers wait in the background, ready to enchain Samson once his hair has been shorn. The sense of Samson's complete helplessness, Delilah's cunning, the significance of the action about to occur, and the eagerness of the armed men about to capture Samson are all details included in Rubens's depiction of the subject. Although the Bible does not provide much information about Delilah, Flavius Josephus, writing in AD 94 in *Antiquities of the Jewish People*, identifies her as a whore. Van Dyck (and Rubens before him) must have followed Josephus's description; here, Delilah is lavishly attired and her breasts are uncovered. She is furthermore accompanied by an older woman, of the type usually identified as a procuress. The similarity in style between Van Dyck's early works and Rubens's mature style caused confusion about the authorship of the Dulwich canvas, which, during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, was attributed alternatively to both artists. It was only in the early twentieth century that the painting was definitively attributed to Van Dyck.

In all its baroque lavishness, Van Dyck's *Samson and Delilah* is a world away from the self-possessed and immaculate serenity of Nicolas Poussin's *Nurture of Jupiter*. The greatest exponent of French classicism, Poussin is represented at Dulwich by seven paintings. *The Nurture of Jupiter* demonstrates what the French artist had

learned in Rome, the city where he spent most of his life. Orchestrated like an ancient relief, the painting is a supreme example of Poussin's skill as a colorist. Poussin was one of Desenfans's and Bourgeois's favorite artists, and they decorated the dining room of their London house solely with paintings by (or attributed to) him. *The Nurture of Jupiter* depicts an event from Greek mythology, recounted by ancient authors, including Ovid and Virgil. Jupiter was the son of Saturn and Rhea. Saturn had been told in a prophecy that one of his sons would overthrow him and rule the world; he therefore swallowed all five of the



Nicolas Poussin (1594–1665), *The Nurture of Jupiter*, c. 1636–37, oil on canvas, 96.2 x 119.6 cm, Bourgeois Bequest, 1811, © The Trustees of Dulwich Picture Gallery

children he had fathered with Rhea in an attempt to thwart the prediction. When a sixth child—Jupiter—was born, Rhea hid him from Saturn on Crete, where he was cared for by two nymphs, who nourished him with goat's milk and honey. The subject of Jupiter being fed by the nymphs and a goat was often represented in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century art. Poussin based his composition on an engraving by Giulio Bonasone (c. 1498–after 1574) after a design by Giulio Romano. The main group of a shepherd and a nymph holding the goat over the baby Jupiter appears in both works, and Poussin must have used the engraving as a direct source of inspiration. In the Dulwich painting, a burly shepherd restrains the goat by the horns, while one of the two nymphs lifts the goat so that the baby can nurse. Behind them a second nymph gathers honey from a tree. Her robes fluttering in the wind, her perfect profile, and her elegant leg are synonymous with the type of female pose often found in ancient Roman reliefs.

Henry Clay Frick owned two spectacular paintings by Rembrandt: *The Polish Rider* (about 1655) and *Self-Portrait* (1658), while Desenfans and Bourgeois had three: *Jacob III de Gheyn* (1632); a portrait of the artist's son, *Titus* (possibly 1663); and what is often considered the best-known painting at Dulwich, *Girl at a Window* (page one). Many romantic stories surround this picture. It was once thought to represent the artist's second wife, Hendrickje Stoffels, shortly after she started to work as a servant in Rembrandt's house. We first hear of Hendrickje, however, in the artist's household in 1649, and as she was already nineteen by 1645, the year *Girl at a Window* was made, it is unlikely that she is the girl portrayed, as the subject of the painting appears to be much younger. It was also thought that Rembrandt painted the *Girl* as a *trompe l'oeil* to be placed in one of the windows of his house to trick passersby. The perfect condition of the painting, however, makes this story improbable; it is yet another example of the myths surrounding Rembrandt's oeuvre. The artist's distinctive painterly technique, with his thick *impasto* and shades of brown paint, is particularly evident in the Dulwich picture, where Rembrandt applied paint to the canvas using not only brushes, but also a palette knife and even his fingers.



Jean-Antoine Watteau (1684–1721), *Les Plaisirs du bal (Pleasures of the Dance)*, c. 1717, oil on canvas, 52.6 x 65.4 cm, Bourgeois Bequest, 1811, © The Trustees of Dulwich Picture Gallery

Unlike The Frick Collection, with its splendid Fragonards and Bouchers, Dulwich Picture Gallery has only a small selection of eighteenth-century French paintings. The masterpiece among them is Jean-Antoine Watteau's *Les Plaisirs du bal*. Around 1730, the renowned dealer and connoisseur Pierre-Jean Mariette wrote that the painting was "rightly considered one of the most beautiful by Watteau," and the English landscape painter John Constable famously described it in 1831 "as if painted in honey—so mellow—so tender—so soft & so delicious." Watteau was born in Valenciennes in 1684 to a family of Flemish descent. Around 1702 he moved to Paris and worked with Claude Gillot (1673–1722), a theatrical painter, and then with Claude Audran II (1658–1734), a painter of ornamental designs. These early experiences must have shaped Watteau's longstanding love of the theater and the *commedia dell'arte*, a deep interest that is often reflected in his paintings. Watteau was the inventor of a new genre in painting, the *fête galante*, in which stylish figures, often taken from the theater, inhabit idyllic settings. *Les Plaisirs du bal* or "the pleasures of the dance," is an enchanting example of this particular genre, with its handsome young gentlemen and ladies depicted deep in conversation, flirting, and making merry under a sumptuous architectural setting. There are more than sixty figures (and four dogs) in *Les Plaisirs du bal*, the majority of which are based on individual sketches of single figures that were then rearranged into a grander composition. The surface of the painting glistens with the shimmer of the ladies' gowns, iridescent in their multicolored stripes. The sophistication, refinement, and delicacy of Watteau's painting were the qualities, no doubt, that prompted Mariette's and Constable's praise. Noel Desenfans also was a great admirer of Watteau's art, and he acquired this work in 1797.

The most important group of paintings to be left to Dulwich after the gallery opened to the public were nine portraits of the Linley family, bequeathed to the institution by William Linley and his brother Ozias, who was a Fellow and the organist of Dulwich College. Four of these portraits were painted by Thomas Gainsborough, one of the most accomplished British portraitists of the eighteenth century. Included in the Frick exhibition will be a large painting of Elizabeth and Mary Linley (see the catalogue cover on page one of this release), behind which is a story worthy of a Hollywood movie: a tragic tale of love, passion, and betrayal. Thomas Linley—a neighbor and good friend of Gainsborough's—was a well-known composer and a music teacher in Bath, and his eight children were celebrated for their talent and beauty. His eldest daughter, Elizabeth (dressed in blue in the portrait), was a legendary figure during her time, praised for her excellent singing skills. She became the subject of gossip, however, when an early engagement to an older man was broken after a presumed affair with a married friend of the family. This was followed by her scandalous elopement to France with the young playwright Richard Brinsley Sheridan. Both were underage at the time, but, despite their families' efforts to keep them apart, the couple married

a year later. The idyll was short-lived, however: Sheridan no longer allowed Elizabeth to sing in public, and, even though she promoted his political career and helped him with his writing, the two were soon leading separate lives owing to Sheridan's frequent extramarital liaisons. Elizabeth's younger sister Mary (wearing orange in the painting) was also unhappy in her marriage, having chosen Sheridan's best friend, Richard Tickell, as her spouse. She was soon complaining to Elizabeth that her husband was treating her to "so many Sheridanisms lately that I never expect him when he promises." At the young age of twenty-nine, Mary succumbed to tuberculosis, leaving Elizabeth inconsolable. Five years later, Elizabeth died of the same disease that had claimed her sister. Sheridan was by her side in the end, and was said to have been deeply affected by her death. Gainsborough portrayed Elizabeth and Mary around 1771–72, just before Elizabeth eloped with Sheridan. The artist has placed the two sisters in a peaceful English woodland dotted with delicate primroses and violets. Their beauty is forever captured in this quintessentially romantic portrait, one of Gainsborough's most inspired masterpieces

## PUBLICATION

*Masterpieces of European Painting from Dulwich Picture Gallery* is accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue written by Dr. Salomon that includes an essay on the origins of the collection at Dulwich as well as comprehensive entries on the nine works. The softcover catalogue (72 pages, \$16.95) is available in the Museum Shop, on the Frick's Web site ([www.frick.org](http://www.frick.org)), and by phone at (212) 547-6848.

## RELATED EDUCATION PROGRAMS

### Special Exhibition Gallery Talks

*Introduction to Masterpieces of European Painting from Dulwich Picture Gallery*

Saturdays, March 20, April 24, May 1 at 12:00 noon

Join curators for a general overview of the special exhibition. *Reservations are required and may be made through the Education page of the Frick web site: <http://www.frick.org/education/calendar> Please sign up for only one session of this gallery talk.*

*The Dulwich Pictures in Twos and Threes*

Saturdays March 27, April 17, and May 15, at 12:00 noon

Enjoy the special exhibition two or three paintings at a time with members of the Frick curatorial staff.

*Reservations are required and may be made through the Education page of the Frick web site:*

<http://www.frick.org/education/calendar>

*Dulwich Spotlight Talks*

Sundays March 14, April 11, and May 9, at 2:00 p.m.

Explore one great masterpiece in the special exhibition in a brief 20-minute talk with a member of the Frick education staff. *Held in conjunction with the Sunday Sketch programs listed below, Dulwich Spotlight Talks are free with museum admission; no reservations are required.*

### Special Exhibition Lectures

*Wednesday evening lectures are free and do not require reservations. Doors open at 5:45 p.m. (if those planning to attend arrive earlier, they are expected to pay the regular museum admission fee).*

**Date:** Wednesday, March 10, 6:00 p.m.

**Speaker:** Ian A. C. Dejardin, Director, Dulwich Picture Gallery, London

**Title:** "For the inspection of the public": The Foundation of England's Oldest Public Art Gallery

lecture explores how a series of historical accidents involving Queen Elizabeth I's favorite actor, a French art  
r, a Swiss artist, a Welsh heiress, the doomed last king of Poland, and England's greatest Regency architect  
resulted in the foundation of one of the seminal art galleries of the Western world: Dulwich Picture Gallery.

**Date:** Wednesday, April 14, 6:00 p.m.  
**Speaker:** Sheila McTighe, Senior Lecturer in Seventeenth-Century Art, Courtauld Institute of Art,  
University of London  
**Title:** *Prints and the Emulation of Raphael in Nicolas Poussin's Later Works*

On April 14, the Frick will present the **Alex Gordon Lecture in the History of Art**. It will explore Poussin's  
altered values as a painter in his old age, focussing on the paintings executed by the artist around 1650, as well as  
the prints made after them. These works raise new questions about Poussin's emulation of the classicism and  
workshop practices of Raphael and Carracci during the last phase of his career.

**Date:** Wednesday, May 26, 6:00 p.m.  
**Speaker:** Xavier F. Salomon, Arturo and Holly Melosi Chief Curator, Dulwich Picture Gallery, London  
**Title:** *Masterpieces of European Painting from Dulwich Picture Gallery*

This lecture will place in context the nine paintings on loan from Dulwich Picture Gallery by discussing other  
works in that collection by artists Van Dyck, Poussin, Rembrandt, Lely, Dou, Murillo, Watteau, Canaletto,  
Gainsborough. Speaker Xavier Salomon will examine how these pictures fit with the history of Dulwich Picture  
Gallery and how they relate to comparable works at the Frick.

### Sunday Sketch

Sundays March 14, April 11, and May 9, start-time between 1:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m.  
Visitors are invited to come sketch on the second Sunday of each month and enjoy the special exhibition. *Held in  
conjunction with the Dulwich Spotlight Talks listed above, Sunday Sketch is free with museum admission; no  
reservations are required Art supplies will be supplied on a first-come, first-served basis..*

### BASIC INFORMATION

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

**Web site:** [www.frick.org](http://www.frick.org)

**E-mail:** [info@frick.org](mailto:info@frick.org)

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

**Hours: open six days a week:** 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Tuesdays through Saturdays; 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Sundays.  
Closed Mondays, New Year's Day, Independence Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas Day. Limited hours (11:00 a.m. to 5:00  
p.m.) on Lincoln's Birthday, Election Day, and Veterans Day.

**Admission:** \$18; senior citizens \$12; students \$5; "pay as you wish" on Sundays from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

**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

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

**Gallery Talks and Education Programs:** an array of docent-led discussions and other gallery talks are now offered, many  
included with admission. Please refer to our website for further information.

**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.

#154, January 19, 2010

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

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