

The temporary new home of The Frick Collection

## Nicolas Party to Create Site-specific Mural at the Frick

New Work to be Inspired by Rosalba Carriera's *Portrait of a Man in Pilgrim's Costume*, from the Frick's Permanent Collection

June 1, 2023, through February 2024



New York (January 19, 2023)—This summer, The Frick Collection will debut a site-specific pastel mural by Swiss-born artist Nicolas Party (b. 1980), executed in the Italian Galleries at the museum's temporary home, Frick Madison. The work will be created in response to Rosalba Carriera's *Portrait of a Man in Pilgrim's Costume* (left), a spectacular eighteenth-century pastel bequeathed to the Frick in 2020 by Alexis Gregory, the founder of Vendome Press. This is the second installation to be inspired by a volume from the Frick's popular Diptych Series, each volume of which focuses on a single work from the collection, pairing an illuminating essay by a curator with a contribution from a contemporary cultural figure. Party's mural will be the centerpiece of an upcoming diptych, *Rosalba Carriera's Man in Pilgrim's Costume*, to be co-authored by Party and Xavier F. Salomon, the Frick's Deputy Director and Peter Jay Sharp Chief Curator.

Comments Salomon, "Nicolas Party is the preeminent artist working with pastels today, making him the perfect candidate to respond to Carriera's captivating portrait. Given his impressive history of similar works and his love for Old Master pastel artists like Rosalba, we are eager to see what he creates. We are fortunate to have this amazing opportunity to collaborate with Nicolas on this groundbreaking project, which continues the Frick's exciting collaboration with contemporary artists."

Adds Party, "The Frick Collection is my favorite museum in New York City. I have found it fascinating to revisit its masterpieces at Frick Madison in a modernist environment. I love seeing the Fragonard panels and other familiar objects up close and in a different context. It is a privilege to collaborate with the Frick on this project, and I am excited to see my work surrounded by such exquisite company."

The installation includes Party's mural and two new related works also executed by Party, which will be on view on the third floor of Frick Madison into next winter. An illustrated publication, featuring images of the installation, will be available in mid-summer.

Carriera was a celebrated pastelist who portrayed wealthy travelers who stopped in Venice while on the Grand Tour. Highly sought after by both Venetian and international patrons, her pastels are rare in American public collections. The Frick's *Portrait of a Man in Pilgrim's Costume* is a superb example of her work, particularly interesting given the figure's costume, which is possibly a reference to an actual pilgrimage undertaken by the man, but more likely a costume for Carnival.

Party has a special interest in the history and medium of pastel. In the summer of 2013, he saw Picasso's pastel *Tête de Femme* (1921), a momentous encounter that prompted him to explore the medium, which he describes as "fast and versatile...very gentle...just dust," with colors that are "vibrant and pure." Pastel subsequently became his primary medium, with a focus on landscapes, still lifes, and portraits in the Western figurative tradition. On many occasions, the artist has created paintings in response to historic European art and artists, from Louis-Léopold Boilly to Arnold Böcklin to René Magritte.

In 2019, Party organized *Pastel* at the FLAG Art Foundation in New York. For the exhibition, he created large pastel murals inspired by the work of various artists, both past and present. He juxtaposed his own work with that of French eighteenth-century artists including François Boucher and Jean-Honoré Fragonard. One of these pairings featured a pastel portrait by Carriera, hung against his pastel mural inspired by Fragonard's Progress of Love series at the Frick.

Party's large-scale pastel murals are ephemeral, created for the duration of a specific exhibition at a unique location. The nature of his work aligns perfectly with the installation at Frick Madison, which has given the museum a unique opportunity to reimagine its presentation of works, shown for the first time outside the domestic setting of the Gilded Age mansion at 1 East 70th Street. This exhibition is part of a series of initiatives in recent years that invite contemporary responses to the Frick's holdings. Party's installation not only will offer a fresh perspective on an important recent acquisition, but will further Frick Madison's invitation to visitors to question the impact of site and setting on their perception of historic objects in the collection.

Funding for the installation is generously provided by The Christian Humann Foundation and the David L. Klein, Jr. Foundation, with the support of the Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia.

## **ABOUT NICOLAS PARTY**

Born in Lausanne in 1980, Party is a figurative painter who has achieved critical admiration for his familiar yet unsettling landscapes, portraits, and still lifes that simultaneously celebrate and challenge conventions of representational painting. His works are primarily created in soft pastel, an idiosyncratic choice of medium in the twenty-first century, and one that allows for exceptional degrees of intensity and fluidity in his depictions of objects both natural and manmade. Transforming these objects into abstracted, biomorphic shapes, Party suggests deeper connections and meanings. His unique visual language has coalesced in a universe of fantastical characters and motifs where perspective is heightened and skewed to uncanny effect.



In addition to paintings, Party creates public murals, pietra dura, ceramics, installation works, and sculptures, including painted busts and body parts that allude to the famous fragments of ancient Greece and Rome. His brightly colored androgynous figures vary in scale from the handheld to the monumental and are displayed on tromp l'oeil marble plinths of differing heights that upend conventional perspective. Party's early interest in graffiti and murals—his projects in this arena have included major commissions for the Dallas Museum of Art and the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles—has led to a particular approach to the installation and presentation of his work. He routinely deploys color and makes architectural interventions in exhibition spaces in order to construct enveloping experiences for the viewer.

The artist's childhood in Switzerland imprinted upon him an early fascination with landscape and the natural world, and the influence of his native country places Party firmly within the trajectory of central European landscape painting. Points of reference in his work include celebrated nineteenth-century Swiss artists Félix Vallotton, Ferdinand Hodler, and Hans Emmenegger. One can also find within his works a twenty-first-century synthesis of the sorts of impulses and ideas that fueled the Renaissance and late nineteenth-century, early twentieth-century figurative painting, the compositional strategies of Rosalba Carriera and Rachel Ruysch, and the visions of such self-taught artists as Louis Eilshemius and Milton Avery.

Based in New York, Party studied at the Lausanne School of Art in Switzerland before receiving his MFA from Glasgow School of Art in Scotland.

## **ABOUT THE FRICK COLLECTION AND FRICK MADISON**

The historic buildings of The Frick Collection are currently closed for renovation and enhancement, their first comprehensive upgrade since the 1930s. For the duration of the renovation project, the collections of the museum and library remain accessible to the public at Frick Madison, the Marcel Breuer–designed building at 945 Madison Avenue that was once the home of the Whitney Museum of American Art, and most recently, The Met Breuer. The project ensures that the public continues to enjoy the Frick's masterpieces, while also giving the museum a unique opportunity to reimagine its presentation of paintings, sculptures, and decorative arts within a

completely different context. For the first time, audiences are able to enjoy a substantial gathering of highlights from the Frick's permanent collection outside the domestic setting of the Gilded Age mansion.

Honoring the institution's architectural legacy and unique character, the project plan designed by Selldorf Architects will provide unprecedented access to the original 1914 residence of Henry Clay Frick, while preserving the intimate visitor experience and beloved galleries for which the Frick is known. Conceived to address pressing institutional and programmatic needs, the plan will create new spaces for permanent collection display and special exhibitions, conservation, education, and public programs, while improving visitor amenities and overall accessibility.

Images: Rosalba Carriera (1673–1757), *Portrait of a Man in Pilgrim's Costume*, ca. 1730, pastel on paper, glued to canvas, 23 1/4 × 18 7/8 × 1/2 in. (59.1 × 47.9 × 1.3 cm), The Frick Collection, Gift of Alexis Gregory, 2020, photo: Joseph Coscia Jr.; photo: Axel Dupeux

## INTERACT

   /FrickCollection  
#FrickMadison

## BASIC INFORMATION

Website: [www.frick.org](http://www.frick.org)

Building project: [www.frickfuture.org](http://www.frickfuture.org)

Bloomberg Connects app: [frick.org/app](http://frick.org/app)

Frick Madison visitor address: 945 Madison Avenue at 75th Street, New York, NY 10021

Museum hours: Thursday through Sunday, 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.; closed Monday through Wednesday. See website for holiday schedule.

Admission: Timed tickets are strongly recommended and may be purchased online. \$22 general public; \$17 seniors and visitors with disabilities; \$12 students. Admission is always free for members. Pay-what-you-wish admission is offered Thursdays from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m.

Please note: Children under ten are not admitted to the museum.

COVID-19/health and safety policies: [frick.org/visit/guidelines](http://frick.org/visit/guidelines)

Ticket purchase link: [frick.org/tickets](http://frick.org/tickets). For questions: [admissions@frick.org](mailto:admissions@frick.org)

Group reservations: For questions: [groupreservations@frick.org](mailto:groupreservations@frick.org)

Public programs: A calendar of online, virtual, and video events is available on our website.

Shop: Open during museum hours as well as online daily.

Refreshments: A light menu, offered by The SisterYard, is available on the lower level during museum hours.

Subway: #6 local to 77th Street station; #Q to 72nd Street station; Bus: M1, M2, M3, and M4 southbound on Fifth Avenue to 75th Street and northbound on Madison Avenue to 74th Street

Museum mailing address: 1 East 70th Street, near Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10021

Photography: Allowed only in the Frick Madison Lobby.

**Reading room:** Access is offered by appointment Tuesday through Sunday, 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. For further information, visit [frick.org/tickets](https://frick.org/tickets).

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For further press information, please contact us at [communications@frick.org](mailto:communications@frick.org).