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from

THE FRICK COLLECTION

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**MEDIA ALERT: FRICK COLLECTION TO PRESENT
MAJOR TURNER EXHIBITION IN 2017**

***TURNER'S MODERN AND ANCIENT PORTS:
PASSAGES THROUGH TIME***

February 23 through May 14, 2017



J. M. W. Turner, *Cologne: The Arrival of a Packet-Boat: Evening*, exhibited 1826, oil on canvas, 66 3/8 x 88 1/4 inches, The Frick Collection, New York; photo: Michael Bodycomb

Joseph Mallord William Turner (1775–1851), Britain's greatest land- and seascape artist during the nineteenth-century, took an interest in the subject of ports throughout his career, both in monumental oil paintings and in watercolors. An insatiable traveler and an artist with a deep fascination with light, topography, local traditions, and classical antiquity, Turner brought an innovative approach to the depiction of both modern and ancient ports. In the spring of 2017, The Frick Collection will present *Turner's Modern and Ancient Ports: Passages through Time*, a major exhibition that brings together some thirty-five works from the 1810s to the late

1830s. The works— in oil, watercolor, and graphite—capture contemporary cities in England, France, and Germany, as well as imagined scenes set in the ancient world. *Turner's Modern and Ancient Ports: Passages through Time* is organized by Susan Grace Galassi, Senior Curator at The Frick Collection; leading Turner scholar, Ian Warrell; and Joanna Sheers Seidenstein, the Frick's Anne L. Poulet Curatorial Fellow. Principal funding for the exhibition is provided by The Honorable and Mrs. W. L. Lyons Brown and Northern Trust. Additional support is generously provided by The Christian Humann Foundation, The Peter Jay Sharp Foundation, Gilbert and Ildiko Butler, Helen-Mae and Seymour R. Askin, the families of George and Michael Eberstadt in memory of Vera and Walter Eberstadt,

Francis Finlay, the Malcolm Hewitt Wiener Foundation, the Christian Keese Charitable Trust, David and Julie Tobey, The Gladys Kriebel Delmas Foundation, Mrs. C. Sidamon-Eristoff, and the Robert Lehman Foundation. The exhibition catalogue is underwritten by a gift from an anonymous donor in memory of Charles Ryskamp.

The springboard for this show is a pair of monumental paintings by Turner in The Frick Collection acquired by the museum's founder over a century ago—the *Harbor of Dieppe* of 1825 and *Cologne, The Arrival of a Packet-Boat: Evening* of 1826. Due to travel restrictions, however, they have never before been part of an exhibition outside of the Frick. While they are widely recognized as significant turning points in the artist's career, a focused examination of these works is long overdue and will provide an ideal occasion to consider afresh one of the central motifs of Turner's art. This exhibition will also unite for the first time *Dieppe* and *Cologne* with a closely related, yet unfinished, work from Tate Britain that depicts the modern harbor of Brest. As supported by recent technical analysis, *The Harbor of Brest* was likely intended to form a series of monumental European ports with the two Frick paintings. This trio of canvases—all made at a time when Turner was experimenting with the representation of light—offers a fascinating glimpse into his technique as well as the everyday life of major European ports of distinctly different regions. Displayed alongside these paintings will be two sketchbooks filled with drawings made on site by Turner during his travels to the Continent, the material from which he later developed his canvases.



J. M. W. Turner, *The Harbor of Dieppe*, 1826 (?), oil on canvas, 68 3/8 x 88 3/4 inches, The Frick Collection, New York; photo: Michael Bodycomb

The exhibition also features three oil paintings from the later 1820s and 1830s in which Turner continues to explore the motif of the port, now as a setting for narrative scenes drawn from classical history: *Regulus* (London, Tate Britain); *Ancient Italy: Ovid Banished from Rome* (private collection); and *Ancient Rome: Agrippina Landing with the Ashes of Germanicus* (London, Tate Britain). These evocations of ancient Rome and Carthage share with the artist's modern ports their compositional format—a central expanse of water, with land on either side, beneath a luminous sky—and their array of quotidian detail—the same variety of mundane objects and figures at work and at leisure that appear in the *Harbor of Dieppe* and *Cologne*—now evoking the daily life of a long bygone era. Into these light-filled and richly detailed scenes, Turner integrates his narrative content—momentous scenes of arrival and departure that look forward and back. The close relationship of Turner's modern and ancient ports reveals the extent to which observation and imagination overlap in his process.

Central to the exhibition are a selection of some two-dozen of Turner's watercolors from these same years, often made for series of prints for a burgeoning class of leisure travelers in the post-Napoleonic era. Representing port towns and cities along the various waterways of the British Isles and Continental Europe, these dazzling small-scale works share with the grand harbors of the 1820s their picturesque subject matter and formal qualities of composition and color. The breathtaking effects of light and color that Turner achieved in watercolor, in fact, informed his work

on canvas, resulting in a freer approach to his use of materials and painting technique, as seen in the Frick pictures and in the ancient scenes.

PUBLICATION

In the accompanying catalogue, the Frick paintings and a wide selection of works by Turner from the 1820s and 1830s, depicting both modern and ancient harbors, are examined in various contexts. Drawing from contemporary travel accounts, literary and visual sources, and critical reviews, as well as new technical analyses of Turner's work, the five essays present a fresh perspective on the middle years of the artist's career. The book will feature essays by the show's curators as well Gillian Forrester, Senior Curator of Prints and Drawings, Yale Center for British Art; and Rebecca Hellen, Conservator of Paintings, Tate Britain; and Joanna Sheers Seidenstein, Anne L. Poulet Curatorial Fellow, The Frick Collection. Among the topics addressed are the radical changes in the social and economic structures of Britain in the first half of the nineteenth century; the rediscovery of the Continent by the British after Waterloo following two decades of war with France; the rise of mass tourism; Turner's involvement in producing watercolors for various print series; and the interconnection between his manner of painting in various media.

BASIC INFORMATION

General Information Phone: 212.288.0700

Web site: www.frick.org

Building project: www.frickfuture.org

E-mail: info@frick.org

App: frick.org/app

Museum entrance: 1 East 70th Street, near Fifth Avenue

Library entrance: 10 East 71st Street

Museum 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

Library Hours: frick.org/visit/library/hours

Museum Admission: \$22; senior citizens \$17; students \$12; "pay what you wish" on Wednesdays from 2 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

First Fridays: Museum admission and gallery programs are free from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. on the first Friday evening of the month (except January and September)

Library: open to the public and free of charge

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

Subway: #6 local to 68th Street station; #Q to 72nd 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 museum admission is an Acoustiguide Audio Tour of the permanent collection. The tour is offered in six languages: English, French, German, Italian, Japanese, and Spanish.

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

Group Museum 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.

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For further press information, please contact Heidi Rosenau, Associate Director of Media Relations & Marketing;
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