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from

THE FRICK COLLECTION

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PRESENTED FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THE UNITED STATES:

“DROUAIS’ PORTRAIT OF *MADAME DE POMPADOUR* FROM THE NATIONAL GALLERY, LONDON”

January 26 through April 25, 1999

On view for the first time in the United States, the celebrated full-length portrait of *Madame de Pompadour* by the French artist **François-Hubert Drouais** (1727 – 1775) will be presented this winter at New York’s Frick Collection. Regarded as one of the greatest and most popular treasures at the National Gallery in London, the portrait was the last one painted of the Marquise de Pompadour, the influential mistress of French King Louis XV. The next in a critically acclaimed series of single-loan exhibitions (following the special display of a landscape by Claude Monet this summer), this winter’s presentation features several complementary paintings by **Jean-Baptiste-Siméon Chardin** (1699 – 1779), **Jean-Baptiste Greuze** (1725 – 1805), and **Jean-Marc Nattier** (1685 – 1766) from the Frick’s own holdings. Decorative artworks on view in conjunction with the portrait include furniture and porcelain of noted French manufacture.

Further, the presentation of the Drouais portrait will have as a backdrop, in a loose sense, other French masterpieces of the period that are installed in galleries throughout the mansion, such as panels by **Jean-Honoré Fragonard** (1732 – 1806) and **François Boucher** (1703 – 1770). Indeed, with such celebrated works in its holdings, many in connection with her life and interests, The Frick Collection has long felt the presence of Madame de Pompadour. Through the single-loan presentation and two free lectures this winter, the Frick offers its visitors a glimpse of her legacy and role as a patron of the arts. **Edgar Munhall**, Curator of The Frick Collection, has organized this presentation and has authored a color-

illustrated educational brochure. *Madame de Pompadour* will be on loan at the Frick from January 26 through April 25, 1999, and the presentation is made possible, in part, through the generosity of the Fellows of The Frick Collection.

THE PORTRAIT TO BE ACCOMPANIED BY COMPLEMENTARY WORKS

The painting by Drouais will hang in East Gallery, flanked by two works by Chardin from The Frick Collection, *Still Life with Plums*, c. 1730 (the only still life at the Frick), and *Lady with a Bird-Organ*, c. 1751. In same room, visitors will find the whimsical painting by Greuze, *The Wool Winder*. Of particular note is the portrait by Nattier, *Elizabeth, Countess of Warwick*, which will hang nearby and has not been on public view in the Frick's galleries since 1980. Beneath the Drouais portrait will be displayed a set of three porcelain *Pots-Pourris Myrte* with Flemish scenes and landscapes, with a pink ground and blue and gold overlay. These three porcelain vases were made c. 1762 at the royal porcelain factory at **Sèvres** and are normally on view on the far side of the Boucher Room, and have seldom been seen so close-up by the public. They are included in this presentation as evidence of Madame de Pompadour's (and Louis XV's) great enthusiasm for Sèvres porcelain. With her encouragement, Louis XV assumed financial responsibility for the luxury manufactory in 1759.

On the north wall across from the portrait *Madame de Pompadour* will hang The Frick Collection's own Drouais, *The Comte and Chevalier de Choiseul as Savoyards*, signed and dated 1758. The public will also have a closer view of this painting than is customary. It usually hangs to the left of the grand staircase that leads to the former private quarters of the Frick family and is one of the few paintings that are ordinarily located behind stanchions.

AN IMPOSING FIGURE OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Jeanne-Antoinette Poisson entered the world of the French court as Madame de Pompadour in 1745. From the time she became the mistress of Louis XV, she wielded considerable influence at Versailles from politics to the arts. In dedicating *Tancredè* to her, Voltaire wrote of Madame de Pompadour, "I venture to thank you publicly for all you have done to help a large number of writers, artists, and other categories of deserving people." The portrait was painted in 1764, the last year of her life. She is shown as a cultivated and industrious woman, working at an embroidery frame, with her dog at her side. She is

surrounded by objects that reflect her taste as a great patron of the arts and letters – shelves of books, a mandolin, furniture in the latest fashion, and a folio of drawings. Acquired by London’s National Gallery in 1977, it was the first French eighteenth-century female portrait of this scale to enter the collection.

THE PRESENCE OF MADAME DE POMPADOUR HAS LONG BEEN FELT AT THE FRICK COLLECTION

Curator Edgar Munhall comments, “In fact, although this mini-exhibition enables us to present a celebrated portrait of the Marquise de Pompadour for the first time at The Frick Collection, her invisible presence has long been felt here. Visitors may see a selection of works by important artists and manufactories that she patronized, which are on view nearby and throughout The Frick Collection.”

On permanent view in the Boucher Room are eight *Arts and Sciences* panels by the artist. These, as well as Boucher’s *Four Seasons*, were all painted for Madame de Pompadour. Originally installed in the second floor boudoir of Mrs. Henry Clay Frick, the *Arts and Sciences* panels were moved to the main floor’s galleries in 1935 to give the public access to them. They have remained on view ever since with other furnishings from Mrs. Frick’s boudoir. Suitably, the parquet flooring in the Boucher Room is the oldest in the mansion, coming from an eighteenth-century chateau in France. Much favored by the public today, the elegant and intimate Boucher Room is a highlight on the Frick website’s new “virtual tour” (www.frick.org).

The Collection also includes major pieces of furniture by **Martin Carlin** (c. 1730 – 85) and **Bernard Vanrisamburgh II** (d. before 1767), who also made furniture for the royal mistress, notably, two cabinets by the latter, with Japanese lacquer panels. French sculptors **Étienne-Maurice Falconet** (1716 – 91) and **François-Jacques-Joseph Saly** (1717 - 76), represented at the Frick by small marbles, also worked for Madame de Pompadour. In fact, a copy of Saly’s *Bust of a Young Girl* in the Boucher Room has been considered a portrait of Madame de Pompadour’s daughter, Alexandrine. The sculpture is mirrored by what appears its depiction in one of the wall panels. Also, oriental vases with French gilt-bronze mounts such as those in the East Vestibule, Dining Room, and North Hall were a type of object much favored by Madame de Pompadour. Finally, Louis XV himself is represented in The Frick Collection by two portraits: as a child of six, in **Antoine Coysevox's** (1640 – 1720) marble bust, which is in the Library, and as a man of about fifty in the Sèvres porcelain biscuit bust of the King, located in the South Hall.

FREE PUBLIC PROGRAMS:

Wednesday, February 10, 5:30pm **Clare Le Corbeiller**, The Metropolitan Museum of Art
“Madame de Pompadour, Her Tastes and Her Time”

This lecture will examine the artistic climate of the period, highlighting the influence that Madame de Pompadour had as a patron of the arts. There is no charge for the lecture and seating is open.

Wednesday, March 24, 5:30pm **Humphrey Wine**, Curator of 17th and 18th Century Paintings at the National Gallery, London, **“Madame de Pompadour – Images of a Mistress”**

In his slide lecture, Dr. Wine offers answers to several questions. Who was Madame de Pompadour? What did she look like? How was she depicted by Drouais and other artists? There is no charge for the lecture and seating is open.

ALSO OPENING THIS WINTER:

FRENCH AND ENGLISH DRAWINGS OF THE EIGHTEENTH AND NINETEENTH CENTURIES FROM THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF CANADA (February 9 through April 25, 1999).

BASIC INFORMATION

General Information Phones:

Collection (212) 288-0700

Library (212) 288-8700

Website: www.frick.org

E-mail: info@frick.org

Where: The Collection is located at 1 East 70th Street, near Fifth Avenue.

The Library is around the corner at 10 East 71st Street.

Museum Hours: 10am to 6pm Tuesdays through Saturdays, and from 1pm to 6pm Sundays. Closed Mondays, New Year's Day, Independence Day, Thanksgiving, December 24, and December 25. Limited hours (1:00 to 6:00pm) on Lincoln's Birthday, Election Day, and Veterans Day.

Library Hours: 10am to 5pm, Monday through Friday; 9:30am to 1pm on Saturday.

Closed August and on Saturdays in June and July. Please call for holiday closure schedule.

Museum Admission: \$7, general public; \$5, students & senior citizens. See updated “Tour Information.”

PLEASE NOTE TO YOUR READERS: Children under ten are not admitted to the Collection, and those under sixteen must be accompanied by an adult.

Library Admission: free.

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: now included in the price of admission is an Acoustiguide INFORM® Audio Tour of the permanent collection, provided by Acoustiguide. The tour is offered in five languages: English, French, German, Japanese, and Spanish.

Museum Shop: the shop closes at 5:45pm, and is open otherwise the same days and hours as the Museum.

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.

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For further press information, please contact Heidi Rosenau, Communications Officer

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