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from

THE FRICK COLLECTION

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**THE FRICK CONTINUES 2014 FOCUS ON EL GRECO
BY UNITING ITS THREE REMARKABLE PAINTINGS BY THE ARTIST
TOGETHER FOR THE FIRST TIME**

EL GRECO AT THE FRICK COLLECTION

November 4, 2014, through February 1, 2015



El Greco (1541–1614), *Purification of the Temple*, c. 1600, oil on canvas, The Frick Collection; photo: Michael Bodycomb

This year, a number of exhibitions and events around the world have commemorated the four-hundredth anniversary of the death of El Greco, the extraordinary Greek artist who, after a brief period in Rome, spent most of his life in Spain. Toledo, the Spanish city in which he lived, has been at the forefront of the festivities, which began last spring with a major monographic exhibition at the Museo de Santa Cruz. Throughout the fall, a series of exhibitions in New York will also pay tribute to El Greco's art. From

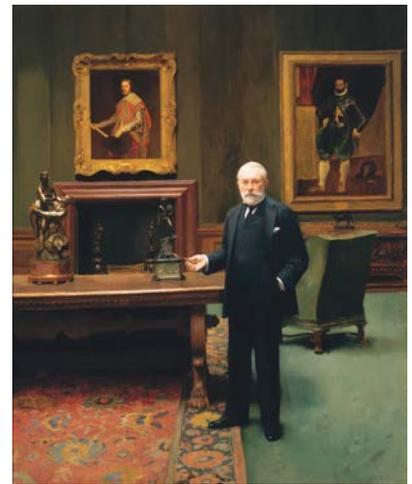
August 5 through October 26, the Frick presents *Men in Armor: El Greco and Pulzone Face to Face*, which pairs his celebrated portrait of Vincenzo Anastagi with a rarely seen Scipione Pulzone portrait of Jacopo Boncompagni. Beginning November 4, the Frick continues the 2014 focus on the artist with *El Greco at The Frick Collection*, uniting its three remarkable paintings—*Purification of the Temple*, *St. Jerome*, and the portrait of Vincenzo Anastagi—and showing them together for the first time. This installation, which will be on view in the Oval Room, is coordinated by the Frick's Peter Jay Sharp Chief Curator, Xavier F. Salomon, and organized in conjunction with the exhibition *El Greco in New York* at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, which will show all of the painter's work from its collection together with that of the Hispanic Society of America.

A TASTE FOR SPANISH ART EMERGES

Henry Clay Frick's appreciation for Spanish painting and, in particular, the work of El Greco, was indebted to the example of his friends Henry O. and Louisine Havemeyer, the American collectors who were fundamental in establishing a taste for Spanish art in the United States during the first decade of the twentieth century. Frick's interest was also informed by the two trips to Spain that he took with his family in 1893 and 1909. There he visited the major art collections in Madrid, Toledo, Seville, Granada, and Cordoba. Frick acquired his first Spanish painting in 1904, when he purchased a significant self-portrait by Murillo (now in a private collection). Over the years, he made several noteworthy purchases that resulted in the highly regarded group of Spanish works now part of the permanent collection: three canvases by El Greco, three by Goya, and one by Velázquez.

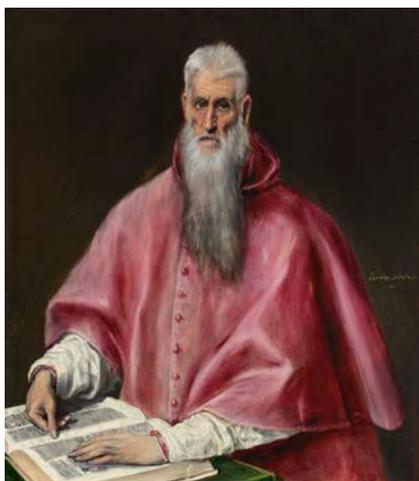
FRICK AS A COLLECTOR OF WORK BY EL GRECO

As the appreciation for Spanish painting grew in the United States, so, too, did the taste for El Greco. Between 1903 and 1906, four important paintings by the master entered public institutions and private collections on the East Coast. In 1903, the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, bought the extraordinary portrait of Fray Hortensio Félix Paravicino, probably the most beautiful portrait painted by the artist. Over the next three years, the Havemeyers purchased the magnificent portrait of Cardinal Fernando Niño de Guevara, The Metropolitan Museum of Art acquired the *Adoration of the Shepherds*, and the Art Institute of Chicago bought the *Assumption of the Virgin*, which had originally decorated the high altar of the church



Sir Gerald Kelly (1879–1972), *Portrait of Mr. Frick in the West Gallery*, 1925, oil on canvas, Frick Art & Historical Center, Pittsburgh

of Santo Domingo el Antiguo in Toledo. Mr. Frick's first purchase of a painting by El Greco, *St. Jerome*, took place in 1905, a year after the Havemeyers purchased *Cardinal Niño de Guevara* (now in The Metropolitan Museum of Art). Frick believed that his El Greco was a portrait of Cardinal



El Greco (1541-1614), *St. Jerome*, 1590-1600, oil on canvas, The Frick Collection; photo: Michael Bodycomb

Gaspar de Quiroga y Vela, Archbishop of Toledo, but in fact the painting was later correctly recognized as an image of Jerome, one of the four Doctors of the Western Church. In its sheer expressive intensity and daring unconventionality, the portrait of the saint, with his wizened face and brilliant red robe, was unlike anything Frick had previously purchased. The canvas had been in the chapter house of the Cathedral of Valladolid and was sold to raise money for the purchase of a new organ. Its departure for the United States was accompanied by vociferous objections in Spain, an incident that

prompted the law for the exportation of works of art from the country to be radically revised. Frick must have considered the painting to be one of the masterpieces of his collection, for he chose to display it at the center of his New York home, in the Living Hall, together with portraits by Holbein and Titian and Bellini's miraculous *St. Francis in the Desert*.

In 1909, during his second trip to Spain, Frick added another El Greco to his collection, the *Purification of the Temple* (illustrated on first page), which was sold to him by the art historian Aureliano de Beruete. Although more modest in scale than the *St. Jerome*, this painting is also characterized by its expressive power, as seen in its explosive composition and vibrant colors. Taking his cue from the Havemeyers, Frick considered El Greco to be an inherently modern master, which was no doubt reflected by his choice to display the small canvas in his private sitting room together with Manet's *Bullfight* and Degas's *Rehearsal*.

In 1913 Frick purchased his third and final El Greco, the full-length portrait of Vincenzo Anastagi. By this time, the house at 1 East 70th Street was nearing completion and Frick was acquiring large canvases to decorate the grand picture gallery located at the mansion's northwest corner, known today as the West Gallery. In the posthumous portrait of Frick by Sir Gerald Kelly (illustrated on page 2), commissioned by his daughter, Helen, the collector is shown standing in front of El Greco's *Vincenzo Anastagi* and Velázquez's portrait of King Philip IV. Then, as now, Spanish art was seen as one of the glories of The Frick Collection.



El Greco (1541-1614), *Vincenzo Anastagi*, c. 1575, oil on canvas, The Frick Collection; photo: Michael Bodycomb

EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

Lecture

Lectures are free. Seating is on a first-come, first-served basis, and reservations are not accepted. Selected lectures will be webcast live and made available on our Web site and The Frick Collection's channel on FORA.tv. Please visit our Web site for details.

Date: Tuesday, January 28, 2015, 6:00 p.m.
Speaker: Xavier Bray, Arturo and Holly Melosi Chief Curator, Dulwich Picture Gallery
Title: *Demystifying El Greco: His Use of Wax, Clay, and Plaster Models*

Free Evening Event: Friday, January 30, 6:00 to 9:00 p.m.

Enjoy a night of programs and activities when we open our doors to the public after-hours to celebrate our special exhibitions. The evening will include gallery talks, open sketching, and music. *Admission is free, and visitors are admitted on a first-come, first-served basis. Reservations are not accepted. Children under ten are not admitted.*

Symposium: Center for the History of Collecting

Please visit our Web site for times, speakers, and additional program information. The symposium is free, but advance registration is required; please visit our Web site to register.

Date: Monday, January 26, 2015, 9:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Title: *El Greco Comes to America: The Discovery of a Modern Old Master*

The goal of the conference is to shine a spotlight on the cultural conditions that nurtured a deep appreciation of the art of El Greco in the United States at the turn of the twentieth century. Talks will be given by scholars from both Spain and the United States, including those whose knowledge base reaches beyond the history of art to incorporate socio-economic issues that define cultural history and the history of art collecting. The event will offer a new perspective on the reputation and reception of this great artist's work and the significant role American collectors have played in ensuring that it continues to be held in such high esteem.

The symposium is made possible with generous support from the Stavros Niarchos Foundation.

INTERACT

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ALSO ON VIEW THIS FALL

MASTERPIECES FROM THE SCOTTISH NATIONAL GALLERY

November 5, 2014, through February 1, 2015

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: 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: \$20; senior citizens \$15; students \$10; "pay what you wish" on Sundays from 11 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

Tour Information: included in the price of admission is an Acoustiguide audio tour of the permanent collection 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 Admission for the Permanent Collection: Please call 212.288.0700 for details and to make reservations.

Public Programs: A calendar of events is published regularly, and programs are listed on the Web site.

#243, September 11, 2014

For further press information, please contact Alexis Light, Manager of Media Relations & Marketing
Media Relations Phone: 212.547.6844; E-mail address: light@frick.org