



PRESS RELEASE

from

THE FRICK COLLECTION

1 EAST 70TH STREET • NEW YORK • NEW YORK 10021 • TELEPHONE (212) 288-0700 • FAX (212) 628-4417

THE FRICK COLLECTION LEADS INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION TO UNLOCK ACCESS TO 25 MILLION IMAGES OF ARTWORKS

**CONSOLIDATED ONLINE ACCESS TO TRANSFORM ART HISTORICAL RESEARCH,
ENABLING SCHOLARS AND GENERAL PUBLIC TO STUDY NEVER-BEFORE-PUBLISHED
PHOTOARCHIVES FROM AROUND THE WORLD**

MAJOR SUPPORT FROM THE ANDREW W. MELLON FOUNDATION TO PROVIDE GLOBAL ACCESS TO THE FRICK'S PHOTOARCHIVE



In 2013, representatives from fourteen international institutions met at The Frick Collection to discuss the establishment of PHAROS, a gathering funded by the Samuel H. Kress Foundation; photo: Michael Bodycomb

In an unprecedented effort to open new avenues for art historical research, The Frick Collection has partnered with thirteen art institutions to establish the PHAROS Art Research Consortium www.pharosartresearch.org, a digital research platform that will revolutionize access to photoarchives around the world. Led by Inge Reist, director of the Frick's Center for the History of Collecting and president of the international consortium, this long-term initiative will bring together photoarchive materials relating to more than 25 million works of art. These collections of images are also rich

in previously unpublished related art historical documentation. Seven million images from the original partners are expected to be digitized and available by 2020, with future timelines for the group to be developed. Eventually, PHAROS will expand to include records from additional photoarchives worldwide. PHAROS currently comprises the Bibliotheca Hertziana (Rome), Bildarchiv Foto (Marburg, Germany), Courtauld Institute (London), Fondazione Federico Zeri (Bologna), Getty Research Institute (Los Angeles), I Tatti (Florence), Institut national d'histoire de l'art (Paris), Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz, National Gallery of Art (Washington, D.C.), Paul Mellon Centre

(London), RKD –Netherlands Institute for Art History (The Hague), Warburg Institute (London), Yale Center for British Art (New Haven), and the Frick Art Reference Library (New York).

“The Frick has always been at the vanguard of art historical research,” said Ian Wardropper, director of The Frick Collection. “As early as 1922, Helen Clay Frick personally organized international photographic expeditions to record significant and rarely reproduced works of art, creating the first-ever public repository of its kind in the country. This documentation proved invaluable, especially at a time when most art history books were not widely available or heavily illustrated. Researchers today are accustomed to having online resources at their fingertips, and in order to ensure that our offerings remain relevant and accessible, they must be digitized and catalogued in a searchable central resource. It is our hope that this initiative will transform scholarship in the twenty-first century, by unlocking access to our collection and ones like it around the globe.”

ANDREW W. MELLON FOUNDATION GRANT SUPPORTS ACCESS TO FRICK PHOTOARCHIVE

In December 2016 the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation awarded a \$1 million grant in support of the Frick’s efforts to provide online access to its photoarchive, which, by extension, will benefit PHAROS. With this grant, the Frick will make accessible a quarter of a million images with their accompanying documentation. The eighteen-month project will largely complete the goal of making the Frick photoarchive available online and establishing a model for other participating institutions, while preserving them for posterity.

DEFINING A PHOTOARCHIVE

Photoarchives were first established in the late nineteenth century, capitalizing on photography—a cutting-edge technology of the time—to reproduce images that would supplant scholars’ reliance on text descriptions, sketches, prints, and travel to study works in person. In the twentieth century, photoarchives around the world grew into rich repositories of art historical knowledge with little or no parallel. Photoarchives capture multiple images of a single work over time, as well as related documentation compiled from scholarly research, making them treasured resources of unpublished knowledge. Over the course of her career, Helen Clay Frick, daughter of the museum’s founder, purchased hundreds of thousands of images from major American and European suppliers and commissioned photographers to capture more than 55,000 pictures of artworks to create the first-ever photoarchive in the United States, which has grown to encompass more than 1.2 million images. In many cases, they document works of art that have been subsequently altered or destroyed by war or natural disaster, providing critical information for art historians and conservators that would have otherwise been lost forever. The PHAROS platform, which will link the fourteen collections together for the first time, will allow integrated online access to images and data that may reveal clues to help illuminate investigations in attribution and provenance research, as well as conservation.



Inge Reist in the Frick Art Reference Library stacks on the floor that contains 20,000 boxes of photoarchival material; photo: Michael Bodycomb

“Invaluable information, written in the margins and on the backs of photograph mounts, was once only available for researchers who could physically visit our collection,” said Reist. “Now, with only a few key strokes, a scholar, student, conservator, or member of the public trying to identify, locate, or better understand the history of a work of art will be able to delve into the collections of fourteen institutions worldwide without having to travel to and search through separate archives on-site. Never before have researchers of all kinds had such comprehensive and easy access to the trove of materials held in these collections. Digitizing the varied and often fragile photographs, reproductions, hand-written notes and articles these collections contain will also preserve them for future generations.”

INNOVATIVE IMAGE-RECOGNITION TECHNOLOGY

PHAROS includes enhanced features and applications such as software that enables searching by image instead of by text, of great benefit because text from the multiple institutions can differ in both content and language. Using the proprietary image-recognition technology developed for PHAROS by John Resig, supported by grants from the Samuel H. Kress Foundation, those interested in Italian art are already able to find and compile multiple images and the related documentation as recorded by the different photoarchives in different languages in seconds. Researchers are instantly rewarded with new insights into a work’s attribution and provenance, exhibition and bibliographic histories, and are able to track previous conservation efforts or any physical modifications (images.pharosartresearch.org). Additionally, users can upload their own images to identify matching and related artworks held in the PHAROS database. This functionality will soon extend to include works of art of all national schools included in member archives.

DRAMATIC INCREASE IN USE OF MATERIALS

“When Helen Clay Frick first established the Frick Art Reference Library almost a hundred years ago, she had a vision for a public resource that was ahead of her time with its reliance on photographic reproductions. In our field, images remain critical, but how they are accessed has changed. We have observed that, when made available online, the use of the same materials multiplies dramatically,” said Stephen Bury, Andrew W. Mellon Chief Librarian of the Frick Art Reference Library. “For example, in 2015, approximately 2,500 photoarchive files were consulted by students and scholars visiting the library on-site. During the same year, nearly 75,000 Frick photoarchive records were accessed in our online catalog. These requests came from individuals in ninety-one countries. The Mellon Foundation’s grant will enable us to expand this reach considerably, ensuring that these critical resources are available for generations to come, not only through the PHAROS platform but also through the Frick’s online catalogue.” Currently, more than 20% of the works of art recorded in the Frick’s photoarchive can be accessed online. At the conclusion of the project supported by the Mellon Foundation, an additional 250,000 photographs and information about the works of art they document will be accessible through the Frick Digital Collections (<http://images.frick.org/>), NYARC Discovery (<http://discovery.nyarc.org/>), FRESCO (<http://arcade.nyarc.org/search~S7>), Arcade (<http://arcade.nyarc.org/>), and the Artstor Digital Library (<http://library.artstor.org/library>).

ABOUT THE FRICK COLLECTION

Housed in one of New York's last great Gilded Age homes, The Frick Collection provides visitors with an unparalleled opportunity for intimate encounters with one of the world's foremost collections of fine and decorative arts. The house and collection originated with Henry Clay Frick (1849–1919), who bequeathed his home and collection of Western paintings, sculpture, and decorative arts for the enjoyment of the public. Since it first opened as a museum in 1935, The Frick Collection has continued to add to its holdings, which encompass masterworks from the Renaissance through the early modern period. Adjacent to the Collection is the Frick Art Reference Library, founded nearly one hundred years ago by Henry Clay Frick's daughter Helen Clay Frick and recognized as one of the top resources of its kind in the world. Today, the Frick offers a range of exhibitions, concerts, and educational programs throughout the year, and continues to provide visitors with indelible arts experiences in a setting of tranquil contemplation.

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

Where: Museum entrance: 1 East 70th Street, near Fifth Avenue; Library entrance: 10 East 71st

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 are posted here: www.frick.org/visit/library/hours)

Museum Admission: \$22; senior citizens \$17; students \$12; "pay what you wish" on Sundays from 11 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. (Library use is free)

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)

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.

#308, May 16, 2017

For further press information, please contact: Heidi Rosenau, Associate Director of Media Relations & Marketing
Phone: (212) 547-6866; Email: rosenau@frick.org