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THE FRICK COLLECTION

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MEDIA ALERT

FRICK COLLECTION TO PRESENT FIRST EXHIBITION IN AMERICA ON PIERO DELLA FRANCESCA

February 12 through May 19, 2013



Piero della Francesca (c. 1411/13–1492), *Virgin and Child Enthroned with Four Angels*, c. 1460-70, oil (and tempera?) transferred to fabric on panel, © The Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute

Revered in his own time as a ‘monarch’ of painting, Piero della Francesca (1411/13–1492) is acknowledged today as a founding figure of the Italian Renaissance. In early 2013, The Frick Collection will present the first monographic exhibition in the United States dedicated to the artist. It brings together seven works by Piero della Francesca, including six panels from the Saint’ Agostino altarpiece—the largest number from this masterwork ever reassembled. They will be joined by the *Virgin and Child Enthroned with Four Angels*, his only intact altarpiece in this country.

Piero della Francesca in America is organized by guest curator and former Andrew W. Mellon Fellow Nathaniel Silver. The related catalogue will include essays by James Banker, Professor Emeritus, North Carolina State University; Machtelt Israëls, Guest Researcher, University of Amsterdam; Elena Squillantini, masters candidate, Università degli Studi di Firenze; and Giacomo Guazzini,

doctoral candidate, Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa. Exclusive to the Frick, where it will be shown in the Oval Room, this important exhibition will also be accompanied by a rich and varied schedule of lectures, gallery talks, and seminars.

Support for the exhibition is generously provided by Mrs. Henry Clay Frick II, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, The Gladys Kriebel Delmas Foundation, Hester Diamond, the Robert H. Smith Family Foundation, the Samuel H. Kress Foundation, and the Robert Lehman Foundation. The accompanying catalogue has been underwritten by The Christian Humann Foundation and a gift from an anonymous donor in memory of Charles Ryskamp.



Piero della Francesca (c. 1411/13–1492), *Saint Augustine*, 1454–1469, oil on poplar panel, Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga, Lisbon

Piero della Francesca created the seven featured paintings for his hometown of Borgo Sansepolcro, enabling the exhibition to reconsider this pioneering artist in the context of his native city. Fundamental to his production was the Sant'Agostino altarpiece (1454–69), the giant polyptych that towered over the high altar of the local Augustinian church. One of the greatest full-length figures from this work, *Saint Augustine* from the Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga in Lisbon, will make its debut in America with this presentation (front page). It will be reunited for the first time with its companion, the Frick's *Saint John the Evangelist* (below), as will all of the surviving small-scale panels from the Sant'Agostino altarpiece (*Saint Apollonia* from the National Gallery of Art, and the Frick's *Augustinian Friar*, *Augustinian Nun* and *Crucifixion*).

Completing the group will be one of the most important Renaissance works in America, Piero's *Virgin and Child Enthroned with Four Angels* (front) from the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute. This intact altarpiece encapsulates Piero's singular ability to paint monumental figures of profound dignity and spiritual grandeur. As with his frescoes in Italy, which hardly ever travel, this large panel is rarely lent by its home institution. It has been presented in New York City only once since the Clark opened to the public nearly sixty years ago, making this a particularly exciting viewing opportunity. Removed from the artist's native city nearly two hundred years ago, this masterpiece will be returned to the context of Piero's oeuvre when it joins his six other paintings in the Oval Room.



Piero della Francesca (c. 1411/13–1492), *Saint Apollonia*, 1454–1469, oil? on poplar panel, Washington D.C., National Gallery of Art

Piero's paintings in museums in the United States reflect his meteoric rise to fame with East Coast American collectors in the early twentieth century, a phenomenon that will be explored in the catalogue. In 1903, Isabella Stewart Gardner initiated the taste for his work with the purchase of a fresco figure of *Hercules* (not in the exhibition). Robert Sterling Clark and Philip Lehman followed her lead by acquiring the *Virgin and Child Enthroned with Four Angels* (1913) and *Saint Apollonia* (1914), respectively. Helen Clay Frick subsequently advocated for purchase *Saint John the Evangelist* (1936), a decision associated with the Collection's opening year. It was joined by an *Augustinian Friar* and an *Augustinian Nun* (1950)

as well as *The Crucifixion*, the latter donated to the Collection in 1961 by John D. Rockefeller, Jr., a Frick trustee. Collectively the four Frick acquisitions marked the coda of Piero's short-lived moment in the history of American collecting. They are the only works by this artist in a New York City collection, and it is with great pleasure that the Frick will present them in a fresh context in 2013.



Piero della Francesca (c. 1411/13–1492), *Saint John the Evangelist*, 1454–1469, oil on poplar panel, thinned and cradled, The Frick Collection, New York

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: 10am to 6pm on Tuesdays through Saturdays; 11am to 5pm on Sundays. Closed Mondays, New Year's Day, Independence Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas Day. Limited hours (11 a.m. to 5 p.m.) on Lincoln's Birthday, Election Day, and Veterans Day.

Admission: \$18; senior citizens \$15; students \$10; "pay as you wish" on Sundays from 11 a.m. to 1 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. The tour is 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 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, Head of Media Relations & Marketing or Alexis Light, Media Relations & Marketing Coordinator

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