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from
THE FRICK COLLECTION

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MEDIA ALERT:
GILBERT STUART'S *GEORGE WASHINGTON*
RETURNED TO PUBLIC VIEW AT THE FRICK COLLECTION
DATES: ONGOING

The celebrated painting of *George Washington* by **Gilbert Stuart** (1755-1828) is on view again for the first time in a year in a presentation in The Frick Collection's Cabinet Room. One of the early replicas of Gilbert Stuart's first life portrait of the president, it is instantly recognizable to visitors. It is also the only painting of an American by an American artist in The Frick Collection, a collection of mainly European masterpieces. Of the portraits Stuart created of prominent figures of his time, including the first five American presidents, none attained the renown of the three he painted from life of George Washington and those he replicated on order throughout his later career. Capturing the character of the simply dressed President in a nearly half-length portrait with an aloof but benevolent expression, Stuart utilized a lively style that was new in America—a combination of fine tonalities and loose brushwork, with an eye for realistic detail—resulting in his reputation as one of the leading portraitists of his day. Purchased by Henry Clay Frick in 1918, the portrait hung in his private business office in the mansion at 1 East Seventieth Street that is now the celebrated museum. Frick commissioned three copies of it from a local artist, possibly for his offices in Pittsburgh and New York, a measure of his esteem of the work. Born in North Kingstown, Rhode Island, Gilbert Stuart grew up in Newport, where his father, a Scots immigrant, operated a snuff mill. After early training in Newport, Stuart moved to London in 1775 and

worked as a student of and later assistant to Benjamin West, eventually setting up his own portrait practice. In England he adopted the style of his notable contemporaries, such as Reynolds, Gainsborough, and Romney, whose works are also represented in The Frick Collection. Having achieved success abroad, Stuart returned to the United States in 1793, determined to paint the country's foremost citizen in order to gain prominence at home. With a letter of introduction from Chief Justice John Jay, he obtained a sitting with the President in 1795 in Philadelphia, then the capital of the country. George Washington was sixty-three years old and in his second term.

With the portrait an instant success, some thirty requests for replicas followed. After completing about ten replicas, Stuart became dissatisfied with the original portrait from life and rubbed it out. In the following year, he made two other portraits from life of Washington, each of which was frequently replicated. The Frick Collection painting is one of the early replicas of Stuart's first life portrait, showing the President in a reddish-brown coat set against a brilliant green curtain with a view of sky behind. It belongs to the group known as the "Vaughan type," as it is thought to be one of two copies painted by the artist for the Philadelphia merchant John Vaughan.

ABOUT THE FRICK COLLECTION

Henry Clay Frick (1849-1919), the coke and steel industrialist, philanthropist, and art collector, left his New York residence and his remarkable collection of Western paintings, sculpture, and decorative arts to the public "for the purpose of establishing and maintaining a gallery of art, [and] of encouraging and developing the study of fine arts and of advancing the general knowledge of kindred subjects." Designed and built for Mr. Frick in 1913 and 1914 by Thomas Hastings of Carrère and Hastings, the mansion provides a grand domestic setting reminiscent of the noble houses of Europe for the masterworks from the Renaissance through the nineteenth century that it contains. Of special note are paintings by Bellini, Constable, Corot, Fragonard, Gainsborough, Goya, El Greco, Holbein, Ingres, Manet, Monet, Rembrandt, Renoir, Titian, Turner, Velázquez, Vermeer, Whistler, and other masters. Mr. Frick's superb examples of French eighteenth-century furniture, Italian Renaissance bronzes, and Limoges enamels bring a special ambiance to the galleries, while the interior and exterior gardens and the amenities created since the founder's time in the 1930s and 1970s contribute to the serenity of the visitor's experience.

Renowned for its small, focused exhibitions and for its highly regarded concert series and lectures, The Frick Collection also operates the Frick Art Reference Library, founded by Henry Clay Frick's daughter, Miss Helen Clay Frick, located in an adjoining building at 10 East 71st Street. Both a research library and a photo archive, the Frick Art Reference Library is one of the world's great repositories of documents for the study of Western art. It has served the international art world for more than seventy-five years.

BASIC INFORMATION

General Information Phone: (212) 288-0700

Website: www.frick.org

E-mail: info@frick.org

Where: 1 East 70th Street, near Fifth Avenue.

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 to 6pm) on Lincoln's Birthday, Election Day, and Veterans Day.

Admission: \$10 (students and senior citizens, \$5)

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

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 INFORM® Audio Tour of the permanent collection, provided by Acoustiguide. The tour is offered in six languages: English, French, German, Italian, 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, Manager of Media Relations & Marketing, or Stephanie Ruggiero, Media Relations & Marketing Coordinator

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