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from
THE FRICK COLLECTION

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**ANIMALS IN COMBAT: GIOVANNI FRANCESCO SUSINI'S
LION ATTACKING A HORSE AND *LEOPARD ATTACKING A BULL***

NOW EXTENDED Through May 1, 2005

The Frick presents a special cabinet installation this February that explores the history of an important sculptural theme, animals in combat, while celebrating a 2002 gift to the institution by Walter A. and Vera Eberstadt. The focus of the exhibition is a pair of extremely rare and exquisite late Renaissance bronzes attributed to the Florentine sculptor. Susini is known to have made only two of these pendant groups, and the Frick pair is the only one in an American public collection. *Lion Attacking a Horse* and *Leopard Attacking a Bull* will be presented along with a selection of contemporary prints, drawings, and books that illustrate that exotic animals (panthers, elephants, lions) were real—although exceptional—presences in the life and entertainment of the Italian courts in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Furthermore, this consideration of the themes of fighting animals in art, culture, and collecting, allows the visitor to identify the sources for the subject matter of the two sculptures. This presentation, coordinated by Frick Collection Curatorial Intern, Giada Damen, runs concurrently with *Renaissance and Baroque Bronzes from the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge* (February 15 through April 24, 2005). It was made possible, in part, through the generous support of The Helen Clay Frick Foundation and the Fellows of The Frick Collection.



Attributed to Giovanni Francesco Susini (c. 1575–1653)
Lion Attacking a Horse, c. 1630–40
Bronze, 24.2 cm high, 30 cm wide
The Frick Collection, New York; Gift of Walter A. and Vera Eberstadt
Photo: Richard di Liberto

Horses, bulls, panthers, and lions were popular subjects for the bronzes produced by Florentine sculptor Giambologna and his collaborator Antonio Susini at the turn of the seventeenth century. Created for private European collectors, these works often show subjects inspired by classical antiquity. Antonio's nephew, Giovanni

Francesco Susini continued this tradition. His sculpture *Lion Attacking a Horse* is based on a colossal fragmentary marble statue that stood during the Renaissance on the Capitoline Hill in Rome (the lion, for the most part, was intact, while the horse was headless and limbless). This work fascinated many artists, including Susini, who traveled to Rome to study the city's ancient ruins. Images of the Roman lion and horse are found in sketchbooks of various sixteenth-century European artists, who drew the marble from different angles, both in its fragmentary state and as they thought it would have looked when it was whole. Susini's version, in which he cast the bronze horse rearing back to strike its attacker, is his own imaginative interpretation.

Susini would also have been familiar with the classical prototype of a predatory cat attacking an ox, as this pair of fighting animals had been used on ancient coins. He did not, however, rely solely on classical art for inspiration



Attributed to Giovanni Francesco Susini (c. 1575–1653)
Leopard Attacking a Bull, c. 1630–40
Bronze, 11.9 cm high, 27.5 cm wide
The Frick Collection, New York; Gift of Walter A. and Vera
Eberstadt
Photo: Richard di Liberto

when creating his sculptures. The vitality of the lion suggests an immediate knowledge of some type of large cat, not surprising considering that many exotic animals were present at the Medici court in Florence, where he lived. The grand dukes were avid “collectors” of rare animals, and lavish entertainments were staged featuring animals in combat. Florentine chroniclers describe in detail these bloody games, in which various types of animals were pitted against one another: lion against horse, tiger against bear, or panther against bull. The more exotic the animal, the better; but because the rarest animals—like leopards—were seldom seen, contemporary accounts and depictions tended to confuse

them with other big cats, such as lions. Although Susini's leopard in his pendant work does indeed have spots, the ruff around its neck is distinctly leonine, suggesting that he had probably never seen a leopard in the flesh, but employed, once again, his powerful imagination.

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, 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

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; 1pm to 6pm on Sundays. Closed Mondays, New Year's Day, Independence Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas Day. Limited hours (1 to 6 pm) on Lincoln's Birthday, Election Day, and Veterans Day.

Admission: \$12; senior citizens \$8; students \$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. 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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