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THE FRICK COLLECTION

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Watteau, His Forebears, Followers, and Legacy Examined for the First Time in a Major Touring Exhibition

WATTEAU AND HIS WORLD:FRENCH DRAWING FROM 1700 TO 1750

OCTOBER 20, 1999 THROUGH JANUARY 9, 2000

Watteau and His World: French Drawing from 1700 to 1750, an internationally touring exhibition opening at The Frick Collection on October 20, 1999, is the first major show to place the unrivaled achievements of this artist within the wider context of his forebears and followers. **Antoine Watteau** (1684 - 1721) was one of the greatest draftsmen of the eighteenth century, and his works are a captivating melding of observation and imagination, providing a glimpse into the creative mind that came to define his age. On view in New York through January 9, 2000, the exhibition features approximately sixty-five sheets from private and public collections in North America selected by guest curator Alan Wintermute, Senior Specialist of Old Master paintings at Christie's and a former Director of Colnaghi USA, New York. Thirty-five drawings by Watteau form the heart of the exhibition and convey his vision in all its liveliness and variety. Among the twelve other artists represented are **François Boucher** (1703 - 1770), **Claude Gillot** (1673 - 1722), **Nicolas Lancret** (1690 - 1743), **François Lemoyne** (1688 - 1737), **Jean-Etienne Liotard** (1702 - 1789), and **Charles Natoire** (1700 - 1777). The exhibition, which travels to the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa (February 11 through May 8, 2000), is organized by The American Federation of Arts and made possible in part by The Florence Gould Foundation. The catalogue is supported in part by the Samuel H. Kress Foundation. Presentation of *Watteau and his World: French Drawing from 1700 to 1750* in New York is supported in part by the Fellows of The Frick Collection, and is coordinated for museum by its Curator Edgar Munhall.

Watteau, who drew constantly throughout his lifetime, is one of the most revered artists of the French School. Watteau coveted his drawings and regarded them as superior to the most perfect of his paintings. When he died at age 36, he was a successful, admired, and prominent artist whose works were avidly sought after and collected in France and throughout much of Europe. The drawings by Watteau featured in the exhibition include arabesques and decorative designs; landscapes; copies of the Old Masters; sketches of actors, clowns, singers, musicians, soldiers, and military scenes; multi-figured compositional drawings for theater scenes; and his most distinctive creations, the *fêtes galantes*, small, romantic landscapes with wistful lovers in fancy dress drawn in characteristic red, black, and white chalks.

The three other sections of the exhibition are devoted to artists who influenced Watteau, his contemporaries, and those who contributed to the extension of his legacy. "Watteau's Artistic Forebears" features works by the decorative painters with whom Watteau apprenticed and the powerful members of the French Academy, including **Claude Gillot** and **Charles de La Fosse**. "Watteau's Followers" includes superb sheets by his most gifted students, works by other painters of the *fête galante*, and drawings by Watteau's closest friends and contemporaries, such as **Jean-Baptiste Pater** and **Nicolas Lancret**. Selected drawings by **Pierre-Antoine Quillard** and **Jacques-André Portail**, his close imitators, further illuminate this section. "Watteau's Legacy" explores the first rococo generation of artists for whom the direct example of Watteau's work was paramount, with works by **François Boucher**, **François Lemoyne**, and **Jean-Baptiste Oudry**, among others.

In his catalogue essay, Mr. Wintermute writes, "Watteau prized his drawings and kept them in bound volumes that enabled him to refer to them easily when composing his paintings; they were the essential sources of inspiration for the figure poses in his *fêtes galantes*." Edme-François Gersaint (1694 - 1750), an art dealer and friend to Watteau, wrote, "In the drawings of his best period...there is nothing superior to them of their kind; subtlety, grace, lightness, correctness, facility, expression; there is no quality that one might wish for which they lack, and he will always be considered as one of the greatest and best draftsmen that France has ever produced."

WATTEAU AND HIS WORLD: FRENCH DRAWING FROM 1700 TO 1750 -- A SYMPOSIUM
Saturday, November 13, 1999, 10:00am

This symposium, offered in conjunction with the AFA exhibition *Watteau and His World*, will be held at The Frick Collection on Saturday, November 13, 1999. The program will feature four eminent scholars who will discuss various perspectives of Watteau's life and art, eighteenth-century French culture, and issues in drawings conservation. The symposium will begin at 10:00am in the Music Room of The Frick Collection and will conclude by 4:00pm. A buffet lunch will be served at 12:15pm.

Featured in the program will be **Alan P. Wintermute**, guest curator and Senior Specialist of Old Master Paintings at **Christie's**, offering an overview of the exhibition and serving as a respondent; **Thomas Crow**, Chair, Department of History of Art, **Yale University**, speaking about painters and public life in eighteenth-century Paris; **Marjorie Shelley**, Conservator in Charge, Conservation Department, **The Metropolitan Museum of Art**, addressing aspects of conservation of Old Master drawings; and **Robert Darnton**, Shelby Cullom Davis Professor of European History, **Princeton University**, speaking on music in eighteenth-century Paris.

Advance reservations with payment are required by November 1. Seating is limited; reservations will be taken on a first-come, first-served basis. Fee: \$50, general public; \$25, students with valid identification. Cost includes symposium registration, museum admission, coffee, and buffet lunch. Payment must be made by check, made out to "The American Federation of Arts" and mailed to Katey Brown, Head of Education; The American Federation of Arts; 41 East 65th Street; New York, NY 10021. An online registration form will be available this fall on the website of The Frick Collection (www.frick.org). For all further information, please call the AFA Education Department at (212) 988-7700 x 26 or 31. The symposium is organized by The American Federation of Arts and The Frick Collection and is supported in part by Christie's.

MAJOR FUNDRAISING GALA HONORING MRS. VINCENT ASTOR DRAWS ON THE EXHIBITION FOR ITS THEME

On Monday, October 25, 1999, from 7:00 to 11:00pm, The Frick Collection hosts a *Fête Galante* in honor of **Mrs. Vincent Astor**, in recognition of her extraordinary leadership in the arts and letters in New York City. This black-tie dinner and evening of eighteenth-century music takes its thematic cue from the exhibition *Watteau and His World*, and proceeds will be used to foster the study and appreciation of the French fine and decorative arts at The Frick Collection and the Frick Art Reference Library. Cocktails

and an exhibition viewing are followed by an intimate dinner in the Garden Court, which will be beautifully transformed through decoration and performance into a rococo fantasy imbued with the look and feeling of Watteau's *fête galante* paintings. The chairmen of the benefit are Mrs. Minturn V. Chace, Mrs. Henry Clay Frick II, Mrs. Patrick A. Gerschel, and Mrs. Samuel Sachs II. For further information and tickets, please call (212) 327-3165.

PUBLICATION

A fully illustrated catalogue accompanies the exhibition. *Watteau and His World: French Drawing from 1700 to 1750* features a major essay by Alan P. Wintermute presenting an overview of drawing in France during this period and situating Watteau in the context of his time. Also included is an essay by Pierre Rosenberg, Director, Musée du Louvre, Paris, discussing Watteau and the Old Masters; an essay by Margaret Morgan Grasselli, Curator of Old Master drawings at the National Gallery of Art, examining issues of connoisseurship in distinguishing among drawings by Watteau and his followers; and an essay by Colin B. Bailey, Deputy Director/Chief Curator of the National Gallery of Canada, on the history of collecting Watteau's drawings. Published by The American Federation of Arts and Merrell Holberton Publishers, Ltd., the 10" x 10" catalogue features 256 pages, approximately 90 color and 76 halftone illustrations, and will be available in softcover at the Museum Shop of The Frick Collection for \$50.00.

ABOUT THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF ARTS

Celebrating its 90th anniversary in 1999, the AFA is the nation's oldest and most comprehensive non-profit art museum service organization. The AFA provides its more than 550 member institutions with traveling art exhibitions and educational, professional, and technical support programs developed in collaboration with the museum community. Through these programs, the AFA seeks to strengthen the ability of museums to enrich the public's experience and understanding of art.

ALSO ON VIEW THIS FALL AT THE FRICK COLLECTION

CONSTABLE'S SALISBURY CATHEDRAL: TWO VERSIONS REUNITED

September 21 through December 31, 1999

VELÁZQUEZ IN NEW YORK MUSEUMS

November 16, 1999, through January 16, 2000

ABOUT THE FRICK COLLECTION

The Frick Collection features masterpieces of Western art from the early Renaissance through the late nineteenth century. Important works by Bellini, El Greco, Rembrandt, Titian, Turner, Vermeer, Whistler, and many others are housed in one of the great mansions remaining from the Gilded Age. These paintings are complemented by one of the world's finest collections of Renaissance bronzes and by French sculpture of the eighteenth century, in addition to outstanding furniture and decorative art works from the ateliers of Riesener, Lacroix, Boulle, Carlin, Gouthière, and Sèvres. Each year more than 250,000 visitors from New York, across America, and around the world come to the Collection at 1 East 70th Street, once the residence of Henry Clay Frick (1849-1919). Designed by Thomas Hastings of Carrère and Hastings and constructed in 1913-1914, the building was changed after Mrs. Frick's death in 1931, with alterations and additions made by the architect John Russell Pope. In 1935 the Collection opened to the public. A new Reception Hall, built in 1977, was designed by John Barrington Bayley, Harry van Dyke, and G. Frederick Poehler, as well as two temporary exhibition galleries. The Frick Collection also operates the Frick Art Reference Library at 10 East 71st Street, both a research library and a photoarchive. The Library is one of the world's great repositories for the documentation and study of Western art and has served the international art world for more than seventy-five years.

BASIC INFORMATION

General Information Phones:

Collection (212) 288-0700

Library (212) 288-8700

Website: www.frick.org

E-mail: info@frick.org

Where: The Collection is located at 1 East 70th Street, near Fifth Avenue.

The Library is around the corner at 10 East 71st Street.

Museum Hours: 10am to 6pm Tuesdays through Saturdays, and from 1pm to 6pm Sundays. Closed Mondays, New Year's Day, January 2, Independence Day, Thanksgiving, December 24, and December 25. Limited hours (1:00 to 6:00pm) on Lincoln's Birthday, Election Day, and Veterans Day.

Library Hours: 10am to 5pm, Monday through Friday; 9:30am to 1pm on Saturday.

Closed August and on Saturdays in June and July. Please call for holiday closure schedule.

Museum Admission: \$7, general public; \$5, students & senior citizens. See updated "Tour Information."

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

Library Admission: free.

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: now included in the price of admission is an Acoustiguide INFORM® Audio Tour of the permanent collection, provided by Acoustiguide. The tour is offered in five languages: English, French, German, Japanese, and Spanish. This fall (date to be announced), a tour in Italian will also be introduced.

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, Communications Officer

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