



# ARCHIVED PRESS RELEASE

*from*

## THE FRICK COLLECTION

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### REMARKABLE DUTCH MANNERIST CABINET PICTURE ON EXTENDED LOAN TO THE FRICK



Joachim Wtewael (1566–1638). *Adam and Eve*, 1610–15, oil on copper, private collection; photo: Michael Bodycomb

The story of Adam and Eve is one of the most enduring in the history of art. With its momentous subject—the creation of humankind—and riveting themes of seduction, deceit, punishment, and redemption, it has long captivated the imaginations of countless artists. Dutch painter **Joachim Wtewael** recounts the tale in an exquisite oil on copper, executed between 1610 and 1615 that is now on loan to The Frick Collection from a private collector. This cabinet picture is displayed in the Octagon Room, where it hangs with paintings by Jan Van Eyck and workshop, Hans Memling, and Pieter Bruegel the Elder, Wtewael's forebears in the northern artistic tradition. It will remain on view into February of 2015. Comments Director Ian Wardropper, “we are thrilled to present to the public this early Northern European painting, which complements our holdings in a number of ways, from its delicately depicted subject

matter to the beautiful effect of its copper support. Furthermore, while Wtewael was less known to collectors like Henry Clay Frick one hundred years ago, fine examples by this artist—whose work is not overly abundant--have been increasingly sought-after by American institutions over the last twenty years. We hope the public enjoys seeing the work for its own gemlike beauty in the context of our holdings and in the contemplative setting of the former Frick residence.”

Wtewael's languidly elegant Adam gazes at Eve as he tenderly pulls her toward him. In one balletic movement, Eve reaches with her right hand to pluck an apple from the tree's branches—the fruit seemingly nudged into her grasp by the serpent—while offering another apple to Adam with her left. Birds and a monkey inhabit the verdant canopy above them, and an ensemble of feathered, furry, and reptilian creatures populates the landscape. One can imagine a cacophony of animal sounds emanating from the foliage. With his penchant for exaggeratedly graceful figures and theatrical compositions, Wtewael's art is defined as Dutch mannerist, a broad description for the style that dominated Dutch art, with many variations, between 1580 and 1610. Dutch mannerism derived from the Italian High Renaissance and was introduced to the Netherlands by the many artists who had trained in Italy. The style was prevalent in Utrecht into the 1620s, even when no longer fashionable in Haarlem, Amsterdam, or The Hague.

A native of Utrecht, Wtewael probably received instruction from his maternal grandfather, the painter Joachim van Schuyck, and his father, Anthonis Wtewael, a glass painter. He then apprenticed with Joos de Beer before embarking on a trip to France and Italy between about 1588 and 1592. It was likely during his Italian sojourn that Wtewael first encountered paintings on copper, which became the artist's support of choice for cabinet pictures: of the fifty-eight paintings he executed between 1592 and 1612, thirty are painted on copper.

Presumably developed in Italy, the technique of painting on copper dates to the early 1500s. Between 1575 and 1650, copper paintings flourished in northern and southern Europe, the likely result of an increase in printmaking on copper plates. Among their advantages, copper sheets offered a fine, non-absorbent surface and required little preparation. They also tolerated variances in climate better than other materials. And unlike paintings on panel or canvas, those on copper did not suffer damage caused by linings or transfers. The metal's natural smoothness concealed brushstrokes and imparted an enamel-like brilliance. Wtewael's precise style was well suited to copper since he did not often blend his colors, preferring instead to layer them for maximum luminosity.

Mannerist painting is sometimes criticized for its extravagant forms, garish colors, and contrived compositions. In his resplendent *Adam and Eve*, however, Wtewael skillfully employs the style's vocabulary to create a glorious vision of Eden and its legendary inhabitants. Whether made for private reflection or for display in a collector's Kunstkammer along with other precious objects, Wtewael's image must have charmed its original owner as it does visitors to the Frick today.

## BASIC INFORMATION

**General Information Phone:** 212.288.0700

**Web site:** [www.frick.org](http://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.

#213, May 24, 2013

For further press information, please contact Heidi Rosenau, Head of Media Relations & Marketing or Alexis Light, Media Relations & Marketing Coordinator

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