



# ARCHIVED PRESS RELEASE

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# THE FRICK COLLECTION

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1 EAST 70TH STREET • NEW YORK • NEW YORK 10021 • TELEPHONE (212) 288-0700 • FAX (212) 628-4417

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## **WITH RETIREMENT OF ANDREW W. MELLON CHIEF LIBRARIAN PATRICIA BARNETT, FRICK ART REFERENCE LIBRARY MARKS 13 YEARS OF ACHIEVEMENT**



The Frick Art Reference Library announces the retirement of Patricia Barnett, Andrew W. Mellon Chief Librarian.

Comments Director Anne L. Poulet, “During her thirteen years as Chief Librarian, Pat Barnett has been a champion of outreach and collaboration. As a result, the Frick Art Reference Library has strengthened its position as an innovative institution, one that colleagues both in the United States and Europe view as an exemplar of best practices in librarianship and new initiatives. I speak for The Frick

Collection staff and Board of Trustees in commending Pat Barnett for her dynamic and transformative years of service, and we congratulate her for the long list of accomplishments during her stewardship at the Library.”

Adds Margot Bogert, Chairman of The Frick Collection’s Board of Trustees, “Pat Barnett leaves the Frick Art Reference Library a vital and relevant institution, known for its influential role in shaping the direction of art historical research. Since her arrival in 1995, the worlds of publishing and research have changed dramatically through the information technology revolution. She embraced the situation confidently, fostering projects that advanced the Library’s offerings and abilities, and forging valuable relationships and collaborations with other institutions. Pat Barnett’s legacy is remarkable, and in her wake the Frick Art Reference Library stands solid in its resources, supporters, collections, and future.”

## **ABOUT THE FRICK ART REFERENCE LIBRARY**

The Frick Art Reference Library was founded in 1920 by Helen Clay Frick as a memorial to her father, Henry Clay Frick (whose art and mansion were bequeathed to the public, later becoming The Frick Collection, one of the world's most treasured house museums). In founding the Library, she vowed to provide a curious and growing public of art researchers with resources as valuable to them as her father's art collection came to be to the world's art lovers. The mission of the Library was, and remains, to make available to a broad community of researchers



materials for the study of art in the Western tradition from the fourth to the mid-twentieth century. With its emphasis on object-oriented research, the Library amassed a photoarchive that now boasts images of more than one million works of art, many of which are unpublished. The Library owns over 350,000 books, periodicals, online resources, and annotated auction and exhibition catalogues. The collection is unrivaled in the United States, and is one of the world's most valued art research centers and the most comprehensive resource on the history of collecting and patronage.

## **HARNESSING TECHNOLOGIES FOR THE SERVICE OF A RESEARCH LIBRARY**

Barnett came to the Frick Art Reference Library in 1995 from The Metropolitan Museum of Art where she held the dual role of Museum Librarian for Information Resources and Director of the Clearinghouse on Art Documentation and Computerization—the latter, a pre-Internet resource shared among the international archives, museum, and library information communities. At the Frick, she championed important advancements that kept pace with and harnessed the rapidly evolving world of information technology, and the Information Technology department was established to serve the entire institution. Shortly thereafter, the Library initiated the planning, development, and implementation of the online library catalog, FRESCO (Frick Research Catalog Online). The electronic conversion of the auction and book records, originally in card form, followed, and today, FRESCO offers records for the entire collection, including more than 35,000 artists represented in the Library's photoarchive. More recently, Barnett co-founded the New York Art Resources Consortium (NYARC), a joint venture by the libraries at the Frick, the Brooklyn Museum, The Museum of Modern Art, and The Metropolitan Museum of Art, the first three of which have created an integrated library system. This pioneering collaboration brings together the online catalogs of all participants, making possible searches over the broad spectrum of the combined collections. Fundamentally important to the research offerings of the Frick Art Reference Library is its photoarchive. During Barnett's tenure, expanding that collection and access to it through the application of digital technologies has been a steady focus.

Digital initiatives have been undertaken at the Frick as well as at other institutions involving outside collaborations. Among the most significant of these is the Frick's contribution of digital files to ARTstor, an online library of nearly one million images in the areas of art, architecture, the humanities, and the social sciences, used by educators, scholars, and students at a variety of institutions, including universities, colleges, museums, public libraries, and K-12 schools.

## **GROWTH OF THE LIBRARY'S COLLECTIONS AND SERVICES**

Barnett's tenure has been marked by vigorous growth in collections. The gift and depository program was revitalized under her direction. As a result, the Library has received many noteworthy donations from museums, galleries, publishers, auctions houses, and individuals, among them major photograph collections from Knoedler & Company, The Museum of Modern Art, and the Rijksbureau voor Kunsthistorische Documentatie. It has also made important purchases of books, catalogues, photographs, and databases over the years, ensuring that the Library remains a comprehensive and current source for researchers. Perhaps the single most significant purchase the Library made during Barnett's service was a cache of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century auction catalogues that were sold by the Paris-based Heim Gallery Library in 2005. Other important purchases of rare materials documenting art movements in Russia, Scandinavia, and Australia reaffirm the Library's reputation as a research facility responsive to new areas of inquiry in art scholarship. Acquisitions activity has been further strengthened since 2003, with the creation of an endowed book fund program. There are nearly twenty book funds, including one recently endowed in honor of Barnett and initiated with a matching grant from Trustee Melvin R. Seiden and a gift from the Private Art Dealers Association. Complementing these unparalleled collections is a commitment to excellent descriptive cataloguing that ensures access to every item, from a two-page exhibition checklist to a multi-volume catalogue raisonné.

Under Barnett, a multi-faceted approach to outreach and programmatic offerings has been taken, resulting in steady growth in the number of users at the Library and its website. Services and amenities have also expanded. The institution now offers Wi-Fi connections, a dynamic internship program and provides orientation sessions to a substantial number of graduate students in the fine and decorative arts. From 2000 to 2006, it hosted *Dialogues on Art*, a popular series of annual panel discussions addressing issues such as art criticism and the art market. For several years, the Library has presented an exhibition program showcasing aspects of the institution's rich research holdings. Substantial renovations to the Reading Rooms and staff areas were undertaken during Barnett's tenure. Readers benefited from access to expanded reference desks, shelving, and computer and laptop stations for an increasing print collection and the accelerated development of electronic resources. A vital and growing staff received improved workspaces to catalogue, process, and provide access to the research collections.

# THE FRICK ART REFERENCE LIBRARY AS A RESEARCH CENTER

Barnett has always appreciated researchers' growing interest in consulting primary documents. To that end she established the Archives Department at the Library in 1997. She was also instrumental in bringing about the shared stewardship of the Helen Clay Frick Foundation archives with the University of Pittsburgh. Processing, preserving, and making accessible those archival resources has been an important focus at the Library for several years leading to greater understanding of Henry Clay Frick as a collector. Access to these archives allowed Frick Associate Director and Peter Jay Sharp Chief Curator Colin B. Bailey to write and publish *Building The Frick Collection*, the institution's first book on the history of the mansion.

Indeed, the topic of art collecting and patronage has been a growing and important area of study. Scholars know that the Frick Library's holdings afford them unique combinations of images and bibliographic materials so essential to documenting individual works of art and the impulses of collectors. Therefore, in 2007, the institution formally inaugurated at the Library the Center for the History of Collecting in America. The efforts of this new venture are aimed not only at academic and museum circles but also at supporting research in fields outside the traditional boundaries of art history, such as economics, sociology, and cultural history. Thus far, the Center hosted two local symposia on collecting taste, and co-sponsored a conference at the University of Venice.

Fellowship, scholars', and research programs have been launched, and the Center's academic initiatives have fostered both graduate and undergraduate coursework through collaborations with New York University.

The Center, like the NYARC initiative, is the culminating achievement during Barnett's tenure at the Frick. She now enters the next phase of her career by serving the broader art library and information communities through consulting and writing. Barnett comments, "I hope to channel my experience and expertise to serve those fields that, interdependently, play a critical role in the future of art research." A national search for Patricia Barnett's successor will be initiated shortly.

## BASIC INFORMATION

**General Information Phone:** (212) 288-0700

**Website:** [www.frick.org](http://www.frick.org)

**E-mail:** [info@frick.org](mailto: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 (11am to 5pm) on Lincoln's Birthday, Election Day, and Veterans Day.

**Admission:** \$15; senior citizens \$10; students \$5; "pay as you wish" on Sundays from 11am to 1pm

**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 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.

# 136, October 20, 2008

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

Media Relations Phone: (212) 547-6844

General Phone: (212) 288-0700

Fax: (212) 628-4417

E-mail address: [mediarelations@frick.org](mailto:mediarelations@frick.org)