



# PRESS RELEASE

from

## THE FRICK COLLECTION

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### FRICK COLLECTION LAUNCHES AMERICAN TOUR OF PAINTINGS FROM THE SCOTTISH NATIONAL GALLERY

#### NEW YORKERS TO ENJOY WORKS BY ARTISTS INCLUDING BOTTICELLI, EL GRECO, VELÁZQUEZ, RAEBURN, WATTEAU, AND SARGENT

November 5, 2014, through February 1, 2015



John Singer Sargent, *Lady Agnew of Lochnaw*, 1892, Scottish National Gallery, Edinburgh, © Trustees of the National Galleries of Scotland

In November the Frick will present ten masterpieces of Italian, Spanish, French, Scottish, and English painting from the Scottish National Gallery in Edinburgh, among them a Botticelli never before on public view in the United States and John Singer Sargent's iconic *Lady Agnew of Lochnaw*. The museum, one of the finest in the world, is distinguished for its holdings of works by the greatest masters of Western art and for its comprehensive collection of Scottish art. A previous collaboration took place in 2000 when the Frick presented a selection of drawings from the Scottish National Gallery, along with Sir Henry Raeburn's *Skating Minister*, a centerpiece of the museum's collection. The upcoming exhibition will feature paintings



Sandro Botticelli, *The Virgin Adoring the Sleeping Christ Child*, c.1485, Scottish National Gallery, Edinburgh, © Trustees of the National Galleries of Scotland

spanning the fourteenth to the nineteenth centuries that invite illuminating comparisons to the Frick's permanent collection. *Masterpieces from the Scottish National Gallery*, which will also include works by Constable, El Greco, Gainsborough, Raeburn, Ramsay, Reynolds, Velázquez, and Watteau, will travel in extended form to the de Young, Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, and to the Kimbell Art Museum in Fort Worth, Texas (see page 8 for further information on this tour). The exhibition is organized for the Frick by Senior Curator Susan Grace Galassi. The selection of works was made by Michael Clarke, Director of the Scottish National Gallery, and

Colin B. Bailey, Director of the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco and former Deputy Director and Peter Jay Sharp Chief Curator of The Frick Collection. An illustrated catalogue with entries by the curators of the Scottish National Gallery and an introductory essay by Michael Clarke accompanies the show. Support for the presentation in New York is generously provided by Sir Angus and Lady Grossart, The Christian Humann Foundation, Peter and Gail Goltra, †Walter and †Vera Eberstadt, Fiduciary Trust Company International, and anonymous gifts in memory of Melvin R. Seiden and Charles Ryskamp. The exhibition is also supported by an indemnity from the Federal Council on the Arts and the Humanities.

## A BOTTICELLI NEVER BEFORE ON VIEW IN THE UNITED STATES

The earliest work in the show, making its first public appearance in the United States, is *The Virgin Adoring the Sleeping Christ Child* by the great Florentine painter Sandro Botticelli (page 1). In this devotional painting, executed in tempera, oil, and gold on canvas about 1485, the Virgin kneels in adoration before her sleeping son. The figures are sheltered by a thornless rose bush with large pink blossoms and a rocky outcropping forming a *hortus conclusus* (enclosed garden), a symbol of Mary's purity. The kneeling figure bears the characteristic idealized features of Botticelli's other representations of the Virgin: a high brow, straight nose, strong chin, and heavy coils of golden hair. Turned in profile, the young mother's divine beauty is enhanced by the radiance of the light blue sky behind her and the delicacy of her transparent, embroidered veil, which is surmounted by a golden halo. Mother and son incline toward each other, as if pulled by an invisible force. The presentation of the infant asleep, unique among Botticelli's many representations of the Madonna and Child, has been interpreted as an allusion to Christ's sacrificial death, while the rock formation in the background suggests a tomb. Although its early history is not known, the contemplative nature of the painting suggests that its original setting was a private house or palace, rather than a church. The picture was in private collections in Great Britain for more than 150 years before it was purchased from the Wemyss Heirloom Trust in 1999 by the Scottish National Gallery.

## VELÁZQUEZ'S SPECTACULAR TREATMENT OF HUMBLE IMAGERY



Diego Velázquez, *An Old Woman Cooking Eggs*, 1618, Scottish National Gallery, Edinburgh, © Trustees of the National Galleries of Scotland

From the spiritual realm of Botticelli's painting, Diego Velázquez's *Old Woman Cooking Eggs* brings us emphatically down to earth in the everyday world of seventeenth-century Spain—the Golden Age of art and literature in which Velázquez—the future first court painter to Philip IV—would play a central role. Before being called in 1623 to the court of Madrid, Velázquez had established a reputation in his native Seville as a painter of religious images and of genre scenes of humble subject matter. This kitchen scene, painted in 1618 when the artist was just eighteen or nineteen years old, showcases his extraordinary talent for illusionistic representation. Within a dark

interior, light and shadow glide across the surfaces of an array of regional wares in metal, ceramic, wicker, and glass. In the earthenware pan, the glistening eggs appear to congeal before our eyes. Working from models posed in his studio, Velázquez achieved a startlingly lifelike quality in the two figures, which is enhanced by the ambiguity of their communication and a sense of interrupted action. This seemingly casual slice-of-life—presented as if glimpsed through a darkened doorway—is highly calculated for maximum visual impact, and demonstrates the young artist’s mastery of composition, naturalistic representation, and psychological interaction. Such kitchen scenes were popular in Seville as well as in Madrid. Velázquez’s spectacular treatment of humble imagery may in fact have played a role in earning him the recognition of the Spanish court, where he would go on to paint the most prestigious of commissions, including the 1644 portrait of Philip IV in the Frick’s collection.

## A GENRE OF WATTEAU’S INVENTION

Painted in France in the early eighteenth century, Antoine Watteau’s *Fêtes Vénitiennes* transports us to a fanciful realm. This celebrated work exemplifies the *fête galante*, a genre of Watteau’s own invention that generally depicts elegantly dressed men and women at leisure in rural or park-like settings. The scene is set in a partially walled garden, sheltered by tall trees with leaves gilded by the setting sun or massed into shadowy shapes. A beautiful young woman in a sumptuous gray silk dress commands the center of the empty foreground, which suggests a stage. She is framed by two male figures: at left, an assertive man in exotic attire locks eyes with her as they commence a stately dance, and, at right, a shepherd with a musette (a type of bagpipe) gazes at her with unfulfilled longing. Behind these three figures, a group of male and female revelers engage in amorous pursuits, their animated poses contrasting with the formality of the dancers. A garden urn embellished with the mask of a goat, a symbol of sensuality, is positioned directly over the central female figure—the object of the two men’s desire. On top of the garden wall, to the right, a sculpture of a voluptuous, quasi-lifelike reclining nude makes explicit the more understated eroticism that animates the figures below.



Jean-Antoine Watteau, *Fêtes Vénitiennes*, 1718–19, Scottish National Gallery, Edinburgh. © Trustees of the National Galleries of Scotland

Technical study shows that in the course of painting, Watteau gave the strutting male dancer the facial features of his friend, the painter Nicolas Vleughels, while at the same time converting the lovelorn shepherd into a self-portrait. Scholars have interpreted these alterations, made late in the execution of the work, as a possible reference to a competition between Watteau and his fellow artist for the affections of the same woman.



## RAEBURN, SCOTLAND'S FOREMOST PORTRAITIST



Sir Henry Raeburn, *Colonel Alastair Ranaldson Macdonell, 15<sup>th</sup> Chief of Glengarry*, 1812, Scottish National Gallery, Edinburgh, © Trustees of the National Galleries of Scotland

Perhaps no painting better embodies the Romantic spirit of early nineteenth-century Scotland than the monumental portrait of one of the era's most colorful characters by Sir Henry Raeburn, Scotland's foremost portraitist during a time of great cultural vibrancy. *Colonel Alastair Ranaldson Macdonell, 15<sup>th</sup> Chief of Glengarry* was Raeburn's main contribution to London's Royal Academy exhibition of 1812. The imposing scale of the canvas and bravura technique speak to Raeburn's ambition to secure a place in the London art world, while the subject's swaggering pose and eye-catching costume attest to his own self-aggrandizing character. Alastair Ranaldson Macdonell, known simply as "Glengarry," became the fifteenth Chief of the Macdonell Clan and inherited the family's extensive estates in 1788. Described by the celebrated novelist Sir Walter Scott as "a kind of Quixote in our age, having retained in its full extent whole feelings of Clanship and Chieftainship elsewhere so long abandoned," Glengarry devoted his life to preserving and perpetuating the customs and traditions of the

heroic era of Highland life. In the eighteenth century, his clan and others had fought valiantly to restore the Stuart line to the British throne. Following their defeat in the second Jacobite Rising (1745–46), a proscription was placed by the government on the wearing of Highland dress, which was lifted in 1782. In Raeburn's portrait, the flamboyant Glengarry chose to be depicted wearing his clan's tartan and the "Glengarry bonnet," which is said to have originated in 1794, when he formed the Glengarry Fencibles. Tucked into the top of one of his long socks is a small single-blade knife, known in Gaelic as a *sgian-dubh*. The viewpoint from slightly below monumentalizes the subject, both literally and metaphorically. Glengarry's dynamic contrapposto stance, taken by Raeburn directly from the famous Apollo Belvedere, confers historical resonance. Sir Joshua Reynolds, who had advised Raeburn at the outset of his career to study classical antiquity in Italy, had encouraged this kind of creative borrowing and had himself taken the pose of the Apollo Belvedere for his own portrait of General Burgoyne (c. 1766) in The Frick Collection.

## CONSTABLE OFFERS A SWEEPING VIEW OF HIS NATIVE LANDSCAPE

In England, Romanticism found expression in the landscape painting of John Constable, whose work is well represented in The Frick Collection. The Scottish National Gallery's *Dedham Vale* of 1827–28 is the definitive statement of the artist's long engagement with his native landscape, the Stour River Valley, now known as "Constable country." As a young man, Constable acquired a deep familiarity with the area while working in his father's mill on the river. Throughout his career, he aimed to represent it in as un-formulaic a manner as possible through direct observation as well as consultation with the works of the great masters who preceded him, such as Gainsborough, Richard Wilson, and, above all, Claude Lorrain, in Constable's view "the most perfect landscape painter the world ever



John Constable, *Dedham Vale*, 1827–28, Scottish National Gallery, Edinburgh, © Trustees of the National Galleries of Scotland

saw.” *Dedham Vale* brings together his abiding love for his native landscape and dialogue with Claude. A steep rise, known as Gun Hill, provides the viewpoint for this sweeping prospect. From the wild and rugged foreground, the eye travels along the winding river through fertile farmland to the village of Dedham (marked by its prominent rectangular church tower) and beyond to the sea. With deft touches of his brush, palette knife, and even his fingers, Constable creates sparkling effects that convey the grandeur and luminosity of the vista. The upper half of the canvas is filled with large, moisture-filled gray and white clouds against a blue sky. Patterns of light and dark on the ground beneath reflect their movement and the transitory nature of the weather. At left, a gnarled stump sprouting new foliage symbolizes the cycle of life. In a natural declivity below the clump of trees, a gypsy woman and her child—familiar denizens of the region at the time—take shelter from the elements. In the text accompanying his English landscape print series, published between 1830 and 1832, Constable noted the significance to his art of Dedham Vale and the surrounding area, writing that it was there “that the Author’s ideas of Landscape were formed; and he dwells on the retrospect of those happy days and years...passed in the calm of an undisturbed congenial study, with a fondness and delight which must ever be to him a source of happiness and contentment.”

## **A PORTRAIT THAT HELPED PROPEL SARGENT TO PROMINENCE**

Although Henry Clay Frick filled his Fifth Avenue mansion with portraits of respectable upper- and middle-class British beauties—as well as a few of questionable repute— by Reynolds, Gainsborough, Romney, Lawrence, and Whistler, he never purchased a portrait by John Singer Sargent. It was not, however, for lack of interest. An undated letter from Sargent to Frick in the Frick archives indicates that the collector had written (in a letter now lost) to request an appointment with him in London. In his reply, Sargent noted that if Frick’s visit was intended for a “commission for portraiture,” that he was “not taking any commissions, and not adding any promises to those I have already made for the future.” No further correspondence between the two men is known, nor what the object of the visit was, or even if it took place. Ironically, in 1922, three years after Frick’s death, Sargent’s renowned portrait of Lady Agnew of Lochnaw (page 1) was offered to the Trustees of The Frick Collection by an agent of the then-widowed subject of the portrait, who was forced to sell it to pay off her debts. Helen Clay Frick, the founder’s daughter, turned the offer down, explaining that the Trustees were not purchasing at that time. Three years later, the painting entered the collection of the Scottish National Gallery. This portrait, painted in 1892, represents a high point of society portraiture in Edwardian London. The commission from Sir Andrew Noel Agnew of Lochnaw to paint his beautiful young wife, Gertrude Vernon, helped to propel Sargent to prominence. The lively personality of the then twenty-seven-year-old beauty and social hostess comes across directly through a combination of assertiveness and ease captured in Sargent’s simple yet masterful composition and bravura brushwork. A French eighteenth-century upholstered bergère chair and a hanging of blue Chinese silk suffice to create a setting. Angled across the chair in a shimmering gown of white accented with a lilac sash, the supremely elegant Lady Agnew looks out with a direct and slightly appraising gaze. Flowing attire, decorative elements drawn from Eastern and Rococo art, and the simplicity of the composition also characterize the portrait of Mrs. Frederick Leyland in The Frick Collection, painted twenty years earlier by a fellow American expatriate, Sargent’s friend and rival James McNeill Whistler. Mrs. Leyland looks off into the distance, her back turned

to us—an object of beauty beyond our reach; Lady Agnew, in contrast, seems to engage the viewer in intimate conversation. Whistler’s perfectionistic tendencies resulted in constant reworkings carried out over more than a year, while Sargent completed his portrait in a mere six sessions, remarking later to a friend that he sometimes obtained his best results with only a few sittings. Exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1893, Sargent’s portrait of Lady Agnew met with an outpouring of praise. It was lauded in *The Times* on April 29, 1893, as “not only a triumph of technique but the finest example of portraiture, in the literal sense of the word, that has been seen here for a long time. While Mr Sargent has abandoned none of his subtlety, he has abandoned his mannerisms, and has been content to make a beautiful picture of a charming subject, under conditions of repose.”

## **ABOUT THE SCOTTISH NATIONAL GALLERY**

The National Galleries of Scotland comprise three institutions, the Scottish National Gallery, the Scottish National Portrait Gallery, and Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art. Founded in 1850, the Scottish National Gallery is widely regarded as one of the finest museums in the world, distinguished both for the quality and the significance of its holdings. Its collection ranges from the fourteenth to early twentieth century and includes paintings, prints, drawings, and sculpture. The institution’s holdings encompass works by the greatest names in Western art, including Botticelli, Titian, El Greco, Velázquez, Rembrandt, Rubens, Watteau, Tiepolo and many of the Impressionists and Post-Impressionists. The Gallery also contains the most comprehensive collection of Scottish art from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century, with masterpieces by such well-known figures as Ramsay, Raeburn, and Wilkie.

## **PUBLICATION**

The exhibition is accompanied by an illustrated catalogue with entries by the curators of the Scottish National Gallery and an introductory essay by Michael Clarke. The book (hardcover, 72 pages, 40 illustrations; \$20.00, Member price: \$18.00) will be available in the Museum Shop or ordered through the Frick’s Web site ([www.frick.org](http://www.frick.org)) and by phone at 212.547.6848.

## **EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND EVENTS**

### **Lectures**

*Lectures are free. Seating is on a first-come, first-served basis, and reservations are not accepted. Selected lectures will be webcast live and made available on our Web site and The Frick Collection’s channel on FORA.tv. Please visit our Web site for details.*

**Date** Tuesday, November 4, 6:00 p.m.  
**Speaker** Michael Clarke, Director Scottish National Gallery, Edinburgh  
**Title** *Pictures for Scotland*

**Date** Wednesday, November 19, 6:00 p.m.  
**Speaker** Richard Ormond, art historian  
**Title** *Sargent’s Lady Agnew of Lochnaw*

**Date** Wednesday, December 10, 6:00 p.m.  
**Speaker** Michael Gallagher, Sherman Fairchild Conservator in Charge, Department of Paintings Conservation, The Metropolitan Museum of Art  
**Title** *A Masterpiece Revisited*

## **Seminar**

*Seminars provide unparalleled access to works of art and encourage thought-provoking discussion with experts in their fields. Sessions are held when the galleries are closed to the public and are limited to twenty participants. Advance registration is required; register online or by calling 212.547.0704. \$100 (\$90 for Members).*

**Date** Monday, December 1, 2:00 to 3:30 p.m.  
**Speakers** Michael Gallagher, Sherman Fairchild Conservator in Charge, Department of Paintings Conservation, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, and Susan Grace Galassi, Senior Curator, The Frick Collection  
**Title** *Masterpieces from the Scottish National Gallery: Shared Perspectives*

## **Ten Paintings, Ten Talks on Masterpieces from the Scottish National Gallery**

Selected Saturdays, 3:00 p.m.

Led by curators and educators, each thirty-minute talk will focus on a different painting from the special exhibition. *All talks meet in the Garden Court and are free with museum admission; reservations are not necessary. Please visit our Web site for a schedule of topics and presenters.*

## **Course: The Frick Connection**

*For college students and recent graduates under age 39; Courses are free with a \$25 student membership or a full membership for recent graduates. Advance online registration is required; please visit our Web site to register.*

**Date** Three-part course, Wednesdays, November 5, 12, & 19, 5:30 to 7:00 p.m.  
**Instructor** Michelle Millar Fisher, Doctoral Candidate in Art History, The Graduate Center, City University of New York  
**Title** *Masterpieces in Dialogue*

## **Free Evening Event: Friday, January 30, 6:00 to 9:00 p.m.**

Enjoy a night of programs and activities when we open our doors to the public after-hours to celebrate our special exhibition. The evening will include gallery talks, open sketching, and music. *Admission is free, and visitors are admitted on a first-come, first-served basis. Reservations are not accepted. Children under ten are not admitted.*

## **Guided School Visits**

During the presentation of *Masterpieces from the Scottish National Gallery*, The Frick Collection will offer a limited number of guided school visits for middle school, high school, and college classes on Mondays, when the museum is closed to the public. *Reservations must be made in advance; please visit [www.frick.org/schools](http://www.frick.org/schools) for more information.*

## U.S. TOUR INFORMATION

**The Frick Collection, New York (10 paintings)**

**DATES:** November 5, 2014, through February 1, 2015

**TITLE:** *Masterpieces from the Scottish National Gallery*

**de Young, Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco (55 paintings)**

**DATES:** March 7, 2015, through May 31, 2015

**TITLE:** *Botticelli to Braque: Masterpieces from the National Galleries of Scotland*

**Kimbell Art Museum, Ft. Worth (55 paintings)**

**DATES:** June 28, 2015, through September 20, 2015

**TITLE:** *Botticelli to Braque: Masterpieces from the National Galleries of Scotland*

## 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:** 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Tuesdays through Saturdays; 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Sundays. Closed Mondays, New Year's Day, Independence Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas Day. Limited hours (11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.) on Lincoln's Birthday, Election Day, and Veterans Day

**Admission:** \$20; senior citizens \$15; students \$10; "pay what you wish" on Sundays from 11 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

<b>PLEASE NOTE TO YOUR READERS: Children under ten are not admitted to the Collection.</b>
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**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 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 Admission for the Permanent Collection:** Please call 212.288.0700 for details and to make reservations.

**Public Programs:** A calendar of events is published regularly, and programs are listed on the Web site.

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

Media Relations Phone: 212.547.0710; E-mail address: mediarelations@frick.org