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from

THE FRICK COLLECTION

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FRICK ANNOUNCES GIFT OF A REMARKABLE STILL-LIFE PAINTING BY DUTCH ARTIST GERARD VAN SPAENDONCK



Gerard van Spaendonck (1746–1822), *Grapes with Insects on a Marble Top*, c. 1793, oil on marble, 11 ¼ x 13 ½ inches, The Frick Collection, New York; photo: Michael Bodycomb

Celebrated for masterpieces in portraiture and landscapes, The Frick Collection is pleased to announce the gift to its permanent collection of a remarkable still life by Gerard van Spaendonck (1746–1822). He is known for his masterful depictions of flowers and botanical specimens across a wide ranging oeuvre that includes miniatures, scientific illustrations, and Salon canvases. Van Spaendonck brought his knowledge of the natural world to bear in this rare painting on marble. It provides a harmonious compliment to the Frick’s three examples in this genre, *Still Life with Plums* by Jean-Baptiste-Siméon Chardin, *Trompe l’Oeil* by Jean-Étienne Liotard, and *Plum Branches Intertwined*, a recently acquired drawing by Pierre-Joseph Redouté’, who was the student of van Spaendonck. Comments Director Ian Wardropper, “His works are quite rare in American public collections, and the most significant holdings are found in France and the United Kingdom, at Musée du Louvre and The Fitzwilliam Museum, respectively. As an extraordinary example of an important yet neglected eighteenth-century artist’s work, van Spaendonck’s *Grapes with Insects on a Marble Top* will strengthen our holdings in the genre of still life. Already installed in the North Hall adjacent to the Liotard, this new acquisition invites fresh conversations and connections across the Frick’s collection. We are grateful to **Asbjorn R. Lunde** for his generous gift to the Frick.”

MINIATURIST TO LOUIS XVI

The artist's emphasis on verisimilitude represents an extension of the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century northern still-life tradition, in which the Dutch-born van Spaendonck was well versed. In Paris, where he lived from 1768 until his death, he drew on his mastery of flower painting in his successive roles as miniaturist to Louis XVI; elected member of the Académie; contributor to the *Vélins du Roi*, an important series of botanical studies on vellum; and Professeur d'Iconographie Naturelle at the Musée d'Histoire Naturelle. As an instructor and botanical artist of the highest order, van Spaendonck not only applied an intellectual rigor to his scientific illustrations, but also to his still lifes.

ABOUT THE SUBJECT OF THIS STILL-LIFE

The painting acquired by the Frick is imbued with a host of possible allegorical meanings, especially when considered with its pendant (whereabouts unknown), that depicts peaches. Grapes and peaches are common attributes of the god Bacchus, as symbols of bounty and fertility, yet both have strong biblical associations as well, with grapes and wine representing the blood of Christ and peaches the fruit of the Virgin's womb. Through his pendant still lifes, van Spaendonck brings to mind the dual nature—pagan and Christian—of the fruits' symbolic connotations.

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: 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Tuesdays through Saturdays; 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. 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.

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

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