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from

THE FRICK COLLECTION

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THE FRICK COLLECTION INVITES THE PUBLIC TO EXPLORE ITS INNOVATIVE WEBSITE (WWW.FRICK.ORG)

“VIRTUAL TOUR” AMONG THE MANY SPECIAL FEATURES

New York's famed **Frick Collection** has recently opened its doors in a new way with the launching of a comprehensive site on the World Wide Web. Millions of Internet users now have access to this site at www.frick.org and can experience innovative features, such as a “virtual tour” of the galleries in the institution's Fifth Avenue mansion. The site, with its many interconnecting links, will keep the public updated on the -- perhaps unexpected -- array of changing exhibitions, educational programs, special events, membership offerings, and news about The Frick Collection and Frick Art Reference Library. Information is available about most items in this internationally acclaimed collection, including its treasures by Bellini, Fragonard, Goya, El Greco, Holbein, Houdon, Rembrandt, Titian, Velázquez, Vermeer, Veronese, Whistler, and other masters. Of tremendous importance to students, art historians, journalists, collectors, dealers, and others is the global access to the resources, online catalogue, and services of the Frick Art Reference Library, which is one the world's greatest research centers for the study of Western art.

Director Samuel Sachs II comments, “I am thrilled that many more ‘visitors’ world-wide can use the Internet as a tool to reach The Frick Collection and the research collections of the Library. In recent years the staff has avidly embraced the use of technology in their work and the logical outgrowth of this is computerized access for the public to the resources of this institution by means of the World Wide Web. I am a strong advocate for the application of technology in the museum environment and I have urged the

staff to think expansively about the possibilities in this realm. The ‘virtual museum’ enables people to browse the galleries from home and will spark the imagination, better preparing visitors for an on-site experience. Those who cannot travel to The Frick Collection will gain a wonderful sense of the museum’s stunning offerings and grand environment.” In this spirit, Sachs offers a personal, audio greeting to users of the website.

A VIRTUAL TOUR WELCOMES WORLD-WIDE VISITORS

Through IPIX technology, (software by Interactive Pictures Corporation that produces spherical, interactive images), visitors to the website can wander through the 1914 former Frick mansion and focus on the masterpieces they choose in the West Gallery, the Boucher, Dining, Fragonard, and Oval Rooms, and the Living Hall. Similarly, extensive visuals and information is available about the sculpture and decorative art pieces in the collection. The virtual tour was created by photojournalist Bill Swersey, who shot the elegant interiors with a 180-degree panoramic, or fisheye, lens. The resulting images were aligned with IPIX “stitching” software that created 360-degree views of the featured rooms.

Instructions on the Frick’s website help the visitor link to and download the necessary viewing software, which is free and located at the IPIX homepage (www.ipix.com). Using a computer mouse to explore the mansion, the visitor can be virtually inside each room, and encounter many layers of information. “Hotspots” selected with the mouse link to art historical texts and larger images for each masterpiece. Items available through the Museum Shop, such as postcards, books, posters, and videos, can be ordered by e-mail as well as by telephone and fax.

ACCESS TO THE LIBRARY FACILITATES RESEARCH

Patricia Barnett, Andrew W. Mellon Librarian, who oversees the Frick Art Reference Library and text and image information services, notes, “The Library will continue to maintain primary sources and scholarly documents on-site, but the visibility and enhanced access that the website provides will enable a far wider community of researchers to consult these materials.” The website is linked to FRESCO, the Frick Research Catalog Online. Established in 1996, FRESCO records over 50,000 source materials catalogued since 1985, which are accessible through the Library, and is a convenient tool for scholars and students alike.

An online form is available for website users to submit reference questions to the Library staff. Additional search features and selected links to outside sites and databases are among the other offerings. “This unusual website is much more than an electronic brochure, as it balances visual elegance with the provision of substantial resources,” adds Floyd Sweeting, the Head of the Information Systems Department.

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The consultant for the site’s original design concept was Donald G. Dunham, a web developer who is currently doing graduate work at New York University’s Interactive Telecommunications Program. The Information Systems Office of The Frick Collection was responsible for initiating and coordinating the development of the site, and Webmaster Vivian Gill is responsible for its enhancement and maintenance. A steering committee representing all parts of the Collection and Library developed the content.

ABOUT THE FRICK COLLECTION

The Frick Collection is an anthology of some of the most distinguished works of Western art from the early Renaissance through the late nineteenth century, including masterpieces by Bellini, El Greco, Rembrandt, Titian, Turner, Vermeer, Whistler, and many others 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 great French sculpture of the eighteenth century. These treasures are surrounded by 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, in addition to two additional 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, 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 and senior citizens. Children under ten are not admitted to the Collection, and those under sixteen must be accompanied by an adult. Please see note below under "Tour Information" for important news.

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 was introduced to the public initially in English and as of the beginning of October 1998, it will be available in French, German, Japanese, and Spanish.

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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