Helen Clay Frick and the Museum’s Early Acquisitions
In May, Dr. Stephen Bury joined the Frick as the new Andrew W. Mellon Chief Librarian. In his new role, he will lead the staff of the Frick Art Reference Library, overseeing its many programs and initiatives. Before coming to the Frick, Dr. Bury served as the head of European and American collections at the British Library, the national library of the United Kingdom and one of the world’s greatest research institutions. Dr. Bury has a keen understanding of digitization, collection sharing, developing technologies, and many other areas relevant to the Library’s evolving role in a rapidly changing field. On behalf of the entire staff, I would like to welcome him to the Frick.

I am pleased to announce that our conservation department is the beneficiary of a $1 million challenge grant recently awarded by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. When matched over the next four years with $3 million in contributions from other donors, the grant will create a $4 million endowment for the position of chief conservator. I am extremely proud of the myriad ways in which this superb department, led by Joseph Godla, cares for our holdings and the beautiful mansion that houses them. The endowment will ensure that this vital area of the Collection’s stewardship continues in perpetuity, while also making possible the department’s broader contributions within the conservation community. It is an exciting prospect, and we are deeply grateful to the Mellon Foundation for making it possible.

The Frick’s travel program has become an important way to strengthen relationships with existing donors while simultaneously reaching out to new friends. In May, I accompanied a group of supporters on a week-long trip to Sweden for an in-depth exploration of some of the finest surviving examples of the distinctively Swedish neoclassical architecture and decorative arts promoted by Gustav III following his return from Versailles in 1771. Our itinerary included visits to palaces, villas, and gardens in and around Stockholm, as well as a number of private homes. Throughout the week we were warmly received and entertained by collectors, curators, museum directors, and members of Sweden’s aristocracy. For information about upcoming trips, please contact Caitlin Davis at 212.547.0697.

As part of our ongoing celebration of The Frick Collection’s seventy-fifth anniversary, this summer we will present an installation of original drawings and early photographs that document the transformation of the once-private Frick family mansion into a public museum. The display, on view in the Cabinet through September 5, will feature a selection of elegant elevations executed for John Russell Pope, the architect responsible not only for the museum’s Oval Room, Garden Court, East Gallery, and Music Room, but also for the building that houses the Frick Art Reference Library.

I wish you an enjoyable summer, and I hope that your plans will include at least one visit to The Frick Collection.

Kind regards,

Anne L. Poulet
Director
TRIBUTE
Remembering Charles A. Ryskamp, Director Emeritus

CABINET INSTALLATION
*From Mansion to Museum: The Frick Collection Celebrates Seventy-five Years*

PERMANENT COLLECTION
Becoming The Frick Collection: Helen Clay Frick and the Museum’s Early Acquisitions

LIBRARY
Arcade: A Groundbreaking Collaboration

COMMUNITY
The Frick Celebrates Its 75th Anniversary: Director’s Circle Dinner, Young Fellows Ball, Spring Party

SUMMER CALENDAR
Educational Programming, Concerts, Museum Shop

LEFT
The Seventieth Street Garden

FRONT COVER

BACK COVER
The Portico and Fifth Avenue Garden; photograph by Michael Bodycomb
TRIBUTE

Remembering Charles A. Ryskamp
Director Emeritus

In March Charles A. Ryskamp, The Frick Collection’s fifth director and longtime friend, died in Manhattan at the age of eighty-one. His contributions to the institution were innumerable, and his tenure as director was marked by dynamic leadership, a passionate commitment to scholarship, and successful fundraising efforts. His engaging, larger-than-life persona attracted an ever-widening circle of friends to the Frick and set the course for broadening the museum’s outreach. Throughout his tenure, he found creative ways to energize the institution without losing sight of its history or its unique place in the art world.

Mr. Ryskamp was named director of The Frick Collection in 1987, after serving as the director of the Morgan Library for seventeen years. Previously seen as a staid and unchanging institution, the Frick underwent a profound evolution under his leadership. With his guidance, the museum expanded its special exhibitions program, made several important acquisitions, developed new gallery spaces, and enhanced its publications program. He launched a formal membership program and reinvigorated the Young Fellows, both of which have become important forces in the life of the museum. Perhaps his most enduring legacy, however, was his successful effort to save the Frick Art Reference Library by mounting the Frick’s first capital campaign, which raised $34 million to support the Library’s programs and to ensure its continued contributions to research in the field of art history.

A literary scholar by training and a self-taught connoisseur, Mr. Ryskamp was a passionate art lover and an avid collector. He began buying at auction in his early teens, eventually building a substantial collection of Old Master and Romantic prints and drawings that would later be the subject of exhibitions at the Morgan Library and at the Yale Center for British Art. His commitment to scholarship and connoisseurship was reflected in his expansion of the Frick’s special exhibitions program, which drew large audiences and garnered accolades from the press. Highlights during his tenure were François-Marius Granet: Watercolors from the Musée Granet at Aix-en-Provence (1988); The Frick’s Other Collection: The 25th Anniversary of the Frick Art Reference Library (1990); Nicholas Lancret, 1690–1743 (1991); The Currency of Fame: Portrait Medals of the Renaissance (1994); John Constable: Drawings, Oil Sketches, and Paintings from a Private Collection (1994); and The Butterfly and the Bat: Whistler and Montesquiou (1995).

A prevailing misunderstanding about the Frick is that it is a static collection. As Mr. Ryskamp was always quick to point out, more than one-third of the works of art on view were acquired after Mr. Frick’s death in 1919. In keeping with that tradition, Mr. Ryskamp oversaw a number of notable acquisitions...
During his tenure, among them drawings, sculptures, and paintings, including *The Portal of Valenciennes* (opposite page) by Jean-Antoine Watteau, the first work by Watteau to enter the Collection. Other significant works added were *The Arch of Constantine and the Forum, Rome* by Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot; a relief sculpture of the *Pietà* by Alessandro Algardi; Jean-Étienne Liotard’s *Trompe l'Oeil*, and two pastel drawings by Jean-Baptiste Greuze, *Baptiste Aîné* and *Madame Baptiste Aîné*. These and other acquisitions reflect his refined taste and astute judgment.

Mr. Ryskamp grew up in Michigan in a family of academics. He earned his bachelor’s degree in English at Calvin College in Grand Rapids and went on to do graduate work at Yale, receiving a master’s degree in 1951 and a doctorate in 1956. He began teaching at Princeton University in 1955, becoming a full professor in 1969. He wrote well-received books on eighteenth-century British literature and was an expert on the English poet William Cowper and the diarist James Boswell. In addition to his teaching duties, he was the curator of English and American literature at Princeton’s library.

His deep knowledge of literature and art informed every aspect of his leadership and was nowhere more apparent than in his promotion of the Frick Art Reference Library. With funds raised during the Library’s endowment campaign, the Andrew W. Mellon Chief Librarian position was created and several book funds were established. To help guide and support its programs, he brought together a group of scholars, dealers, and philanthropists to form the Council of Associates of the Frick Art Reference Library, which evolved into what is now the Visiting Committee. Major advancements were achieved in the areas of technology and digitization, including the creation of FRESCO (Frick Research Catalog Online), the Frick’s first online public access catalog. Mr. Ryskamp was an advocate of accessibility in all areas, and in 1989 he abolished the regulation that required women researchers to wear skirts in order to be admitted to the Library’s Reading Room. His repeal of the anachronistic rule—enforced since the Library opened its doors in 1924—did much to help alter the public’s perception of the Frick as an unchanging, outmoded institution.

Mr. Ryskamp significantly expanded the range and reach of the Frick’s publications. He was devoted to finishing the comprehensive, nine-volume catalogue of the permanent collection (intended primarily for the use of scholars and collectors), but he also realized the importance of servicing a more general readership. He accomplished this by supporting the Collection’s efforts to publish fully illustrated volumes, including *Paintings from The Frick Collection* and *Art in The Frick Collection: Painting, Sculpture, and Decorative Arts*.

After retiring as director in 1997, Mr. Ryskamp served the Frick in an advisory role for more than a decade. He will be remembered for his passionate love of art, for his dedication to ensuring the strength and stability of the institution, and for his wisdom, warmth, and marvelous wit.—Anne L. Poulet, Director

A memorial service for Charles Ryskamp was held on May 10 at St. James’ Church in New York City. Readings and remarks from the service can be found at frick.org. If you would like to make a contribution to the Frick Art Reference Library’s endowed book fund established in Mr. Ryskamp’s honor, please contact Mary Emerson at 212.547.6870.
CABINET INSTALLATION

From Mansion to Museum
The Frick Collection Celebrates Seventy-Five Years

June 22 through September 5, 2010

On December 16, 1935, The Frick Collection opened its doors to fascinated crowds. Henry Clay Frick had died sixteen years before, leaving his magnificent collection and his Fifth Avenue mansion for the benefit of the public. What happened in the intervening years is the subject of an installation currently on view in the Cabinet, From Mansion to Museum: The Frick Collection Celebrates Seventy-Five Years. The selection of architectural drawings and photographs on display charts the conversion of Mr. Frick's private residence, designed by Carrère and Hastings, into one of New York's finest art institutions.

Mr. Frick's widow, Adelaide, and his daughter Helen continued to live in the family home at One East 70th Street after his death. When Adelaide died in 1931, little time was wasted in beginning work on the transformation of the house. The Board of Trustees, which had been hand selected by Mr. Frick and named in his will, invited two renowned architects to submit plans for the new museum: Delano and Aldrich, designers of the original Walters Art Gallery in Baltimore, and John Russell Pope, who would count among his most famous commissions the National Archives in Washington, D.C. (1930–35), the gallery for the Elgin Marbles at the British Museum in London (1930–39), the West Building of the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. (1935–41), and the Jefferson Memorial (1936–43), the last three completed posthumously.

John Russell Pope (below, left) trained at Columbia University and was subsequently awarded a scholarship to the American Academy in Rome to study the architecture of Italy and Greece. He also studied at the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris, which nurtured his enthusiasm for classical architectural styles. By the 1930s he was nearing the end of a successful career, although at the time he was busier than ever with museum commissions. He worked on two additions for The Metropolitan Museum of Art and designed the monumental gallery for modern sculpture at London's Tate Gallery.

Pope proposed clearing the Frick mansion's former courtyard and enclosing it under glass (opposite page, right), thereby creating the Garden Court, complete with palms, plants, and a fountain in the center. An inspired design, the Frick's Garden Court prefigured Pope's plans for similar courts in the National Gallery of Art. Pope also advocated creating a new entrance on 70th Street by extending the façade over the building's former carriageway. These ingenious solutions won Pope the commission in March 1932.

Among the first issues Pope addressed in transforming the Frick home into a museum was visitor access. The mansion's former...
porte-cochère was demolished to make way for a public entryway, today known as the Entrance Hall. The hall’s ornate coffered ceiling is balanced by the more austere pilasters capped with Ionic capitals and the arched portals of the room’s limestone walls.

Originally proposed for the second floor of the mansion, the auditorium (known today as the Music Room) was constructed on the museum’s main floor to allow easy access from both the Collection and the Library. An elegant large-scale elevation drawing executed for Pope by the architectural decorator and muralist Angelo Magnanti, one of four on view in the Cabinet, depicts the Music Room’s flattened domed ceiling and circular skylight (opposite page). It was Pope’s intention that the room serve as both a lecture hall and an art gallery.

Mr. Frick’s former office, just off the West Gallery, was demolished to make way for the Oval Room. An oval shape was chosen because, according to Pope, “It could be creatively treated as a thing in itself, contrasting with the court’s rectangle…. As such it would have a certain definite elegance of its own.”

Along with the additions of the Entrance Hall, the East Gallery, the Music Room, and the Garden Court, Pope designed the classically inspired building that houses the Frick Art Reference Library, located adjacent to the Collection on East 71st Street. The Library had been founded in 1920 by Helen Clay Frick as a memorial to her father and since 1924 had been housed in a one-story building designed by the architect Thomas Hastings. The rapid expansion of the Library’s collection of art books, journals, and photographs resulted in an urgent need for more space. By the time Pope submitted a set of revised plans in August 1933, adjacent properties at 10 and 12 East 71st Street had been purchased by the Trustees. Pope then proposed demolishing Hastings’s original Library, thereby allowing the museum to expand into both the interior courtyard and the adjoining plot at 6 and 8 East 71st Street, where the original Library stood. The new thirteen-story Library (above, left) would be constructed on the site of the razed townhouses at 10 and 12 East 71st Street.

In April 1933 Pope’s final plans for both the addition to the Collection and the new Library were submitted for approval, with construction costs estimated at $1,941,000. Pope’s Italianate Library, built of the same Indiana limestone as the house, opened to researchers in January 1935. By the end of that same year, the new Frick Collection was also ready. Every detail Pope had designed was employed to make the transition from the original house to its modern additions harmonious. Similar marbles, woods, and stone were used wherever possible, and the decoration of the Garden Court—with its paired Ionic columns, shields, and cartouches—consciously evoked the classical vocabulary used by Hastings in the original house. On December 11, 1935, seven hundred invited guests attended an inaugural reception. An article in the Art News three days later noted that “It will be difficult for the viewer unfamiliar with the house as it stood three years ago to realize what tremendous changes have been wrought to make a handsome private dwelling into an efficient museum building.” The massive rebuilding and new construction that had been carried out with such speed and efficiency surely would have impressed the founder.—Margaret Iacono, Assistant Curator
During the years between Henry Clay Frick's death in 1919 and the museum's opening in 1935, The Frick Collection underwent more substantive changes than it would at any other time in its subsequent seventy-five-year history. The magnificent addition to the original Frick mansion on East 70th Street nearly doubled the museum's size. Designed and built between 1931 and 1935 by John Russell Pope, the new East Gallery, Oval Room, Garden Court, and Lecture Hall echoed the grand scale of Frick's Picture Gallery (now called the West Gallery). Pope's enlarged and expanded Frick Art Reference Library, which had been founded in 1920 in Frick's honor by his daughter Helen Clay, rose on East 71st Street at the same time as the museum addition was being built. Today, these two institutions express the unity of Henry Clay Frick's vision. In enduring architectural terms, they articulate the goals stated in Frick's will, in which he bequeathed his art collection and residence "for the purpose of establishing and maintaining a gallery of art ... and encouraging and developing the study of the fine arts ... for the use and benefit of all persons ...."

Written as a statement of purpose rather than as a restrictive set of rules, Frick's will granted the Board of Trustees the freedom to augment his original collection through new acquisitions and to shape The Frick Collection as a public institution. By designating his family members and close associates as Trustees, Frick sought to ensure the integrity of his legacy even as he granted the Board the liberty to initiate change. The Board's charter family members included his wife, Adelaide; his son, Childs; and his daughter Helen Clay (below), or "Miss Frick" as she was called. Though Childs was chairman, Miss Frick acted as a leader. Her status as the principal heir to her father's private fortune gave her the power, if not the written authority, to assume this role. Unlike her brother, Miss Frick shared her father's passion for art. From her childhood, they discussed his collecting, and Frick's paternal attention shaped her life's purpose. The Frick archives contain the meticulously annotated and illustrated travel diaries that Miss Frick composed in her teens and twenties to record what she had seen during the family's numerous trips to European museums and private collections. She was her father's key companion as he assembled one of the most important art collections in the United States and built a mansion to house it. When her father died in 1919, Miss Frick was thirty years old, a woman in her first maturity, who, though not formally trained, had been schooled all her life in the sophisticated appreciation, display, and purchasing of fine art.

Just a few months after her father's death, Miss Frick set off to Europe to begin researching his collection. On that trip she made her first independent contact with curators, scholars, and dealers—the kind of professionals she would cultivate as advisers and friends as she devoted her life and a large part of her substantial inheritance to the arts. Inspired by this experience, she created and financed the Frick Art Reference Library, one of the earliest independent research institutions in the United States dedicated to promoting the study of art history. By founding the Library within a year of her father's death, Miss Frick addressed the educational goals that were integral to his bequest. To her, the will's mandate of "encouraging and developing the study of the fine arts" applied with equal force to determining the Collection's acquisitions. Miss Frick's knowledge of art history provided the confidence to evaluate her father's collection, and the personal and financial trust endowed her by Henry Clay Frick gave her the means to steer the museum's future course. When the Board of Trustees formed a committee on paintings in

**OPPOSITE PAGE**

Fra Filippo Lippi (c. 1406-1469), *The Annunciation*, c. 1440, tempera on poplar panels, The Frick Collection

**RIGHT**

Helen Clay Frick (1888-1984), c. 1917, The Frick Collection/Frick Art Reference Library Archives
1924, she, rather than its official chairman, Horace Harding, took the lead. Between 1924 and 1935, Miss Frick was the sole member of the committee recorded as having proposed new purchases. The acquisitions that she made for the Collection before it opened in 1935 responded to its new public role by introducing paintings from periods and traditions different from those that had been collected by her father.

Miss Frick advocated her most important acquisitions for the Collection while she and her mother, Adelaide, still lived in the mansion on East 70th Street. This period ended with her mother's death in 1931. In that year, the Trustees appointed The Frick Collection's first director, Mortimer Clapp; the Board took on increased power; and funding for acquisitions was diverted to building the new museum addition. From 1924 to 1931, when the lines between private and institutional collecting were not yet fully drawn, Miss Frick enjoyed the greatest liberty to shape the collection her father had bequeathed to the public. She established early Italian painting and pre-Impressionist French painting as the new areas in which the museum principally collected. She was attracted to these pictures because they were art historically important and because they broadened the dimensions of her father's collection. In the summer of 1927, for example, Miss Frick successfully advocated for the purchase of Duccio's Temptation of Christ.

In a letter to Harding, she stressed the painting's significance: "The history of the Duccio panels has no parallel, and of course through all the ages and by all the critics they are considered among the most important pictures in Italian art." In January of that same year she persuaded the dealer Felix Wildenstein to write to Harding in support of the acquisition of Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres's Comtesse d'Haussonville (page 11). Wildenstein's letter also emphasized the work's historical importance, and he backed those claims with a fully documented dossier on the picture. When they were acquired by the Frick, both the Duccio and the Ingres were regarded as masterpieces whose only direct link with Henry Clay Frick's original collection was their remarkable quality. Miss Frick's ambition to expand the boundaries of the Collection was bold. But, even during this period of her greatest influence, she could not have enforced such dramatic change without the Board's sanction. In 1927 the Trustee Walter Hines expressed the Board's concomitant desire to augment Henry Clay Frick's bequest. He supported the acquisition of the Comtesse d'Haussonville, writing, "I would be in sympathy with ... an Ingres of that character in the Gallery, as my impression is that that particular phase of French art is not well represented at present in the Collection if represented at all."

Henry Clay Frick had acquired works of the highest quality that reflected his own personal taste. He collected sculpture and decorative art, but his primary interest was painting. He derived his greatest pleasure from portraits, landscapes, and genre subjects of the seventeenth-century Dutch, Flemish, and Spanish schools, as well as eighteenth-century British examples. His desire to feature splendid paintings in almost all the rooms of his home on East 70th Street also led him to purchase eighteenth-century French painted panels such as the Progress of Love, the grand cycle by Jean-Honoré Fragonard. In general, Frick avoided religious subjects. He said he most enjoyed pictures that were "pleasing to live with." These tended to be large-scale, painterly masterpieces in which virtuoso brushwork rather than dramatic subjects provided visual excitement. His daughter, on the other hand, was keenly attracted to early Italian paintings with profound religious themes. Although she advocated for them for their art historical significance, their aesthetic qualities must have appealed to her equally and sharply distinguished her taste from her father's. Early Italian pictures, with their glittering gold backgrounds, jewel-like colors, and minutely painted details, contributed a novel sense of small-scale, finely crafted splendor to the Collection. The aesthetic sensibility that informed Miss Frick's choices was articulated by the eminent art historian Kenneth Clark, who in 1935 commented on an early Italian painter's works, "it would be a mistake to write of them [only] as if they were historical specimens or units in an academic scheme: their claim to our attention is their exquisite beauty." The French pictures Miss Frick proposed to the Board also are notable for their beauty: Ingres's portrait of the Comtesse d'Haussonville, for instance, was praised in an exhibition catalogue of 1921 for its "beautiful contours" and "marmoreal azure opulence." Although Miss Frick was
silent on the topic of beauty, the superlatively fine brushwork and ravishing color of all the paintings she proposed for acquisition speak to a sensuous aspect of her taste that is one of her more overlooked contributions to The Frick Collection.

Miss Frick’s passion for the so-called Italian primitives was long-standing: they were the focus of her studies and the centerpiece of her private collection. But it was not solely for personal reasons that she advocated the purchase of masterpieces such as Duccio’s Temptation of Christ. In the 1920s, when Miss Frick began securing early Italian paintings for The Frick Collection, these works had been acknowledged as the very foundations of the Western pictorial tradition, and their study had provided the basis for art historical scholarship in the English-speaking world. In the 1890s Bernard Berenson’s comprehensive, illustrated publications on central Italian and Venetian painters of the Renaissance had fostered the birth of modern connoisseurship.
Document-based studies such as R. Langton Douglas's magisterial *A History of Siena* of 1902 had established many art historical methods still employed today. Miss Frick probably focused her efforts on acquiring central Italian paintings (such as the Duccio and Fra Filippo Lippi's *The Annunciation*) and Venetian pictures (such as Paolo and Giovanni Veneziano's *The Coronation of the Virgin*) because these were the two Italian schools most esteemed and researched by founders of the discipline of art history. What more appropriate choice of works could there have been for a collection dedicated to encouraging the study of the fine arts in the United States?

In the 1920s, when art history was still a young discipline, professional boundaries were fluid and scholar-connoisseurs (including Berenson and Douglas) worked as advisers and dealers. In 1924 Douglas offered Miss Frick what was to be the first picture acquired by the Collection, *The Annunciation* by Fra Filippo Lippi (page 7). This lovely, lyrical painting was a daring purchase. It was undocumented and unpublished, and experts had only recently attributed it to Lippi. Moreover, *The Annunciation* was believed to represent Lippi's early style, which was then poorly understood. In a letter to Miss Frick, Douglas suggested that *The Annunciation* could be "the earliest known work of the master" and to support this proposal he enumerated the relevant stylistic sources for Lippi's early manner. Douglas's comments provided clarity where there had been confusion. He delivered them with the succinct authority of a scholar who had written the first English monograph on Fra Angelico, the dominant painter of Lippi's generation. As a student of early Italian painting, Miss Frick recognized the value of Douglas's expertise and appreciated the historical importance and beauty of *The Annunciation*. She enthusiastically supported its purchase and vigorously brought dissenting Board members round to her view. Douglas's opinion of *The Annunciation*, as well as Miss Frick's, has withstood the test of time. The picture is still acknowledged as a masterpiece of Lippi's early period.

The French pictures Miss Frick advocated for purchase reveal her thinking less like a scholar and more like a present-day curator who strives to augment a collection's strengths. Aware that the Fragonard Room and several important paintings...
by François Boucher were central to her father’s collection, she sought to acquire exceptional works by equally important, though as yet unrepresented, French painters. She began in 1925 by proposing to the Trustees Chardin’s delicate cabinet picture *Lady with a Bird Organ* (then referred to as *La Serinette*). Paul J. Sachs, the assistant director of Harvard’s Fogg Art Museum, who was Miss Frick’s most influential adviser and friend, helped her shepherd *La Serinette* (opposite page) through the process of acquisition. She had solicited Sachs’s professional opinion after encountering resistance to the purchase from some of her fellow Trustees. Sachs’s supporting arguments, which Miss Frick submitted to the Board, attested to the painting’s authenticity, superb quality, and good condition. They also delineated the importance of Chardin and *La Serinette* within the history of French painting and described how the picture would complement The Frick Collection’s holdings. These same topics structure present-day museum acquisition proposals that curators write to inform their Boards about the merits of a purchase. Sachs’s letter is a testament to Miss Frick’s professional stance as she made choices for a public museum. The influential New York art critic Royal Cortissoz immediately recognized the astuteness of Miss Frick’s choice. In 1925 he wrote her a long, effusive letter, concluding that *La Serinette* “is a masterpiece and I see it in my mind’s eye as making the most lawful entry into the Frick Collection....the fixing forever in a perfect frame of one of the jewels in the history of painting.”

Miss Frick’s emphasis on the acquisition of paintings acknowledged that they had been her father’s primary collecting interest. In the field of sculpture and the decorative arts she selectively followed his lead, focusing on augmenting the sculpture collection with works that matched the quality and grandeur of Henry Clay Frick’s best acquisitions across media. She was not interested in proposing more of the Italian Renaissance bronze statuettes or the small-scale eighteenth-century French sculptures that he had purchased largely *en bloc* to enrich the domestic interiors of his East 70th Street mansion. The four sixteenth- and seventeenth-century life-size bronze busts
Though it is not known whether this exercise in connoisseurship influenced Miss Frick, it cannot be disputed that she subsequently devoted herself to the study of Houdon with the same intensity that she gave to Italian painting and that she eventually trained herself to become a respected Houdon specialist. In 1935 she demonstrated her expertise by proposing for acquisition Houdon’s magnificent life-size marble portrait bust of Armand-Thomas Hue, fourth Marquis de Miromesnil, correctly judging that it was the best of the known versions. As with the acquisition of French paintings, Miss Frick’s proposal of this eighteenth-century sculpture built on the Collection’s strengths. The marble bust of Miromesnil (opposite page) was commensurate in scale and quality to the four bronze male portraits by earlier distinguished Renaissance and Baroque masters that had been acquired by Henry Clay Frick. Together, the Comtesse du Cayla and the Marquis de Miromesnil suggested the range of Houdon’s portraiture by contrasting the evanescent delicacy of a female bust with the sharply realized grandeur of a male portrait.

Miss Frick did not get everything right, but taking the lead in acquisitions always requires assuming risk and sometimes making mistakes. Her eagerness to acquire discoveries (such as the Lippi Annunciation) that her father had purchased a beautiful example, Houdon’s vibrant marble the Comtesse du Cayla. Frick approved this acquisition only after he had compared the Comtesse du Cayla side by side with another Houdon female portrait bust offered to him, pondering the two marbles in his library as he made his decision. Though it is not known whether this exercise in connoisseurship influenced Miss Frick, it cannot be disputed that she subsequently devoted herself to the study of Houdon with the same intensity that she gave to Italian painting and that she eventually trained herself to become a respected Houdon specialist. In 1935 she demonstrated her expertise by proposing for acquisition Houdon’s magnificent life-size marble portrait bust of Armand-Thomas Hue, fourth Marquis de Miromesnil, correctly judging that it was the best of the known versions. As with the acquisition of French paintings, Miss Frick’s proposal of this eighteenth-century sculpture built on the Collection’s strengths. The marble bust of Miromesnil (opposite page) was commensurate in scale and quality to the four bronze male portraits by earlier distinguished Renaissance and Baroque masters that had been acquired by Henry Clay Frick. Together, the Comtesse du Cayla and the Marquis de Miromesnil suggested the range of Houdon’s portraiture by contrasting the evanescent delicacy of a female bust with the sharply realized grandeur of a male portrait.

Miss Frick did not get everything right, but taking the lead in acquisitions always requires assuming risk and sometimes making mistakes. Her eagerness to acquire discoveries (such as the Lippi Annunciation) could, and did, backfire. In 1924 she purchased with her own funds a newly discovered, large-scale marble group attributed to the early Renaissance painter Simone Martini. These sculptures were soon exposed as contemporary forgeries and sent to the University of Pittsburgh to serve as study
pieces. Miss Frick learned from this acquisition disaster. She retreated from completely unfamiliar fields and relied on her Houdon expertise to direct future sculpture purchases. She also concentrated her energy on the area she knew best, early Italian painting. Her persistence garnered important acquisitions, although it eroded her relationship with fellow Trustees. In 1929 she forced approval of the purchase of Paolo and Giovanni Veneziano’s Coronation of the Virgin by presenting to the Board Andrew Mellon’s written comments and vote in favor of this expensive picture (it was acquired for $190,000). She had achieved this success by shipping the painting from New York to Washington, D.C., for Mellon’s inspection. Although the Coronation made a significant addition to the Collection, the Trustees—including Mellon—must have felt manipulated by her tactics. Miss Frick was driven to such extremes by the dilatory habits of the Board that she rightly believed threatened the Collection’s ability to acquire in a competitive art market in which victory went to those who made swift decisions.

Miss Frick recognized the Collection’s limitations as a buyer earlier than did her fellow Board members. Between 1924 and 1935 the Collection spent an average of $92,000 a year on acquisitions. This was significantly less than the sums that wealthy private collectors or large museums could marshal in the pursuit of masterpieces. The Frick Collection was also limited by its size. Buying paintings in large groups was then not only beyond its financial scope, but it also would have upset the Collection’s unique character. Yet purchasing paintings en bloc was precisely the method employed at the end of the 1920s by large institutions such as The Metropolitan Museum of Art and by private collectors such as Samuel H. Kress and Andrew W. Mellon. In light of these circumstances, Miss Frick strove to secure every advantage for the Collection, which sought to purchase works of only the highest quality. Her leadership and focus on three fields—early Italian and pre-Impressionist French pictures and the sculpture of Houdon—established a strong de facto acquisition policy that encouraged dealers to offer important works from these areas first to The Frick Collection. Dealers granted the coveted right of first option only when they were confident that their buyer would make the purchase. The Lippi Annunciation,
Duccio’s Temptation, Veneziano’s Coronation, Chardin’s Serinette, Ingres’s portrait of the Comtesse d’Haussonville, and Houdon’s Miromesnil were all offered to The Frick Collection as first options.

After the museum opened in 1935, the Board of Trustees and the Frick’s director attempted to draft a formal institutional acquisitions policy. Yet their desire to expand the limits of the Collection beyond the types of works acquired by Henry Clay Frick and his daughter met with adamant resistance from Miss Frick herself. Almost fifteen years of bitter (and sometimes public) contention ensued, and Miss Frick would not agree to a written acquisitions policy until 1951.

Already by 1935, some Board members had tired of Miss Frick’s relentless focus on a narrow range of Old Masters, and they claimed that her fervent commitment to early Italian pictures threatened to overshadow her judgment of quality. When the Board was considering Lazzaro Bastiani’s Adoration of the Magi (opposite page) for acquisition in 1935, Trustee John D. Rockefeller Jr. cabled, “While I would greatly support committees decision am wondering whether it is wise to buy a picture by a second rate artist in these uncertain financial times.” Rockefeller’s assessment, though harsh, was justified. The Adoration is a beautiful picture that captures a significant art historical moment in the tradition of Venetian Renaissance painting, but it is not a masterpiece. His cable, however, does not tell the entire story. During that 1935 meeting, the Trustees had to choose between buying Gerard David’s elegant Rest on the Flight to Egypt (left; now in the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.) for $130,000 or purchasing both the Adoration and the portrait of the Marquis de Miromesnil for $135,000. As the chairman of the acquisitions committee, Miss Frick had proposed a fine, reasonably priced early Italian picture and bet on her expertise by promoting along with it an underpriced, underacknowledged Houdon masterpiece. Miss Frick had engineered a daring choice that responded creatively to The Frick Collection’s acquisition budget for that year. She presented the Board with a difficult decision. Should the Board have voted instead for Gerard David’s Rest on the Flight to Egypt? That question is as open to debate today as it was then.

When visitors first entered The Frick Collection in 1935, they witnessed an institution that both celebrated change and honored its legacy. At the museum’s opening, the East 70th Street mansion’s most important domestic interiors—the Dining Room, the Fragonard Room, the Living Hall, and the Library—remained largely as Henry Clay Frick had installed them. By Miss Frick’s request, the grand Picture Gallery was hung just as it had been during her father’s day. But much had changed. The intimate room in which Frick had displayed his colorful
Limoges enamels had been transformed into a gallery that also featured jewel-like masterpieces of early Renaissance painting. In Pope's expansive new East Gallery, Ingres's sensuous portrait of the Comtesse d'Haussonville hung center stage, while Houdon's brilliant marble bust of the Marquis de Miromesnil commanded the cool gray space of Pope's Garden Court. Miss Frick's acquisitions had established the character of galleries both old and new and set the bar for future purchases. With an institutional budget significantly more modest than her father's fortune, Helen Clay Frick bought daringly, knowledgeably, and well. The years between 1924 and 1935 still define the most inventively brilliant sequence of purchases in The Frick Collection's acquisition history. For Miss Frick, nothing less than this could have fulfilled the bold promise of her father's bequest.—Denise Allen, Curator

This article is indebted to Inge Reist, who shared her essay "Helen Clay Frick: Charting Her Own Course" from Power Underestimated: American Women Art Collectors, due to be published later this year. Letters quoted within are from the archives of the Frick Art Reference Library. I am grateful to Julie Ludwig and Susan Chore of the archives department for their invaluable guidance during my research.

LEFT
Lazzaro Bastiani (d. 1512), Adoration of the Magi, 1470s, tempera on poplar panel, The Frick Collection

OPPOSITE PAGE
Gerard David (c. 1460–1523), Rest on the Flight to Egypt, oil on panel, c. 1510, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.
Arcade: A Groundbreaking Collaboration
The Frick Partners with MoMA and Brooklyn Museum

Most people associate museums with art and artifacts, not research libraries. But many of New York's most prestigious museums have extensive collections of books and papers. Four of them—The Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Modern Art, the Brooklyn Museum, and The Frick Collection—have combined forces to share resources, save money, and make their holdings more accessible to the public.

Together these institutions make up the New York Art Resources Consortium, an integrated library system formed in 2007 that is supported by grants from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Its Web site, nyarc.org, went online in February. Last year, three of the museums united their collections in one catalog, called Arcade (the Met has kept its catalog separate).

"This allows us to do some things collaboratively that we weren't able to do individually," said Milan R. Hughston, the chief of library and museum archives at MoMA. "Together we aggregate close to a million books, articles, periodicals, and special collections that document art history."

The database, at arcade.nyarc.org, is a trove of more than 800,000 records from ancient Egypt to contemporary art that includes exhibition and auction sale catalogs, monographs, periodicals, rare books, photographs, and archival materials.

The Arcade program allows users to search all three libraries' combined holdings and also conduct searches of specific collections. In addition, the Web site has links to recent acquisitions, bibliographies, new digital collections, and library blogs.

"Because the culture of each museum is unique, they haven't had a tradition of doing this," said Deborah Kempe, chief of collections management and access at the Frick Art Reference Library. "It's groundbreaking in the world of art information."

"It's all about making sure that we stay vibrant, alive places," Ms. Kempe added. "The whole is larger than its parts. We can maximize our strengths. We can showcase collections at each site, but together pack more of a punch. The possibilities are endless."

The research collections had previously primarily served scholars, museum and art market professionals, collectors, and graduate students. But by coordinating their efforts, the museums hope to reach a wider audience. "We all have a mission to the public that isn't generally known and we want to highlight that," Ms. Kempe said. "There are many other people who could use this material. We would like the word to be out even more."

All of these libraries have been affected by the economic downturn, and the consortium hopes to save money by, for example, sharing a subscription to a journal. "Part of the objective is to bring certain economies and efficiencies to our operations, to look at centralizing core activities—cataloging, processing, acquisitions, conservation, storage of print collections, digital collections," said Kenneth Soehner, the chief librarian at the Met's Watson Library. "We realized that..."
The potential for this collaboration and the need for this collaboration are greater every day as we face economic challenges,” Mr. Soehner continued. “I’m still confident that a consolidation of our activities could bring significant cost reductions.”

With a staff of 42 and nearly 700,000 volumes, the Met has one of the largest art museum libraries in the world, Mr. Soehner said. It attracts 28,000 visitors a year and adds 1,000 books to the collection every month. “There is a much greater chance of continuing that distinction through collaboration with other libraries,” he said.

But the consortium has also made the participating museums realize the specific strengths of their individual holdings. “It allows us to see what we have that’s unique and rare,” said Deirdre Lawrence, the principal librarian at the Brooklyn Museum. “The libraries reflect what’s in the museum collections. There is not a lot of duplication.”

“What we’ve been able to do is broaden knowledge of what we have,” she added. “We’ve opened up the doors and let the world in.”

The Brooklyn Museum Libraries and Archives, for example, includes the Wilbour Library of Egyptology, founded in 1934 with the personal library of Charles Edwin Wilbour, one of America’s first Egyptologists, who provided the foundation for the museum’s Egyptian antiquities collection. The Frick has sketchbooks of artists who went to Egypt. “These things all complement each other,” Ms. Kempe said.

The Frick Art Reference Library, established in 1920 by Helen Clay Frick—the daughter of Henry Clay Frick, who founded the adjacent museum—has collections relating to fine and decorative arts from the fourth century to the mid-twentieth century by artists from Europe and the Americas. Its photo archive includes more than one million photographs documenting the work of 36,000 artists.

“The Frick was collecting in areas the Met wasn’t,” Mr. Hughston said. If someone wants to research Latin America, they can draw on the Brooklyn Museum library’s Spanish Colonial holdings or the Modern’s contemporary material. “If you’re looking for anything related to Picasso, you’re going to go to MoMA,” said Lily Pregill, Arcade’s project coordinator and systems manager. “But you’ll also find things at the Frick that you may not have known were there.”

The libraries, in turn, can work together to curate online exhibitions, oral histories, and other projects. “What we’re looking at are collaborative projects that will fill gaps in terms of research,” Ms. Lawrence said. “We spend thousands of dollars on books and periodicals,” she continued. “We want them to be used. We don’t want them to just sit on the shelves.”—Robin Pogrebin

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The Frick Celebrates Its 75th Anniversary
Director's Circle Dinner, Young Fellows Ball, Spring Party

The Director's Circle Dinner on January 25 doubled as a celebration of the museum's seventy-fifth anniversary. Following cocktails in the Garden Court, author Steven McLeod Bedford spoke about the architect John Russell Pope and his conversion of Henry Clay Frick's residence into a museum. Dinner was served in the East Gallery, one of five public spaces Pope added to the original mansion.

On February 25, the Young Fellows turned back the clock to 1935, the year The Frick Collection opened its doors. The Diamond Deco Ball, named in honor of the Frick's diamond anniversary, raised nearly $250,000 in support of the museum's education program. The event's chairwomen wore '30s-inspired gowns by Vera Wang and jewelry by Tiffany & Company, two of the evening's sponsors.

On May 17, the Frick said "thank you" to its Fellows with the annual Spring Party. Guests took their last look at the special loan exhibition of paintings from London's Dulwich Picture Gallery, and in the Fifth Avenue Garden, a jazz trio played under the magnolia trees.

Director's Circle Dinner
1. David Owsley and David Tobey 2. Frederick R. Koch and Chairman Margot C. Bogert 3. Olivia Birkeland Gerard and John P. Birkeland 4. Francis Finlay and Director Anne L. Poulet

Diamond Deco Ball

Spring Party
Concerts

Tickets are now available for the 2010–11 concert season. For a complete listing of artists and dates through 2011 or to purchase tickets, please visit frick.org/concerts.

Sunday, October 10, at 5:00 p.m.
Ensemble 415, in New York debut. Two violins, two violas, cello, and harpsichord: Bach, Vivaldi, Albinoni, Muffat, Sammartini, Albicastro

Sunday, October 24, at 5:00 p.m.
Nelson Goerner, Argentinean pianist, in New York recital debut: Chopin, Schumann

Sunday, November 14, at 5:00 p.m.
Doric String Quartet, in New York debut: Haydn, Korngold, Schubert

Sunday, December 12, at 5:00 p.m.
Colin Balzer, Canadian tenor, in New York recital debut, with Erika Switzer, pianist: Haydn, Schubert, Britten

Programs in the Galleries

Programs are free with museum admission. No reservations are necessary unless otherwise indicated. For a complete listing of Education programs or to reserve a space, please visit frick.org/education.

Rooms with a View
Sundays and Tuesdays through July, at 3:00 p.m.
Join a docent for a ten-minute presentation about the distinctive and beautiful rooms of The Frick Collection.

Art Dialogues
Friday, July 9, at 6:30 p.m.
Friday, August 13, at 6:30 p.m.
For young professionals, Art Dialogues offer the dual pleasures of a long look at a work of art and the chance to meet likeminded art-lovers. Free after-hours admission; online reservations are required.

Gallery Conversations
Saturday, July 10, at 12:00 noon
Participants will study and discuss selected masterpieces in the galleries. Online reservations are required.

Sunday Sketch
Sunday, July 11 & 25, drop-in between 1:00 and 3:00 p.m.
Visitors are invited to sketch architectural views of the Frick from inside or outside the building. All ages over ten are welcome.

Art Club
Saturday, July 17, at 11:00 a.m.
Saturday, August 14, at 11:00 a.m.
For middle school students. Participants will write and illustrate imaginative stories in the galleries, using the artwork and architecture as inspiration. Classes are free, but online reservations are required.

MUSEUM SHOP

The Museum Shop offers a wide selection of scholarly and popular books, stationery, prints, and gift items related to the Frick’s exhibitions and collections. Visit the shop during regular Collection hours or purchase items online at frick.org. Members always receive a 10% discount.

Building The Frick Collection
125 pages
softcover $14.95

First Impressions

Were you here in 1935?
The Frick Collection’s 1935 debut inspired countless newspaper articles by art critics and cultural commentators, but little is known of public opinion or the experiences of private individuals. In this 75th anniversary year, we are seeking first impressions of those who visited during the museum’s inaugural year, 1935–36. If you or someone you know has a story to share, please contact Mary Emerson at emerson@frick.org or 212.547.6870.

Lecture

Saturday, June 26, at 2:00 p.m.
A Grand Conversion: Transforming the Frick Residence into a Museum
Steven McLeod Bedford will discuss architect John Russell Pope’s skillful conversion of a home into The Frick Collection. Bedford is the author of the acclaimed monograph John Russell Pope: Architect of Empire. Free with museum admission. No reservations are necessary.

Garden Party

Benefit Event
Thursday, July 15, 6:30 to 9:00 p.m.
Join fellow art enthusiasts for cocktails and music in the museum’s beautiful Fifth Avenue Garden. Proceeds from the event benefit a wide range of programs at the Collection and the Library. Purchase tickets online or by calling 212.547.6873.
Patron Tickets, $250
Young Patron Tickets, $150
(age 39 and younger)
The Frick Collection
1 East 70th Street
New York, New York 10021
212.288.0700

Collection Hours
10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday; 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Sundays; closed Mondays and holidays

Admission
Members receive unlimited free admission to The Frick Collection. Adults, $18.00; $12.00 for seniors; $5.00 for students; on Sundays from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., visitors are invited to “pay what you wish.” Children under ten are not admitted.

Membership
For information regarding your membership or to give a membership as a gift, please call the membership department at 212.547.0707.

The Museum Shop
The Museum Shop is open during regular Collection hours. You also may purchase items online at frick.org or by telephone at 212.547.6848.

Frick Art Reference Library
10 East 71st Street
New York, New York 10021
212.288.8700

Library Hours
10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday; 9:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Saturdays; closed Sundays, holiday weekends, Saturdays in June and July, and during the month of August. The Library is open to all researchers free of charge.

Visit our Web site at frick.org.

The Fragonard Room
Jean-Honoré Fragonard (1732–1806),
The Progress of Love, Love Letters, 1771–73,
oil on canvas, The Frick Collection