



# ARCHIVED PRESS RELEASE

from

## THE FRICK COLLECTION

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### *ELECTIVE AFFINITIES: EDMUND DE WAAL AT THE FRICK COLLECTION*

**FIRST MUSEUM INSTALLATION BY THE ARTIST IN THE UNITED STATES**

May 30 through November 17, 2019



Edmund de Waal, *that pause of space*, porcelain, gold, alabaster, aluminum, and plexiglass, 2019, on view in the North Hall, © Edmund de Waal. Courtesy the artist and The Frick Collection; photo: Christopher Burke

The Frick Collection will present a temporary installation of site-specific works by sculptor Edmund de Waal—a rich juxtaposition of nine objects displayed in the main galleries of the museum, alongside works from the permanent collection. Acclaimed as both an artist and writer, de Waal is known for his award-winning family memoir *The Hare with Amber Eyes* (2010), as well as installations of porcelain vessels housed in minimal structures, often created in response to collections and archives or the history of a specific place, such as Waddesdon Manor and Chatsworth House, both in England. His approach is particularly suited to the Frick, and this project marks the first such installation by the artist in the United States. The presentation, curated by Charlotte Vignon, the Frick's Curator of Decorative Arts, is the latest in a series of collaborations with de Waal and The Frick Collection. The installation is accompanied by related education programs and an illustrated catalogue featuring installation views and essays by Vignon and de Waal, which will be available in June.

Vignon comments, “I am deeply grateful to Edmund for conceiving such a beautiful and insightful presentation, one that embodies his profound understanding of art, architectural spaces, and the history of collecting. It is a wonderful culmination of his long and close relationship with the Frick.”

De Waal adds, “My hope is that people will understand that this installation is a result of a lifetime-long love affair with this collection, that it’s an attempt to be in real conversation with art, with spaces, with how light changes within a building, with how you move through spaces. If that works, I’m happy.”

## ABOUT THE INSTALLATION

Designed specifically for the Frick’s Gilded Age mansion, the sculptures de Waal has created—made of porcelain, steel, gold, alabaster, and glass—resonate with the visual experience of the collection as much as with its history, beginning with Henry Clay Frick’s roots in Pittsburgh. Their careful placement compels a reconsideration of the museum’s spaces and the masterpieces contained therein. Highlights of the project, discussed here, include installations in the Frick’s West Gallery, North Hall, and Fragonard Room. (Other galleries that contain works by de Waal are the Ante Room, Dining Room, Living Hall, Library, and Enamels Room.)

## THE WEST GALLERY

Frick was one of the greatest art collectors of his time, with a passion for Old Master paintings. Although he lived with paintings throughout his home, it was in the magisterial picture gallery (now called the West Gallery) that he chose to display his important collection of Flemish, Dutch, and Spanish works, including masterpieces by Rembrandt, Vermeer, Van Dyck, Hals, Velázquez, and Goya. De Waal’s *noontime and dawntime* and *from darkness to darkness* respond to several key elements that have characterized this room since Frick’s time, among them a series of half-length portraits by Hals of sitters in sober yet fashionable black attire with white collars and sleeves: *Portrait of a*



Edmund de Waal (b. 1964), *noontime and dawntime*, porcelain, steel, and plexiglass, 2019, on view in the West Gallery, © Edmund de Waal. Courtesy the artist and The Frick Collection; photo: Christopher Burke

*Woman*, 1635; *Portrait of an Elderly Man*, ca. 1627–30; *Portrait of a Painter*, early 1650s; and *Portrait of a Man*, ca. 1660. These individuals embody the upright and wealthy society of Dutch Protestant merchants, many of whom had become immensely rich and powerful through the Dutch East India Company, founded in 1602 to organize the booming trade between Europe and Asia. It was because of the Dutch East India Company that Asian porcelain was

imported in large quantities to Europe, fueling a two-centuries-long passion for “white gold,” as porcelain was then called.



Edmund de Waal (b. 1964), *noontime and downtime* (detail), porcelain, steel, and plexiglass, 2019, on view in the West Gallery, © Edmund de Waal. Courtesy the artist and The Frick Collection; photo: Christopher Burke

The size and darkness of de Waal’s pieces made of black porcelain and black steel also resonate with the three large seventeenth-century bronze sculptures displayed on the long table in the middle of the room: *Hercules and the Hydra* by an unknown French artist; *Nessus and Deianira* attributed to Pietro Tacca; and *Triton and Nereid* by an unknown Netherlandish artist. These works join the other sixteenth- to eighteenth-century Italian and Dutch bronze sculptures positioned throughout the room on Renaissance cassoni and Renaissance-style tables, to emulate the sophisticated atmosphere of a grand Italian Renaissance or Baroque residence. Finally, de Waal’s installation engages with another painting that has been on display in the West Gallery since the early twentieth century: Goya’s *The Forge* (ca. 1815–20). This masterpiece features three men working iron, the base metal of steel, which is extensively used by de Waal in the objects he has created for the museum, as an evocation of the origin of Frick’s wealth.

## THE NORTH HALL

Galleries throughout the museum feature arrangements of paintings, furniture, and *objets d’art* made in different countries and centuries, which come together in balanced ensembles. Some of these groupings were created by Mr. Frick with the help of his dealers and interior decorators and remain unchanged today; others were created over the years by the institution’s curators, who have positioned artworks to address the later function of the house as a public museum and also to incorporate new acquisitions. One of these ensembles was created in the 1980s in the North Hall by the Frick’s first curator, Edgar Munhall (1933–2016), who positioned Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres’s *Comtesse d’Haussonville* (1845) above an eighteenth century French side table of gray-blue marble with gilt-bronze mounts by Pierre Gouthière, the great chaser and gilder. The table was commissioned in 1781 by the wealthiest woman in France at the time, Louise Jeanne de Durfort, the Duchess of Mazarin.



On the side table, Munhall placed a pair of dark-blue Chinese porcelain beakers with eighteenth-century French gilt-bronze mounts that evoke the porcelain vases in Ingres's portrait. These beakers are now temporarily replaced by *that pause of space* (page 1 and at right), de Waal's garniture made with alabaster, glazed and unglazed porcelain, and fragments of gilt porcelain, in a floating vitrine with a gold frame. The materials and their colors converse directly with the luxurious objects owned by the Duchess of Mazarin and the Comtesse d'Haussonville, represented in Gouthière's side table and Ingres's painting, respectively. While giving us a glimpse inside the world of these two fashionable Parisians who lived a century apart, these works of art—including de Waal's piece—remind us that objects, which so often survive their first owners, can acquire different meanings and functions as they pass from one collector to another.



Edmund de Waal, *that pause of space*, porcelain, gold, alabaster, aluminum, and plexiglass, 2019, on view in the North Hall. © Edmund de Waal. Courtesy the artist and The Frick Collection; photo: Christopher Burke

## THE FRAGONARD ROOM



Edmund de Waal (b.1964), *on an archaic torso of Apollo*, 2019, porcelain, steel, gold, alabaster, aluminum, and plexiglass, on view in the Fragonard Room. © Edmund de Waal. Courtesy the artist and The Frick Collection; photo: Christopher Burke

The Fragonard Room is named after the artist who created the fourteen panels that constitute *The Progress of Love* by, purchased by Mr. Frick in 1915 from the art dealer Joseph Duveen (1869–1939). The gallery is a celebrated evocation of an eighteenth-century French interior from a 1914 perspective. Here, atop a mahogany and gilt-bronze commode, made in 1785–90 by Jean-Henri Riesener, Marie-Antoinette's favorite cabinetmaker, is *on an archaic torso of Apollo*. The Apollo of the title evokes the gilt-bronze mask on the commode. De Waal's piece engages with other works in this gallery related to the god of music, poetry, and light, and ultimately of desire. The two sets of stacked celadon porcelain bowls follow the rhythm created by the other objects in the room: *The Dance of Time* (1788), designed by Louis XVI's clockmaker Jean-Baptiste Lepaute, with

three terracotta figures by Clodion; *Zephyrus and Flora* (1799), also by Clodion; and the garniture in the center of the room composed of three vases from the Sèvres Porcelain Manufactory (ca. 1759). De Waal's installation adds a twenty-first-century voice to a conversation that began a century ago, when Mr. Frick and Duveen first assembled these objects for this room. Conversation among objects was elevated to an art form during the eighteenth century, with writers exploring the genre of stories told from the objects' point of view.



Edmund de Waal (b.1964), *on an archaic torso of Apollo*, 2019, porcelain, steel, gold, alabaster, aluminum, and plexiglass, on view in the Fragonard Room. © Edmund de Waal. Courtesy the artist and The Frick Collection; photo: Christopher Burke

Major support for the installation is provided by the David Berg Foundation, Agnes Gund, Mr. and Mrs. Michael J. Horvitz, Margot and Jerry Bogert, the Arnhold Family, Kathleen and †Martin Feldstein, the Eugene M. Lang Foundation, Ambassador and Mrs. John L. Loeb Jr., Lynda and Stewart Resnick, Louisa Stude Sarofim, Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Saul, and by Jane Richards in honor of Elizabeth Eveillard.

## ABOUT EDMUND DE WAAL



Edmund de Waal; photo: Ben McKee

De Waal's art and literature speak to his fascination with the nature of objects and the narratives of their collection and display. With his interventions and artworks, de Waal explores themes of diaspora, memorial, materiality, as well as the color white; and through his written and artistic practice, he has broken new critical ground in the history and potential of ceramics, and in architecture, music, dance, and poetry. His recent museum exhibitions include responses to the Italian painter Giorgio Morandi (Artipelag, Stockholm, 2017); to the collection of the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, with a focus on the theme of anxiety (2016); and an architectural intervention made in response to the Viennese émigré modernist Rudolf Schindler (Schindler House, Los Angeles, 2018).

In addition to *The Hare with Amber Eyes*, de Waal is also the author of *The White Road: Journey into an Obsession* (2015), a personal narrative about the history of porcelain. In collaboration with the Frick, he is a co-author, with Vignon, of a recently published volume in the Frick Diptych series. The publication focuses on a pair of porcelain candelabras with gilt-bronze mounts by Pierre Gouthière. In 2013, he gave a lecture in conjunction with the Frick Art Reference Library's Center for the History of Collecting, and was the museum's Autumn Dinner honoree in 2016.

## ABOUT THE PUBLICATION



The Frick Collection has produced a fully illustrated catalogue to accompany the exhibition, which includes an essay written by de Waal and entries for each of the nine installations, written by Vignon. The publication is available in the Museum Shop or can be ordered on the Frick's Web site ([frick.org](http://frick.org)) or by phone at (212) 547-6848 (92 pages; 46 color illustrations; hardcover \$17.95, member price \$16.16).

## AUDIO TOUR AND RELATED PROGRAMS

An audio tour by de Waal of each object in the installation is available on the Frick's Web site ([frick.org](http://frick.org)), as well as clips of the music that inspired him during the creation of the pieces.

A number of related programs will be offered during the run of the exhibition including a keynote lecture given by de Waal on May 30 at 6:30 p.m. He will also participate in *Art is the Way*, a collaboration between the Frick and P.S. 84, The Lillian Weber School of The Arts. Now in its third year, the program brings objects from the museum's collection into the classroom with the aim of increasing access to art, inclusion, and diversity.

## INTERACT

Social:    /FrickCollection

#deWaalxFrick

#FrickCollection

## BASIC INFORMATION

**General Information Phone:** 212.288.0700

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

**Building project:** [www.frickfuture.org](http://www.frickfuture.org)

**E-mail:** [info@frick.org](mailto:info@frick.org)

**App:** [frick.org/app](http://frick.org/app)

**Museum address:** 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:** \$22; senior citizens \$17; students \$12; Pay-what-you-wish hours on Wednesdays from 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. **PLEASE NOTE TO YOUR READERS:** Children under ten are not admitted to the museum

**First Fridays:** Museum admission and gallery programs are free from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. on the first Friday evening of the month (except January and September)

**Subway:** #6 local to 68th Street station; #Q to 72nd 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 museum admission is an Acoustiguide Audio Tour of the permanent collection. The tour is offered in six languages: English, French, German, Italian, Japanese, and Spanish.

**Shop:** The shop is open the same days as the museum, closing fifteen minutes before the institution.

**Group Museum Visits:** Please call 212.288.0700 for details and to make reservations.

**Public Programs:** A calendar of events is available online

**Library address:** 10 East 71st Street, near Fifth Avenue

**Hours:** [www.frick.org/visit/library/hours](http://www.frick.org/visit/library/hours)

**Admission:** Open to the public free of charge

**#345, May 14, 2019**

For further press information, please contact Alexis Light, Senior Manager of Media Relations & Marketing; Phone: 212.547.0710; E-mail: [mediarelations@frick.org](mailto:mediarelations@frick.org)