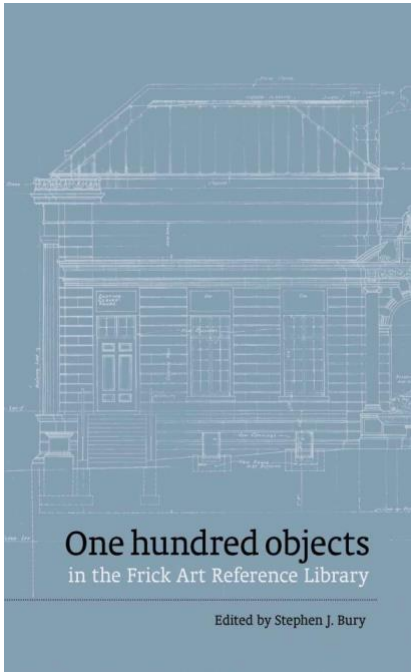


Frick Art Reference Library Celebrates Its Centennial New Anthology Documents Library's Remarkable History through Collection Highlights



New York (October 26, 2022) — The Frick Art Reference Library, a preeminent center for art historical research, is marking one hundred years since its opening by looking back at its remarkable history. A new publication, *One Hundred Objects in the Frick Art Reference Library*, commemorates the occasion through highlights drawn from the library's extensive collections of books, rare auction catalogs, artists' sketchbooks, photographs, and a wide range of archival holdings. The book also celebrates moments in the library's history, from its involvement in the Monuments Men program during World War II to its development of innovative research tools.

With entries written by current and past staff members, the publication underscores the breadth of the library's holdings, enjoyed by generations of students, scholars, and members of the public at no charge. Over the next two years, the celebration continues with *One Hundred Years at the Library*, a series of related videos released on the Frick's [YouTube channel](#) and dedicated blog posts published on frick.org/blogs.

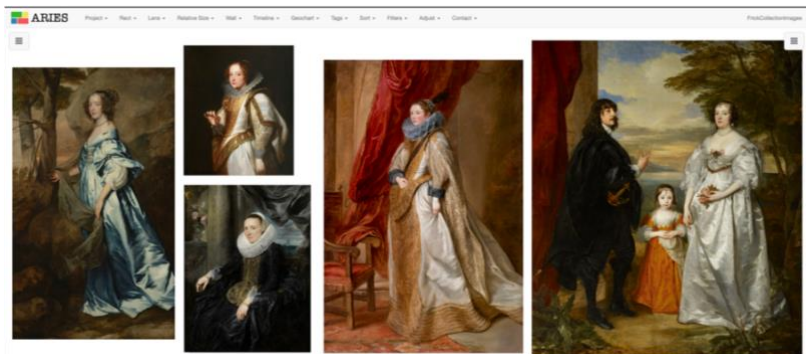
Comments Stephen J. Bury, Andrew W. Mellon Chief Librarian, "There are so many ways to tell the story of this significant library, from reflections on its founder and the staff who shaped it to the collections in its care and the cutting-edge offerings for which it is known today. We hope this volume offers fresh and perhaps unexpected perspectives on the evolution of what is today one of the world's leading research centers."

The publication marks the anniversary of the library opening its doors to the public for the first time, in 1922, after its founding by Helen Clay Frick as a memorial to her father, Henry Clay Frick. The basis of its collections were data and documents she provided to him while conducting research on the artists in his collection. She drew inspiration from the Witt Library of Reproductions, established in London in the late nineteenth century by connoisseurs Mary and Sir Robert Witt, who was a trustee of both the National Gallery and Tate and chairman of the National Loan Collections Trust. Helen Frick's library—whose founding collection, the Photoarchive, was the first of its kind in the United States—was initially housed in the basement bowling alley of the family residence. In early 1922, an art history class from Princeton University was the first group of researchers to visit the newly founded Frick Art Reference Library, and this event was chosen to mark the centennial, as it affirmed the nascent institution as a serious destination for the study of art history.



In 1935, the library opened a new permanent home, located at 10 East 71st Street. The building was designed by John Russell Pope, who at the same time was transforming the Frick residence into the museum now known as The Frick Collection. Together, these two public institutions—today joined as one— would become seminal centers dedicated to the appreciation and study of art. Over the next century, the library evolved and expanded its offerings, notably embracing innovation and new technologies to broaden scholars' access to a vast array of art historical resources. This includes the advancements of its Photoarchive and initiatives in microfilming, digitization, web archiving, computer vision, and much more. An example discussed in the book is a newly developed software tool called ARIES (ART Image Exploration Space), developed in collaboration with NYU's Tandon School of Engineering and Brazil's Universidade Federal Fluminense, which allows

researchers and art historians to manipulate and organize images in a digital space in a way that promotes new findings and greatly assists in scholarly work.

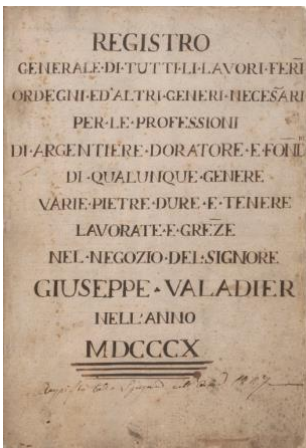




Several entries in the book amplify the central role women play in the library’s history and in its collections. While scores of male agents and dealers helped Henry Clay Frick form his art collection, the library was founded and, for decades, run exclusively by women, mirroring the profession at large. The first six chief librarians—Ruth Savord, Ethelwyn Manning, Hannah Johnson Howell, Mildred Steinbach, Helen Sanger, and Patricia Barnett—were responsible for the library’s major leaps forward, each one adapting to a rapidly evolving field while maintaining the institution’s exacting standards. One of the objects in the

publication is a 1923 photograph of the library’s staff, who were instrumental in its early establishment and growth and several of whom held decades-long tenures.

The library’s collections are also representative of women’s achievements in the arts. Additional objects highlighted in the book include a portrait bust of Helen Clay Frick by the renowned American sculptor Malvina Cornell Hoffman, a book of poems published after the sudden death of celebrated seventeenth-century Bolognese painter and printmaker Elisabetta Sirani, and woodcuts by artist Elena Luksch-Makowsky, the only woman who took part in the Vienna Secession exhibition of 1902.



To complement its vast holdings of books, archives, and auction catalogs, the library has acquired remarkable manuscripts and albums of prints, several of which are also highlighted in this publication. Among these is the 380-page shop inventory of the Valadier family. (Silversmith Luigi Valadier’s work was the subject of the Frick’s award-winning 2018–19 exhibition *Luigi Valadier: Splendor in Eighteenth-Century Rome*.) Dated 1810, the inventory is the principal documentary source for information on the family’s eighteen-room workshop, itemizing tools and utensils, raw materials, and completed works, as well as models and drawings essential to understanding their

output. The library also holds the most complete extant set of plates from one of the first fashion magazines, the *Gallerie des modes et costumes français*. Published at intervals between 1778–87, the hand-colored engravings present the remarkable and whimsical hairstyles, fashions, and millinery arts of France in the years approaching the Revolution. The rarity of sets like this today—as such material was often destroyed due to its royalist connections—exemplifies the unique objects found in the Frick Art Reference Library and detailed in this celebratory publication.



One Hundred Objects in the Frick Art Reference Library was supported by the Eugene V. and Clare E. Thaw Charitable Trust. Published by the Frick Art Reference Library in association with Uniformbooks, it is available for purchase at the Museum Shop at Frick Madison, by visiting shop.frick.org, or by emailing sales@frick.org. The softcover volume of 240 pages features color and black-and-white illustrations (\$24.00; member price \$19.20).

The reading room of the Frick Art Reference Library is currently housed at Frick Madison, the temporary home of The Frick Collection during the renovation of its historic buildings. To reserve a free library appointment, visit the Frick website here visit frick.org/visit/library.

Images: Cover of *One Hundred Objects in the Frick Art Reference Library*. Photo: Joseph Coscia Jr.; The first iteration of the Frick Art Reference Library, ca. 1923, located in the basement bowling alley of Henry Clay Frick's mansion at 1 East 70th Street. Photo: The Frick Collection/Frick Art Reference Library Archives; Frick Art Reference Library entrance on East 71st Street. Photo: Michael Bodycomb; Screenshot of ARIES software. Photo: Frick Art Reference Library; Library staff, summer 1923. Photo: Ira W. Martin, The Frick Collection/Frick Art Reference Library; Woodcut by Elena Luksch-Makowsky for the *Ausstellung der Vereinigung bildender Künstler Österreichs Secession Wien: Klinger, Beethoven: April–June 1902*. Photo: Frick Art Reference Library; Cover of the shop inventory of Giuseppe Valadier, 1810. Frick Art Reference Library, acquired with the support of Marina Kellen French, 2016. Photo: Frick Art Reference Library; Plate from *Gallerie des modes et costumes français, 1778–87*. Frick Art Reference Library, gift of Melinda and Paul Sullivan, 2016. Photo: Frick Art Reference Library

INTERACT

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BASIC INFORMATION

Website: frick.org

Building project: frickfuture.org

Bloomberg Connects app: frick.org/app

Frick Madison visitor address: 945 Madison Avenue at 75th Street, New York, NY 10021

Museum hours: Thursday through Sunday, 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.; closed Monday through Wednesday. See website for holiday schedule.

Admission: Timed tickets are strongly recommended and may be purchased online. \$22 general public; \$17 seniors and visitors with disabilities; \$12 students. Admission is always free for members. Pay-what-you-wish admission is offered Thursdays from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m.

Please note: Children under ten are not admitted to the museum.

COVID-19/health and safety policies: frick.org/visit/guidelines

Ticket purchases: frick.org/tickets. For questions: admissions@frick.org

Group museum visits: Available for groups of ten or more. Virtual private tours and online school visits are also offered. See frick.org/visit for more details.

Public programs: A calendar of online and in-person events is available on our website.

Shop: Open during museum hours as well as online daily at shop.frick.org.

Coat check: Available in the Frick Madison Lobby. Visitors are not permitted to carry oversized items into the galleries.

Refreshments: A light menu is available during museum hours.

Subway: #6 local to 77th Street station; #Q to 72nd Street station. **Bus:** M1, M2, M3, and M4 southbound on Fifth Avenue to 75th Street and northbound on Madison Avenue to 74th Street.

Museum mailing address: 1 East 70th Street at Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10021

Photography: Allowed only in the Frick Madison Lobby.

Reading room: Access is offered by appointment Tuesday through Saturday, 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. For further information, visit frick.org/visit/library.

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For further press information, please contact us at communications@frick.org.