

The temporary home of The Frick Collection

Artist Nicolas Party Debuts a Pastel Mural at Frick Madison

Party's Site-Specific Installation Responds to a Pastel Portrait by Eighteenth-Century Artist Rosalba Carriera

June 1, 2023, through March 3, 2024



(New York, May 31, 2023) – The Frick Collection has unveiled a large pastel mural commissioned from the Swiss-born artist Nicolas Party (b. 1980) at the museum's temporary home, Frick Madison. This site-specific work was created in response to Rosalba Carriera's *Portrait of a Man in Pilgrim's Costume*—one of two eighteenth-century pastels by Rosalba bequeathed to the Frick by Alexis Gregory in 2020. The installation features Rosalba's superb portrait at the center of a three-wall mural designed by Party, as well as two new related works specially created by Party for this presentation.

On view from June 1, 2023, through the remainder of the Frick's residency at the Breuer building (which ends March 3, 2024), this installation will inspire the Frick's summer and early fall programming as well as a new publication.

The project, which also marks the 350th anniversary of Rosalba's birth, is organized by Xavier F. Salomon, the Frick's Deputy Director and Peter Jay Sharp Chief Curator. Salomon comments, "It has been a particular pleasure to work with Nicolas Party. I met Nicolas in April 2021 and since then have enjoyed an ongoing and enlightening conversation on pastels. Nicolas's installation at Frick Madison is the result of our exchanges, and I am delighted with the result." Party adds, "When I first fell in love with pastels, some ten years ago, my research quickly led me to the queen of pastel, Rosalba. Her practice and love for the powdery sticks increased the popularity of the medium and were crucial to the development of the art form. I felt a powerful attraction to her pastels. Today, I like to think our approaches might not be all that different."

Born in Venice, Rosalba Carriera (1673–1757) was celebrated throughout Europe during her lifetime for her portraiture. She was the preeminent portraitist in Venice in the mid-eighteenth century, at the same time the Venetian Carnival reached its zenith. During this period, foreign travelers flocked to Venice for the masked revelries that became synonymous with the city, and Rosalba's studio was a popular stop for visiting foreigners, who often posed for her in their elegant Carnival costumes. *Portrait of a Man in Pilgrim's Costume* (ca. 1730) is most likely one such work. The sitter is possibly French, British, or German, but his identity remains unknown. With his black cape, staff, and jaunty tricorne hat, he is depicted as a pilgrim.



Party's mural includes elaborate draperies that highlight the Rosalba portrait along with two additional pastel portraits he created in response to it. These ornate draperies evoke the work of two other towering figures in European pastels—Jean-Étienne Liotard (1702–1789) and Maurice-Quentin de La Tour (1704–1788)—and echo the function of Venetian Carnival masks, which were designed to both conceal and reveal the features of their wearers. Party's installation engages devices of disguise and disclosure, from masks to draperies to makeup (often produced with the same chemical components used to make pastel sticks).

The large-scale murals created by Party, whose primary medium since 2013 has been pastel, are ephemeral, lasting only for the duration of a specific exhibition at a unique location. The historical nature of his practice aligns perfectly with the

installation at Frick Madison, which has given the museum a unique opportunity to reimagine its permanent collection display, presented for the first time outside the domestic setting of the Gilded Age mansion at 1 East 70th Street.

This project is part of a series of initiatives in recent years that invite contemporary responses to the Frick's holdings. Party's installation not only will offer a fresh perspective on an important recent acquisition, but will further Frick Madison's prompting of visitors to question the impact of site and setting on their perception of historic objects in the collection.

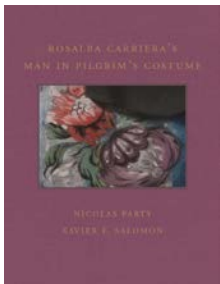
Funding for the installation is generously provided by The Christian Humann Foundation and the David L. Klein, Jr. Foundation, with the support of the Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia.

FREE COMMUNITY EVENING THIS SUMMER

The Frick's next seasonal community evening, Cheng-Harrell Open Night, will feature programming revolving around Party's mural. Held on Friday, June 23, from 5:00 to 9:00 p.m., the event will welcome visitors to Frick Madison to explore three floors of galleries along with the Frick Art Reference Library. A variety of talks will be presented throughout the evening, including two on the Rosalba portrait and Party's installation. Guests are also encouraged to find inspiration in the mural while sketching throughout the museum.

The event is free to all with registration. ASL interpretation and Assistive Listening Devices are also provided at all the talks. Full details are available at frick.org/opennights.

NEW DIPTYCH VOLUME



In August, the Frick will publish *Rosalba Carrera's Man in Pilgrim's Costume*, the thirteenth volume in its popular Diptych series. Each book in the series focuses on a single work from the collection, pairing an illuminating essay by a curator with a contribution from a contemporary cultural figure. Nicolas Party's mural will be the centerpiece of the upcoming diptych, which will also include an essay by Xavier F. Salomon as well as text by Party.

Rosalba Carrera's Man in Pilgrim's Costume will be available for purchase at Frick Madison and online at shop.frick.org.

ABOUT NICOLAS PARTY

Born in Lausanne in 1980, Party is a figurative painter who has achieved critical admiration for his familiar yet unsettling landscapes, portraits, and still lifes that simultaneously celebrate and challenge conventions of representational painting. His works are primarily created in soft pastel, which allows for exceptional degrees of intensity and fluidity in his depictions of objects both natural and manmade. Transforming these objects into abstracted, biomorphic shapes, Party suggests deeper connections and meanings. His unique visual language has coalesced in a universe of fantastical characters and motifs where perspective is heightened and skewed to uncanny effect.



In addition to paintings, Party creates public murals, pietra dura, ceramics, installation works, and sculptures, including painted busts and body parts that allude to the famous fragments of ancient Greece and Rome. His brightly colored androgynous figures vary in scale from the handheld to the monumental and are displayed on tromp l'oeil marble plinths of differing heights that upend conventional perspective. Party's early interest in graffiti and murals—his projects in this arena have included major commissions for the Dallas Museum of Art and the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles—has led to a

particular approach to the installation and presentation of his work. He routinely deploys color and makes architectural interventions in exhibition spaces in order to construct enveloping experiences for the viewer.

Over the years, Party has created work in response to that of European painters such as Louis-Léopold Boilly (1761–1845), Arnold Böcklin (1827–1901), and René Magritte (1898–1967), to name just a few. In 2019, Party organized the pastel exhibition at the FLAG Art Foundation in New York, where he created large—and ephemeral—pastel murals inspired by French eighteenth-century artists including François Boucher (1703–1770) and Jean-Honoré Fragonard (1732–1806), both of whom are represented in the Frick’s permanent collection.

Based in New York, Party studied at the Lausanne School of Art in Switzerland before receiving his MFA from Glasgow School of Art in Scotland.

ABOUT THE FRICK COLLECTION AND FRICK MADISON

The historic buildings of The Frick Collection are currently closed for renovation and enhancement, their first comprehensive upgrade since the 1930s. For the duration of the renovation project, the collections of the museum and library remain accessible to the public at Frick Madison, the Marcel Breuer–designed building at 945 Madison Avenue that was once the home of the Whitney Museum of American Art, and most recently, The Met Breuer. Now in its final year, the temporary residency ensures that the public can continue to enjoy the Frick’s masterpieces, while also giving the museum a unique opportunity to reimagine its presentation of paintings, sculptures, and decorative arts within a completely different context.

Honoring the institution’s architectural legacy and unique character, the project plan designed by Selldorf Architects will provide unprecedented access to the original 1914 residence of Henry Clay Frick, while preserving the intimate visitor experience and beloved galleries for which the Frick is known. Conceived to address pressing institutional and programmatic needs, the plan will create new spaces for permanent collection display and special exhibitions, conservation, education, and public programs, while improving visitor amenities and overall accessibility.

Images: All photos of artwork by Joseph Coscia Jr. Portrait of Nicolas Party by Axel Dupeux.

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. Free admission is granted to visitors ages 10–17. 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](https://www.frick.org/visit/guidelines)

Ticket purchase link: [frick.org/tickets](https://www.frick.org/tickets). For questions: admissions@frick.org

Group reservations: For questions: groupreservations@frick.org

Public programs: A calendar of online, virtual, and video events is available on our website.

Shop: Open during museum hours as well as online daily.

Refreshments: A light menu, offered by The SisterYard, is available on the lower level 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, near Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10021

Photography: Allowed only in the Frick Madison Lobby.

Reading room: Access is offered by appointment Tuesday through Sunday, 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. For further information, visit [frick.org/tickets](https://www.frick.org/tickets).

#393

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