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THE FRICK COLLECTION

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The Frick Collection to be Only North American Venue of Internationally Touring Exhibition

POUSSIN, CLAUDE, AND THEIR WORLD: SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY FRENCH DRAWINGS FROM THE ÉCOLE DES BEAUX-ARTS, PARIS

September 18 through December 1, 2002

Featuring seventy-one drawings, *Poussin, Claude, and Their World: Seventeenth-Century French Drawings from the École des Beaux-Arts, Paris*, includes outstanding masterpieces by Nicolas Poussin and Claude Lorrain, as well as lesser-known artists such as Sébastien Bourdon, Simon Vouet, Eustache Le Sueur, Charles Le Brun, and Noël Coypel. With works by over thirty artists selected by Emmanuelle Brugerolles, Curator of Drawings at the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts, and Colin B. Bailey, Chief Curator, The Frick Collection, these works provide an in-depth survey of French drawings from the seventeenth century carefully chosen from a collection that is singularly rich in this field. The École des Beaux-Arts has seldom placed such a large number of sheets on loan at any given time, and this exhibition will include many drawings that have never been on view in the United States. Furthermore, several new acquisitions are to be included, works that the École des Beaux-Arts has not yet shown even to the French public. A special edition of the catalogue has been translated for the Frick venue of this tour and represents a new source in English on the holdings of this important French institution. The exhibition is made possible by a generous grant from the Robert Lehman Foundation and through the support of the Fellows of The Frick Collection.

A RICH COLLECTION PRESENTS A SPECIAL OPPORTUNITY

The Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture was founded by Cardinal Mazarin and Louis XIV in 1648. Its school survived the French Revolution to join that of the Academy of Architecture, and during the early nineteenth century, the two became the *École des Beaux-Arts*. The institution inherited a remarkable collection from the former Royal Academies, and today its holdings in the area of Master Drawings comprise a remarkable resource of some 15,000 works. French, Italian, and Northern Schools are well represented among the sheets from the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries.

The exhibition at the Frick presents an important opportunity to study the flourishing of the French School in the seventeenth century, a noted area of strength in the collection of the *École des Beaux-Arts*. Of particular focus will be the years between 1620 and 1680, the period to which French Classicism traces its origin. At the center of this development were **Nicolas Poussin** (1594–1665) and **Claude Lorrain** (c. 1604/05–1682), whose work served as models for so many other artists and set the standard for the genres of history and landscape painting, respectively. Drawings by both masters comprise approximately one-third of the exhibition. A sense of context is offered by the work of more than thirty other artists who preceded and followed Poussin and Claude. The exhibition presents a wide variety of genres, among them allegory, religion, portraiture, and landscape, while including preparatory studies for paintings, painted décors, tapestries, decorative ornaments, and engravings.

Nicolas Poussin spent most of his active years in Italy, absorbing the riches of classical art and architecture, while very much developing his own idiom. Indeed, Poussin's approach to history painting – wherein the challenge rests in depicting multiple-figure compositions in an exciting and legible fashion – was so striking and successful that he set the standard against which other artists' works in this genre have been judged. One of the highlights of the exhibition is the drawing *Salome Receiving the Head of Saint John the Baptist*, dated after Poussin returned to Rome from a stay in Paris. His graphic style altered radically at this point: whereas he previously drew figures with a lively and spontaneous precision, after 1642 he assumed a more expressive, pictorial mode, as exemplified in this sheet. Here, Poussin's bold use of a brown wash creates sculptural quality to this heroic drawing that is quite different from the linear sensibility of the monumental paintings for which he is best known. Among the other heroic-themed works featured is a preparatory study for *The Judgment of Solomon*. Poussin considered the final

version of this composition (now at the Louvre) to be his best painting, and very quickly it became one of the most admired examples of the genre.

The exhibition offers an opportunity to examine Poussin's graphic work in genres with which he is less associated. Included are rare landscape drawings, such as *A Fortified Castle*, which reveals his ability to capture the effects of light and shadow convincingly – but with great economy. The selection also includes a fairly rare example of Poussin's practice of directly sketching from antique models, *Studies of Roman Soldiers, after Bas-reliefs on Trajan's Column*.

Claude Gellée, known as Claude Lorrain after the province of his birth, was also active in Italy as a painter and draftsman, devoting himself particularly to the study of nature. Viewed as the quintessential landscape painter of the period, he captured the beauty of the Roman countryside, referred to as the Campagna, and elevated it in a way that suggests the timelessness of the ancient world. He made countless open-air studies of natural elements as well as medieval and roman monuments in an effort to learn how to depict every possible variation of the effects of light, from dawn until dusk. These studies, which were particularly associated with his early years, served as learning exercises and provided a record for future reference. Included in the exhibition are independent works of this type, among them *The Pyramid of Caius Cestius* and *Study of Trees*, both dating to the 1630s. Claude also created a vast number of preparatory studies directly associated with finished paintings. Among those on view at the Frick is *The Disembarkation of Aeneas and His Companions in Latium*, of 1640-50. This work reveals a shift away from his most typical pastoral subject matter in favor of a narrative scene that draws on Virgil's *Aeneid*.

The French School, however, did not begin with Poussin and Claude but may be traced back to the 1620s to such masters as **Simon Vouet** (1590-1649). He, too, spent many active years in Italy, absorbing influences that he would later introduce to France when called back by Louis XIII. His work represents a parallel oeuvre, distinct from that of Poussin. He held the title Premier Peintre du Roi and is best known for portraiture and designs for decorative elements in the residences of the French aristocracy. Among the five works by Vouet on view in the exhibition is a drawing believed to be a self-portrait of the artist in his twenties. Also featured is a preparatory sheet for a female figure in the tapestry *The Sleeping of Odysseus Carried Ashore in Ithaca*. The painter **Eustache Le Sueur** (1616-1655) was under his tutelage and is

represented by several drawings for decorative paintings, among them the depiction of a dancing muse, designed for an alcove in the Hôtel Lambert in Paris. **Charles Le Brun** (1619-1690), who worked briefly for Vouet – and traveled with Poussin to Italy – is better known for carrying out grand interior decorations for private houses in Paris and Royal residences. He served not only as the painter and designer but as a project director. Prior to his work at Versailles, which began in the 1660s, he supervised the decoration of Vaux-le-Vicomte, built for Nicholas Fouquet, Finance Minister under Louis XIV. *Winged Female Figure with Raised Arms*, the drawing of a sculpture for this magnificent house, is one of several sheets by the master to be included in the exhibition.

CATALOGUE PRESENTS WORK IN ENGLISH

A fully illustrated catalogue accompanies the exhibition and will be available in separate English and French editions. It contains a foreword by the Director of the École des Beaux-Arts, Henry-Claude Cousseau, and Samuel Sachs II, Director of The Frick Collection. Essays by artists who have taught at the school, Vincent Bioulès and Pierre Buraglio, offer a special perspective on the pleasure to be derived from such works in the classroom. Catalogue entries by Emmanuelle Brugerolles and David Guillet are accompanied by an index of artists, an index of museums and collections, and other materials. The publication will be available in softcover for \$49.95 through the Museum Shop of The Frick Collection or by ordering online through the museum's website, www.frick.org. For further information on the Museum Shop, or to place an order by phone, please call (212) 288-0700.

FREE PUBLIC LECTURE

Date: Wednesday, September 18, 2002, 5:30pm
Speaker: **Emmanuelle Brugerolles, École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts**
Title: **The Role of Drawing in Artistic Creation in Seventeenth-Century France**

The speaker will discuss two distinct currents in the development of French drawing in the seventeenth century: one that stems from the tradition of Simon Vouet, who studied with the Carracci in Italy; the second from French artists who, like Poussin and Claude Lorrain, were also deeply affected by their sojourns in Italy. There is no charge for this lecture, and seating is limited.

ABOUT THE FRICK COLLECTION

Henry Clay Frick (1849-1919), the coke and steel industrialist, philanthropist, and art collector, left his New York residence and his remarkable collection of Western paintings, sculpture, and decorative arts to the public “for the purpose of establishing and maintaining a gallery of art, [and] of encouraging and developing the study of fine arts and of advancing the general knowledge of kindred subjects.” Designed and built for Mr. Frick in 1913 and 1914 by Thomas Hastings of Carrère and Hastings, the mansion provides a grand domestic setting reminiscent of the noble houses of Europe for the masterworks from the Renaissance through the nineteenth century that it contains. Of special note are paintings by Bellini, Constable, Corot, Fragonard, Gainsborough, Goya, El Greco, Holbein, Ingres, Manet, Monet, Rembrandt, Renoir, Titian, Turner, Velázquez, Vermeer, Whistler, and other masters. Mr. Frick’s superb examples of French eighteenth-century furniture, Italian Renaissance bronzes, and Limoges enamels bring a special ambiance to the galleries, while the interior and exterior gardens and the amenities created since the founder’s time in the 1930s and 1970s contribute to the serenity of the visitor’s experience.

Renowned for its small, focused exhibitions and for its highly regarded concert series and lectures, The Frick Collection also operates the Frick Art Reference Library, founded by Henry Clay Frick’s daughter, Miss Helen Clay Frick, located in an adjoining building at 10 East 71st Street. Both a research library and a photo archive, the Frick Art Reference Library is one of the world’s great repositories of documents for the study of Western art. It has served the international art world for more than seventy-five years.

BASIC INFORMATION

General Information Phone: (212) 288-0700

Website: www.frick.org

E-mail: info@frick.org

Where: 1 East 70th Street, near Fifth Avenue.

Hours: open six days a week, with recently expanded hours: 10am to 6pm on Tuesdays through Thursdays and on Saturdays; 10am to 9pm on Fridays; and 1pm to 6pm on Sundays. Closed Mondays, New Year’s Day, Independence Day, Thanksgiving, December 24, and December 25. Limited hours (1 to 6pm) on Lincoln’s Birthday, Election Day, and Veterans Day.

Admission: \$10 (students and senior citizens, \$5)

PLEASE NOTE TO YOUR READERS: Children under ten are not admitted to the Collection, and those under sixteen must be accompanied by an adult.

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: included in the price of admission is an Acoustiguide INFORM® Audio Tour of the permanent collection, provided by Acoustiguide. The tour is offered in six languages: English, French, German, Italian, Japanese, and Spanish.

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

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.

#53, August 5, 2002

For further press information, please contact Heidi Rosenau, Manager of Media Relations & Marketing, or Stephanie Ruggiero, Media Relations & Marketing Coordinator

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