



## NEWS RELEASE

Contact: Greg Langel  
Media and Marketing Manager  
412-371-0600 ext. 524  
GLangel@TheFrickPittsburgh.org

For Immediate Release

**THE FRICK ART & HISTORICAL CENTER PRESENTS**  
***STORIED PAST: FOUR CENTURIES OF FRENCH DRAWINGS***  
***FROM THE BLANTON MUSEUM OF ART***

*Traveling exhibition featuring 56 drawings chronicling a 400-year period in France makes its debut in Pittsburgh, where it is complemented by works from the Frick's permanent collection*

PITTSBURGH, PA, January 14, 2011—*Storied Past: Four Centuries of French Drawings from the Blanton Museum of Art* opens at the Frick Art & Historical Center on February 5, 2011. Composed of 56 drawings made between 1500 and 1900, this exhibition chronicles the full range of artistic uses of the medium, from quick sketches to finished compositional studies, to drawing as an end in itself. The Blanton Museum at the University of Texas at Austin has organized the exhibition from their permanent collection, which was supplemented a bit more than a decade ago by a large gift of drawings. The French drawings from this gift had not received systematic academic study, nor had most of them been published. The exhibition will remain on view at the Frick through April 17, 2011.

Especially rich in 17<sup>th</sup>- and 18<sup>th</sup>-century drawings, the exhibition illustrates the rise to dominance of the Académie royale de peinture et de sculpture as one of the most dominant cultural and political institutions in Europe.

—more—

The exhibition includes works by François Boucher (1703–1770), Jean-Baptiste Greuze (1725–1805), and Nicolas Lancret (1690–1743), among others, with the nineteenth century represented by choice sheets from François-Marius Granet (1777–1849), Théodore Rousseau (1812–1867), Jean Forain (1852–1931), Théophile-Alexandre Steinlen (1859–1923), and others who reflect shifts in the approach to drawing in the modern era.

At the Frick, the exhibition will find a perfect counterpart in the museum’s permanent collection, which visitors will enter as they exit the traveling drawings show. Paintings by Jean-Marc Nattier (1685–1766), Lancret (1690–1743), Jean-Baptiste Pater (1695–1736), Boucher, Hubert Robert (1733–1808), and Nicolas-Bernard Lepicié (1735–1784), will be displayed with examples of decorative arts from the period, which will provide for a richer understanding of the 18th century in particular. Interpretation will link the Frick’s collection to the Blanton exhibition through specific *Collection Connection* labels, and with a printed gallery guide.

Frick Director Bill Bodine comments, “The Frick’s presentation of *Storied Past: Four Centuries of French Drawings from the Blanton Museum of Art* reflects an institutional interest in French art established by Helen Clay Frick, founder and benefactor of the museum. We are delighted to be the first museum to host this exhibition of the Blanton’s magnificent drawings, many of which are unpublished and unfamiliar to the art world at large. This exhibition also provides us with the opportunity to highlight select French drawings and paintings in our collection that were purchased by Miss Frick and relate to the body of work on loan from the Blanton Museum of Art.”

## **ABOUT THE EXHIBITION**

The exhibition begins in a period of transition from the mannerism of the late Renaissance to the Baroque period. Two sheets showing designs for a powder flask made by an artist associated with the School of Fontainebleau show the sophisticated sense of decoration that prevailed among artists working around the court of Francis I. Two drawings attributed to seminal printmaker Jacques Callot (1592–1635) and his circle date to the period he spent in Florence, and show his interest in melding his observations of life around him into his

expressive and inventive finished compositions. The fluid chalk *Study of a Man with a Turban*, c. 1617, attributed to Callot, is characteristic of his elegant figures and displays a masterful ability at controlling light and shade and swiftly capturing the spirit of a figure, as well as its contours.

The Académie royale de peinture et de sculpture was founded in 1648. Modeled on Italian examples, the Académie provided training for and official recognition of artists, and allowed for artists to categorize themselves more highly than craftsman or tradespeople. Instruction at the Académie was based on a combination of lectures and studio classes. By the 1680s the Académie royale was an extremely influential organization, with well-established rules, a code of practice, lectures, regular competitions and prizes, exhibitions, and life-drawing-classes.

The Académie, like those in Italy, considered drawing a fundamental part of the training of an artist and a necessary skill for a successful painter. Engrained in the academic system was a hierarchy of importance with history painting (narrative painting of religious, classical or mythological subject matter) being the most important, followed by portraiture, genre, landscape, and still-life painting. As the exhibition progresses through the Baroque period, examples of typical classical, mythological and religious subjects are prevalent, featuring an annunciation by Michel Dorigny (1616–1665) and a fascinating *Elevation of the Cross* attributed to Raymond LaFage (1656–1684). Religious and mythological subjects, along with the occasional classical landscape, dominate for about 50 years, until the emergence of the Rococo.

The style of Jean-Antoine Watteau (1684–1721) is represented in this exhibition by *Landscape in a Venetian Manner*, c. 1715–1716 (Circle of Watteau). Watteau is best known for his *fêtes galantes*, a term invented by the Académie in 1717 to describe the artist's variation on the traditional theme of outdoor feasts. This drawing depicts the type of classicized, pastoral setting that might have been populated by fashionable couples in one of

Watteau's finished paintings. The artist kept bound albums of his landscape drawings—some made from nature and others copied from earlier artists—which he later incorporated into his painted compositions. This drawing exhibits the distinctive featherlike touch and delicacy of Watteau that suggests life's fragility and transience.

The drawings of the Rococo period have exceptional crossover in artists and subject matter with the permanent collection at the Frick, both collections include Watteau's contemporary Lancret, as well as Jean-Marc Nattier and Boucher, and demonstrate the period's interest in portraiture, allegory, mythology, and idealized landscapes. The favorite painter of Louis XV's mistress, Madame de Pompadour, Boucher is represented by two drawings in this exhibition. *Mucius Scaevola Putting His Hand in the Fire*, c. 1726–1728, an early drawing, shows the influence of his teacher, François Le Moyne (1688–1737), whose work is also included in the exhibition. A later sheet by Boucher, *Juno Commanding Aeolus to Unleash the Winds*, 1769, is executed in a markedly different style than the earlier drawing and was made in preparation for a painting now in the collection of the Kimbell Art Museum in Fort Worth, Texas.

The neoclassical period is exemplified by Granet, who studied in the studio of Jacques-Louis David (1748–1825) along with Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres (1780–1867). Granet traveled to Italy early in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and there developed a market for his works focusing on church interiors, ruins, and monuments. His drawing *Monks Entering a Cloister*, c. 1802–1819, shows his fascination with the atmosphere of classical architecture, and his typical skill at employing dramatic light effects.

By the mid-19th century, the hold of academic training on the art world began to weaken, and the lure of Italy as the land of both ideal landscape and ideal architecture collapsed as younger artists, like Théodore Rousseau, began to find deeper meaning in creating images of their own landscape. Rousseau's small charcoal drawing on pink paper *A Marshy River Landscape*, c. 1845, illustrates his interest in responding directly to nature. The decidedly unpicturesque view of scrubby growth and wintry trees growing alongside a chill and grey looking river bordered by swampy land, has his characteristic manner of close observation combined with

sketchy, more poetic passages. The pink paper and the use of white chalk on the horizon create an effect of either sunrise or sunset, and an atmosphere of sublimity and transcendence. As the exhibition concludes at the cusp of the 20<sup>th</sup> century we see artists exploring a variety of more modern subjects—from the late realism of *Workers Loading Ballast* by Frédéric Jacqué (1859–1931), to the more academic and conservative orientalism of Alexandre-Louis Leloir (1843–1884) and his *Moroccan Girl Playing a Stringed Instrument*, 1875, to the graphic sensibility employed by Théophile Alexandre Steinlen in preparatory drawings for his famous lithographs.

## **EXHIBITION PROGRAMS**

The Frick offers a range of programs—including weekly tours and gallery talks—to complement this exhibition. Many of these public programs are offered free of charge. Detailed program information is available in the news release on exhibition-related programs.

## **EXHIBITION ORGANIZATION AND SUPPORT**

*Storied Past: Four Centuries of French Drawings from the Blanton Museum of Art* is organized by the Blanton Museum of Art at the University of Texas at Austin.

Support for the exhibition is provided by Continental Airlines and the Still Water Foundation.

## **CATALOGUE**

A 160-page fully illustrated softbound catalogue published by Hudson Hills Press accompanies the exhibition. *Storied Past: Four Centuries of French Drawings from the Blanton Museum of Art* includes essays by Cheryl K. Snay, the Blanton's former Associate Curator of Prints and Drawings; Jonathan Bober, Senior Curator of Prints, Drawings and European Paintings; and Kenneth M. Grant, Paper Conservator, Harry Ransom Center. The catalogue includes entries on all works, which are accompanied by full-color images. It will be available for purchase at the Frick's Museum Shop.

## **EXHIBITION TOUR**

*Storied Past: Four Centuries of French Drawings from the Blanton Museum of Art* is a traveling Exhibition, which will be making its debut at the Frick Art & Historical Center, where it will be on view from February 5–April 17, 2011. Following its showing at the Frick, the exhibition will be on view at the Blanton Museum of Art at The University of Texas from September 18–December 31, 2011, and the Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Center for Visual Arts at Stanford University from May 28 – August 24, 2014.

## **ABOUT THE BLANTON MUSEUM OF ART**

The Blanton Museum of Art at The University of Texas at Austin is one of the foremost university art museums in the country. The museum's permanent collection houses over 17,000 works of art, creating the largest and most comprehensive collection in Central Texas. The Blanton is recognized for its modern and contemporary American and Latin American art, European paintings, and the finest collection of prints and drawings in the South and Southwest.

## **THE FRICK ART MUSEUM**

The Frick Art Museum is an intimately-scaled classical structure built in 1969 that contains the fine and decorative art collection of Helen Clay Frick. The permanent collection on view at The Frick Art Museum concentrates on Italian Renaissance and French 18th-century works. Collection highlights include 15th-century paintings by Sassetta and Giovanni di Paolo; a portrait by Rubens; a landscape by Boucher; and a devotional altarpiece by Jean Bellegambe. In addition to exhibiting its permanent collection, the museum presents an active program of temporary exhibitions at the venues housing its multiple collections. Admission to The Frick Art Museum is free. The Frick Art Museum is open Tuesday – Sunday, 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Docent-led tours of *Storied Past: Four Centuries of French Drawings from the Blanton Museum of Art* are available free of charge on Wednesdays, Saturdays, and Sundays at 2:00 p.m. Groups of five or more and those interested in scheduling a tour of the permanent collection are requested to schedule a private tour at an alternate time. The cost for group tours of the exhibition and permanent collection is \$5 per person, and reservations must be

made two weeks in advance by calling 412-371-0600, 9:00 a.m. – 5:00p.m., Monday—  
Sunday.

## **THE FRICK ART & HISTORICAL CENTER**

The Frick Art & Historical Center is the legacy of Helen Clay Frick, daughter of 19th-century industrialist and art collector Henry Clay Frick. Having established The Frick Art Museum in 1969, Miss Frick desired that her family home, Clayton, and the surrounding estate be preserved for, and opened to, the people of Pittsburgh after her death. Her vision was realized in 1990.

Today, the Frick Art & Historical Center houses a galaxy of collections—including fine arts, decorative arts, automobiles and carriages, and historic artifacts— in multiple galleries and venues, many of which are historic objects in and of themselves. These collections, and the programs that interpret them, illuminate the era during which Pittsburgh became one of the nation’s most important cities and also make meaningful connections to contemporary times. Although still a relatively young institution, the Frick ranks among Pittsburgh’s most important cultural and educational assets.

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

The Frick Art & Historical Center is located at 7227 Reynolds Street in Pittsburgh’s Point Breeze neighborhood. Free parking is available in the Frick’s off-street lot or along adjacent streets. The Frick is open 10:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Tuesday–Sunday and closed Mondays and major holidays. Admission to The Frick Art Museum, Car and Carriage Museum, Greenhouse, and Playhouse is free. The public should call 412-371-0600 for information, or visit the Frick online at [TheFrickPittsburgh.org](http://TheFrickPittsburgh.org).

**For additional information or images, please contact Greg Langel, Media and Marketing Manager, at 412-371-0600 ext. 524 or [GLangel@TheFrickPittsburgh.org](mailto:GLangel@TheFrickPittsburgh.org).**

###

*The Frick Art & Historical Center, a museum, historic site and cultural center, serves the public through preservation, presentation, and interpretation of the fine and decorative arts and historically significant artifacts for all residents of and visitors to Western Pennsylvania.*