



## NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

### **THE FRICK CELEBRATES MEISSONIER BESTSELLING AUTHOR ROSS KING TO LECTURE AT THE FRICK ART MUSEUM ON MAY 2**

*Celebration of the work and life of Jean-Louis-Ernest Meissonier  
on May 2–3 includes lectures and a free Family Day*

PITTSBURGH, PA, April 1, 2009—On Saturday, May 2 and Sunday, 3, 2009 the Frick Art & Historical Center will celebrate the work of 19<sup>th</sup>-century French painter Jean-Louis-Ernest Meissonier (1815–1891), whose final masterpiece, *1806, Jena* is on view through May 31, 2009 at The Frick Art Museum.

Received in 2007 as a gift from the Richard D. Edwards Family to the Frick's permanent collection, *1806 Jena* is the last of several major canvases painted by Meissonier that portray Napoleon I and his army. The painting and its original frame have since been conserved and placed on view at The Frick Art Museum.

Weekend events include a **lecture by noted historian and *New York Times* bestselling author Ross King, PhD, on Saturday, May 2 at 7:00 p.m.**, with a special Meet-the-Artist reception with Dr. King preceding the lecture at 6:00 p.m., and a lecture by Constance Cain Hungerford, PhD, Mari S. Michener Professor of Art History at Swarthmore College, on Sunday, May 3 at 1:30 p.m.

A free Family Day on Saturday, May 2 from 12:00–4:00 p.m. with activities and demonstrations for families is also part of the weekend activities, and art conservator Christine Daulton will provide a free lecture on the conservation of *1806 Jena* on Wednesday, May 6 at noon.

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## PROGRAMS

Following is a complete listing of *The Frick Celebrates Meissonier* events:

***Rivalries and Reputations in the Gilded Age:  
Manet, Meissonier and the Birth of Impressionism***

**Lecture by Ross King, PhD**

Saturday, May 2, 2009, 7:00 p.m.

The Frick Art Museum

Enormous changes occurred in French society and French art between 1863—the year of the *Salon des Refusés*—and the first Impressionist exhibition of 1874.

Noted historian and *New York Times* bestselling author Ross King will examine the contrasting styles, reputations and posthumous fortunes of two of the French art world's main protagonists during this period, Ernest Meissonier and Édouard Manet, as well as their reception by the critics and collectors in Gilded Age America.

A special Meet-the-Author reception with Dr. King is planned for Saturday, May 2 at 6:00 p.m., preceding his lecture. Reservations required; details below.

***The Flash of Sabers: Meissonier's Cult of Napoleon***

**Lecture by Constance Cain Hungerford, PhD**

Sunday, May 3, 2009, 1:30 p.m.

The Frick Art Museum

*1806, Jena* was the culmination of Meissonier's career, the last 30 years of which he devoted to painting Napoleonic military subjects. Dr. Hungerford will discuss how Meissonier used his recreations of the past to explore two interests shared with his contemporaries: landscape effects and the representation of horses in motion.

### LECTURE COSTS:

- May 2 and 3 lectures and Meet-the-Author reception for Ross King:
  - \$50 members
  - \$60 non-members and guests
- Individual lectures (without reception):
  - \$10 members, teachers and students
  - \$15 non-members and guests

Call 412-371-0600 to register and for additional information.

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**Family Fun Day: Vive La France!**  
**Saturday, May 2, 12:00 p.m.–4:00 p.m.**

Celebrate the art and culture of France with activities and demonstrations for the entire family. FREE ADMISSION to the exhibition *The Road to Impressionism* for families with kids 12 and under.

**Art at Noon: Revealing the Painting**  
***The Science and Art of Conservation***

Lecture by Christine Daulton, Art Conservator

Wednesday, May 6, 2009, 12:00 p.m.

The Frick Art Museum

FREE

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR: ROSS KING**

“Cultural Historian” might be an apt description of the author Ross King. Born in Estevan, Saskatchewan, King earned a PhD in English Literature from York University in Toronto before moving to England in 1992 to assume a research position at the University of London.

There, he tried his hand at writing an historical novel, publishing *Domino* in 1995, a book set in the world of masquerades and opera in 18th-century London. It was soon followed by *New York Times* bestseller, *Brunelleschi's Dome: How a Renaissance Genius Reinvented Architecture* and *Ex-Libris*, a novel about bookselling, codes, and spies in 17th-century Europe.

*Michelangelo and the Pope's Ceiling*, another *New York Times* bestseller that was also nominated for a National Book Critics Circle Award, appeared the subsequent year. The prolific writer then turned to France and several hundred years later to explore Meissonier and Manet, 19th-century French artists in the *The Judgment of Paris: The Revolutionary Decade That Gave the World Impressionism*.

Commenting on *The Judgment of Paris*, the *New York Times Book Review* asserts King's account is “in its broad outlines, a familiar story, but Mr. King ... tells it with tremendous energy and skill. It is hard to imagine a more inviting account of the artistic civil war that raged around the Paris Salons of the 1860's and 70's, or of the outsize personalities who transformed the way the world looked at painting.”

The author, based in Woodstock (near Oxford), England, the historic site of Blenheim Palace, is currently curating a 2010 exhibition of Post-Impressionist art at the McMichael Canadian Art Collection, for which he is writing a book. He is also writing books about Leonardo da Vinci and his notebooks.

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR: CONSTANCE CAIN HUNGERFORD

Constance Cain Hungerford wears at least two hats at Swarthmore College in Swarthmore, PA. As the college's Mari S. Michener Professor of Art History at Swarthmore, Dr. Hungerford teaches 19th- and 20th-century art. Since 2001, she has also served as Provost, heading the faculty and overseeing the academic program.

Dr. Hungerford earned her PhD from the University of California, Berkeley. In addition to her teaching and administrative duties, Dr. Hungerford continues her research in 19th-century French art history.

In 1993, she served as principal organizer for the Meissonier retrospective at Musée des Beaux-Arts de Lyon. Extensively researching and writing about Meissonier, she authored a comprehensive monograph of the artist in 1999, titled *Ernest Meissonier: Master in His Genre* (Cambridge). She also contributed an essay on *1806, Jena* to the Frick's 1997 *Collecting in the Gilded Age* exhibition catalogue.

## ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

### *MEISSONIER: A FINAL MASTERPIECE, A PITTSBURGH HOME*



Jean-Louis-Ernest Meissonier, *1806, Jena*, 1890. Oil on canvas, 42 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 57 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> inches. Frick Art & Historical Center Collection.

Jean-Louis-Ernest Meissonier's impressive tour de force painting *1806, Jena* is on view at The Frick Art Museum through May 31, 2009

Featured in the 1997 Frick-organized exhibition *Collecting in the Gilded Age: Art Patronage in Pittsburgh, 1890–1910*, *1806 Jena* was a significant “rediscovery” by the curatorial team.

Although the work has an over-100-year history in Pittsburgh, for much of that time its presence was unknown to art historians, who lost track of the painting shortly after it was exhibited in the first Carnegie Annual.

Since arriving at the Frick, *1806, Jena* has undergone extensive conservation treatment to restore it to its full glory. Restoration efforts have revealed the work's original vibrant colors and greatly enhanced the appearance of fine detail. The painting's gilded frame has also been restored. The current exhibition marks the first public exhibition of the artwork since the completion of its conservation.

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In addition to *1806, Jena*, the exhibition *Meissonier: A Final Masterpiece, A Pittsburgh Home* includes three prints made after Meissonier's Napoleonic canvases, from the two-volume set *Oeuvres Complètes de E. Meissonier*, as well as supplemental archival photography of the Lockhart mansion and informational text panels.

### **ABOUT THE WORK**

Meissonier began preparing for *1806, Jena* in 1887, in anticipation of the 1889 Exposition Universelle in Paris, though elements found in the painting are visible in studies and sculptures from as early as 1880. When the Exposition opened, *1806, Jena* was one of several works by Meissonier included in its catalogue; however, *1806, Jena* was not actually displayed, reportedly because it was unfinished. It would take the notoriously meticulous master three more years to finish his last great Napoleonic canvas. Meissonier eventually displayed the still unfinished *1806, Jena*, at the inaugural salon of the Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts in May 1890. He died seven months later in January 1891.

Correspondence in the Meissonier family archives suggests that the painting was commissioned by Edmond Simon, an art agent in France for the London firm of Arthur Tooth & Sons. The painting entered Simon's possession by 1893, when he lent it to the posthumous Meissonier retrospective at the Galerie Georges Petit in Paris. In 1896, *1806, Jena* traveled to Pittsburgh, where it remains.

### **A FAMILY'S LEGACY: 1806, JENA AND THE LOCKHART FAMILY**

Painted in 1890, *1806, Jena* was the extremely popular and successful Meissonier's last major work. The painting depicts Emperor Napoleon on a shallow hillside observing the Battle of Jena, where his armies inflicted a crushing defeat on the Prussians.

Research suggests that local industrialist Charles Lockhart (1818–1905), an ambitious collector, was seeking a Meissonier, and that it was brought to Pittsburgh for him to see—and eventually buy. Described by the *New York Times* as the “second richest man in Pittsburgh,” Lockhart was an early and leading figure in the region's oil industry and was involved in myriad business concerns throughout the country (railroad, lumber, telegraph, mining, and iron and steel, to name but a few). He was a co-founder of the giant oil trust Standard Oil Co., and also served as president of the Lockhart Iron and Steel Co. from 1890 until his death. Lockhart's fortune enabled him to amass a collection of artwork cited as one of the finest and most valuable in the city. In addition to works from popular artists of the day such as William Bouguereau, Théobald Chartran, and Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot, the Lockharts showed particular affinity for Belgian genre scenes and French military painting. The latter interest perhaps led Lockhart to seek a work by Meissonier, who was renowned for his meticulously researched and highly detailed military genre paintings and Napoleonic battle scenes.

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Following the 1896 Carnegie Annual, *1806, Jena* entered the Lockhart Family collection housed in a specially designed gallery in their North Highland Avenue home. The piece instantly became the most important work in Lockhart's holdings, and probably the most prestigious and expensive painting in Pittsburgh up to that time.

The painting was inherited by Lockhart's daughter, Janet Lockhart McCune, his grandson, Charles Lockhart McCune, and then his great granddaughter, Mary "Kitty" McCune Edwards. She and her husband Richard Dilworth Edwards loaned the impressive canvas to the Frick for the 1997 exhibition *Collecting in the Gilded Age: Art Patronage in Pittsburgh 1890–1910*.

### **THE ARTIST AND THE EMPEROR: MEISSONIER AND NAPOLEON**

Born in Lyon, France, Jean-Louis-Ernest Meissonier (February 21, 1815–January 21 1891) rose to the heights of the international art stage, earning worldwide acclaim and celebrity in a career that spanned six decades. The recipient of countless awards and honors, Meissonier saw his canvases sell for record-setting prices to the dignitaries and socialites of France and the world.

Meissonier had little formal artistic training, but precocious innate talent which he honed by producing woodcut illustrations for books. By his mid-twenties, he demonstrated an obvious preference for making historical genre paintings, usually small-scale and heavily influenced by Dutch and Flemish seventeenth-century painting. An avid historian, Meissonier brought a passion for historical detail to his work, amassing a collection of antiques and costumes in order to create accurate depictions of the past.

Beginning with his 1864 painting *1814, The Campaign of France*, Meissonier embarked on a series of works depicting the military exploits of Napoleon Bonaparte (1769–1821), the legendary French military leader and self-proclaimed Emperor who conquered much of Europe in the early nineteenth century. For some of his canvases, Meissonier posed as the Emperor himself, and had a replica made of Napoleon's greatcoat to wear while he sat on a wooden horse-like seat. His portrayals of Napoleon triumphant in battle also sought to inspire the French nation following their defeat in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–71, a conflict in which Meissonier himself took part. *1806, Jena* is one of five major canvases Meissonier envisioned illustrating Napoleon I and his armies at war. Other finished examples include *1814, The Campaign of France* (Musée d'Orsay, Paris) and *1807, Friedland*, which caused a media sensation when it entered the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1887 as a gift from Judge Henry Hilton. Prints made after these works are included in the current exhibition.

Meissonier balanced closely observed details, and an academic style with a lively narrative sense that infuses his paintings with drama and appeal. His realism was based on thorough, painstaking research, and a maniacal perfectionism. For example, in *1814, The Campaign of France*, Napoleon leads his troops through the snow. To obtain the appropriate setting, Meissonier had his country estate plowed up and powdered with flour. In the Frick's *1806, Jena*, he conveys a sense of authenticity through observed

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details like rutted dirt and tufts of grass, and also in the individuation of figures and in a faithfulness to anatomical detail—Meissonier prided himself on his accurate depictions of horses. Because of this care, Meissonier’s paintings, while re-creations of events, people, and times he never actually witnessed, have a sense of freshness and immediacy.

### **PRESERVING A MASTERPIECE:**

#### **ABOUT THE CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION**

Upon its arrival at the Frick in 2007, the painting was examined by a conservator who determined that a layer of surface dirt had accumulated over a number of years. The painting had also been unevenly varnished with a natural resin that had become extremely yellowed. Removal of surface dirt, old varnish, and overpaint revealed the vibrant colors seen in the men’s uniforms, the subtle blues hidden in the cloudy sky and greatly enhanced the appearance of fine detail throughout the painting.

In addition to improving the appearance of the painting, conservation treatment included a number of structural enhancements to stabilize the artwork. The canvas was removed from its stretcher and flattened to reduce pleating near the edges and small tears in the canvas were mended using Japanese mulberry tissue. To create a more stable support for the canvas, cotton fabric was placed on the stretcher and the painted canvas placed on the cotton backer. Finally, the painting was coated in a non-yellowing varnish to protect the paint surface.

The frame has also been restored through two phases of treatment. The first phase involved stripping away layers of dull “gold” paint and gilding to reveal the original surface of water-gilding, gilt bronze, and burnished gilt-bronze highlights. During phase two of treatment, old repairs were removed or refined, missing areas of ornament were replaced with casts made from molds of original ornament, and the frame was oil gilded and toned to complement the original bronze surface.

**For additional information or images, please contact Greg Langel,  
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*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.*