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The Americana Foundation

THE KRESGE FOUNDATION



FREER HOUSE

MPSI
MERRILL PALMER SKILLMAN INSTITUTE
for Child & Family Development



Beneath the Surface: A Scientific Investigation of Freer House's Original Decorative Paint Treatments

Sunday, Nov. 15, 2015

2:00 pm Lecture, 3:30 pm Tours & Reception

LOCATION:

Freer House, 71 East Ferry St., Detroit, MI 48202

COST:

Students & Members: \$10 / General Admission: \$15

Visitors to Freer House often ask about the "spots," small patches on the walls and woodwork where the flat grey paint has chipped off or been removed, revealing surprising views of sheen and color. These few areas offer rare glimpses into 1892, when Charles Lang Freer commissioned his favorite artists to design finishes for his Detroit home that would form the context for his extensive collection. These created the impression of "a shimmering jewel," according to Susan Hobbs, the former Freer Gallery curator of American Art. Walls and woodwork glistened with iridized hues created through careful applications of paint, metal leaf, and transparent glazes.

SPEAKER: Cathy Selvius De Roo, PhD, Conservation Scientist, the Detroit Institute of Arts, will discuss the mysteries beneath the surface of the Freer House walls. For six years, Dr. Selvius De Roo, with support from the Americana Foundation, has been compiling the most extensive and systematic analysis to date of materials comprising the Freer House's original decorative surfaces. Join her as she takes us beneath the home's monochrome surfaces and into the original, colorful, vibrant spaces that housed the very first Freer Gallery of Art.

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WAYS TO REGISTER

Call Rose Foster. She'd love to hear from you at:
313-664-2509 or
rmfoster@wayne.edu

OR

Register Online at:
www.mpsi.wayne.edu/freer/events

OR

Mail form below to:
Freer House, MPSI, WSU
71 East Ferry St.
Detroit, MI 48202

FREER HOUSE
Beneath the Surface
MAIL-IN RSVP

Member(s) _____ at \$10

Student(s) _____ at \$10

Non-member(s) _____ at \$15

Total Amount \$ _____

Name (s) _____

Organization _____ Day phone _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

E-mail _____

VISA/Master Credit Card # _____ Check # _____ (Payable to: Wayne State University/MPSI)

Name (as it appears on card) _____ Exp Date _____ 3 digit security code _____

Signature _____

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Parking located behind the
Freer House (Lot #35)
Pay \$7 by credit card at gate

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About the speaker

Dr. Cathy Selvius DeRoo is the Research Scientist at the Detroit Institute of Arts. (She earned her Ph.D. from the University of Michigan in biochemistry and was awarded a National Institutes of Health Postdoctoral Fellowship in biophysics.) In 2009, with support

from the Americana Foundation, DIA Research Scientist, Dr. Cathy Selvius DeRoo, initiated the most extensive and systematic analytical research to date in an effort to understand the materials that comprised the original decorative surfaces within the Freer House. That research has contributed to a more comprehensive understanding of the visual context that was created to display Charles Lang Freer's collection of paintings by American Impressionists, which included works by Thomas Wilmer Dewing, Dwight Tryon, James McNeill Whistler, Abbott Thayer, and John Twachtman. This talk presents glimpses below the monochrome painted surfaces that exist today into what were the colorful, vibrant spaces that comprised the very first Freer Gallery of Art.

Dr. Selvius DeRoo was a member of the exhibition team for the Fakes, Forgeries, and Mysteries exhibition, the first exhibition at the DIA that featured scientific analysis of works of art. Most recently, she and Christopher Foster, DIA Paper Conservator, contributed an essay on their technical study of drawing materials employed by Diego Rivera in creating the cartoons for the Detroit Industry murals to the exhibition catalogue for Diego and Frida in Detroit.



<http://mpsi.wayne.edu/freer/index.php>

The Freer House

(1892) is ranked as one of the most important historic buildings in Michigan. Its fine architectural detail and rich cultural history are both locally and internationally significant. The Freer House is also recognized for its role in child and family development as the home of the renowned Merrill Palmer Skillman Institute since 1920.

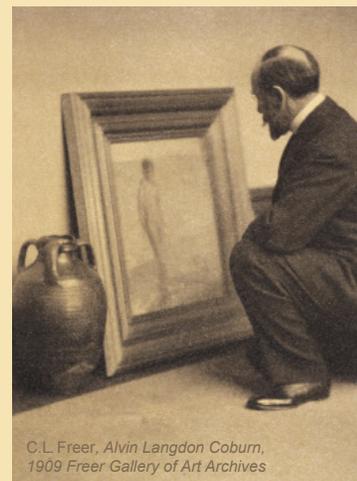


photo by ALEXANDER VERTIKOFF

The Freer House membership organization works to preserve this landmark through public events, tours and fundraising for restoration. Recent accomplishments include the reproduction of original paintings for the main hall and parlor and a new historically appropriate roof. Current goals include the courtyard garden and the Whistler Gallery restoration projects.

Charles Lang Freer

(1854-1919) made his fortune in railroad freight car manufacturing in Detroit. His remarkable shingle style residence on East Ferry Ave. was designed in 1892 by Wilson Eyre, Jr. Freer's home contained one of the world's greatest collections of Asian and American art, including works by Whistler and the Peacock Room. Freer bequeathed his collection to the Smithsonian where it is housed today at the Freer Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C.



C.L. Freer, Alvin Langdon Coburn, 1909 Freer Gallery of Art Archives

For information contact: William Colburn, Director, at william.colburn@wayne.edu.