



Dear Friend,

2018 was a year of great progress for the Freer House!

Thank you for your interest in the Freer House. Please join us as a member and help support the preservation and restoration of this historic landmark. Your membership will help to foster a deeper appreciation of Freer's international legacy and the richly diverse communities and cultures of metro Detroit.

Over the past year we have expanded our outreach to diverse communities, opened the new public gardens, increased restoration work and welcomed visitors from across Detroit and around the globe.

Join as a Freer House member by contacting Rose Foster at 313-664-2509, at rmfoster@wayne.edu or by following this link to the membership page on our website: <https://mpsi.wayne.edu/freer/membership>

2018 Year End Report

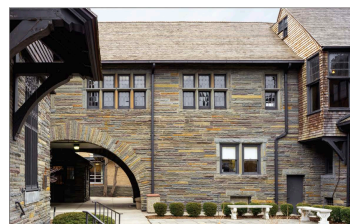


Dr. Thomas W. Brunk poses in the former Peacock Room, Freer House, with a selection of his objects once owned by Charles Lang Freer (June 2018)

In Memory of Thomas W. Brunk, PhD, (1949-2018) Thomas Brunk began his ground breaking research and documentation of the Freer House as a young man in the 1970's, and his advocacy for the building's preservation became a life-long endeavor. His authoritative book, *The Charles Lang Freer Residence: The Original Freer Gallery of Art, Dichotomy*, 1999, firmly established the house as an outstanding landmark of local, national and international significance. Dr. Brunk continuously encouraged Merrill Palmer Skillman Institute and Wayne State University to properly maintain and preserve the building, forming the "Friends of the Freer House" group with Phebe Goldstein in the 1990's and continuing his advocacy efforts until his sudden passing on November 15th. His contributions to the preservation of Detroit's historic buildings are immeasurable and includes such landmarks as Pewabic Pottery, the Scarab Club, the Prismatic Club, Masonic Temple, Indian Village, to name just a few. Thomas Brunk mentored hundreds of students and preservationists, generously sharing his knowledge and passion for Detroit's history and architecture. The Freer House owes so much to Dr. Brunk and we will miss him greatly.



National Publicity for Freer House. *American Bungalow* magazine featured a 12-page article on the Freer House in its Fall, 2018 issue. Beautifully written by Douglas J. Forsyth, Bowling Green State University, with outstanding photographs by renowned architectural photographer, Alexander Vertikoff, the piece provided Detroit's Freer House with positive national attention for its history and architecture.



THE CHARLES LANG FREER HOUSE, THE SUBSTONE, WAS QUARIED BY FREER'S HISTORIC FIRM, BRUNTON, NEW YORK. THE HORSESHOE ARCH IS INSPIRED BY WHAT WAS ORIGINALLY THE CARRIAGE HOUSE IN THE WILSON EYRE JR. RESIDENCE (IT ACCORDS TO JAMES WHITELEY'S FAMOUS PEACOCK ROOM, AND AN ADDITIONAL TOP LEFT ART GALLERY).

RIGHT THE FLIGHT OF STAIRS IS BROKEN AT LANDINGS WITH RAILING. WHITELEY KNEW DISRUPTED THE VERTICAL FLIGHT OF THE STAIRS TO ADD TO THE COMPLEXITY OF THE DIFFERENT HORIZONTAL LINES. NOTE THE REAPPEARANCE OF THE HORSESHOE ARCH ON THE INTERIOR. THE EARLY FLOOR LIGHTING FIXTURE, DESIGNED BY EYRE AND HOUSED BY BRUNTON, IS VISIBLE AT TOP RIGHT.

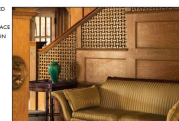
BY DOUGLAS J. FORSYTH

CHARLES LANG FREER AN AMERICAN SUCCESS STORY

WHEN PRESERVATIONISTS think of Detroit, their inclination is to mourn for buildings lost over the years. Certainly many fine structures have come down. From the early 1950s, the city suffered a radical loss of population. Fortunately, residents now show signs of returning. So we have reason to celebrate this renewal by calling attention to the astonishing inventory of fine buildings that remain.

One striking example is the shingle-style dwelling that Charles Lang Freer (1854-1919) had built, beginning in 1890, on E. Ferry Ave. (now E. Ferry St.). His architect was Wilson Eyre, Jr. (1858-1944), a master of the shingle style of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Thanks to the work of the late Vincent Scully, noted Yale art historian, we now think of this mode of expression as one of the top exponents of modernism in American architecture. Its practitioners were searching for a distinctly American style of residential building, one that would be free from historical revivalism, that would make form true to structure, and make that structure reflect the needs of con-

THE MAIN HALL, EYRE USED A TIGHT BASKETWEAVE WOOD SCREEN IN THE PLACE OF BALUSTES TO CONVEY THE BRADCOOP STAIRS.



PHOTOGRAPHY BY ALEXANDER VERTIKOFF

Restoration Projects



DIA team installing *The Princess* replica in the former Peacock Room (L-R) Megan Major, Doug Peters, (Freer House member), Ayaka Hibino, Davin Brainard, Alicia McCullough

New Whistler Reproductions Grace the Freer House: Three giclee reproductions (a photo transparency printed onto art canvas) of important works by James McNeill Whistler from Freer's collection have been created and installed in the Freer House. Thanks to wonderful support from Cory Grace and Lee Glazer of the Freer Gallery of Art, and project management by Freer House board member, Doug Peters, together with an expert installation team from the DIA and generous sponsors including Dr. David Weinberg, our first replicas of Whistler paintings and frames have joined those of artists Dwight W. Tryon, Thomas W. Dewing and Abbott Handerson Thayer! The new Whistler reproductions include: *Princess from the Land of Porcelain*, placed in the former Peacock Room; *Harmony in Blue and Gold: The Little Blue Girl*, hung in the former 1906 gallery room; and *Variations in Flesh Colour and Green: The Balcony*, installed in the main hall.



Flapjacks by Fredrick Stuart Church, 1892

Flapjacks is back! The original oil painting *Flapjacks*, by Michigan artist, Frederick Stuart Church, resurfaced at an art auction in July and was successfully purchased by a group of Freer House members. Donors include Michael and Matt Coleman, Phebe and Sid Goldstein, Marc Herrick and Michael Farrell, Doug Peters, John L. Booth, and Debbie Hobler. The amusing painting depicting a group of frolicking bears being served pancakes by a young woman in a chef's hat and apron, was given to Freer by Church in 1892 as a gift for his new home. Freer bequeathed it to a friend who later donated it to the Detroit Club. In the 1990's, the painting was sold by the club to a private owner and it came up for auction this summer. This generous donation marks the first time an original painting once owned by Freer has been returned to the Freer House.

Ornate Doorbell Welcomes Visitors.



Andrew Smutek, Freer House, holding original doorbell. James Viste, College for Creative Studies, with doorbell replica

In addition to the painting *Flapjacks*, Frederick S. Church also designed a remarkable ornate, sculptured bronze doorbell for the area adjacent to the front door, featuring a bear with his head cocked as if listening for the bell to ring! Unfortunately, the doorbell was stolen in the 1980's, but was miraculously recovered and returned soon thereafter. Ever since it has been secured in a safe and only brought out for viewing at Freer House events. A long-held dream of Dr. Brunk's was to see a replica of the doorbell made and installed outside the Freer House. Thanks to the efforts of master metalworker, James Viste at the College for Creative Studies, a beautiful replica of the original doorbell was cast and installed in September, just in time for the garden dedication event.

New Paint and Repairs. Thanks to the efforts of Wayne State's maintenance department staff, interior walls in the rear section of the main house and 35 exterior windows and doors were resurfaced and repainted this year, greatly improving areas that had not been repainted in over 20-30 years!



Terry Dunn, WSU staff, painting the and repairing the Freer House windows

Public Education Programs

Asia Comes to Detroit. Japan, Korea and China were featured in programs exploring Freer's global travels and legacy as a pioneering collector of Asian art. The events attracted diverse guests from across Detroit and around the world.

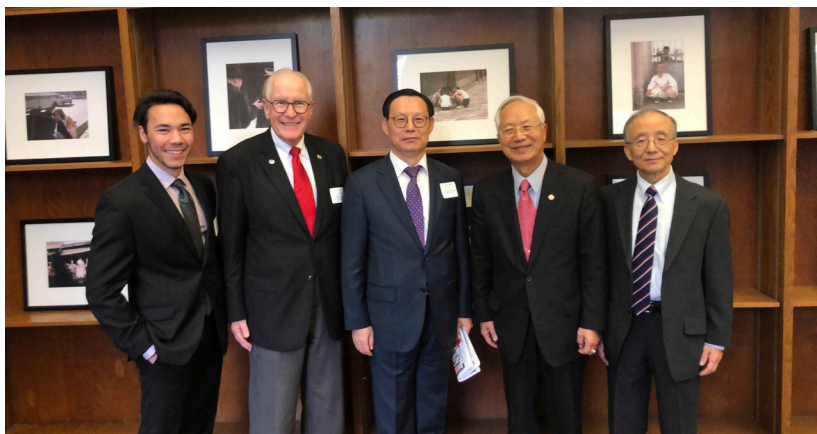


Princess Akiko of Japan discussing documentation related to Freer with William Colburn, Director

Visit by Japan's Imperial Family. In June, the Freer House was deeply honored to host a private visit by Her Imperial Highness, Princess Akiko of Japan, who was invited by the Japan Business Society of Detroit (JBSD) to lead a public symposium at the DIA on cross-cultural relations between the U.S. and Japan through the arts. In her keynote lecture, Princess Akiko highlighted the important contributions of Charles Lang Freer to raising appreciation of Japanese art and culture in the United States. The Freer House was invited by Mr. Takashi Omitsu, JBSD, to host Princess Akiko for a rare private tour and luncheon. Accompanied by faculty and students from Tokyo's Gakushuin University, Princess Akiko spent an entire morning viewing the house, including a special display of personal objects that once belonged to Freer from the collection of Dr. Thomas W. Brunk.

A complete translation into Japanese of our exhibit booklet, *Freer, Detroit and Japan*, was accomplished in time for Princess Akiko's visit and is now available to Japanese-speaking visitors, thanks to the outstanding efforts of Freer House members, Yuriko Kuchiki, Hiroko Lancour and MPSI staff, Catherine Blasio.

Korea Photo Exhibit. In November, the Freer House hosted a special exhibition of photographs of traditional life in Korea, loaned by the UM Asia Library. The exhibit, *An Accidental Photographer: Portraits of a Lost Seoul*, was held in celebration of the opening of the new Jacobs Asian Art Wing at the DIA. The event attracted over 200 visitors who also enjoyed live traditional Korean music, refreshments, and a display of images of Korean art collected by Charles Lang Freer. Event sponsors included the Korean Consulate General in Chicago, Honorary Consul General of Korea in Michigan, Friends of Korea, UM Asia Library, UM-NAM Center for Korean Studies, Friends of Asian Arts and Cultures/DIA, and Michigan Korean Weekly.



(L-R) Andrew Smutek, Freer House; David Roden, Korean Honorary Consul General in Michigan; Jong-Kook Lee, Consul General, Republic of Korea in Chicago; Byung Joon Kim, Chair, Korean American Cultural Center; Doyoun Choo, Consul Liaison (Michigan)



(L-R) Ed Sui, Program Host; Dr. Daisy Yiyou Wang, Peabody Essex Museum; Jeanette Sui, Program Host

Freer's Adventures in Collecting Chinese Art was the subject of an outstanding lecture by Dr. Daisy Yiyou Wang for the Freer House lecture series, co-sponsored in December with the DIA's Friends of Asian Arts and Cultures. Dr. Wang, curator of Chinese and East Asian Art, Peabody Essex Museum, is the author of a new book exploring Freer's pioneering role in establishing cross cultural relations between the U.S. and China through the arts. A large audience of over 200 people attended the lecture at the DIA and more than 100 gathered at the Freer House for the post lecture reception and tours. Community co-sponsors for the event included the Association of Chinese Americans, Michigan US China Exchange, UM Center for Chinese Studies, Detroit Chinese Radio & TV, Dragon Eagle TV, and Art House Lectures and Tours, Inc. Ed and Jeanette Sui served as Freer House Program Hosts.



(L-R) Ann Nicholson, Chris Consales, Phebe and Sid Goldstein, Barbara Heller

The Garden is Open! A six year-long project to revitalize the courtyard gardens and front yard landscaping was completed this summer. The beautiful new garden was dedicated in September in honor of Phebe Goldstein and in memory of Denise Little. Based on historical documentation provided by Dr. Brunk, the garden plan was designed by Fred Knight, K.C. Runciman Landscapes, together with Dr. David Michener, curator of UM Matthaei Botanical Gardens and a dedicated garden project committee. The garden was installed by Tim McAlister and W. H. Canon Landscape Company with project management by WSU's Randy Pacquette and Matt Walker, in consultation with Fred Knight.



Charles Little places a candle in the Japanese garden lantern in memory of Denise Little at the Garden Dedication Event

Over 125 donors contributed generously to the garden and a fund has been created to help support its maintenance. Unique elements include trees and plants reflecting Freer's original combination of American and Asian plant varieties, a hand forged reproduction of the missing original Peacock Room iron porch railing, and a hand carved, exact replica of Freer's Japanese stone garden lantern! Please visit the garden next time you are in Midtown.



The newly completed Freer House garden



Freer House Progress in 2018 was made possible by invaluable support from the Americana Foundation, Kresge Foundation, Erb Family Foundation, Birkhill Family Foundation, the Merrill Palmer Skillman Institute/WSU, 10 board members, 14 active volunteers, and the generosity of over 350 members and donors like you! Many thanks to all!

Freer House Volunteers. Our gratitude to the Freer House volunteers for their outstanding service in 2018! Darren Brim, Matt Coleman, Michael Coleman, Sandi Combs, Ryan Cunningham, Chuck Demske, Marc Herrick, Molly James, Hiroko Lancour, Kathleen Marcaccio, Natalie Miller, Gail Powell, Rebecca Savage, and Walt Symborski.

Freer House Board. Additional thanks to board members, Julianne Bjarnesen, Michael Coleman, Carol Edwards, Marianne Endicott, Phebe Goldstein, John Hannigan, Tom Jankowski, Peter Lichtenberg, Ken Myers, Doug Peters, and Marilyn Tuchow.

Freer House staff includes Andrew Smutek, Research Tech and William Colburn, Director, with support from Merrill Palmer Skillman Institute staff, Rose Foster, Caitlin Lyons, Kelly Hicks and additional support from Catherine Blasio and Cheryl Deep.

Many thanks to our Sponsors



Erb Family Foundation



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