

MERRILL-PALMER SKILLMAN INSTITUTE
FRIENDS OF THE FREER HOUSE
WAYNE STATE
UNIVERSITY

PRESENT

*FREER AND WHISTLER:
AN "AMAZING!" FRIENDSHIP*

LECTURE BY:

DR. KENNETH JOHN MYERS

CURATOR OF AMERICAN ART AND HEAD OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AMERICAN ART
DETROIT INSTITUTE OF ART



James Abbott McNeill Whistler, *Portrait of Charles Lang Freer*, 1902



James Abbott McNeill Whistler, *Brown and Gold (Self-Portrait)*, 1895-1900

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2007
CHARLES LANG FREER HOUSE
71 EAST FERRY
3:00 PM

LECTURE & LIGHT RECEPTION
TOURS OF THE FREER HOUSE

SPACE IS LIMITED

RSVP REQUIRED (313) 872-1790
COMPLIMENTARY ADMISSION FOR MEMBERS
SUGGESTED DONATION FOR NON-MEMBERS \$5.00

About the Speaker

The Friends of the Freer House is honored to host a special lecture by Dr. Kenneth Myers on the remarkable friendship between Charles Lang Freer and the great American artist James McNeill Whistler. Freer's close friendship with Whistler led to his acquisition of the world's greatest collection of Whistler's works. Once housed and exhibited at Freer's home in Detroit, his collection is now a prized possession of the Freer Gallery of Art in the nation's capitol. Dr. Myers was previously the Curator of American Art at the Freer Gallery, Smithsonian Institution. Since 2005, he has been the Curator of American Art and Head of the Department of American Art at the Detroit Institute of Arts. Dr. Myers is a cultural historian specializing in nineteenth-century American paintings, drawings, and prints. He is widely published in his field. He co-curated the exhibition *Mr. Whistler's Galleries: Avant-Garde in Victorian London*.

Lecture Overview

A self-made millionaire and self-taught aesthete, the Detroit businessman Charles Lang Freer (1854–1919) began to collect art in 1883. Like many young collectors of the day, Freer began with contemporary prints. In the 1880s, the expatriate American artist James McNeill Whistler (1834–1903), was widely regarded as one of the two most important contemporary etchers. In the mid 1880s several print dealers tried to get Freer interested in Whistler's work, but Freer did not learn to appreciate Whistler's unusually refined and abstract prints until a business trip to New York in 1887. He became a confirmed Whistlerian in March 1890, when he visited Whistler in London. Dr. Myers will discuss the impact of Whistler's aesthetic interests and ideas on Freer, focusing on Freer's collecting in the 1890s and the first decade of the twentieth century.