



Dear Freer House Members and Supporters,

It's still hard to believe that for most of 2020, the Freer House sat protected, but lonely and vacant of staff and visitors, as WSU adhered to COVID prevention protocols that require working remotely. Our Spring and Fall tours and programs were all cancelled. But this challenging situation created new opportunities. With the interior of the house inaccessible, our efforts shifted to restoring significant elements of the Freer House exterior. And your membership helped make this restoration opportunity possible! With support from you, we were able to cover the costs of paint, supplies and equipment needed by WSU painters and carpenters at a time of tight WSU budget limitations. Your annual membership truly makes a difference!

In light of the past challenging year, we extended all Freer House memberships through the end of 2020, and we've established a new annual January-December membership cycle. I encourage you to renew your membership today for 2021 and help us 'restore' hope for a brighter and better year to come!

William S. Colburn, Director, The Freer House

Essential Restoration Undertaken at Freer House



WSU carpenters and Freer House board member, Doug Peters, install a restored leaded glass window

When COVID-19 precautions required the temporary closure of the Freer House to the public in 2020, the opportunity arose to pursue critically needed infrastructure repairs. Exterior wood windows, doors and trim are important elements of the unique architecture of the Freer House. Unfortunately, many of these windows and doors have suffered severe deterioration due to decades of deferred maintenance.

Thanks to Wayne State University's Facilities, Planning and Management Department (WSU/FPM) more than 100 windows, doors and large

sections of exterior trim were expertly repaired and repainted in 2018-19, with an additional 50 windows and more trim restored during the Summer of 2020! Work this year included cleaning and repainting the historic ornamental iron grilles originally installed by Freer in 1907 for the Peacock Room

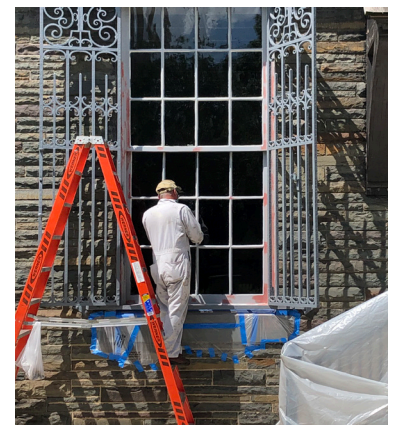


Thank you WSU painters and carpenters!
(L-R): Terry Dunn, Steve Burchart, Kevin Jonas, and Bill McDonald



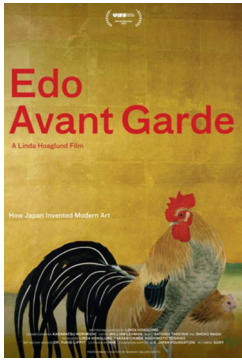
Restoration of 3rd floor dormer windows

windows. We extend our sincere thanks to WSU painters Terry Dunn and William McDonald, carpenters Steve Burchart and Kevin Jonas, and FPM supervisors Dave Kuffner, Tim Herr and Doug O'Brien, for their outstanding work. Additional thanks to Freer House board member, John Douglas Peters, who sponsored the complete restoration of a large 1892 leaded glass window in the main hall. As a result of their efforts, the Freer House is not only more beautiful, but also more resistant to harm from rain and severe weather.



Terry Dunn, WSU painter, restoring the Peacock Room windows

Spring Freer House & DIA Event!



The Freer House is excited and proud to co-sponsor with the Detroit Institute of Arts, a free online showing of the extraordinary 2019 documentary film, **Edo Avant Garde**.

The film, which has been described as “outstanding,” “mesmerizing,” and “exquisite,” reveals the story of how Japanese artists of the explosively creative Edo era (1615-1868) pioneered innovative approaches to painting that many in the West associate most readily with modern art of the 20th century.

The film provides a visually immersive experience of some of Japan’s most celebrated, yet least filmed paintings, including many exceptional Japanese screens collected by Detroit’s Charles Lang Freer, once displayed in his home on Ferry Avenue, and now part of the Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian.

The film will be available online, free, from May 13-23, and a special Q&A will take place on May 20, 6:30pm with the renowned film director, Linda Hoaglund, and Freer House National Advisory Board member and Japanese art expert, Dr. Yukio Lippit, Harvard University, in conversation with DIA curators, Katherine Kasdorf and Elliot Wilhelm. The Q&A program will highlight Charles Lang Freer’s and Detroit’s role in introducing Japanese art to America.

To register and receive a free link to view the film anytime May 13-23, and attend the Q&A on May 20, visit the Freer House website “events” page at <https://mpsi.wayne.edu/freer/events>.



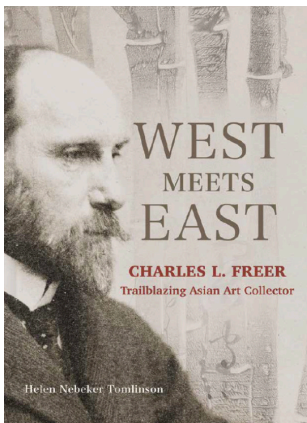
Film Director, Linda Hoaglund
& Japanese art expert, Dr. Yukio Lippit

Countdown to Freer Gallery of Art Centennial Celebration in 2023

In preparation for the 100th anniversary of the opening of the Freer Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., the museum initiated a monthly blog post in 2020 entitled, “This Day in Freer History.” Freer House supporters will find recent postings of interest including, *A Transcendent Realm: Freer, Swami Vivekananda and India* from September, *The Storied Friendship of Whistler and Freer* last July, and January’s, *A Momentous Gift to the Nation, the Freer Gallery of Art*. These fascinating accounts, written by various curators and staff at the Freer and Sackler Galleries, weave together stories of Freer’s life in Detroit with his world-wide travels and extraordinary adventures in art collecting. To view “This Day in Freer History” blogposts ongoing visit: asia.si.edu/blog



New Books Highlight Legacy of Charles Lang Freer and Freer House

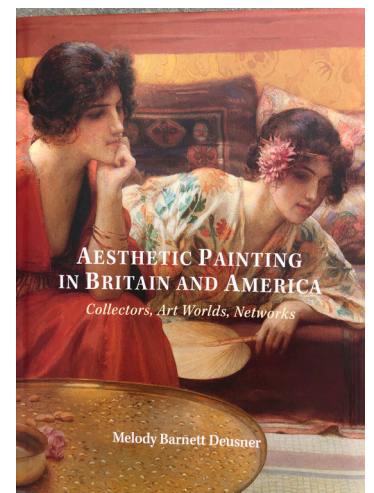


Cover of new Freer biography by
Helen Tomlinson, PhD.

The first full biography of the life of Freer, *West Meets East: Charles L. Freer, Trailblazing Asian Art Collector*, was released by Mascot Books in November, 2019. The author, Helen Nebeker Tomlinson, PhD, based the book on her early (1979) PhD thesis about Freer as a collector of Asian art. Dr. Tomlinson undertook extensive new research to document Freer’s extraordinary life, devoting several chapters to Freer’s Detroit business, civic and cultural lives, while highlighting his pioneering efforts to raise American’s understanding and appreciation of Asian arts and cultures. The Freer House hosted a sold-out book talk by Dr. Tomlinson in November, 2019. The biography is available at the author’s website: charlesfreer.com

A fascinating new book, *Aesthetic Painting in Britain and America: Collectors, Art Worlds and Networks* highlights Freer as an exceptional collector of American aesthetic movement art, including the works of Tryon, Dewing, Thayer and Whistler.

The author, Melody Barnett Duesner, PhD, features the Freer House and the paintings Freer commissioned for the home’s main hall and parlor in her chapter entitled, *Harmonious Systems: Expansion and Standardized Production in Detroit and Beyond*. These new books by Dr. Tomlinson and Dr. Duesner underscore the growing significance of the Freer House and Freer’s Detroit legacy for scholars and researchers in American and Asian art history, worldwide.



Cover of new art book by
Melody Barnett Duesner, PhD

Pewabic Pottery Staff Visits the Freer House (pre-COVID lockdown)

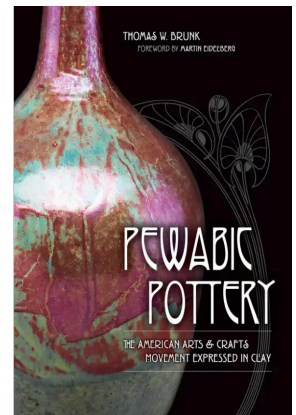


Staff from Pewabic Pottery tour the Main Hall of the Freer House

In late January, 2020, the entire staff of Detroit's historic Pewabic Pottery was the last group of visitors to tour the Freer House before COVID forced temporary closure. Charles Lang Freer was a close friend and exceptional patron of Pewabic's co-founder, Mary Chase Perry. Over 40 Pewabic vessels acquired by Freer are the only American ceramics he chose to include in the collection at the Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian. Staff members from Pewabic enjoyed an extensive tour of the Freer House, including its two beautiful Pewabic tile fireplaces, while listening to stories of Mary Chase Perry's frequent visits decades ago to view Freer's extraordinary collection of Eastern pottery. Perry's exposure to Freer's Islamic and Asian ceramics in turn influenced the development her own famous glaze techniques.

History of Pewabic Pottery book by Thomas W. Brunk just released by MSU Press!

Freer House scholar, author and board member, the late Dr. Thomas W. Brunk, was also the noted authority on the history of Pewabic Pottery. Dr. Brunk authored a detailed book on the subject, including an entire chapter devoted to Freer's significant patronage of Pewabic and friendship with its founder Mary Chase Perry. Sadly, Dr. Brunk's untimely passing in 2018 took place before his completed manuscript could be published. Thanks to the efforts of Freer House board member, John Douglas Peters, and Project Editor, Amanda Frost, this extraordinary book has just been released by Michigan State Press and can be purchased at www.michiganstatepress.org or from your local independent bookseller (and yes, on Amazon too.) The Freer House is honored to have helped shepherd this project to assure that Dr. Brunk's exceptional scholarship and devotion to the history of Detroit's own Pewabic Pottery will be available for future generations.



Cover of new history of Pewabic book
by T.W. Brunk, PhD



James Viste, Edgewise Forge,
holding original bronze Chinese dragon
lamp

Bronze Chinese Lamp Replica Project Underway

A surviving treasure of the exterior ornamentation of the Freer House is a rare bronze Chinese outdoor lamp, depicting the head of a dragon and tail of a phoenix, in an elaborate coiled design which originally held a round opaque globe with an electric bulb inside. The lantern/lamp was originally installed at the northwest corner of the house to shed light on the courtyard garden side entrance of the Freer House. At some point in the 1980's the lamp was removed and was about to be thrown out, when it was discovered by Dr. Thomas W. Brunk and stored away for safe keeping. Thanks to the generous support of Freer House member Dr. David Weinberg, a project to create a reproduction of the lamp is now underway, with the goal of installing a bronze replica in its original outdoor location in Summer, 2021, with the original lamp protected and displayed inside the Freer House. James Viste, Head Metalsmith, Edgewise Forge, who created replicas of the original iron railing for the Peacock Room porch and the bronze replica of the original doorbell, is handling this exciting project, with assistance from artist, John Rizzo.

The Princess Returns to Freer House. Replica of Whistler's Painting Installed.

A full-scale giclee reproduction of James McNeill Whistler's famous painting, *The Princess from the Land of Porcelain*, was installed in its original location in the former Peacock Room. The replica was made possible by generous support from Freer House member, Dr. David Weinberg, with in-kind support from Doug Peters, and kind permission from the Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian. The DIA graciously provided the services of its expert art installation team led by Davin Brainard, to properly secure the large work to the wall. Added thanks to Barbara Heller of the DIA for recommending the Peacock Room inspired blue-green paint color for the wall surfaces. The original painting, acquired by Freer in 1903 and installed in the Peacock Room during its period in the Freer House from 1904-1919, today graces the Peacock Room at the Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian. For a fascinating exploration of the London, Detroit and Washington, D.C. history of the Peacock Room, visit www.peacockroom.wayne.edu, an online resource developed by the Smithsonian and WSU.



L-R: Sarah Burger, DIA; Alicia McCullough, DIA;
Barbara Heller, DIA; Doug Peters, Freer House
Davin Brainard, DIA; Steve Shaw, DIA.

Garden Welcomes (Socially Distanced) Visitors



Entrance gates to the courtyard garden

Although the Freer House interior continues to be temporarily closed due to COVID precautions, the exterior courtyard gardens remain open to the public daily during daylight hours. Guests are asked to socially distance and wear face masks while enjoying the tranquil atmosphere of the courtyard garden. The garden welcomes visitors via the west side gates facing Ferry Street. Visitors will also note that the garden landscaping has been extended to the east side staircase plaza of the Freer House!



Japanese maple and stone lantern

Generous community donors to the garden revitalization project provide vital support for continued maintenance of the garden by K. C. Runciman Landscapes, in cooperation with the WSU Grounds Department, headed by Mike Bernal. Donations to the Freer House Garden Maintenance Fund are gratefully received online at <https://giving.wayne.edu/donate/freerhouse>



Phebe Vandervort Goldstein
Founding Member of Freer House Board

In Memory of an Extraordinary Friend of the Freer House

The Freer House garden was dedicated in 2018 in memory of the late Denise Little, Chair of the Freer House Garden Project Committee, and in honor of Phebe Goldstein, co-founder of the Friends of the Freer House and longtime Board of Visitors member of Merrill Palmer Skillman Institute. With flair, Phebe cut the ribbon of the opening of the garden that September. We have been greatly saddened by the passing of Mrs. Goldstein in January, 2020. The Freer House was honored to be asked by the Goldstein family to host Phebe's memorial service. A standing room crowd of friends and family paid tribute; assembled in the historic house where Phebe spent her young adulthood as a Merrill Palmer student, and in later years, devoted countless hours as an extraordinary supporter of MPSI and the Freer House. The family generously asked that gifts in Phebe's memory be designated for the maintenance and growth of the Freer House courtyard garden. For information on the Garden Maintenance Fund/Donation please call Rose Foster 313-664-2509.

Please Support our Business Co-Sponsors!



Art House
Lectures & Tours Inc.



The Freer House has been very fortunate to have the outstanding support of various businesses and organizations as co-sponsors of our public programs. We wish to highlight two of our longtime, valued sponsors, Art House Lectures and Tours and Blossoms Birmingham. We encourage our members to support these outstanding local businesses that contribute so much to our community, in both good and challenging times! Please visit their websites at <http://www.arthousetours.com/> and <https://www.blossomsbirmingham.com/>.

Foundation Support for Freer House Renewed!



<https://www.erbff.org/>

In addition to local business sponsors, Freer House operations and programs depend upon the support of individuals, institutions and foundations. We are extremely grateful to be included in the Detroit Arts Support grant program from the Kresge Foundation and Erb Family Foundation for 2020-21. In addition, the Freer House is grateful to the Americana Foundation for its visionary leadership grant support in years past through 2019.



<https://kresge.org/>

Thank You Loyal Members! Please Renew your 2021 Membership today!

We wish to express appreciation to our 300 plus members, volunteers and donors for making the public programs and ongoing restoration of the Freer House possible. Your support means more now than ever! Members also receive first notice of Freer House programs. Please join or renew your membership today!

<https://giving.wayne.edu/donate/freerhouse>

For more information contact Rose Foster, rmfoster@wayne.edu or 313-664-2509