

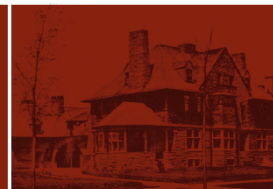


# THE FREER HOUSE

International Landmark, A World Class Lecture Series



71 East Ferry  
Detroit, MI 48202  
313-664-2500



## THE FREER HOUSE CELEBRATES WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH



Katherine Nash Rhoades



Grace Dunham Guest



Charles Lang Freer



Louisine Havemeyer



Agnes Ernst Meyer

# Wonderful & Alarming Women: Charles Lang Freer and the Women Who Helped Establish His Museum

**Thursday, March 31, 2022 at 6:00-7:15 PM, EST**

With guest speaker, **Lillian Wilson, PhD**, Humanities Career Diversity Postdoctoral Fellow, Wayne State University, and Founder and Director of Detroit Historical Consulting

**Register for this program at [mpsi.wayne.edu/freer/events](https://mpsi.wayne.edu/freer/events)**

This program will be recorded. A link will be sent to registrants after March 31.

When Detroit industrialist-turned-art-collector, Charles Lang Freer, died in 1919, four of his women friends, Katharine Nash Rhoades, Grace Dunham Guest, Agnes Ernst Meyer, and Louisine Havemeyer, took leadership roles at his namesake museum, the Freer Gallery of Art. But their close connections with Freer began years prior, as he encouraged their interests as artists, art collectors and researchers, and they in turn assisted with the development and curation of his growing art collection; first at his home in Detroit and later at his museum in Washington, D.C. Rare for the era, the symbiotic relationship between these four women and Freer was based on warmth, dedication, shared interests, and mutual respect, leading to Grace Guest becoming a curator and the other women appointed by Freer as 'trustees' of the new museum.

Delving into primary sources including personal and professional correspondence, museum reports, exhibition catalogues, photographs and paintings, Lillian Wilson, PhD, will discuss how these four dynamic women became instrumental to the running of the Freer Gallery. Their work exemplifies how women took on increasingly important roles at art museums beginning in the 1910s. At the same time, their stories highlight how the professionalization of museum work, and upper-class conventions imposed limits on women's power in the art world.

Join us on **Thursday, March 31, 6:00 - 7:15 pm EST** as we discover how Freer's friendships with Rhoades, Guest, Meyer, and Havemeyer offer fresh insight into his personal life and his ideas about the changing role of women in society during the early twentieth century.



Fred A. and Barbara M. Erb Family Foundation

(See reverse for more details)

# About the Speaker



**Lillian Wilson** has a PhD in history from Wayne State. Her 2021 dissertation, *‘Wonderful and Alarming Women’: Establishing the Freer Gallery of Art, circa 1920*, was the first full-length project to consider the contributions of Katharine Nash Rhoades, Grace Dunham Guest, Agnes Ernst Meyer, and Louisine Havemeyer to the Smithsonian’s Freer Gallery of Art.

Dr. Wilson is founder and director of Detroit Historical Consulting, which specializes in career diversity programming for colleges and universities, and historical research for individuals, businesses, and museums. She is also the Humanities Career Diversity Postdoctoral Fellow and Managing Director of the Humanities Clinic at Wayne State University.

From 2018 - 2021, Dr. Wilson was the American Historical Association Career Diversity Fellow at WSU, during which time she led the Wayne State Humanities Clinic graduate internship program. Wilson’s past professional experience also includes work for the Detroit Historical Museum, the Smithsonian Institution, and The Phillips Collection. For the last decade, she has taught history and art history courses at WSU and the College for Creative Studies. Lillian Wilson lives in metro Detroit with her husband, son, and beagle.

**The Freer House (1892)** is the headquarters of the Merrill Palmer Skillman Institute, Wayne State University. The house is a masterpiece of American shingle-style architecture and the birthplace of the Freer Gallery of Art, National Museum of Asian Art, Smithsonian in Washington, DC. As an early champion of American, Asian, and Middle Eastern art, Freer created a legacy of multi-culturalism that is today celebrated in the house's mission and programming. These bonds to our nation's capitol and much of the world make the Freer House an ambassador of Detroit's global cultural heritage.



*Photo by Alexander Vertikoff*



**The Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, National Museum of Asian Art (1923)**, is located on the National Mall in Washington, DC. Committed to preserving, exhibiting, and interpreting exemplary works of art, the National Museum of Asian Art addresses broad questions about culture, identity, and the contemporary world. The museum cares for exceptional collections of Asian art, with more than 45,000 objects dating from the Neolithic period to today and originating from the ancient Near East to China, Japan, Korea, South and Southeast Asia, and the Islamic world.

Nearly a century old, the Freer Gallery of Art also holds a significant group of American works of art largely dating to the late nineteenth century. It houses the world’s largest collection of diverse works by James McNeill Whistler, including Whistler’s famed Peacock Room.

**For more information about the program,  
please contact Ryan Cunningham at [ryanc@wayne.edu](mailto:ryanc@wayne.edu)**