



December 2005

### **Two Versions of Francis Guy Painting *Winter Scene in Brooklyn* Displayed Together for First Time in Over 180 Years at Brooklyn Museum**

For the first time in more than 180 years, Francis Guy's *Winter Scene in Brooklyn*, one of the earliest paintings to enter the Brooklyn Museum collection, will be exhibited alongside another version of the subject on loan from a private collection. The paintings, considered important historical documents of how the village of Brooklyn appeared in 1820, will be displayed together with some twelve related objects from the Museum's collection, including paintings, works on paper, furniture, ceramics, silver, and a journal written by a young woman who resided in the area during this period. *Picturing Place: Francis Guy's Brooklyn, 1820* is a focused exhibition that examines ways in which art constructs community identity. It will be on view from March 20 through June 18, 2006, at the entrance to the Luce Center for American Art.

Francis Guy painted multiple versions of this Brooklyn scene shortly before his death in August 1820. In addition to the two paintings in the exhibition, there are three smaller, figureless versions (including one in summer). In 1846 *Winter Scene in Brooklyn* entered the collection of the Brooklyn Institute (predecessor to the Brooklyn Museum), then located on Washington Street, where in 1881 the painting was damaged in a fire. A section of about twenty-four inches on the left side of the Museum's canvas was lost, but this area is intact in the private collection painting and nineteenth-century prints.

Painted from the second-story window of his house on Front Street, Guy's two large winter scenes provide a glimpse into the burgeoning village—its bustling activity, architecture, and colorful residents. In addition to capturing Brooklyn's distinctive look, the artist tapped into the growing demand for American subjects. The exhibition situates Guy's works within the evolution of American landscape painting from picturesque scenes indebted to European artistic conventions, to topographical studies celebrating the young nation's development.

In Guy's Brooklyn paintings, people play an equally important role as the urban setting; hence, another section of the exhibition explores the identities of Brooklynites of the period who were then, as now, diverse. Guy represents this diversity in several ways: portraying a range of classes (from manual laborers to merchants), including several African Americans (some of whom were slaves), and alluding to the town's Dutch ancestry (with an old-fashioned barnyard).

## **Brooklyn Museum**

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[www.brooklynmuseum.org](http://www.brooklynmuseum.org)

*Picturing Place: Francis Guy's Brooklyn, 1820* has been organized by Karen A. Sherry, Assistant Curator of American Art at the Brooklyn Museum.

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**GENERAL INFORMATION**

**Admission:**

Contribution \$8; students with valid I.D. and older adults \$4. Free to Members and children under 12 accompanied by an adult. Group tours or visits must be arranged in advance by calling extension 234.

**Directions:**

Subway: Seventh Avenue express (2 or 3) to Eastern Parkway/Brooklyn Museum stop; Lexington Avenue express (4 or 5) to Nevins Street, cross platform and transfer to the 2 or 3. Bus: B71, B41, B69, B48. On-site parking available.

**Museum Hours:**

Wednesday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; First Saturday of each month, 11 a.m. to 11 p.m.; all other Saturdays, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Sunday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Closed Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day.