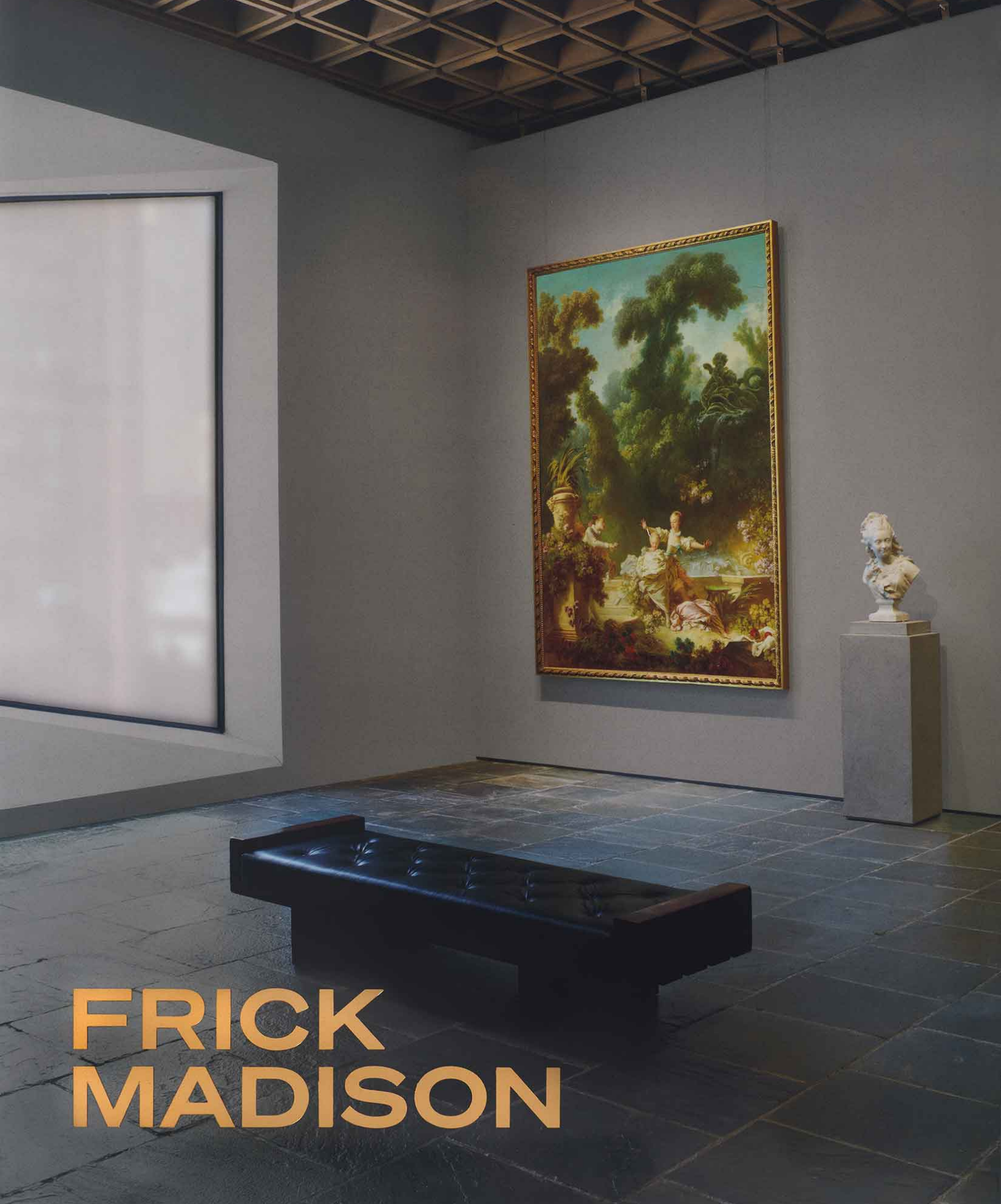

FRICK MADISON

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THE FRICK COLLECTION AT THE BREUER BUILDING

FOREWORD BY **ROXANE GAY**
PHOTOGRAPHED BY **JOSEPH COSCIA JR.**
WITH TEXTS BY **IAN WARDROPPER** AND **XAVIER F. SALOMON**

THE FRICK COLLECTION
IN ASSOCIATION WITH D GILES LIMITED

This publication is made possible by the Drue and H. J. Heinz II Charitable Trust, with additional support from The Arthur F. and Alice E. Adams Charitable Foundation.

Major support for the installation is provided by Bloomberg Philanthropies, Denise Littlefield Sobel, an anonymous gift in memory of Melvin R. Seiden, The Christian Humann Foundation, and by David and Julie Tobey. Additional funding is generously provided by the Samuel H. Kress Foundation, Acquavella Family Foundation, Larry Gagosian, the Malcolm Hewitt Wiener Foundation, The Honorable and Mrs. Earle Mack, The Gladys Krieble Delmas Foundation, Joanne Payson in memory of John Whitney Payson, Fabrizio Moretti, the David L. Klein, Jr. Foundation, Elizabeth F. Stribling and Guy Robinson, Eiko and Michael Assael, Christie's, Elise Frick, Hubert and Mireille Goldschmidt, Jane Richards in honor of Elizabeth M. Eveillard, and Sotheby's.

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First published in 2021 by The Frick Collection

1 East 70th Street
New York, NY 10021
www.frick.org
Michaelyn Mitchell, Editor in Chief
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In association with GILES
An imprint of D Giles Limited
66 High Street
Lewes, BN7 1XG, UK
gilesltd.com

Designed by McCall Associates, New York
Typeset in Lyon and Söhne Breit
Printed and bound in the United States

A CIP catalogue record for this book is available from the Library of Congress.

ISBN: 978-1-913875-03-9

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FOREWORD

ROXANE GAY

The Frick Collection has, until now, been inseparable from its 70th Street residence on New York's Upper East Side. In that storied building, the art and the home are symbiotic, intertwined. There are paintings and sculptures and rugs and furniture, all displayed in a home that is more than a hundred years old.

For the next three years, however, the Frick's collection is displayed in the Breuer building on Madison Avenue, a hulking Brutalist structure. The Breuer is an unexpected home for a classical art collection featuring works from the 1200s to the 1900s, mostly European. Instead of the organic, textured environment of the Frick mansion, the collection can now be seen in a building that is all concrete geometry and steel reinforcement and right angles, a space that serves as a *tabula rasa* onto which the Frick curators have projected their vision of what the Frick's art could be in a new space.

As they planned the transition, the Frick curators held a retreat and brainstormed how they would display the collection in a new space. Their work was driven by one question—how do you take a collection of early European art, normally displayed in a historic home, and translate it from that space to a 1966 Brutalist building? What guiding principle do you use to arrange the works and why?

Rather than working against the architecture of the Breuer building, the curators decided to work with it. They took a minimalist approach, a stark contrast to the maximalist aesthetic of the Frick home. There are no interior walls in the Breuer, so they built that infrastructure and painted the walls in gray tones that complement the colors of the building. In its temporary home, the Frick is all about the art. There is nothing between you and the work, no barriers, few vitrines. There are no labels adjacent to the art with information about the works. Instead, you can follow a printed guide or audio tour or experience the art independently. For the first time, you can see a given artist's work on its own, instead of in concert with the Frick house. You can see the beauty of the work, the flaws, how the work has aged, all its strengths and weaknesses.