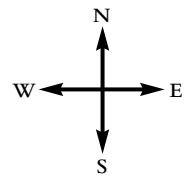
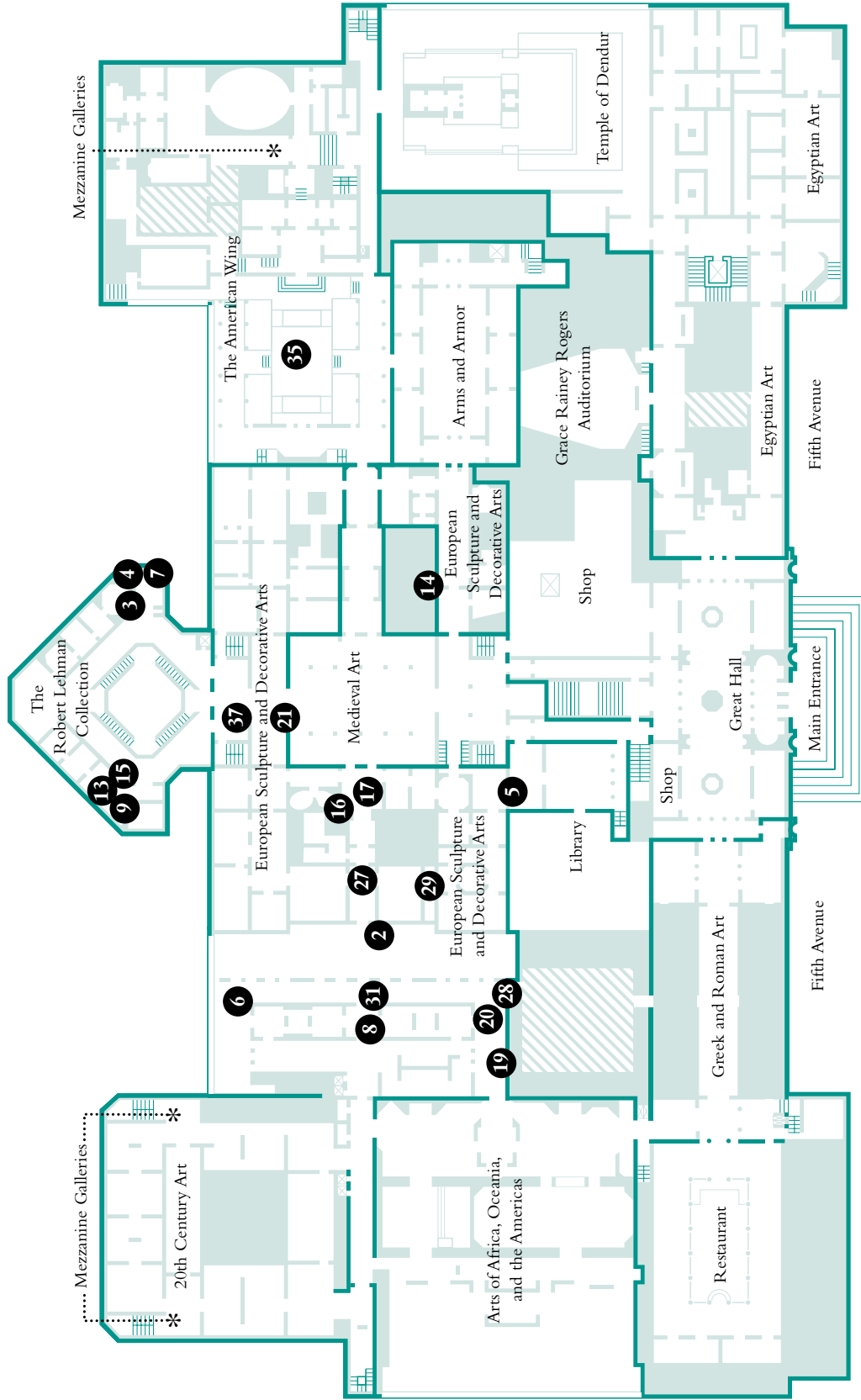
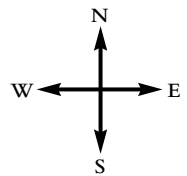
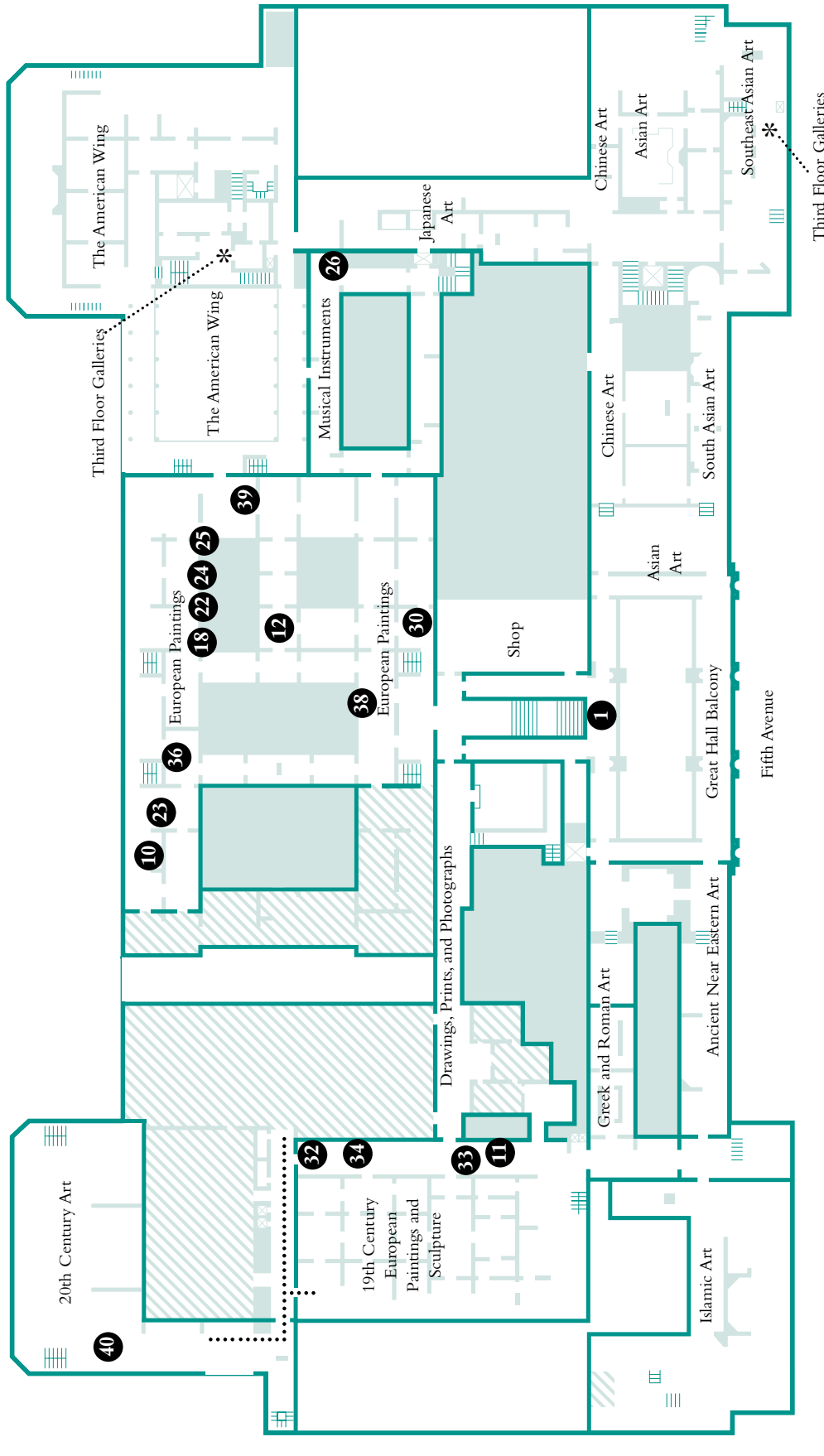


Main Floor



“Hunts” Inside the Museum / Outside The New Greek Galleries

Second Floor



“Hunts” Inside the Museum / Outside The New Greek Galleries

OUTSIDE THE GREEK ART GALLERIES

Greek Mythological and Historical Subjects

Classical antiquity has been a source of inspiration for artists of subsequent generations, most notably those in the Renaissance and Baroque periods. The Metropolitan Museum of Art has hundreds of examples that attest to the importance of classical antiquity in later European traditions. The following works of art have been selected primarily to illustrate a variety of subject matter in a range of material that is relatively accessible for viewing by large groups. These works are intended to be a resource that can be used to enhance the study of Greek mythology and history and serve as an introduction to other periods in the history of art.

For background information on many of the subjects listed below, please consult the “hunts” in the Greek art galleries. Note that the Roman author Ovid, writing in the time of Augustus, borrowed many Greek stories and legends for his *Metamorphoses*. As heirs to the Greek mythological tradition, the Romans renamed many Greek gods and goddesses. The titles of the works listed below often give the Roman rather than the Greek name of a deity or hero. In these instances, the Greek equivalent has been provided in parentheses, e.g., Hercules (Herakles).

Please be advised that objects in the Museum are occasionally moved, and galleries are sometimes temporarily closed. We suggest that you visit the Museum ahead of time in order to ensure that your intended route is available.

A Hunt for Perseus

1. **Perseus with the Head of Medusa.** Marble, executed between 1804 and 1806. Antonio Canova (Italian [Rome], 1757–1822). Fletcher Fund, 1967 (67.110.1) (Location: Great Hall Balcony)



1.

2. **Andromeda and the Sea Monster.** Marble, 1694. Domenico Guidi (Italian [Rome], 1625–1701). Purchase, Josephine Bay Paul and C. Michael Paul Foundation Inc. Gift, Charles Ulrick and Josephine Bay Foundation Inc. Gift, 1967 (67.34) (Location: European Sculpture and Decorative Arts, Carroll and Milton Petrie European Sculpture Court)



2.

Acquired in Rome by John Cecil, fifth earl of Exeter (1648–1700), this sculpture was long believed to have been the work of Pierre-Étienne Monnot, the French-born sculptor who carved the English statesman's funerary monument. The *Andromeda*, thoroughly Roman Baroque in conception and treatment, was once thought to have been merely influenced by Domenico Guidi, Monnot's mentor, but is now attributed to Guidi himself. The sculpture has recently been identified as the *Andromeda* (previously considered lost) originally commissioned by Francesco II d'Este, duke of Modena, who died before acquiring it. John Cecil bought the work for Burghley House, his Northamptonshire residence, where it remained until this century.



3.

3. **Perseus severs the head of Medusa and frees Andromeda, chained to a rock (here a tree) as a sacrifice to a dragon.** Dish, Italian (Urbino?); lustered in Gubbio, 1533. Maestro Giorgio Andreoli. Robert Lehman Collection, 1975 (1975.1.1106) (Location: The Robert Lehman Collection)



4.

A Hunt for Herakles

4. **The Second Labor of Hercules (*Herakles*):** He must vanquish the nine-headed Lernaean Hydra. Dish, Italian (Deruta), ca. 1510. Robert Lehman Collection, 1975 (1975.1.1038) (Location: The Robert Lehman Collection)



5.

5. **Hercules (*Herakles*) and the Erymanthian Boar.** Bronze statuette, Italian (Florence), mid-17th century. After a model by Giovanni Bologna. (1982.60.100) (Location: European Sculpture and Decorative Arts)

6. **Herakles the Archer.** Bronze, 1909. Émile-Antoine Bourdelle (French [Paris], 1861–1929). Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Stephen C. Millett, 1924 (24.232) (Location: European Sculpture and Decorative Arts, Carroll and Milton Petrie European Sculpture Court)



6.

Herakles is here preparing to shoot the Stymphalian birds, one of his twelve labors. This work, which established Bourdelle's reputation, was executed in 1909 following several small-scale studies, most of which were cast in bronze. The first cast of the monumental version was purchased by Prince Eugene of Sweden for his palace in Stockholm.



7.

7. **The Twelfth Labor of Hercules (*Herakles*):** He must subdue Cerberus (*Kerberos*) and bring him up from Hades. Dish, Italian (Urbino), lustered in Gubbio, ca. 1532. Follower of Francesco Xanto Avelli da Rovigo. Robert Lehman Collection, 1975 (1975.1.1082) (Location: The Robert Lehman Collection)

8. Atlas or Hercules (*Herakles*) Supporting the Earth. Terracotta painted to resemble bronze, ca. 1780. Claude Michel, called Clodion (French [Paris], 1738–1814). Bequest of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1906 (07.225.379) (Location: European Sculpture and Decorative Arts)

One of Herakles' twelve labors was obtaining the golden apples from the Garden of the Hesperides. He persuaded Atlas to fetch the apples for him, by offering to take the burden of the world off of Atlas' shoulders. After Atlas returned with the apples, Herakles tricked Atlas into taking back the burden, by asking him to hold the world temporarily while he rested a cushion on his shoulders to make the load more comfortable.

This is a preliminary model for a bronze clock figure; the clock's movement would have been in the globe. In an anonymous sale in Paris in 1790, a terracotta was sold that was purported to be Clodion's model for a clock for Catherine the Great of Russia.

9. Hercules (*Herakles*) slays the centaur Nessos. Dish, Italian (Gubbio), 1525. Workshop of Maestro Giorgio Andreoli. Inscribed: *Divo . Erculi* (To divine Hercules). Robert Lehman Collection, 1975 (1975.1.1100) (Location: The Robert Lehman Collection)

The composition is based on an engraving, probably by Marcantonio Raimondi, in which the story of the centaur Nessos, whom Herakles shot with an arrow (Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, Book 9), is confused with that of the giant Kakos, whom Herakles clubbed to death.



8.



9.



10.



11.

A Hunt for Theseus

10. *The Feast of Acheloüs*. Oil on wood, ca. 1615. Peter Paul Rubens (Flemish, 1577–1640) and Jan Brueghel the Elder (Flemish, 1568–1625). Gift of Alvin and Irwin Untermyer, in memory of their parents, 1945 (45.141) (Location: European Paintings)

This large panel is one of the most impressive known collaborations between Rubens and his older colleague Jan Brueghel. Rubens conceived and painted the figure group; throughout the rest of the picture, Brueghel was in his two elements: landscape and still life painting. A “cabinet picture” like this one would have been made for the “cabinet,” or private gallery, of a collector who could appreciate clever invention, fine execution, the quotations of classical sculpture in the nearest figures at the table, and Rubens’ retelling of the tale found in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* (Book 8). Theseus (in red) and his companions were returning from Crete to Athens when they encountered the river god Acheloüs. The god set a banquet before them and explained that a distant island was his lost lover Perimele, held forever in his embrace. Except for young and “reckless” Perithous, the story of the miracle “moved the hearts of all.”

11. *Theseus Fighting the Centaur Bianor*. Original modeled in 1849; this bronze cast ca. 1867. Antoine-Louis Barye (French, 1795–1875). Gift of Samuel P. Avery, 1885 (85.3) (Location: Nineteenth-Century European Paintings and Sculpture, B. Gerald Cantor Sculpture Gallery)

Barye’s thorough grounding in classical prototypes is evident in this highly charged representation of an incident from the battle between the Lapiths and Centaurs described in Book 12 of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*. Barye surely knew the series of metopes from the Parthenon depicting the Greek legend, but the death blow delivered by the Greek hero is recognizably borrowed from the marble *Hercules and a Centaur* by the Mannerist sculptor Giambologna in Florence.

A Hunt for Myths and Fables

12. Scenes from the Story of the Argonauts. *Above:* Panel of a cassone (marriage chest); tempera on wood, gilt ornament, ca. 1465. Master of the Argonauts (Italian [Florence], fourth quarter of 15th century). Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1909 (09.136.2). (Location: European Paintings)

Jason, dressed in golden armor, is charged by King Pelias with retrieving the Golden Fleece, shown at the upper left. Pelias was later murdered by his daughters, an event depicted in another room of the palace. In the foreground, Jason mounts his horse; in the center background, he is joined by Orpheus. Jason, Hercules (Herakles), and Orpheus are then shown consulting with the centaur Chiron on Mount Pelion, while the Calydonian boar hunt is depicted in the right foreground. In the distance is Jason's ship, the *Argo*.

This painting was probably installed as a backrest on a bench, or framed in the wainscoting of a room.

13. The Story of King Midas: Midas preferred Pan's music to Apollo's in a contest between the two gods, whereupon Apollo gave Midas the ears of an ass (Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, Book 11). Armorial plate, Italian (Castel Durante or Urbino), ca. 1520–25. Nicolò da Urbino (Italian, active from ca. 1520; d. 1537/38). Robert Lehman Collection, 1975 (1975.1.1019) (Location: The Robert Lehman Collection)



12.



13.



14.

14. Actaeon (*Aktaion*) Changing into a Stag. Maiolica, Italian (Urbino), ca. 1525–30. Probably the Master FR. Samuel D. Lee Fund, 1941 (41.49.3) (Location: European Sculpture and Decorative Arts)

While hunting, Aktaion was changed into a stag by Diana (Artemis) when he surprised the goddess and her nymphs bathing on Mount Cithaeron (Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, Book 3). His own hounds then ran him to ground and killed him.



15.

15. The Story of Apollo: Just as the god catches the fleeing nymph Daphne, his first love, she turns into a laurel tree (Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, Book 1). Ceramic plate, Italian (Urbino), 1532. Francesco Xanto Avelli da Rovigo. Robert Lehman Collection, 1975 (1975.1.1137) (Location: The Robert Lehman Collection)



16.

16. The Drowning of Britomartis. Tapestry of wool and silk, French (probably Paris), 1547–59. Probably designed by Jean Cousin the Elder (ca. 1490–1560/61); possibly woven by Pierre II Blasse and Jacques Langlois (both active 1540–60). Made for Diane de Poitiers (1499–1566), possibly for her Château d’Anet. Gift of the children of Mrs. Harry Payne Whitney, 1942 (42.57.1) (Location: European Sculpture and Decorative Arts)

Combining events described by classical authors with details contemporary to the artist, the story of Britomartis, as told in the inscription, unfolds in several scenes. At upper left, King Minos of Crete relentlessly pursues the Cretan princess Britomartis. She, however, chooses to fling herself into the sea rather than succumb to him. The goddess Diana (Artemis), the virgin huntress, pictured with her hounds and attendants, subsequently invents the net and gives it to the fishermen, as seen at top center. They retrieve the body of Britomartis so that it may be brought to a holy place.

Personal references to Diane de Poitiers include the border device of an arrow with the Latin words *Consequitur quodcumque petit* (“It attains whatever it seeks”), which is also found at Anet. The monogram initials *HD* that decorate the goddess Diana’s gown are those of the French King Henri II and his longtime mistress Diane de Poitiers.

17. The Reign of Jupiter (*Zeus*) Marble, French, ca. 1555–60. School of Fontainebleau. Purchase, The Annenberg Foundation Gift, 1997 (1997.23) (Location: European Sculpture and Decorative Arts)

Zeus, king of the gods, is seated on a rocky ledge. Water flows from the ledge in three streams, apparently irrigating the fountain in the medallion. Mercury (*Hermes*) is at the left and below are the zodiacal signs for Gemini and Sagittarius.



17.

18. Venus (*Aphrodite*) and Adonis. Oil on canvas. Titian (Italian [Venice], ca. 1488–1576). The Jules Bache Collection, 1949 (49.7.16) (Location: European Paintings)

Ovid, in his *Metamorphoses* (Book 10), relates the story of the goddess Aphrodite vainly trying to restrain her lover, the mortal Adonis, from departing for the hunt. The mood of playful sensuality conceals the tragic irony that Adonis is destined to be killed during the hunt by a wild boar. Titian painted two versions of the composition: one in 1554 for Philip II of Spain (now in the Prado, Madrid), and the other shortly before 1570 for the Farnese family (lost). The present picture is a version of the second composition, and since its cleaning in 1976, can be seen to have been painted in great part by Titian.



18.



19.

19. *Aesop's Fables* Cabinet made of various exotic hardwoods veneered on oak, with ebony moldings; plaques of hardstones and slate; *pietre dure* work of various hardstones, colored marbles, and rock crystal; Italian (Florence), ca. 1615–23. Court workshop of the grand dukes of Tuscany. Wrightsman Fund, 1988 (1988.19) (Location: European Sculpture and Decorative Arts)



20.

The arms are those of a Barberini cardinal, probably Maffeo Barberini (1568–1644), who became Pope Urban VIII in 1623. The scenes from Aesop's *Fables* are after woodcut illustrations in the edition by Francisco Tупpo published in Naples in 1485.

20. *Faun Teased by Children*. Marble, ca. 1616–17. Gian Lorenzo Bernini (Italian [Rome], 1598–1680). Purchase, The Annenberg Fund, Inc. Gift; Fletcher, Rogers, and Louis V. Bell Funds; and Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, by exchange, 1976 (1976.92) (Location: European Sculpture and Decorative Arts)

This work by Bernini, only eighteen or nineteen years old at the time, remained in the possession of the Bernini family at least until the beginning of the eighteenth century.



21.

21. *Diana (Artemis) and the Stag*. Automaton of silver, partly gilt, enameled, set with jewels; movement of iron, wood; German (Augsburg), ca. 1620. Joachim Friess (master 1610; d. 1620). Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917 (17.190.746) (Location: European Sculpture and Decorative Arts)

The stag has a hollow body and a removable head and can be used as a drinking cup. When used in drinking games, a mechanism in the base was wound up and the automaton was allowed to run freely on concealed wheels until it came to a halt before one of the participants at the table, who had to drink everything in the cup. Artemis' bow, quiver, and arrow are late nineteenth century in date.

22. *Midas Washing at the Source of the Pactolus*. Oil on canvas, 1624. Nicolas Poussin (French, 1594–1665). Purchase, 1871 (71.56) (Location: European Paintings)

Poussin, who painted this not long after he arrived in Rome in 1624, was drawn to the story of Midas, an allegory of vanity (Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, Book 11). When Bacchus (Dionysos) offered Midas a gift, the king asked that everything he touched be turned to gold. Soon realizing that he could neither eat nor drink, he asked to be relieved of the gift, and Dionysos sent him to wash it away in the Pactolus River. Partly submerged in water, Midas is dominated here by the personification of a river god.

23. *Venus (Aphrodite) and Adonis*. Oil on canvas, mid- or late 1630s. Peter Paul Rubens (Flemish, 1577–1640). Gift of Harry Payne Bingham, 1937 (37.162) (Location: European Paintings)

Aphrodite, assisted by Cupid (Eros), vainly tries to restrain her mortal lover Adonis from setting off for the hunt, knowing that if he does so, he will be killed by a wild boar (Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, Book 10). The painting is inspired by Titian's picture of the same story in the Prado, Madrid, which Rubens saw and copied during his stay in Madrid in 1628–29 (a version of Titian's painting hangs in the Museum; see no. 22 above). The broad execution and vivid color of the present painting indicate a date in the mid- or late 1630s. Radiographs reveal that Rubens originally gave Adonis a somber expression, which was repainted at a later date.

The picture was presented by Emperor Joseph I to the first duke of Marlborough, John Churchill.



22.



23.



24.

24. Blind Orion Searching for the Rising Sun. Oil on canvas, 1658. Nicolas Poussin (French, 1594–1665). Fletcher Fund, 1924 (24.45.1) (Location: European Paintings)

For his depiction of the gigantic hunter, Poussin drew on the Greek writer Lucian (*De domo*, lines 27–29): “Orion, who is blind, is carrying Cedalion, and the latter, riding on his back, is showing him the way to the sunlight. The rising sun is healing [his] blindness.” Poussin also studied a sixteenth-century commentary on the tale by Natalis Comes, which affords a meteorological interpretation. Accordingly he added Diana (Artemis), standing upon the clouds that wreath Orion’s face, symbol of the power of the moon to gather the earth’s vapors and turn them into rain. Toward the end of his life, Poussin scrutinized pebbles, moss, flowers, and plants, and his landscapes—such as this one, painted for Michel Passart in 1658—evoke the earth’s early history by showing nature abundant and uncultivated.



25.

25. Mercury (*Hermes*) and Battus. Oil on canvas. Francisque Millet (French, 1642–1679). H. O. Havemeyer Collection, Bequest of Mrs. H. O. Havemeyer, 1929 (29.100.21) (Location: European Paintings)

Ovid (*Metamorphoses*, Book 2) recounts the story of the old shepherd Battus, who, having witnessed Hermes’ theft of a herd of cattle, promised not to disclose the secret. When tested by the god, shown here in the guise of a young shepherd, he pointed to the foot of the mountain where the cattle were hidden. Hermes then turned him into a stone. The authorship of the picture, once attributed to Poussin, was established by an engraving of it bearing Millet’s name.

26. Polyphemus and Galatea; The Triumph of Galatea.

Harpsichord, Italian (Rome), ca. 1670. Invented by Michele Todini. The Crosby Brown Collection, 1889 (89.4.2929) (Location: Musical Instruments)

The cyclops Polyphemus pursued the nymph Galatea, but she was in love with Acis, son of Faunus. The rejected Polyphemus killed Acis with a rock (Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, Book 13).

This gilded case encloses an Italian harpsichord of typical design but with an unusually long five-octave compass. Decorated with a frieze depicting the Triumph of Galatea and supported by three Tritons, it was described in Michele Todini's catalogue of 1676. It originally formed part of his *Galeria Armonica*. Todini designed several such lavish instruments and charged admission from the aristocrats who visited his gallery. The flanking figures of Polyphemus playing a bagpipe (Todini invented one like it) and Galatea, holding a lute, were displayed with the harpsichord in front of a "mountain," which concealed a small pipe organ. The organ simulated the bagpipe's sound, and the harpsichord represented the sound of the lute. The artistic quality of the case ranks it among the finest examples of Roman Baroque decorative art, while Todini's ingenuity and pursuit of new forms of instrumental expressivity grew out of the same musical climate that led to the invention of the piano by 1700.

27. Scenes from Stories in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*: Io, transformed into a cow, watches Mercury (*Hermes*) behead hundred-eyed Argos (Book 1); below, Icarus (*Ikaros*) flying with artificial wings over the Aegean Sea (Book 8). Ewer of tin-enameled earthenware (*faience*), French (Nevers), ca. 1675–85. The Charles E. Sampson Memorial Fund; Gift of Irwin Untermyer by exchange; Rogers Fund; and Bequest of John L. Cadwalader, by exchange, 1985 (1985.181.2) (Location: European Sculpture and Decorative Arts)



26.



27.



28.

28. *Diana (Artemis) and Actaeon (Aktaion)*. Wool and silk tapestry, French (Paris), designed before 1680; woven at the atelier of Jean Jans the Younger (ca. 1644–1723), at or near the Gobelins, late 17th–early 18th century. Gift of Mrs. George S. Amory, in memory of her father and mother, Mr. and Mrs. Amory Sibley Carhart, 1964 (64.208) (Location: European Sculpture and Decorative Arts)



29.

From a set of tapestries depicting stories from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, this hanging illustrates the moment when Aktaion, having accidentally seen the goddess Artemis and her nymphs bathing, begins to change into a stag (Book 3).

29. *Marsyas*. Marble, French (Toulon), ca. 1682–90. Christophe Veyrier (French, 1637–1690). Rogers Fund, 1919 (19.17) (Location: European Sculpture and Decorative Arts)

The Phrygian satyr Marsyas challenged Apollo to a music contest. Marsyas lost and was flayed alive by Apollo (Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, Book 6).

30. *The Chariot of Aurora (Eos)*. Oil on canvas. Giovanni Battista Tiepolo (Italian [Venice], 1696–1770). Bequest of Lore Heinemann, in memory of her husband, Dr. Rudolf J. Heinemann, 1996 (1997.117.7) (Location: European Paintings)

Eos, goddess of dawn, drives her chariot, accompanied by the Hours and heralded by Apollo; Time is shown on the right. Also recognizable are Ceres (Demeter), with a sheaf of wheat, and Bacchus (Dionysos), wearing a crown of vine leaves—emblematic of summer and fall.

This beautiful oil sketch was possibly a proposal by Tiepolo for the decoration of a ceiling in the Royal Palace in Madrid. Tiepolo had been summoned to Spain in 1762 by Charles III to paint the ceiling of the throne room, and upon completion of this vast fresco, he made proposals for the decoration of other rooms. A ceiling of this scheme was painted in the queen's bedroom in 1763 by Tiepolo's rival, Anton Raphael Mengs.

31. *Minerva (Athena)*. Terracotta, signed and dated Rome, 1766. Claude Michel, called Clodion (French, 1738–1814). Purchase, Charles Ulrick and Josephine Bay Foundation, Inc. Gift, 1975 (1975.312.6) (Location: European Sculpture and Decorative Arts)

Clodion's Neoclassical style was developed during his years in Rome, from 1762 to 1771.



30.



31.



32.

32. Oedipus and the Sphinx. Oil on canvas. Gustave Moreau (French, 1826–1898). Bequest of William H. Herriman, 1920 (21.134.1) (Location: Nineteenth-Century European Paintings and Sculpture, B. Gerald Cantor Sculpture Gallery)

Moreau's interpretation of the Greek myth draws heavily on Ingres' painting *Oedipus and the Sphinx* (1808; now at the Louvre in Paris). Both painters chose to represent the moment when Oedipus confronts the winged monster in a rocky pass outside the city of Thebes. Unlike her other victims, Oedipus could answer her riddle and thus saved himself and the besieged Thebans. This painting was extremely successful at the Salon of 1864; it won a medal and established Moreau's reputation.



33.

33. Pygmalion and Galatea. Oil on canvas, ca. 1890. Jean-Léon Gérôme (French, 1824–1904). Signed (on base of statue): J. L. GEROME. Gift of Louis C. Raegner, 1927 (27.200) (Location: Nineteenth-Century European Paintings and Sculpture, B. Gerald Cantor Sculpture Gallery)

At the end of his career, Gérôme became increasingly interested in polychrome sculpture. The present picture and a lifesize marble (Hearst Monument, San Simeon, California), both executed about 1890, illustrate a story from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (Book 10). The artist chose the moment when the wish of the Cypriot sculptor Pygmalion was granted by Venus (Aphrodite): his statue of Galatea came to life and responded to his love. The apparition of Cupid (Eros) with his bow and arrow is not mentioned in Ovid's account of the legend.

34. *Orpheus and Eurydice* (Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, Book 10). Marble, 1893; probably modeled before 1887. Auguste Rodin (French, 1840–1917). Signed and dated: A. Rodin/1893. Gift of Thomas F. Ryan, 1910 (10.63.2) (Location: Nineteenth-Century European Paintings and Sculpture, B. Gerald Cantor Sculpture Gallery)

Originally modeled for Rodin's sculpture *The Gates of Hell*, where it was apparently intended to illustrate a poem from Baudelaire's *Les fleurs du mal*, this group was abandoned by the artist in his final version of *The Gates*, but given a second existence under the present title. The figure of Eurydice is recognizable as that of *The Martyr* and exemplifies Rodin's propensity for exploring multiple interpretations of a single form.

35. *Diana (Artemis)*. Gilded bronze, modeled 1892–93; this cast, 1928. Augustus Saint-Gaudens (American, 1848–1907). Rogers Fund, 1928 (28.101) (Location: The American Wing, Charles Engelhard Court)

This *Diana* is a half-size model of a thirteen-foot-high finial designed to surmount the tower of the original Madison Square Garden in New York City. The design, by the architect Stanford White (1853–1906), is after the Giralda, the tower that adjoins the cathedral of Seville in Spain. The first *Diana* (1891, eighteen feet high), made of sheet copper, proved too large and cumbersome in relation to the tower and was replaced in 1893 by the streamlined second version. The second *Diana*, also made of sheet copper, was removed in 1925, just before the Garden was demolished. The sculpture was severely criticized for its nudity, but even as a campaign was launched to remove it from the tower, *Diana* was becoming one of New York's most popular landmarks.



34.



35.



36.

A Hunt for the Trojan War

36. *The Judgment of Paris*. Oil on wood, possibly ca. 1528. Lucas Cranach the Elder (German, 1472–1553). Signed (right foreground, on rock) with winged serpent. Rogers Fund, 1928 (28.221) (Location: European Paintings)

The painting shows Paris awarding a golden apple (here transformed into a glass orb) to the fairest of the three goddesses Minerva (Athena), Juno (Hera), and Venus (Aphrodite). This was a favorite subject of the mature Cranach; a very similar picture in the Öffentliche Kunstsammlung in Basel is dated 1528, and the present painting may date from about this time.



37.

37. *The Trojan War: The great wooden horse left behind by the Greeks is dragged into the city of Troy*. Armorial dish, Italian (Pesaro), ca. 1550. Possibly the Zenobia painter. The coat of arms is unidentified. Bequest of Alexandrine Sinsheimer, 1958 (59.23.2) (Location: European Sculpture and Decorative Arts)

A Hunt for Historical Subjects

38. *The Death of Socrates (Sokrates)*. Oil on canvas, 1787. Jacques-Louis David (French, 1748–1825). Signed, dated, and inscribed: (lower left) L.D/MDCCLXXXVII; (right, on bench) L. David; (right, on bench, in Greek) *Athenaion* (“of Athens”). Catharine Lorillard Wolfe Collection, Wolfe Fund, 1931 (31.45) (Location: European Paintings)

Accused by the Athenian state of denying the gods and corrupting the youth through his teachings, Sokrates (469–399 B.C.) was offered the choice of renouncing his beliefs or being sentenced to death by drinking hemlock. David shows him calmly discoursing on the immortality of the soul to his grief-stricken disciples. The figure at the foot of the bed is either Plato or Crito.

The picture, with its courageous theme, is perhaps David’s most perfect Neoclassical statement. The printmaker and publisher John Boydell wrote Sir Joshua Reynolds that it was “the greatest effort of art since the Sistine chapel and the Stanze of Raphael... This work would have done honour to Athens at the time of Pericles.” The subject is loosely based on Plato’s *Phaedo*, but in painting it, David consulted a variety of sources, including Denis Diderot’s 1758 treatise on dramatic poetry and the work of poet André Chénier. David is reported to have taken his inspiration for the pose of Plato/Crito from a novel by the English writer Samuel Richardson.



38.



39.

39. Aristotle with a Bust of Homer. Oil on canvas, 1653.

Rembrandt (Dutch, 1606–1669). Signed and dated (on pedestal of bust): Rembrandt.f. / 1653. Purchase, special contributions and funds given or bequeathed by friends of the Museum, 1961 (61.198) (Location: European Paintings)

In this depiction of Aristotle, the Greek philosopher rests his hand reflectively on a bust of Homer, the epic poet of a much earlier age. A medallion depicting Alexander the Great, whom Aristotle tutored, hangs from a splendid gold chain. This extravagant decoration may represent Alexander's gift to Aristotle and recalls the gold chains given by princely patrons to Titian, Rubens, and van Dyck. It is generally supposed that Aristotle contemplates the worth of worldly success as opposed to spiritual values or immortal ideas. The gesture of the hands, accentuated by the cascading sleeves, and the shadows playing over Aristotle's brow and eyes support this interpretation.

The picture was painted for the great Sicilian collector Antonio Ruffo, who evidently had not requested any particular subject. His inventory, dated September 1, 1654, lists the canvas as a "half-length figure of a philosopher made in Amsterdam by the painter Rembrandt (it appears to be Aristotle or Albertus Magnus)." The ancient and medieval philosophers shared an interest in the senses, with sight—perhaps evoked by Homer's blindness—judged superior to hearing and touch. In the early 1660s, Rembrandt sent Ruffo companion pictures of Alexander and Homer, which suggests that, despite his much later costume, the figure must be Aristotle (as he is called in Ruffo papers dated 1662). In any case, the study of a figure lost in thought is characteristic of Rembrandt, whose achievement here reflects his long-standing preoccupation with visual and emotional experience.

A Hunt for a Kouros

40. *Kouros*. Marble, 1944–45. Isamu Noguchi (American, 1904–1988). Fletcher Fund, 1953 (53.87a–i) (Location: Modern Art, second floor)

The title of Noguchi’s work makes specific reference to Archaic Greek standing nude male statues. After the Metropolitan bought Noguchi’s *Kouros*, which uses no pins or adhesives to connect its many pieces, the sculptor wrote to the Museum: “The image of man as Kouros goes back to student memories of your archaic plaster casts and the pink Kouros [see slide 3] you acquired—the admiration of youth. My Kouros is a stone construction. The weight of the stone holds it aloft—a balance of forces as precise and precarious as life.”

Soon after Noguchi, a Japanese American, was released from an internment camp in Arizona, where he had been held during World War II, he made this figure using pieces of marble found at construction sites in New York City. In describing this period in his autobiography, the artist again wrote about *Kouros*: “It’s like life—you can lose it at any moment.”



40.

