

Report from the Director and the President

For The Metropolitan Museum of Art, the past year was one of superlatives in almost every area. The Museum made worldwide headlines for two of the most important acquisitions in the last half-century, and it mounted a number of exhibitions that ranked as firsts for the art world at large. Through the caliber of its collections and special exhibitions it cemented its already formidable standing in the area of modern art, and with the renovation of its landmark facade nearing completion, it brought an air of anticipation and excitement to the cultural life of New York City. Major milestones were also reached in its “21st-Century Met” building from within program, and the Museum’s widely respected arts magazine, the *Bulletin*, officially entered its second century of publication.

Acquisitions

Dominating the cultural press last fall was news of the Metropolitan’s purchase of a rare and uniquely important early Renaissance masterpiece by the fourteenth-century Italian painter Duccio de Buoninsegna. Painted about 1295 to 1300, this exquisite *Madonna and Child* by the great Sieneese painter is one of the most important single acquisitions of the last fifty years. The painting, in tempera and gold on wood, although well known in the literature, had been inaccessible, even to scholars, for over half a century. Small in size but immense in achievement and influence, the Duccio *Madonna and Child* fills a gap in the Met’s Renaissance collection that even the Museum had scant hopes of ever closing. Together with Giotto, Duccio is considered one of the two principal founders of Western European painting. His works are extremely rare—only a dozen or so are known—and the addition of the *Madonna and Child* enables visitors for the first time to follow the entire trajectory of European painting from its beginnings to the present. Influenced by Giotto’s frescoes, Duccio explored sentiment and emotional response in his art, with a lyricism and sensitivity to color that became the basis of Sieneese painting. This new, complex vision attains its first clear statement in the *Madonna and Child*, and it is for this reason that this small panel is so revolutionary. The Met is deeply grateful for the generosity shown by several trustees and donors who helped the Museum acquire the Duccio painting, which was purchased through a portion of long-held funding designated for acquisitions, supplemented by gifts and other funds.

The excitement surrounding the Duccio acquisition was still very much in the air when the Metropolitan announced in the spring that it had acquired what has long been regarded as the world’s finest collection of photographs in private hands, the Gilman Paper Company Collection. With exceptional examples of nineteenth-century French, British, and American photographs, as well as masterpieces from the turn-of-the-century and modernist periods, the Gilman Collection was formed by the late Howard Gilman and his curator, Pierre Apraxine, between 1977 and 1997. With more than 8,500 photographs, dating primarily from the first century of the medium, 1839–1939, the collection has played a central role in establishing photography’s historical canon and in setting the standard for connoisseurship in the field. In addition to many individual icons of photography by such masters as Julia Margaret Cameron, Roger Fenton, Nadar, Gustave Le Gray, Mathew Brady, Carleton

Watkins, Edward Steichen, and Man Ray, the Gilman Collection includes exceptional albums and whole bodies of work by pioneers of the camera, as well as remarkable photographs by little-known, even unknown, masters.

This landmark acquisition—by far the most important that the Metropolitan has ever made in the field of photography, indeed one of its most important acquisitions in any field—provides the Museum’s public with a rich and enduring opportunity to study and appreciate the visual innovation and sheer beauty of photography at its highest level. The Museum and its public all owe a deep debt of gratitude to its trustees, donors, and supporters, as well as to The Howard Gilman Foundation, for having given this unparalleled collection its proper home at the Metropolitan.

Many other objects of distinction were acquired this past year, and highlights of these recent acquisitions, including descriptions and illustrations, can be found in the fall 2005 *Bulletin*.

Exhibitions

The acquisition of the Gilman Collection marked the second time in less than a month that the Metropolitan was linked with groundbreaking photography. The exhibition “Diane Arbus Revelations,” organized by the San Francisco Museum of Art, was the first major museum retrospective of the artist’s work in more than thirty years, and it opened at the Met less than two weeks before the Gilman Collection announcement. Besides featuring almost 200 of Arbus’s riveting photographs, along with contact sheets, cameras, letters, writings, books, and other objects, the special exhibition played a central role in the Museum’s newest audience-development initiative, the College Marketing Group. In April, in the first event of its kind for the Metropolitan, more than 1,500 college-age students turned out for a special evening viewing of Arbus’s seminal work, as controversial today as when her pictures were first seen.

There was also an element of the new in special exhibitions that focused on both ancient and colonial art. Last fall’s “China: Dawn of a Golden Age, 200–750 AD” featured many works that had never before been seen outside that country, along with many recently excavated objects. With more than 300 works, the exhibition, one of the largest ever to come out of mainland China, focused on the tumultuous period following the fall of the Han dynasty (220 AD) to the reunification of the Sui (581–619) and Tang (618–907) dynasties, a period of major cultural transformation due to massive migrations from northern Asia into China. The exhibition showed that, amid the influx and change, Hellenistic imagery, Near Eastern motifs, and Central Asian and Indian elements combined to create highly unusual and important works of art.

As with the groundbreaking China exhibition, most of the works that were on view in last fall’s “The Colonial Andes: Tapestries and Silverwork, 1530–1830” had never before been exhibited in the United States. The exhibition displayed more than 175 objects produced during the three centuries following the arrival of the Spanish in South America in 1532 and revealed how the arts initiated and preserved a dialogue between Andean and European cultural traditions. Many of the objects on view, some of the finest creative achievements from the Viceroyalty of Peru (now modern-day Peru

and Bolivia), had only been fully brought to light by recent archaeological and scholarly advances.

European art of the late 1500s was also well represented at the Met this year when the first major U.S. retrospective ever to be devoted to the drawings of Peter Paul Rubens, "Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640): The Drawings," opened in January. The exhibition brought together over one hundred of the influential Baroque master's superb and representative drawings, including many that had never before left Vienna.

Besides Diane Arbus, another pioneering twentieth-century artist to be featured at the Metropolitan this past year was Max Ernst (1892–1976), a founding member of the Dada and Surrealist movements in Europe and one of the most ingenious artists of the twentieth century. Last spring's "Max Ernst: A Retrospective," the first major U.S. survey of the artist's work in thirty years, featured almost 200 paintings, collages, drawings, and sculptures steeped in Freudian metaphor, private mythology, and childhood memories.

"Max Ernst: A Retrospective" inaugurated "Get Modern at the Met," a yearlong marketing focus on modern and contemporary art that will continue into 2006. Last year welcomed several exhibitions that are part of this rich group of offerings, including the much-anticipated "Matisse: The Fabric of Dreams, His Art and His Textiles." Raised in a town in northeastern France that was famous for its luxury fabrics, Henri Matisse (1869–1954) had an innate appreciation of textiles and was an avid collector of fabrics. The exhibition—the first to explore the artist's lifelong fascination with textiles and their profound impact on his art—offered intriguing new insights into what inspired one of the most revered masters of modern art by displaying paintings and works on paper alongside examples from Matisse's personal collection of fabric lengths, costumes, and hangings, items that had been packed away in family trunks since the artist's death in 1954. The exhibition was organized by The Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Royal Academy of Arts, London, and Le Musée Matisse, Le Cateau-Cambrésis.

Other exhibitions included in the "Get Modern at the Met" outreach were "Sol LeWitt on the Roof: Splotches, Whirls and Twirls," on the Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Roof Garden, featuring five sculptures and one wall drawing created specially for the garden's eastern wall; "Chanel," The Costume Institute's major spring exhibition, which presented iconic fashions from Coco Chanel to Karl Lagerfeld and illustrated the historic importance of the House of Chanel for the modern woman; and an exhibition of two new works by the internationally renowned installation artist Tony Oursler, called "Tony Oursler at the Met: 'Studio' and 'Climaxed.'"

Capital Projects

Last year saw major progress in the Museum's "21st-Century Met" building-from-within construction plan, launched in February 2004 with funds from the Museum's capital campaign. The expansion project in the 19th-Century Galleries, part of the interior construction plan, unfolded on schedule with the completion of the floor slab that will extend the second-floor galleries directly over the Oceanic galleries. When completed, the extension will add 9,000 square feet of new second-floor gallery space for nineteenth-century art, modern art, and modern photography. The central focus of the "21st-Century Met" plan—work in Wing K on the light-filled atrium to be known as the Leon Levy and Shelby White Court for Roman and Etruscan art—proceeded apace with the installation of the skylight frame. Renewal of the Ruth and Harold D. Uris Center for Education, which includes a substantial upgrading of the facilities for school groups, continued on schedule as well.

During the ongoing construction, which is crucial to the long-term vitality of the Museum, the Metropolitan has made every effort

to ensure that the work does not inconvenience visitors or neighbors or disrupt traffic. The Museum received good news in May when state judges for the second time ruled in favor of the Met in a lawsuit brought by some neighbors seeking to halt or delay the Wing K and 19th-Century Galleries expansion construction projects. The trial court had dismissed the suit initially brought in the fall of 2003; the litigants appealed, and the suit was dismissed by the higher court last spring.

The four-year project to restore the Museum's landmark facade entered its final phase and was the subject of an in-depth feature in *The New York Times*. The article, which included striking photography and interviews with Met staff, was a testament to the Museum's high place amid the world's cultural and architectural landscape. The Metropolitan and its many visitors thank the City of New York and the federal government for their generosity in supporting this project.

Visitorship

Providing a welcome boost in attendance during February was the special viewing from the Cantor Roof Garden of *The Gates, Central Park, New York City, 1979–2005*, by Christo and Jean-Claude, for two weeks. More than 350,000 visitors, representing an 82 percent increase over Museum visitorship during the same period the previous year, came to the Roof Garden, which was specially opened for this two-week period, and to other locations in the Museum to take advantage of the beautiful aerial and close-up views of the installation in Central Park.

The increase in visitors in February, though dramatic, did not significantly affect overall annual attendance in fiscal year 2005. For the past several years, attendance in the main building has remained fairly steady; last year saw a slight drop to 4.3 million visitors, down from 4.4 million the previous fiscal year. The combined attendance for both the main building and The Cloisters in fiscal year 2005 was 4.5 million visitors. Like many cultural institutions, the Metropolitan is and has been for the past few years in a period of increased financial pressure, and steady or declining attendance is one of several factors in this ongoing strain. Among its efforts to increase revenues last year, the Met did raise admissions and other fees. A full discussion of the Museum's financial picture, including the trend in expenses rising faster than revenues, appears in the Report of the Chief Financial Officer on pages 51–53.

The Fund for the Met

In fiscal year 2005, The Fund for the Met continued to raise funds to support gallery renovations and construction projects such as those described above and also to strengthen the endowment and enhance the Museum's permanent collection. During the past year, the capital campaign made great progress toward reaching the \$900 million goal set in January 2004, raising over \$47 million in gifts and pledges. Gifts and pledges to the campaign now total nearly \$692 million, and planned gifts total more than \$84 million, representing \$776 million toward the goal.

The Museum benefited from the outstanding generosity of longtime friends. While "China: Dawn of a Golden Age" was on view, the Metropolitan announced that, in recognition of Florence and Herbert Irving's longtime support of the Department of Asian Art, its Asian art galleries would now officially be known as the Florence and Herbert Irving Asian Wing. The designation also acknowledged the couple's exceptionally generous new promised gift in the area of Asian art, which will provide funds for acquisitions, exhibitions, and the ongoing maintenance of the Florence and Herbert Irving Galleries for South and Southeast Asian Art, and will endow a curatorial position. Together with the Irvings' previous support, the new

promised gift constitutes one of the largest gifts ever made to advance the field of Asian art in any American museum. The Metropolitan and its visitors thank and applaud the Irvings for making one of the great gifts in the history of the Museum. Their boundless generosity has helped the Met remain and grow as one of the most important Asian art museums of the world.

The Museum is grateful too to many friends of its Department of Photographs, particularly Joyce Menschel and the Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation, who supported the acquisition of the Gilman Collection, mentioned above. Thomas H. and Ann Tenenbaum Lee also pledged \$5 million, and gifts of \$1 million were given by Mrs. Walter Annenberg and The Annenberg Foundation, Joseph M. Cohen, Jennifer and Joseph Duke, Henry and Marie-Josée Kravis, and Cynthia Polsky.

Gifts of endowment support were particularly strong this year, with a total of \$18 million received. Top gifts include \$2 million from Gail and Parker Gilbert for special exhibitions; \$2 million from Denise and Andrew Saul for Modern art acquisitions; \$2 million from Miriam and Ira D. Wallach for Asian art acquisitions; and \$1 million from Carl and Iris Barrel Apfel for The Costume Institute. In the Department of Scientific Research, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation endowed a research scientist position, and David H. Koch endowed the position of Scientist in Charge. On the capital front, the Greek and Roman master plan was supported by significant gifts from the Joyce and Daniel Cowin Foundation and Diane Carol Brandt. Doris and Stanley Tanenbaum also pledged \$1 million toward the American Wing.

This year was an outstanding one as well for planned giving, with over \$22 million raised. Significant gifts include a trust created for the American Wing by Mr. and Mrs. Raymond Horowitz, and two binding bequests, one from Mr. and Mrs. Noel Levine and another from Joseph Cohen, both for the Department of Photographs. In addition, \$9.5 million was received from matured bequests, including \$4 million from the Estate of Bill Blass.

Various government sources continued to play a crucial role in the life of the Metropolitan. We are grateful to the Mayor and the City Council for supporting operations as well as major capital projects in the main building and at The Cloisters; to the New York State Council on the Arts for its largest operating support grant, \$200,000, to be renewed annually for the next five years; and to Senators Hillary Rodham Clinton and Charles Schumer, as well as Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney, for \$475,000 to help fund, through the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the final phase of the facade restoration project.

Trustees, Staff, and Volunteers

Ann G. Tenenbaum, affiliated with the Metropolitan since 1996, was elected to the board of trustees; Mrs. Leon Hess and Andrall E. Pearson were elected honorary trustees; and Richard V. Clarke and Carl Spielvogel were elected trustees emeriti.

In January, David E. McKinney retired as President after six years. Having spent his first career as a top executive at IBM, Dave made the transition to the museum world remarkably quickly and effort-

lessly. His innate professionalism, combined with approachability and warmth, made Dave an ideal colleague, and one who was highly popular with the staff. We thank Dave for his numerous contributions to the management of this Museum, especially in the areas of finance, construction, fund-raising, technology, merchandising, and human resources. He came to an institution that was strong, and made it even stronger, leaving a wonderful legacy for which all of us are grateful.

The search for a new Sherman Fairchild Conservator in Charge of Paintings Conservation ended in June with the appointment of Michael Gallagher, who comes to the Metropolitan from the National Galleries of Scotland. Dorothea Arnold, an authority on ancient Egyptian art and archaeology who joined the Museum in 1985, was named Lila Acheson Wallace Chairman in the Department of Egyptian Art. Ian Wardropper was named Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Chairman in the Department of European Sculpture and Decorative Arts, where he has been Curator in Charge since 2001.

Also in January, three of the Metropolitan's senior executives assumed new and expanded administrative responsibilities: Deborah M. Winshel, previously Senior Vice President and Chief Financial Officer, was named Executive Vice President for Administration and Chief Financial Officer; Sharon H. Cott, previously Vice President, Secretary and General Counsel, became Senior Vice President, Secretary and General Counsel; and Harold Holzer, formerly the Museum's Vice President for Communications and Marketing, was promoted to Senior Vice President for External Affairs. Nina McNeely Diefenbach, previously Deputy Vice President for External Affairs and Chief Development Officer, was named Vice President for Development and Membership last November.

With deep sadness we report the deaths of two gifted, accomplished, and treasured colleagues last year, William S. Lieberman and Jeffrey Russian. Bill Lieberman, the longtime Jacques and Natasha Gelman Chairman of the Department of Modern Art and one of the Museum's most brilliant curators, led the Department of Modern Art for twenty-five years and was active at the Museum until his death on June 1 as the Jacques and Natasha Gelman Special Consultant for Modern Art. Jeff Russian, Vice President for Finance and Planning at the time of his death last January, played a crucial part in the Museum's executive team for thirteen years, helping to sustain the mission and health of the institution.

The Museum relies greatly on the assistance and support provided by our volunteers, led this year by Susan Eddy, with the assistance of Barbara Clarkin, and we are indebted to the volunteers for contributing so much of their time and talent year after year. Their presence throughout the Museum is an important reminder to all of us that our many accomplishments are rooted in a tradition that values excellence and service above all else. On behalf of the Museum's staff, we thank them, and extend heartfelt thanks to our trustees and many members and friends as well.

Philippe de Montebello
Director

Emily K. Rafferty
President