Report from the Director and the President

The Metropolitan Museum of Art made history in fiscal year 2011 with record attendance of more than 5.6 million, and as the year came to a close, it was clear that it was significant not only in terms of making history but also in terms of shaping the future. Fiscal year 2011 included achievements, progress, and announcements in several areas that underscored the Museum’s commitment to growth as a global institution for a global audience and to introducing the public to new ways of engaging with and understanding the Museum’s collections.

A significant milestone in the Metropolitan’s efforts to provide its various audiences with greater access to its collections was reached in January when it completed the online publication of all catalogued works. This step makes the Metropolitan one of only a handful of museums that have created such comprehensive access. The database is a key component in the much-anticipated relaunch of the Museum’s website, scheduled for fiscal year 2012, and becomes the foundation for many other applications in the future. It has already helped grow the highly regarded Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History. Launched in 2000, the Timeline continues to expand in scope and depth and to reflect the most up-to-date scholarship while exploring the history of art from around the world as illustrated by the Museum’s collections. An invaluable reference and research tool for students, educators, scholars, and anyone interested in art history, it draws roughly one quarter of the website’s visits. The institution further enhanced its commitment to greater accessibility online through Connections, a portfolio of one hundred short narratives by staff from throughout the Museum, each of whom selected works of art from the collection that resonate with their personal interests and perspectives. A year-long project that began in January 2011, Connections initiates the Museum’s intention to present its collections in new and intriguing ways to our growing online audience.

The announcement in May that the Metropolitan would collaborate with the Whitney Museum of American Art regarding the use of its distinctive Marcel Breuer Building to present exhibitions and educational programming for at least eight years, starting in 2015, was a testament to the Metropolitan’s continued commitment to advancing scholarship across the full timeline of art history. This exciting initiative will invoke the expertise of curators across the Museum’s departments in exploring its holdings and thinking creatively about them.

Vision and leadership have long been associated with the Metropolitan, and the retirement of James R. Houghton, the Museum’s Chairman of the Board, at the end of this fiscal year gave us the opportunity to honor his distinct capacity for both of these qualities. A Trustee since 1982, he led the institution since 1998 with dedication and grace. We owe him a tremendous debt of gratitude for helping to guide the Museum through a major transition and unprecedented economic challenges, and we will miss his wisdom, sensitivity, and strength.

Real estate industry and civic leader Daniel Brodsky, a Trustee since 2001 and another generous and visionary leader, was elected the Museum’s next Chairman of the Board in May and assumes the chairmanship in September, when Jamie retires and becomes a Trustee Emeritus. As we welcome Dan in leading the institution into the next decade, we salute Jamie with affection and gratitude.

The Metropolitan also saw financial success in fiscal year 2011, ending the year with a surplus of approximately $1.3 million and showing growth in all areas of earned income—admissions, retail operations, and membership. (For a detailed discussion of the Museum’s financial results for the fiscal year, see the Report of the Chief Financial Officer, on pages 50–53.)

With so much achieved and so much to look forward to—including the much-anticipated completion in the coming months of renovations in the Department of Islamic Art galleries and the paintings, sculpture, and decorative arts galleries in The American Wing—the Museum is poised to capitalize on the breadth, depth, and excellence of its collections, demonstrating once again its unique ability to reach across time and bridge the world’s cultures and disciplines in exhilarating ways.

Acquisitions

The Metropolitan continues to enhance the collections through key acquisitions in a number of areas. In fiscal year 2011 there were several standout purchases. The Department of Drawings and Prints acquired a masterpiece of drawing by Perino del Vaga (Pietro Buonaccorsi, 1501–1547). Long known in literature but until recently believed to have been lost, Jupiter and Juno: Study for “Forti di Giove” Tapestries is one of the artist’s most beautiful, accomplished works. It is connected with a singularly important and prestigious commission awarded by a major patron—a series of lost tapestries depicting the clandestine romantic assignations of Jupiter (the “Forti di Giove”), commissioned by Andrea Doria. Distinguished in provenance, it enhances the Museum’s current holdings of drawings by Perino.

At the same time, the Museum acquired a painting by the same artist, Perino’s The Holy Family with the Infant Saint John the Baptist, for the Department of European Paintings. An early work for the artist, probably from the mid-1520s when he worked for the papal court and members of the elite Roman Curia, it is a private devotional image, exceedingly rare for Perino, who primarily designed and executed frescoes, stucco reliefs, tapestries, altarpieces, and decorative objects. After undergoing restoration in the Museum’s Department of Paintings Conservation, it will be a featured work in the fall 2011 exhibition “Perino del Vaga in New York Collections.”

The Department of Nineteenth-Century, Modern, and Contemporary Art acquired Théodore Géricault’s Lions in a Mountainous Landscape, an extraordinary example of the artist’s spontaneous handling of paint. Rooted in the Sublime by its depictions of animal to animal opposition, this rare painting provides the essential link between Géricault and his notable successors, Eugène Delacroix and Antoine-Louis Barye.

The exceptional quality and condition of The Falcon’s Bath, an important tapestry from the Southern Netherlands dating to about 1400–1415 and acquired this year for The Cloisters collection, is a highlight of the Museum’s already impressive collection of medieval tapestries. It is a remarkable discovery and one of the finest and best-preserved surviving examples of tapestries from the early fifteenth century. The large tapestry depicts courteously figures training a falcon, and with its central depiction of an elaborate rose trellis and flowering turf bench, it is especially appropriate for The Cloisters with its marvelous gardens and exceptional art collection.

The only extant fully illuminated Book of Hours made for King Francis I (1494–1547, ruled from 1515), Hours of Francis I, was acquired by the Metropolitan this year for the Department of European Sculpture and Decorative Arts. The patronage of Francis I was a catalyst for the invention and development of the Renaissance style in his country, and this magnificent work both represents his influence on
manuscript illumination and extends the Metropolitan’s presentation of the French Renaissance into one of its important art forms.

Also for the Department of European Sculpture and Decorative Arts, the Museum acquired a splendid ebony collector’s cabinet with a surprisingly colorful architectural interior (Dutch, ca. 1640–50), attributed to Herman Doomer, who also appears in the Metropolitan’s paintings collection in a 1640 portrait by Rembrandt. One of the most important pieces of furniture of the Dutch Golden Age, this particular cabinet exemplifies the expert use of exotic ebony and other tropical veneers during the first half of the seventeenth century and is an eloquent complement to two Dutch case pieces already in the collection, each representing totally different types of cabinets.

The Museum’s world-renowned collection of Islamic art was enriched in fiscal year 2011 by an exceptional purchase from the collection of the great Islamic art scholar Stuart Cary Welch: an imaginative steel and gilt-bronze Indian (Deccan) dagger with a ruby-set zoomorphic hilt of naturalistic and fantastic creatures from the second half of the sixteenth century. The enriched hilt, its most remarkable feature, forms an openwork arabesque of interwoven animal forms based around a hunting theme. As a member of a small group of Deccan daggers with comparable enriched hilts, the importance of this piece lies in its imaginative treatment of form, its visual appeal, and its rarity of iconography and style.

Many other objects of distinction were acquired this year; for the full list, see the Departmental Accessions section starting on page 11. Highlights of this year’s and next year’s acquisitions, including descriptions and illustrations, will be found in the fall 2012 Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin.

Exhibitions

The scope and vibrancy of the exhibitions mounted in fiscal year 2011 underscored the Museum’s standing as a world-class institution, beginning with a fall season that included several exhibitions that were firsts in their fields. “The World of Khubilai Khan: Chinese Art in the Yuan Dynasty,” a major international loan exhibition devoted to one of the most dynamic periods in Chinese history (1271–1368), ushered in the season with approximately 220 works, most of which had never traveled outside China and included some of the greatest Chinese paintings of all time.

The artist Jan Gossart, the pivotal Old Master who changed the course of Netherlandish art from its emphasis on the legacy of Jan van Eyck and charted new territory that eventually led to the age of Rubens, had never before been the focus of a major U.S. exhibition until the Metropolitan’s fall show “Man, Myth, and Sensual Retreat found full splendor in the galleries of the Metropolitan.

The exquisite and awe-inspiring craftsmanship of the guitars and stringed instruments made by three master luthiers, John D’Angelico, James D’Aquisto, and John Monteleone, were presented against the backdrop of the Museum’s own world-renowned musical instruments collection in last winter’s “Guitar Heroes: Legendary Craftsmen from Italy to New York,” The more than eighty instruments on view came from collectors and players around the world and had been used by some of the greatest guitarists of the last century. To complement and augment the exhibition, the Museum’s first app was conceived. For the many visitors who downloaded the application to their mobile devices, it brought to life the guitar makers’ creative process through the voices and performances of such artists as George Benson, Mary Kaye, Steve Miller, and Django Reinhardt.

Winter into spring brought two exhibitions that presented works expressing themes of concentration and inward reflection. “Cézanne’s Card Players,” with works from one of the most beloved of all nineteenth-century French painters, brought together for the first time a majority of the works that Paul Cézanne (1839–1906) dedicated to the theme and that are often counted among his most beautiful and moving works. “Rooms with a View: The Open Window in the 19th Century” focused on one of the richest motifs in the visual arts. The window in the Romantic era became a potent symbol for unfulfilled longing and the experience of standing on the threshold between an interior and the outside world, and the paintings in the exhibition featured contemplative figures in luminous light-filled rooms, studios with artists at work, or the window as sole motif.

Bold and dynamic perspectives marked the institution’s spring and summer seasons. “Reconfiguring an African Icon: Odes to the Mask by Modern and Contemporary Artists from Three Continents” showcased highly creative reinterpretations in unconventional materials of the iconic form of the African mask. Equally dynamic were the works in “Poetry in Clay: Korean Buncheong Ceramics from Leem, Samsung Museum of Art,” which focused on the bold and expressive ceramic art that flourished in Korea during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries as well as the contemporary Japanese ceramics within the Museum’s own collection that were inspired by them. This special loan exhibition featured some sixty masterpieces from the renowned collection of the Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art in Seoul, Korea. With this exhibition, the Museum launched its second multimedia tour app, this time for the iPad, which included such highlights as 360-degree object views and panoramas of the galleries.

Spring’s “Richard Serra Drawing: A Retrospective” traced how one artist irrevocably changed the practice and definition of modernist drawing by addressing the significant shifts in concept, materials, and scale in Serra’s drawn oeuvre. With sixty works from the 1970s to the present, the show was the first-ever retrospective of the artist’s drawings.

The daringly original work of the late iconic fashion designer Alexander McQueen brought excitement and dramatic intensity to the Museum’s summer season, and by the time it closed, “Alexander McQueen: Savage Beauty” had made history as one of the most popular exhibitions ever held at the Metropolitan and the most visited of the special exhibitions organized by The Costume Institute since it became part of the Museum in 1946 (see Visitorship, below). Approximately one hundred examples of McQueen’s work from archives in Paris and London and from private collections were presented in a landmark show that continued the Museum’s tradition of celebrating designers whose creative vision has gone beyond fashion to impact culture and style.
Visitors turned out in record numbers to view the Museum's collections and programs in fiscal year 2011. The total number of visitors, 5.68 million, which includes The Cloisters Museum and Gardens, was the highest recorded in forty years and exceeded last year’s figure by more than 400,000. Of particular note was the month of May, which drew 620,000 visitors (the most since May 2001) and included a Holiday Monday on Memorial Day that was the highest-attended since the program began in 2004. President’s Day weekend, with 62,000 visitors, was another attendance high point. Among the special exhibitions that contributed to the record attendance for the fiscal year were “Alexander McQueen: Savage Beauty,” which drew more than 660,000 visitors during its run from May 4 to August 7, making it the eighth most popular exhibition ever held at the Museum in its 141-year history; last summer’s “Picasso in The Metropolitan Museum of Art,” which ran from April 27 to August 15, 2010, and drew 703,256 visitors; and “Dough + Mike Starn on the Roof; Big Bambú” (April 27 to October 31, 2010), which drew 631,064 visitors to the Museum’s Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Roof Garden.

A Museum survey conducted this summer showed that the Alexander McQueen exhibition, along with three other widely attended exhibitions of fiscal year 2011—“Anthony Caro on the Roof,” “Richard Serra: A Retrospective,” and “Rooms with a View: The Open Window in the 19th Century”—generated $908 million in spending by regional, national, and international tourists to New York, resulting in a direct tax benefit to the City and State of some $90.8 million. The popularity of the Museum’s exhibitions was also reflected in an increase in members this year, with Membership income reaching an all-time high of $255.5 million. We are particularly grateful to our members and donors, whose loyal support both contributed to the popularity of the year’s exhibitions and makes so much possible.

The Museum’s website also attracted an impressive number of visits, 47 million, in fiscal year 2011 and raised more than $13 million online, increases over the prior fiscal year of 19 percent and 18 percent, respectively. As part of a broader effort to support its commitment to online visitors and build and encourage its relationship with them, the Museum also operates email marketing and social media programs that provide content and interactive experiences. The email marketing program, which began in 2000 and includes newsletters and philanthropy outreach, raised 78 percent more revenue through merchandise, membership, and admissions than in the prior year, and, collectively, more than one million fans, followers, and subscribers interact with the Met daily on Facebook, Twitter, Flicker, Tumblr, ArtBabble, iTunes U, and YouTube. The website also supported the Museum’s exhibition program with thirty-two online exhibition features launched in fiscal year 2011, including expanded features for “The World of Kublai Khan: Chinese Art in the Yuan Dynasty,” “Guitar Heroes: Legendary Craftsmen from Italy to New York,” and “Alexander McQueen: Savage Beauty,” which alone served 1.5 million online visits during the run of the exhibition. Also noteworthy this year, alongside the Metropolitan’s presence on popular social media sites, was the Museum’s historic participation as a founding member of the Google Art Project, which draws Google’s broader Internet audience straight to the Museum’s galleries and collections.

The Metropolitan’s Multicultural Audience Development Initiative (MADI), now in its thirteenth year, hosted a number of well-attended events. This was the third year for its annual Post-Pride Party for the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender community, and the event, held in July, drew more than 1,200 guests, making it the highest-attended yet. Other well-attended MADI events included the third annual collaborative luncheon with The Costume Institute to honor models of color who have revolutionized the fashion world, as well as celebrations marking Diwali (the annual Indian Festival of Lights) and the Chinese Lunar New Year. MADI’s annual event to celebrate Women’s History Month drew more than 660 guests in fiscal year 2011, and in anticipation of the reopening in November 2011 of the Galleries for the Art of the Arab Lands, Turkey, Iran, Central Asia, and Later South Asia, MADI hosted a tea for more than 100 leaders from New York–based Muslim organizations and religious groups.

The tea followed a morning event that was organized by MADI and the Museum’s Government Affairs office to introduce the new galleries to government officials. The College Group at the Met, a branch of MADI now in its seventh year and dedicated to reaching college-age audiences in the greater New York area, also hosted several well-attended events, including May’s “McQueen for a Night,” which drew almost 800 students, and an evening in honor of the exhibition “John Baldessari: Pure Beauty,” which was held in November 2010 and drew more than 800 students.

Capital Projects
By the end of fiscal year 2011, the Metropolitan was just months away from the completion of two major and impressive capital projects. Closed for renovation since May 2003, the galleries for the Department of Islamic Art will reopen greatly enlarged, freshly conceived, and completely renovated in November 2011. The debut of these fifteen extraordinary galleries, renamed the Galleries for the Art of the Arab Lands, Turkey, Iran, Central Asia, and Later South Asia, will underscore the Museum’s mission as an encyclopedic institution while providing a unique opportunity to convey the grandeur of Islamic art at a pivotal moment in world history. The opening in January 2012 of The New American Wing Galleries for Paintings, Sculpture, and Decorative Arts will bring to completion a major, multiphase reordering and upgrading of The American Wing. When these expanded and reconceived new galleries devoted to the history of American art from the eighteenth to the early twentieth century open, nearly all of The American Wing’s 17,000 works will be on view, providing visitors with an unparalleled experience of the breadth and depth of American art.

The project to renovate the Metropolitan’s book conservation facility, begun in 2009, was completed in fiscal year 2011. Part of the Thomas J. Watson Library, the completely renovated Sherman Fairchild Center for Book Conservation is responsible for the preservation and conservation treatment of the collections of the Thomas J. Watson Library and the departmental libraries (totaling approximately one million items), and the illustrated books in the collection of the Department of Drawings and Prints.

Also in fiscal year 2011, the Museum announced it would undertake a major redesign and reconstruction of its Fifth Avenue outdoor plaza and fountains. The project, still in the planning stages, will take about two years and is expected to be completed by 2015. The Museum’s beloved front steps, one of New York City’s favorite gathering places and recently rehabilitated, will remain a centerpiece of the design.

In June 2011, the Patrons Lounge closed for a major refurbishment—the first since opening in 1987—and this September reopens with a new look, new seating arrangements, and improved lighting.

Thanks to a generous allocation of $5.5 million from the City of New York, the Museum was able to continue work on its multyear plan to upgrade and replace components of its infrastructure. For this crucial funding, we are grateful to Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg, First Deputy Mayor Patricia E. Harris, Commissioner of Cultural Affairs Kate D. Levin, City Council Speaker Christine C. Quinn, Manhattan Borough President Scott M. Stringer, and City Council members Daniel R. Garodnick, Melissa Mark Viverito, and Jimmy Van Bramer.

The Fund for the Met
Thanks to the Museum’s loyal friends and new supporters, The Fund for the Met had a sensational year in fiscal year 2011, raising more than $60 million, almost double the amount raised in the previous fiscal year. This is an excellent indication that donor confidence is returning and of the strength of the institution. Overall, total gifts and pledges are now $1.1 billion, with planned gifts totaling more than $103 million.
The Fund for the Met saw a significant number of leadership gifts this year—more than $52 million—due in large part to The American Wing Challenge Grant. In April 2010, an anonymous donor challenged the Museum with a $10 million year-long matching grant, and the Museum not only raised matching funds four months ahead of time, but also exceeded the donor’s second challenge: raising the match from $10 million to $13 million. Overall, the challenge grant generated more than $27 million in new gifts and encouraged other leadership gifts to the Wing from Georgia Gosnell, Trustee Lee and Alice Cary Brown, Katharine and William Rayner, Trustee Barrie and Deedee Wigmore, James and Barbara Reibel, Carol and Terry Wall, and an anonymous donor.

The Patri and Everett B. Birch Foundation also made a leadership gift to the Department of Islamic Art in memory of former Trustee Patti Cadby Birch to support the capital project and to endow related education programs. In recognition of the foundation’s generosity, and Patti’s great love of the art and culture in this part of the world, the Museum will name the Moroccan Court and the adjacent Spain, North Africa, and the Western Mediterranean Gallery in her honor.

Meanwhile, The Costume Institute renovation benefited from an exceptional leadership pledge from Lizzie and Jonathan Tisch, for which the Museum will designate a new 4,200-square-foot exhibition space in recognition of their generosity. This new space will allow for the ongoing presentation of objects from The Costume Institute’s remarkable collection. Trustee Sandy and Linda Lindenbaum also made a gift to name the African art gallery in The Michael C. Rockefeller Wing, which is to the east of their current gallery.

Endowment gifts have also rebounded since last year. Trustee Florence Irving and her husband, Herbert, endowed a curatorship of the Arts of South and Southeast Asia, continuing their outstanding commitment in this field. The Museum received numerous other generous endowment gifts supporting a variety of areas and activities. As always, friends of the institution continue to provide support for the purchase of works of art and the Museum’s endowment for acquisitions.

Trustees, Staff, and Volunteers

Candace K. Beinecke, Hamilton E. James, and Paul Ruddock were elected to the Board of Trustees this year. Anna Wintour, an Honorary Trustee since 1999, was also elected Trustee. In her role over the years as co-chair of the Museum’s annual Costume Institute Benefit, Anna has raised more than $88 million, transforming the benefit, long referred to as the “Party of the Year,” from an annual event into the main source of funding for the operations and activities of The Costume Institute year-round. Iris Cantor, S. Parker Gilbert, Henry B. Schacht, and Malcolm H. Wiener were elected Trustees Emeriti.

We were deeply saddened this year by the deaths of two long-serving Trustees. Trustee Emeritus Daniel P. Davison, a devoted friend and benefactor whose forty-seven years of service on the Board included fifteen years as the Vice Chairman, will be especially remembered for the vision and counsel he provided during the installation of The Temple of Dendra in The Sackler Wing. The board also mourned the death of Trustee Emeritus Peter H. B. Frelinghuysen, who for forty-three years served as a Trustee with great distinction.

James C. Y. Watt, the Museum’s Brooke Russell Astor Chairman of the Department of Asian Art, retired in June after twenty-five years of dedicated service and was named Curator Emeritus. Renowned both in this country and internationally for his outstanding work and immense contributions to scholarship and connoisseurship in the field of Chinese art, James also demonstrated superb leadership of the department, a post he assumed in 2000. As a curator, his passion for promoting a greater awareness and understanding of the arts of Asia in the Western world made for a number of outstanding major exhibitions at the Metropolitan, including, most recently, “China: Dawn of a Golden Age, 200–750 A.D.” (2004–2005) and this year’s “The World of Khubilai Khan: Chinese Art in the Yuan Dynasty.” Succeeding James is Maxwell K. (Mike) Hearn, who has been with the Museum since 1971 and has long played a major role in the department. Mike was named the Douglas Dillon Curator for Chinese Painting and Calligraphy in 2005 and is now the Douglas Dillon Curator in Charge of the Department of Asian Art.

Mark Polizzotti joined the Museum in November 2010 as the new Publisher and Editor in Chief. He comes to the Metropolitan from the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, where since 1999 he was the Director of Intellectual Property and Publisher. Mark has also held senior positions at David R. Godine, Publisher, and Grove Weidenfeld, and before taking his current position had, over the last fifteen years, distinguished himself at the Metropolitan as a superb freelance translator (from French) with his work on several major exhibition catalogues.

The search for a new General Manager of Concerts & Lectures concluded in March with the appointment of Limor Tomer, who began at the Museum in May and whose prolific career in the arts encompasses more than twenty years of experience as producer, programmer, administrator, and classical pianist. Before joining the Metropolitan, Limor was Executive Producer for Music at WQXR radio, where she was responsible for creating cultural collaborations with local, national, and international institutions and producing award-winning programs and live broadcasts with Lincoln Center and Carnegie Hall.

The Museum also appointed this year a new Chief Technology Officer, Jeffrey S. Spar, who has more than twenty years’ experience in information technology. Jeff has significant experience in business process redesign, digital publishing, and IT effectiveness. He comes to the Metropolitan from Reader’s Digest Association, Inc., where he was Chief Information Officer for ten years. Previously, he spent ten years consulting at McKinsey & Company.

Three curators and one conservationist, all outstanding scholars and specialists, also joined the Metropolitan this year. In July 2010 the Museum welcomed Elizabeth Mankin Kornhauser as Curator in The American Wing, Jennifer Perry as Conservator for Japanese paintings in the Department of Asian Art, and Xavier F. Salomon as Curator in the Department of European Paintings, and, on July 1, 2011, John Carpenter as Curator of Japanese Art.

Michael Spart began in June as the new Controller. Prior to joining the Museum, Michael spent more than twenty years with New Line Cinema Corporation, where he was made Senior Executive Vice President of Finance in 2000, and most recently, was Senior Vice President, Finance, and Controller at Madison Square Garden Entertainment.

Additionally, there were several promotions this year. In the curatorial field, Stijn Alsteens, Drawings and Prints; Navina Najat Haidar, Islamic Art; and Marla Prather and Rebecca A. Rabinow, both Nineteenth-Century, Modern, and Contemporary Art, were all promoted to Curator; Yuan-li Hou, Asian Art Conservation, was promoted to Conservator; Linda Seckelson, The Thomas J. Watson Library, was promoted to Museum Librarian; and in Education, Marcie J. Karp and Joseph Loh were promoted to Managing Museum Educator.

The Metropolitan relies greatly on the assistance of a dedicated group of volunteers, led this year by Margaret Evans, assisted by Frances Garrett; their efforts touch almost every aspect of the institution’s work. On behalf of the Museum, we thank all of our volunteers, as well as our members and friends, for their many contributions this year. We are grateful, too, to our trustees and staff; their talent and expertise, along with their unflagging commitment to excellence, are the reason the Metropolitan is able to succeed in its mission and offer its wide and diverse audiences an unrivaled experience of the world’s greatest art.

Thomas P. Campbell
Director and CEO

Emily Kernan Rafferty
President