
Thomas J. Watson Library

Research Guide

Finding Information on Objects in The Met

This is a quick guide to finding information about the objects in The Met's permanent collection.

Thomas J. Watson Library

The Met Fifth Avenue
1000 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10028

212-650-2442

For current Library hours visit
us at metmuseum.org/watson

Collection Online

The Met Collection Online is a database with records of all The Met's accessioned objects. To search the Collection Online, [click here](#). Alternately, once on The Met's website, click on the Art tab on the home page and find the Art Collection link.

Enter the object accession number (or appropriate key words) and click on the arrow to search. The accession number is on the object label or caption.

If you do not have the accession number, search by the artist's last name and/or a keyword from the title of the work (e.g., bruegel harvesters), or keyword (e.g., armoire) or a phrase that describes the work (e.g., "art deco" in quotation marks). Use the filters to refine results: Object Type/Material, Geographic Locations, Date/Era, Department.

The object record will contain basic information about the work as well as an image if available.

Many object entries include object details, a catalog entry, signature information, provenance, exhibition history, references, and links to relevant essays in The Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History and MetPublications.

Search [Watsonline](#) or another library catalog to locate the citations found under References.

Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

The Timeline is a geographical, historical, and thematic exploration of global art history, as illustrated by The Met's Collection. Access the Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History by [clicking here](#). Alternately, click on the Learn with us tab on the home page of the Museum's website, and find the Timeline of Art History link.

You will find essays written by Met experts, chronologies, works of art, and suggested keywords to assist in your research.

The Timeline might feature the specific object you are looking for; OR, you can search for contextual information on the time period, artist, culture, form, style or medium of the object and find valuable contextual information, e.g., Ming Dynasty (1368-1644).

MetPublications

[Met Publications](#) is a portal to The Met's publishing program with over 1,500 titles, including books, online publications, and Bulletins and Journals from the last five decades. Publications date from 1964 to the present.

[Met Publications](#) includes a description and table of contents for most titles, as well as information about the authors, reviews, awards, and links to related Met titles by author and by theme. Current book titles that are in-print may be previewed and fully searched online, with a link to purchase the book. The full contents of almost all other book titles may be read online, searched, or downloaded as a PDF. For the Met's Bulletin, all but the most recent issue can be downloaded as a PDF. For the Met's Journal, all individual articles and entire volumes can be downloaded as a PDF. Readers may also locate works of art from The Met's collection that are included in every book and periodical title -- just search the accession number as a keyword.

Every title also includes a link to the print volume in [Watsonline](#) and [WorldCat](#).

Need additional information?

If the object is not on the Museum's website, or if you need more information than you find on the website, try the following:

Search the Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin and Metropolitan Museum of Art Journal in [JSTOR*](#) (you need to be in the Museum or have a subscription through your institution) by the artist's last name and the exact title of the work, or by keywords from the title or description of the work.

The Recent Acquisitions Bulletins are available in full text through a link on the Museum's website by [clicking here](#); alternately, you may mouse over the collections tab and click on Recent Acquisitions.

If you know that the object was in an exhibition, search for the exhibition catalog in [Watsonline](#). Not every exhibition has a catalog, but most do.

Look in relevant Met collection catalogs that describe the permanent collection (many of the Museum's objects are discussed in these catalogs).

Contact the [Central Catalog](#) to find out if the object may be documented there; you will receive an email response with available information.

***JSTOR — full text database**

[JSTOR](#) is a multi-disciplinary collection of scholarly journals and electronic books (e-books) that include primary sources, images, and more. Note: Some journal coverage does not include the last 1-5 years.

JSTOR is limited to [onsite access](#) only for public patrons.

Museum staff will be prompted to authenticate for offsite access.

Have a question?

Reach a reference librarian at watson.library@metmuseum.org or use our virtual chat service, Ask a Librarian, Monday-Friday, 10am-5pm.

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