

THE
MET

March 2020–2021



A Year of Mission
and Challenges

Perpetual Mission, Historic Response

A Message from President Daniel H. Weiss

For both visitors and staff, walking toward the Beaux Arts facade of The Met Fifth Avenue or the medieval edifices of The Met Cloisters can feel like walking back in time. But within our walls, humanity's past intermingles with the present, just as time moves on outside. Throughout its 151-year history, The Met has been an evolving institution, existing symbiotically with the world around us.

Our relationship to great historical moments has never been felt as profoundly as it has this past year. The world, our city, and our Museum were rocked by three intersecting crises: the COVID-19 pandemic, the ensuing global financial crisis, and the movement for social and racial justice. New York was among the country's first major COVID hotspots, and while The Met is fortunate to be a large and stable institution, it will take years to recover from the economic and emotional toll the virus has taken on our community. Throughout it all, we have been challenged to examine our

role in systemic inequity and to transform The Met into a more inclusive institution.

Founded on the heels of the Civil War, the Museum has weathered its share of challenges: the 1918 pandemic, world wars, financial crises, and September 11th. This one-year anniversary allows us to reflect not only on how we have met this moment but how we can continue to evolve. The commitment to the Museum demonstrated by our staff and supporters has been awe-inspiring. Our Buildings and Security teams braved the shutdown's dark days to safeguard our buildings; Curatorial, Conservation, and Scientific Research staff patrolled the galleries to care for the collection; staff at home worked tirelessly to keep our mission alive; our Visitor Experience team brought the mission to life once we were able to reopen; Members, donors, and Trustees rallied to raise desperately needed emergency funding; and our local and national leadership fought to



include cultural institutions in all recovery plans. Neither the achievements of the past year nor the movement forward would have been possible without such dedication.

We stand profoundly changed by the events of the last year, yet the importance of our mission remains more certain than ever. The Met is not only a place for inspiration; it is also a living idea—the idea that we are all part of history, our lives and cultures deeply connected. To move toward a better future, we must do so together, holding strong to all that we value and share.

Strengthening Our Met Community

The Met has faced many turning points throughout its 151-year history, and there can be no doubt that we are at one of those transformational moments now. We see the movement for social justice as an opportunity to steward the Museum toward a strong future, one that fully embraces the diversity, creativity, and richness of the human experience. Crucial to this planning are our commitments to anti-racism, diversity, and strengthening The Met community, which range from how we hire staff to how we build and oversee our collection and programming, structure our governance, and engage our community.

Cover: *DREAM TOGETHER*, 2020, by Yoko Ono, installed at The Metropolitan Museum of Art © Yoko Ono. Photo by Anna-Marie Kellen

This page: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fifth Avenue facade. Photographed on May 12, 1917.

Page 5: Photo by Paula Lobo.

Programming in a Time of Change

A Message from Max Hollein, Marina Kellen French Director

“Dream together.” Proclaimed in the first-ever commissioned banner for the Museum’s Fifth Avenue facade, there could be no better words than Yoko Ono’s to inspire unity, positivity, and aspiration. Installed in the weeks before we reopened on August 29, Yoko Ono’s work was one of the many ways in which The Met demonstrated the power of art to bring comfort, inspire resilience, and help us understand our turbulent times.

Thanks to passionate cross-departmental collaboration, we quickly adjusted our programming and just a few days after closing in March announced a robust selection of digital offerings—exhibition and collection-focused features, classes, and educational resources for families, along with social media features that drew millions. Our exhibitions planning team made sure the much-anticipated spring shows—*Making The Met, 1870–2020*; The Roof Garden Commission: Héctor Zamora, *Lattice Detour*; and *Jacob*

Lawrence: The American Struggle—were on view when we reopened and that the lineup continued undiminished, with *About Time: Fashion and Duration*, *Goya’s Graphic Imagination*, and the upcoming retrospective of American artist and social justice champion Alice Neel.

Our efforts to deliver exceptional programming gained momentum through our work to create a more open and equitable institution. Following on our list of 13 commitments to anti-racism and diversity issued last July, in August we announced that going forward all Met internships will be paid, an important milestone for the field. We expanded our efforts to more rigorously collect underrepresented voices in the collection with several key acquisitions this year, and newly installed permanent galleries reflect our commitment to explore themes of diversity and representation, as seen in the new British Galleries, opened one year ago, and European Paintings galleries, which reopened in



December after heroic efforts to install new skylights during the five months of closure.

The outpouring of joy and thanks from the public and our Members when we reopened was nearly overwhelming. The Met is moving energetically forward with major programming and acquisition initiatives as well as the transformation of significant areas of its permanent galleries. Yoko Ono’s words are wonderfully, inspirationally resonant.

Visitorship at a Glance

Opening The Met’s doors last August after five months of closure was an important signal for New York and for all in The Met community. We couldn’t wait to welcome visitors back, and when we did we saw how important it was for New Yorkers to reconnect with their favorite artworks and spaces in their Museum. This year, **90 percent** of our visitors are **from the local area** (in other years, over half of our visitors come from long distances, national or international). The importance of our Members has also been underscored: so many loyal friends reached out during the time of closure to express how much they missed being at The Met, and this year, Members represent 25 percent of our visitors (usually the figure is about 10 percent). This past year, we have seen more clearly than ever before how important the Museum is for those who live nearby and visit often. Like an old and trusted friend, we are here to offer comfort, inspiration, and peace.

A (Novel) Year in the Life of The Met



120
hand-sanitizer dispensers installed at The Met Fifth Avenue

20
gallons of hand sanitizer used by staff and visitors each week

4,497,976
total visitors at The Met Fifth Avenue, Met Breuer, and Met Cloisters, Jul 1, 2019 up until closure on Mar 13, 2020

569,701
ticketed visitors at The Met Fifth Avenue and Met Cloisters from the Aug 29, 2020 reopening through the end of Feb 2021

**2 hours
10 minutes**

length of visit before closure

2 hours

length of visit after reopening



56
exhibitions postponed and rescheduled

12,713
average number of ticketed visitors at The Met Fifth Avenue per day before closure

4,065
average number of ticketed visitors at The Met Fifth Avenue per day after reopening

40
staff volunteers spent
55 days
monitoring the Museum's collections areas during closure from mid-Mar through mid-Jul 2020

800
directional and health and safety signs posted around The Met Fifth Avenue

Received
\$34.8 M
in emergency relief from
891
donors

Launched virtual group tours in Jun 2020 reaching nearly
13,000
participants through Feb 2021

95%
increase in engagement on The Met's Instagram page in the first two weeks of closure

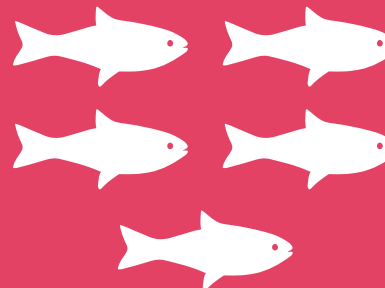
The Met is now the
2nd
most followed museum in the world on social media

5
koi fish in The Met's Astor Court were fed by staff volunteers at the start of daily collections-monitoring rounds



762
virtual tours and education programs, and digital performances offered from Mar through Dec 2020 with

3.3+ million
views



120
Members-only virtual events and programs

46
Met Reopening Team meetings from Apr 2020 through Feb 2021 to plan the safe return of Met staff and visitors

Innovating, Changing, and Leading through Crisis

By Dan Weiss and Max Hollein



During this year of challenges and resilience, we were often asked what the future will hold for art museums. For a museum such as The Met—whose mission is to connect audiences to creativity and knowledge; to protect and preserve the institution and its magnificent collection in perpetuity; and to be good citizens and exemplary leaders in our current times—the question of how to navigate the

present in order to stay relevant and emerge stronger in the future is a guiding one. It fuels our thinking across all levels, driving us toward greater excellence in all that we do. Here is a look at some of the work that we began or that was especially prominent over this historic year and that we think will be important for the future.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Access

In the summer of 2020, in support of The Met's previously formulated goals to become ever more inclusive, equitable, fair, and welcoming, we made clear that the movement of social justice has a direct impact on our work by issuing Commitments to Anti-Racism, Diversity, and a Stronger Community. Our commitments to bring meaningful change to the institution through systemic improvements in our policies, practices, and priorities have set a path for the Museum to emerge a stronger institution for our staff, the public, and the larger cultural world.

Connecting Digitally

The reality of social isolation spurred more and more people to be comfortable engaging online, widening the audience for our digital programs. Since early in the pandemic, one of our highest priorities has been to develop experiences that provide dynamic access to the Museum at a time when visitation has not been possible for millions. Our robust and ever-growing selection of virtual content and social media initiatives—live and interactive programming, performances, art classes, resources for families, conversations with curators, educators, and artists, and more—is a testament to our commitment to developing new ways for people to experience and appreciate art.

Paperless Visitor Experience

Implementing a timed-entry ticketing system and online admission tickets has not only helped us manage flow into the building, thereby adhering to public health guidelines, it has transformed our ability to serve visitors when onsite. The entry process is smoother, and through the online reservation system we are able to know how many to expect on a given day and can offer these visitors information about programs and amenities that allows for better planning of their visit.

Partnering with Sister Institutions

The NYC Museums Reopening Task Force—an unprecedented alliance of 25 New York cultural institutions across all five boroughs that formed in March 2020 to make sense of how to reopen after the citywide museum shutdown—has brought a spirit of community and collaboration that continues. Having navigated together the complex process of reopening, the group now meets regularly to hear how other institutions are meeting new issues and challenges.

Support of Our Government Representatives

Shortly after the pandemic forced venues to close, months of advocacy and engagement with elected officials on the part of The Met and other cultural institutions helped pass the Shuttered Venue Operators Grant, which allows the Museum to apply for a federal grant of up to \$10 million. This program, along with the continued support of officials for the arts and culture, will be crucial in the months ahead, as will the ongoing operating funding we receive from the City and the ongoing funding of infrastructure projects from the City and State.

Virtual Group Tours

Since we launched them last June, private virtual tours connecting participants to The Met collection and exhibitions through images and media with a live Met guide and interactive discussion have been offered to 500 groups, reaching nearly 13,000 participants across all audiences, from kindergarten to 12th-grade and university school groups to corporate teams, senior centers, community organizations, and cultural and personal groups, as well as frontline healthcare workers. The tours continue to be popular following our reopening in August, and in addition to many local groups in New York City and the tristate area, we have worked with schools and organizations in over 30 states and 13 countries. Individual participants (not tracked) are even more widespread.

On View This Spring and Summer



Goya's Graphic Imagination

THROUGH MAY 2
Drawings and Prints, Galleries 691–693

During his long career, the remarkable Francisco Goya (1746–1828) produced about 900 drawings and 300 prints through which he shared his complex ideas and responded to the turbulent social and political changes of his time. The works on view come mainly from The Met collection, with exceptional loans from institutions in New York, Boston, and Madrid.

Made possible by the Placido Arango Fund and Fundación María Cristina Masaveu Peterson.

Alice Neel: People Come First

MAR 22–AUG 1
Modern and Contemporary Art,
Gallery 899, The Tisch Galleries

This first museum retrospective in New York of American artist Alice Neel (1900–1984) in 20 years positions Neel as one of the century's most radical painters, a champion of social justice whose commitment to humanist principles inspired her life as well as her art. On view are over 100 paintings, drawings, and watercolors.

Made possible by the Barrie A. and Deedee Wigmore Foundation. Major support provided by the Adrienne Arsht Fund for Resilience through Art. Additional funding provided by Angela A. Chao and Jim Breyer, Agnes Gund, and the Jane and Robert Carroll Fund. Organized by The Metropolitan Museum of Art in association with the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao and The Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco.



**The Medici:
Portraits and Politics,
1512–1570**
OPENS JUN 26
Gallery 999,
Iris and B. Gerald Cantor
Exhibition Hall

Lead corporate sponsorship provided by Bank of America. Major support provided by David S. Winter. Additional funding provided by the Sherman Fairchild Foundation, the William Randolph Hearst Foundation, Alice Cary Brown and W.L. Lyons Brown, the Gail and Parker Gilbert Fund, Laura and John Arnold, Diane Carol Brandt, the Hata International Foundation, Mr. and Mrs. J. Tomilson Hill, Denise and Andrew Saul, and The International Council of The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Supported by an indemnity from the Federal Council on the Arts and the Humanities.

A New Look at Old Masters
THROUGH SPRING 2022
European Paintings,
Galleries 601–606, 608,
614–627

**The New Woman
Behind the Camera**
OPENS JUN 29
Photographs, Galleries
691–693, and 851–852

Made possible in part by the Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation. Organized by the National Gallery of Art, Washington, in association with The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

**Arte del mar:
Artistic Exchange
in the Caribbean**
THROUGH JUN 27
Arts of Africa, Oceania, and
the Americas, Gallery 359, The
Michael C. Rockefeller Wing

Made possible by the Friends of Africa, Oceania, and the Americas: Art of Five Continents.

**The Roof Garden
Commission: Alex Da Corte,
As Long as the Sun Lasts**
APR 16–OCT 31
The Iris and B. Gerald Cantor
Roof Garden

Supported by Bloomberg Philanthropies. Additional support provided by Cynthia Hazen Polsky and Leon B. Polsky.

**The Facade Commission:
Carol Bove, *The séances
aren't helping***
THROUGH FALL 2021
The Met Facade

Made possible by the Director's Fund, the Diane W. and James E. Burke Fund, Helene and Johannes Huth, and Cynthia Hazen Polsky and Leon B. Polsky.

**For a complete listing
of what's on view, visit
[metmuseum.org](https://www.metmuseum.org).**

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Seated Giant (detail), by 1818, by Francisco de Goya y Lucientes, burnished aquatint with scraping and strokes of 'lavís' added along the top of the landscape and within the landscape. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1935 (35.42); *Geoffrey Hendricks and Brian* (detail), 1978, by Alice Neel, oil on canvas. San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Purchase, by exchange, through an anonymous gift. © Estate of Alice Neel.

This page:
Photograph of Alex Da Corte taken by Alex John Beck

**The Metropolitan
Museum of Art**

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[metmuseum.org](https://www.metmuseum.org)