

# MAKING THE MET

## 1870 ————— 2020

**Large Print Labels**  
**Gallery 899**

## **Making the Met, 1870–2020**

We hope you find these large print labels helpful and easy to use. This PDF includes all labels and text panels in the exhibition in a recommended viewing order.

We value your feedback, and would appreciate any comments or suggestions on how we might improve these labels or otherwise make the Museum's special exhibitions, permanent galleries, and information more accessible to all visitors. Comment forms are available at the Information Desks in the Great Hall and the Ruth and Harold D. Uris Center for Education.



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#MakingTheMet

## **An Anniversary Year Transformed**

Scheduled to open in March as the centerpiece of the Museum's 150th anniversary celebrations, *Making The Met* was fully planned and partially installed when the Museum closed temporarily in response to the outbreak of COVID-19.

The exhibition explores pivotal moments in the history of The Met, and we unexpectedly found ourselves in the midst of another, shuttered for over five months when the institution had not closed for more than a few days since moving to its current location in 1880.

Attention quickly turned to safeguarding the art and serving the community by creating and donating personal protective equipment to healthcare workers. We also reimagined our online offerings for audiences sheltering in place around the world.

In June, in the wake of the violent deaths of George Floyd and other Black Americans at the hands of the police and the ensuing Black Lives Matter protests, The Met joined the nationwide call for justice. As a first step, the Museum released a series of antiracism commitments, covering all of its activities, from programming to further diversifying our staff, with the goal of fostering an environment of equity, inclusivity, and dialogue.

These events have intensified our reflections about the Museum's role in society, some of which resulted in updated and expanded texts for the show. Looking forward, we believe this moment will inspire institutional change and creative new forms of engagement in the latest chapter of our history, which begins now, in 2020.

Above all, this anniversary year, in ways both planned and unanticipated, has highlighted how it is people—artists, staff, and visitors—who make The Met. We are immensely grateful to welcome you back and hope you enjoy your visit.

## **Making the Met, 1870–2020**

In a flush of optimism following the Civil War, a group of businessmen, civic leaders, and artists determined to found an art museum in New York City. They took the first concrete step toward this goal on April 13, 1870, when The Metropolitan Museum of Art was incorporated. One hundred and fifty years later, we look back at the Museum's history to celebrate the art it makes accessible to the public, to commemorate the people who propelled it in new directions, and to investigate its place in society.

*Making The Met* presents ten episodes in which the Museum's course changed as it expanded its collection and launched new initiatives. At the same time, we recognize that we are living through further societal transformation in our anniversary year. In many of these cases, we reflect with pride; in others, we acknowledge our place within fraught histories. We have also considered the legacy of each episode, its staying power or evolution. Conservation studies presented throughout the galleries showcase the research that continues to deepen our understanding of objects in our care, and a central axis within the installation offers a path through time with a visual introduction to yesterday's visitors and the inner workings of the Museum.

We open here with a selection of superb works from around the world and across time; each is inspired by the human figure, standing for the stories of art and people at the core of this exhibition.

*Digital introduction panel, on wall across from the main intro text in the intro gallery*

*Making The Met* is enhanced by digital storytelling in the galleries and online.

**Audio Guide:** Many remarkable people have shaped The Met over 150 years. Hear from a dynamic cast of artists, curators, donors, and other key figures. Narrated by Steve Martin.

**Conservation Stories:** Learn how conservation and scientific research deepen our understanding of works in the collection.

**Architecture Tour:** Watch a two-part video illustrating the Museum's evolution from a site in Central Park to a New York City landmark.

Visit [metmuseum.org/Making-The-Met](https://metmuseum.org/Making-The-Met) or scan the QR code below on your mobile device to access these features and more on the exhibition website.



Audio Guide and Conservation Stories supported by

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*from the left side of the gallery entrance, left to right around gallery*

### **Head of Bhairava**

Nepalese, 16th century

Gilded copper, rock crystal, paint

Zimmerman Family Collection, Gift of the Zimmerman Family, 2012 (2012.444.2)

A fearsome form of the Hindu god Shiva, the wide-eyed, fanged, and flaming Bhairava embodies rage. The representation of the deity as an independent, masklike head is unique to the Newari metalworkers of Nepal, who were famous throughout the Himalayan world for their skills in working copper. Gifts from the pioneering collection of Jack and Muriel Zimmerman such as this one have recently expanded The Met collection of Asian art with exceptional objects from Tibet and Nepal.

### **Power figure**

#### ***Nkisi N’Kondi: Mangaaka***

Republic of Congo or Cabinda, Angola, Chiloango River region, Kongo peoples, Yombe group, 19th century

Wood, iron, resin, ceramic, plant fiber, textile, pigment

Purchase, Lila Acheson Wallace, Drs. Daniel and Marian Malcolm, Laura G. and James J. Ross, Jeffrey B. Soref, The Robert T. Wall Family, Dr. and Mrs. Sidney G. Clyman, and Steven Kossak Gifts, 2008 (2008.30)

This personification of law and order was the collaborative creation of a Kongo master sculptor and a priest, or *nganga*. Known as Mangaaka, the figure regulated the affairs of communities ravaged by the transatlantic slave trade and confronted with incursions on their sovereignty by European powers. The stomach cavity and ocular recesses served as receptacles for empowering sacra inserted by the *nganga*, while each metal element added to the surface records the resolution

of conflicts or the ratification of contractual agreements. Deliberately deconsecrated in its community, the figurative receptacle has an expressive power that remains awe-inspiring.

## **Vincent van Gogh**

Dutch, 1853–1890

### ***La Berceuse (Woman Rocking a Cradle)***

1889

Oil on canvas

The Walter H. and Leonore Annenberg Collection, Gift of Walter H. and Leonore Annenberg, 1996, Bequest of Walter H. Annenberg, 2002 (1996.435)

Van Gogh painted his friend Augustine Roulin holding the rope to an unseen cradle as a modern icon of maternity. Of his variations on the theme, the sitter kept this version for herself, prompting the artist to comment that “she had a good eye and took the best.” The portrait was among seven Van Goghs bequeathed by the Honorable Walter H. and Leonore Annenberg, which nearly doubled The Met’s existing holdings to form the largest collection of his work outside of Europe.

## **Isamu Noguchi**

American, 1904–1988

### ***Kouros***

1945

Marble

Fletcher Fund, 1953 (53.87a–i)

A masterpiece of abstract surrealist sculpture and a rich combination of modern Western European and Japanese aesthetics, Noguchi's *Kouros* is a powerful example of how contemporary artists have responded to The Met collection over time. As the sculptor explained in a note to the Museum in 1953, "The image of man as kouros goes back to student memories of your plaster casts and the pink archaic Kouros you acquired—the admiration of youth." Noguchi was likely referring to an important Greek sculpture The Met purchased in 1932 (on view in Gallery 154).

image caption:

Marble statue of a kouros (youth). Greek (Attic), ca. 590–580 B.C. Fletcher Fund, 1932 (32.11.1)

## **Auguste Rodin**

French, 1840–1917

### ***The Age of Bronze***

Modeled 1876, cast ca. 1906

Bronze

Gift of Mrs. John W. Simpson, 1907 (07.127)

This richly hued allegorical bronze was given to The Met by Katherine Seney Simpson in 1907.

The first full-length figure by Rodin to enter the collection, the statue is a cornerstone of the Museum's holdings of the esteemed sculptor and represents its early commitment to collecting the work of living artists. Subsequent gifts from Thomas Fortune Ryan, the Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Foundation, and the sculptor himself vaulted the small but significant group of Rodins into a

world-class collection.

**Richard Avedon**

American, 1923–2004

*Marilyn Monroe, Actress, New York City, May 6, 1957*

Gelatin silver print

Gift of the artist, 2002 (2002.379.11)

This poignant image of Marilyn Monroe was included in the landmark 1975 exhibition of Avedon's portraiture at the Marlborough Gallery, New York. In 2000 the artist donated the show's entire contents—over a hundred prints that he had held onto for a quarter century—to The Met. A native New Yorker, Avedon spent many hours here as a child studying works by Goya and Roman Egyptian painted portraits.

**Grave stele with a little girl and doves**

Greek, ca. 450–440 B.C.

Parian marble

Fletcher Fund, 1927 (27.45)

Exceptional for its sensitive rendering of a child with her pet doves, the grave monument represents the Museum's outstanding collection of Greek and Roman art. This area expanded significantly under the third director, Edward Robinson, himself an accomplished classical archaeologist. Nearly a century later, new research continues to enhance our understanding of ancient statuary, including evidence that details—such as the straps on the girl's sandals—would probably have been articulated with color.



*in through-wall case in The Street, outside gallery 1, The Founding Decades*

**Plinth with the feet of a colossal male statue**

Cypriot, middle or second half 6th century B.C.

Limestone

The Cesnola Collection, Purchased by subscription, 1874–76 (74.51.2683)

This fragmentary sculpture was discovered in 1870 by Luigi Palma di Cesnola, American consul in Cyprus and eventually The Met's first director. During the founding decades, the trustees and staff of the Museum established a collection from the ground up, and antiquities were among their top priorities. Their focus reflected a fascination with art from distant lands. This work evokes the desert with "two vast and trunkless legs of stone" in Percy Bysshe Shelley's poem "Ozymandias."

## 1. THE FOUNDING DECADES

The Met was born in 1870 of a grand idea but without art, a building, or professional staff. The founders, largely hailing from White Protestant New York society, quickly took important steps forward, at the outset acquiring and even hanging works themselves. The first gift to the collection was a Roman sarcophagus, followed by two large purchases of old master paintings and Cypriot antiquities. Other acquisitions, including American paintings, Maya sculpture, and armor from Turkey to Japan, reflected the exceedingly varied interests of New York collectors. Although not every object was a masterpiece or even original, they expressed the Museum's aspirations to represent artistic traditions from all over the world.

The Met occupied two buildings in succession before opening its permanent home in Central Park in 1880. By the time the first director, Luigi Palma di Cesnola, died in 1904, the Museum was firmly established and prepared to embark on a new chapter.

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The Met is now made up of more than 1.5 million objects spread over 2 million square feet and cared for by 1,600 staff members. Its mission to collect and display art from all cultures continues, with each generation reinterpreting that goal.

image caption:

“Open, Sesame! The Sunday Opening of The Metropolitan Museum of Art,” *Munsey's Weekly*,  
June 2, 1891

*on wall around gallery, left to right*

**John Frederick Kensett**

American, 1816–1872

***Sunset on the Sea***

1872

Oil on canvas

Gift of Thomas Kensett, 1874 (74.3)

Kensett, a respected Hudson River School artist, was a founder of The Met and a member of the executive committee until his death. His brother, Thomas, donated thirty-eight of the artist's paintings known as his "Last Summer's Work" as a testament to "the great interest my late brother had in the success of your Institution." Painted in Darien, Connecticut, *Sunset on the Sea* was among Kensett's most experimental works, with a radiant sun at the center of an atmospheric scrim of clouds and sea.

**Eagle relief**

Toltec (Mexico), 10th–13th century

Andesite or dacite, paint

Gift of Frederic E. Church, 1893 (93.27.1)

The Met's first president, John Taylor Johnston, declared that "the antiquities of our own continent should form a prominent feature in an American Museum," reflecting a move in the direction of hemispheric unity that was deeply entangled with political ambitions toward Latin America. Artist and trustee Frederic Edwin Church, who was aligned with this belief, donated a pair of Toltec panels depicting an eagle grasping a trilobed object in its talon. However, by 1914 the Museum considered ancient American works incompatible with a fine arts institution, and most of the collection was sent to other museums, eventually returning decades later.

*on wall around corner*

**Frederic Edwin Church**

American, 1826–1900

***The Parthenon***

1871

Oil on canvas

Bequest of Maria DeWitt Jesup, from the collection of her husband, Morris K. Jesup, 1914

(15.30.67)

A celebrated landscape painter and founding trustee, Church advised on and donated to the collection until he died in 1900. That same year the Museum organized a memorial exhibition, which included this ambitious canvas based on pencil and oil sketches completed during Church's 1869 visit to the Athenian Acropolis. Commissioned by the financier Morris K. Jesup, *The Parthenon* was among a group of significant paintings by Hudson River School artists bequeathed by his widow, Maria DeWitt Jesup.

*on wall across closed doors*

**Anthony van Dyck**

Flemish, 1599–1641

***Saint Rosalie Interceding for the Plague-Stricken of Palermo***

1624

Oil on canvas

Purchase, 1871 (71.41)

This picture and the adjacent one by Francesco Guardi were among the 174 European paintings in the founding purchase of 1871. There were few old master paintings in America at the time. In the decades that followed, citizens of New York, with its Dutch heritage, tended to favor Dutch and Flemish artists such as Anthony van Dyck. While quarantined in Palermo, Sicily, due to an outbreak of plague, Van Dyck painted Saint Rosalie, patroness and protector of the city, after her remains were discovered nearby. This work has taken on new relevance and poignancy in the wake of the COVID-19 crisis.

**Francesco Guardi**

Italian, 1712–1793

***The Grand Canal above the Rialto***

Late 1760s

Oil on canvas

Purchase, 1871 (71.119)

Eighteenth-century topographical pictures gained in popularity in the later twentieth century, nearly a hundred years after this fine image of Venice's Grand Canal arrived at The Met as part of the founding purchase. The Museum now holds one of the most important collections of Venetian view paintings in the world.

**Camille Corot**

French, 1796–1875

***Ville-d'Avray***

1870

Oil on canvas

Catharine Lorillard Wolfe Collection, Bequest of Catharine Lorillard Wolfe, 1887 (87.15.141)

Corot's view of the pond on his family's property was enthusiastically received at the 1870 Paris Salon. Roughly a decade later Catharine Lorillard Wolfe bought the work from New York gallery M. Knoedler & Co. Heiress to a tobacco fortune, Wolfe was the Museum's first major female patron and in 1887 donated this canvas as part of a group of European paintings that reflected the taste for nineteenth-century landscape, narrative, and genre subjects.

*on wall after corner*

**Edouard Manet**

French, 1832–1883

***Young Lady in 1866***

1866

Oil on canvas

Gift of Erwin Davis, 1889 (89.21.3)

Donated by Erwin Davis, an industrial speculator, this painting and *Boy with a Sword* (on view in the nearby nineteenth-century galleries) were the first Manets in any museum and among the first modern artworks at The Met. *Young Lady in 1866* was made the year that the idea for the Museum was introduced at a gathering of Americans in Paris. The artist adapted the life-size format usually reserved for portraits of historic figures to represent a contemporary woman in her dressing gown holding a nosegay and a monocle, accompanied by a parrot confidant. The intimate garment and

bold brushwork astonished contemporary viewers.

*on platform, center of gallery*

### **Head of a bearded man**

Cypriot, early 6th century B.C.

Limestone

The Cesnola Collection, Purchased by subscription, 1874–76 (74.51.2857)

In 1872 The Met purchased several thousand antiquities amassed by Luigi Palma di Cesnola while he was American consul on the island of Cyprus. He shared most of his contemporaries' lack of archaeological knowledge and training coupled with a desire to find, buy, sell, and own ancient pieces. By today's standards, his methods of excavation and restoration are unacceptable. In recent decades, the Museum has been actively reasserting the collection's exceptional significance through conservation, display, and publication.

Audio guide 501

*on wall, adjacent to gallery entrance, right to left*

### **Eastman Johnson**

American, 1824–1906

#### ***Christmas-Time, The Blodgett Family***

1864

Oil on canvas

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Whitney Blodgett, 1983 (1983.486)

Johnson depicts merchant William Tilden Blodgett and his family in the parlor of their Manhattan home, which is decorated for Christmas. Painted toward the end of the Civil War, the serene interior only hints at the urgent issue of Black emancipation through the kinetic toy, suggestive of a

minstrelsy figure and outfitted comically as a Union recruit. Its presence underlines Blodgett's abolitionist sympathies and the complexity of racial stereotyping at the time. Johnson and Blodgett would later serve as founding trustees of The Met, with the latter securing funds for the purchase of 174 European paintings in 1871, which included works by Anthony van Dyck and Francesco Guardi on view in this gallery.

### **Frank Waller**

American, 1842–1923

#### ***Interior View of the Metropolitan Museum of Art When in Fourteenth Street***

1881

Oil on canvas

Purchase, 1895 (95.29)

Based on numerous on-site drawings, this painting offers a glimpse into the Douglas Mansion on West Fourteenth Street, The Met's second home from 1873 to 1879. Pictured are two second-floor galleries as they appeared the last year before the Museum moved to its current location. Anthony van Dyck's *Saint Rosalie Interceding for the Plague-Stricken of Palermo* (on view in this gallery) is visible among the European and American paintings hung in the then-fashionable salon style.



*in through-wall case, right to left*

**Franchi and Son**

British

**Salver**

19th century, after a 1558–59 Flemish original

Silver on base metal

Purchase, 1873 (73.8.46)

In its early years The Met acquired reproductions, including plaster casts of ancient sculptures and electrotypes, which replicated objects crafted in precious metals. The impetus behind this mode of collecting was a prevailing skepticism that the Museum could assemble a collection of originals equal to those in Europe as well as an appreciation of the educational value of copies. This electrotype tray is visible in the nearby painting by Frank Waller.

**Charter of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1870, signed by the Museum's founding Trustees**

Office of the Secretary Records, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives

**Vase with poems composed by the Qianlong Emperor**

Chinese, Qing dynasty (1644–1911), Qianlong mark and period (1736–95), mid-18th century

Porcelain painted in overglaze enamels and gilding (Jingdezhen ware)

Purchase by subscription, 1879 (79.2.612a, b)

The first important acquisition of Asian art came from Samuel P. Avery, an art dealer and founding trustee. Funded in part through a public appeal, the purchase consisted of more than 1,300

ceramics and included export wares, typical for collections of the period, as well as works for domestic consumption, like this vase made for the eighteenth-century Qing imperial court. Two poems by the emperor himself are presented on the floral background, which transforms the porcelain surface into a framed work of calligraphy.

**Pillow in the shape of an infant boy**

Chinese, Qing dynasty (1644–1911), 18th–19th century

Jade (jadeite)

Gift of Heber R. Bishop, 1902 (02.18.426)

**Water dropper in the shape of a crane**

Chinese, Qing dynasty (1644–1911), 18th century

Agate

Gift of Heber R. Bishop, 1902 (02.18.876a, b)

This jadeite figure of an infant boy and agate sculpture of a crane are among the numerous gifts of Heber R. Bishop, a prominent trustee of The Met during its formative years. Bishop assembled a remarkable collection of hardstone carvings in the late nineteenth century, the majority of which represent the artistic sophistication and technical virtuosity of lapidary art in late imperial China.

*in case, around corner*

**Jean Antoine Houdon**

French, 1741–1828

***Benjamin Franklin***

1778

Marble

Gift of John Bard, 1872 (72.6)

Houdon's canonical portrait of Benjamin Franklin was the first significant European sculpture to enter the collection. Created while the statesman was stationed in France drumming up support for American independence, the bust captures Franklin's signature wit and simple Quaker style. Not only its subject but also its provenance is linked to the founders of the nation, and the work was presented to The Met with a letter Franklin wrote to the donor's father. The practice of associating works of art with their former owners lent luster to objects and flattery to patrons.

*in case, around corner*

**Turban helmet**

Turkish (possibly Istanbul), late 15th–16th century

Steel, iron, silver, gold

Rogers Fund, 1904 (04.3.210)

In 1904 the Museum paid just over \$250,000, its largest sum until that point, for the esteemed collection of arms and armor assembled by the French duc de Dino. While the collection's strengths mostly lay in European works, it also included important non-Western pieces. Helmets with the distinctive shape shown here were worn throughout much of the Islamic world from

around the mid-fourteenth to the early sixteenth century. In the nineteenth century, Western collectors saw the form as resembling a turban, prompting the name “turban helmet.”

*in next case*

**Inscribed by Yukinoshita Sadaiyé**

Japanese, active 17th century

**Armor (*gusoku*)**

17th century

Iron, lacquer, silk, gilded copper

Rogers Fund, 1904 (04.4.9a–l)

The large plates covering the torso of this suit reflect dramatic changes in the construction of Japanese armor made in response to the introduction of firearm technology into Japan in the sixteenth century. A zoologist with a passionate interest in historical arms, Bashford Dean was the founding curator of the Department of Arms and Armor at The Met and established the world’s finest collection of Japanese arms and armor outside of Japan. In tribute to Dean’s many contributions to the growth of the Museum, he was elected a trustee upon his retirement in 1927, the only curator to ever receive such an honor.

*This Audio guide stop has been deleted from the exhibition but will be available online: 502*

*in through-wall case in The Street, outside gallery 2, Art for All*

**Albrecht Dürer**

German, 1471–1528

***Samson Rending the Lion***

Ca. 1497–98

Woodcut

Gift of Georgiana W. Sargent, in memory of John Osborne Sargent, 1924 (24.63.111)

The Met collects masterpieces of artistic expression as well as objects that are more functional in nature but that inspire students and creators. Dürer elevated the medium of woodcut to an unprecedented level of technical virtuosity, as seen in *Samson Rending the Lion*. This exceptional pairing presents the print alongside the carved wooden block from which it was made. Whether the artist cut his own woodblocks or commissioned a skilled woodcutter remains an open question.

**Albrecht Dürer**

German, 1471–1528

***Woodblock for Samson Rending the Lion***

Ca. 1497–98

Pearwood

Gift of Junius Spencer Morgan, 1919 (19.73.255)

## 2. ART FOR ALL

The year 1905 inaugurated a new era at The Met. The second director, Caspar Purdon Clarke, and trustee leadership promoted the educational mission of the Museum. They sought to reach audiences beyond traditional elite museumgoers, especially artists, designers, and students. To this end, while still acquiring artworks that were beautiful and rare, the institution also pursued ephemeral and utilitarian objects. These collections, meant for study and as sources of inspiration, encompassed art from a wide range of cultures and times.

This gallery highlights three collections and two curators who embodied this educational spirit: musical instruments and textiles, overseen by Frances Morris, the Museum's first woman professional, and prints, headed by William Ivins Jr. These trailblazing curators opened study rooms for textiles (in 1910) and for works on paper (in 1917), encouraging access to art for all.

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In certain areas, The Met has continued to collect a broad representation of a medium or type of object, from baseball cards to Bauhaus textiles. Visitors can still make appointments in study rooms to examine works of art that are not on view.

image caption:

Frances Morris (second from right) in the Textile Study Room, 1918

*in case to left of text panel*

**Tunic with confronting catfish**

Nasca-Wari (Peru), 800–850

Camelid hair, tapestry-weave

Gift of George D. Pratt, 1929 (29.146.23)

The Museum avidly collected ancient Andean textiles early in its history. This men's tunic was one of twenty-four "notable specimens" given by collector and Met trustee George Dupont Pratt in 1929. When the number of Andean textiles reached more than one hundred the following year, mostly through Pratt's largesse, the Museum devoted an exhibition to the subject called *Peruvian Textiles: Examples of the Pre-Incaic Period*.

*in case on wall around corner*

**Noh costume (*Karaori*) with cherry blossoms and fretwork**

Japanese, Edo period (1615–1868), first half 18th century

Silk, brocaded twill

Rogers Fund, 1919 (19.88.2)

This exquisite Noh costume was purchased for a 1920 exhibition about Japanese and Chinese brocades. According to the Museum's *Bulletin*, "the main object of arranging this collection has been to show the designers and silk workers, at a moment when rich gold and silver brocades are in such great demand, the finest Chinese and Japanese examples."

*on wall across opening*

### **Frances Morris and the Textile Study Room**

When Frances Morris, an acknowledged expert in European lace, was put in charge of the Museum's textile collection in 1906, it was rich in lace but little else. To correct the imbalance and with the idea of creating a study room for "all persons interested in the study, manufacture, or sale of textiles," in 1909 the Museum purchased almost four thousand "specimens of textiles, Peruvian, Coptic, European, and Oriental, sixth to nineteenth century" amassed by Friedrich Fischbach, a German design historian. With this acquisition, the institution announced that "our collection of textiles has attained a development quite equal to that of our laces; and it is hoped that it will prove of great value to students of the arts and crafts." The following year, Morris opened the Textile StudyRoom, where objects were both safely stored and available for viewing when not on display in three adjoining galleries.

image caption:

Suite of textile galleries, March 31, 1925

*on wall above case*

### **Chair-seat cover**

Indian for the European market, 1725–50

Cotton, painted resist and mordant, dyed, with overpainting

Rogers Fund, 1927 (27.195.1)

While in France preparing for her landmark 1927 exhibition *Painted and Printed Fabrics*, Frances Morris, The Met's first textile curator, bought many examples of eighteenth-century textiles with her own money, "hoping that our Museum would sometime realize the importance of such documents" and reimburse her. This remarkably pristine Indian seat cover made for the European



market was undoubtedly part of this acquisition effort.

### **Voided velvet**

Italian (possibly Genoa), second half 17th century

Silk and metal-wrapped thread

Rogers Fund, 1909 (09.50.1318)

This piece of luxurious Italian velvet is one of the more complete textiles of the almost four thousand, ranging in date from the sixth to the nineteenth century, purchased by the Museum specifically for study in 1909. Many pieces are more fragmentary, but are still valuable for showing textile patterns, weave structures, and fibers from around the world.

*in case below, left to right*

### **Cravat end**

Flemish (Brussels), mid-18th century

Linen, bobbin lace

Rogers Fund, 1926 (26.283)

Many wealthy American women of the late nineteenth century collected handmade European lace, and before 1909 The Met textile collection was composed mostly of lace donated by these society women. Later purchases built on this foundation, such as this cravat end, which was prized both for its exquisite design of hunters on horseback and for its provenance—it is thought to have been made for Habsburg empress Maria Theresa, who later gave it to her daughter Queen Marie Antoinette.

**Cesare Vecellio**

Italian, 1521–1601

***Corona delle Nobili et Virtuose Donne: Libro I–IV***

1601

Woodcut

Rogers Fund, 1918 (18.67.2[39])

This lace border, given to the Museum in 1915 by Frances Morris's friend and patron Anna Barnes Bliss, looks like it could have been made after its creator studied an early lace pattern book like the example on display here. Both the lace and the woodcut feature a two-tailed mermaid as well as other birds and beasts.

**Border**

Italian or Flemish, 17th century

Linen, bobbin lace

Gift of Mrs. William H. Bliss, 1915 (15.59)

*on wall, left to right*

### **Fan Design with Republican Assignats**

French

Ca. 1795–96

Etching

Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1938 (38.91.56)

### **Antoine Watteau**

French, 1684–1721

#### ***Seated Woman Holding a Fan***

Ca. 1717

Red, black, and white chalk

Gift of Ann Payne Blumenthal, 1943 (43.163.23)

Watteau was famous for his elegant *fêtes galantes*, scenes of aristocratic and theatrical figures at leisure. In this drawing, the woman's stylish clothes and the collapsed fan in her lap attest to her femininity and elevated social status. The Met collection includes over a hundred eighteenth- and nineteenth-century fan designs that record evolving fashions for what were by nature ephemeral objects. The neoclassical design shown in this etching would have signaled the user's antiroyalist sympathies at the time of the French Revolution.

**Joseph Mallord William Turner**

British, 1775–1851

***The Lake of Zug***

1843

Watercolor over graphite

Marquand Fund, 1959 (59.120)

**Margaret Neilson Armstrong**

American, 1867–1944

***White Valerian, Valeriana sitchensis***

July 14, 1909

Watercolor and brown ink over graphite

Gift of Helena Bienstock, Cynthia MacKay Keegan and Frank E. Johnson, 2010 (2010.341.2[19])

**Margaret Neilson Armstrong**

American, 1867–1944

***Bronze Bells, Fritillaria atropurpurea***

May 2, 1912

Watercolor and brown ink over graphite

Gift of Helena Bienstock, Cynthia MacKay Keegan and Frank E. Johnson, 2010 (2010.341.2[2])

Turner's masterwork, based on sketches made in Switzerland, demonstrates a transcendent use of watercolor to evoke rising dawn light over a mountain lake. Armstrong took a more scientifically accurate approach to her delicate watercolors *Bronze Bells* and *White Valerian*, which record specimens she gathered during five trips west of the Rocky Mountains. The pioneering botanical artist used these works to illustrate her 1915 *Field Book of Western Wildflowers*.

**William Morris**

British, 1834–1896

**Merton Abbey Works**

British, founded 1881

***Strawberry Thief***

Design registered 1883, printed 1917–23

Cotton, indigo discharged and block-printed

Purchase, Edward C. Moore Jr. Gift, 1923 (23.163.11)

A donation of funds in 1923 enabled the Museum to systematically collect examples of contemporary design for the first time. Curator Joseph Breck traveled the world purchasing works in all media, including twenty-five lengths of textiles and wallpaper designed by the firm Morris & Company. Two of these innovatively designed and immaculately printed fabrics were included in Frances Morris's 1927 exhibition *Painted and Printed Fabrics*.

**Edouard Vuillard**

French, 1868–1940

Printed by Auguste Clot, Paris

Published by Ambroise Vollard, Paris

***Interior with Pink Wallpaper I and Interior with Pink Wallpaper II, from the series Landscapes and Interiors***

1899

Color lithographs

Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1925 (25.70.14, .19)

**Dagobert Peche**

Austrian, 1887–1923

**Wiener Werkstätte**

Austrian, Printed by Flammersheim & Steinmann, Cologne

**The Rose**

1922

Machine roller-printed wallpaper

Gift of Wiener Werkstätte of America, Inc., 1923 (23.236[40])

Vuillard's manner of depicting the wallpaper in this pair of prints of a bourgeois interior augments the flattened, decorative effect of the overall compositions. The Met collection offers an opportunity to view samples of similar wallpaper from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, including this one designed by Wiener Werkstätte (Vienna Workshops) artist Peche. Material such as this has served as inspiration to generations of artists and designers.

*This Audio guide stop has been deleted from the exhibition but will be available online: 504*

### **William M. Ivins Jr. and the Collection of Works on Paper**

In 1916, following the acquisition of more than thirty-five hundred prints from the paper manufacturer Harris Brisbane Dick, the trustees hired William Ivins Jr. to build a collection that would rival the other curatorial departments. Ivins was part of a long tradition of museum professionals who began developing their expertise as private collectors and independent scholars. Faithful to the Museum's educational mission, he believed that prints "throw open to their student with the most complete abandon the whole gamut of human life and endeavor, from the most ephemeral of courtesies to the loftiest pictorial presentations of man's spiritual aspirations." The pairings of masterworks with more popular works here reflect this methodology, which has continued to shape the collecting philosophy of what is now the Department of Drawings and Prints.

image caption:

Prints Study Room, 1926

### **Michelangelo Buonarroti**

Italian, 1475–1564

#### ***Studies for the Libyan Sibyl***

Ca. 1510–11

Red chalk, accents of white chalk

Purchase, Joseph Pulitzer Bequest, 1924 (24.197.2)

**Domenico del Barbieri**

Italian, 1506–1565

***Two Flayed Men and Their Skeletons***

Ca. 1540–45

Engraving

The Elisha Whittelsey Collection, The Elisha Whittelsey Fund, 1949 (49.95.181)

Purchased by The Met with the help of artist John Singer Sargent, Michelangelo's magnificent drawing consists of a series of closely observed life studies for a figure on the Sistine Chapel ceiling. The medium of red chalk was especially suited for his highly naturalistic study of anatomical detail. Anatomy was often learned through engravings, such as this one by Barbieri, which portrays two skeletons paired with *écorchés*, or flayed figures, from different perspectives.

**Martin Schongauer**

German, ca. 1435/50–1491

***Christ Carrying the Cross***

Ca. 1475–80

Engraving

Purchase, The Sylmaris Collection, Gift of George Coe Graves, by exchange, 1935 (35.27)



## **Hans Schlaffer of Ulm**

German, active ca. 1470–75

### ***The Sudarium***

Ca. 1470–75

Handcolored woodcut

Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1941 (41.47)

According to the Bible, Saint Veronica encountered Jesus struggling to carry the cross and wiped the sweat off his face. His features were miraculously imprinted on her veil. The cloth, known as the sudarium, is the subject of this early woodcut, rendered in a simple style to fill the popular demand for sacred imagery. Schongauer's near-contemporary engraving depicts Christ carrying the cross. His complex and lively composition was made for a more discerning audience.

*in through wall-case*

## **Chasuble (*Opus Anglicanum*)**

English, ca. 1330–50

Silk velvet, embroidered with silver, silver-gilt, colored silk threads, with pearls

Fletcher Fund, 1927 (27.162.1)

Frances Morris wrote in the Museum's *Bulletin* that the acquisition of this intricately worked medieval chasuble in 1927 signified "an important event in the history of the Museum collection of textile fabrics." The richness and skill of *opus anglicanum* (English work) embroidery was renowned throughout Europe in the Middle Ages. Scenes from the life of the Virgin beneath delicate Gothic tracery arches adorn the back of this liturgical vestment, which remains one of the great treasures of the textile collection.

## **Engaged capital from Saint-Guilhem-le-Désert**

French (Languedoc), late 12th century

Limestone

The Cloisters Collection, 1925 (25.120.47)

Vestiges of sculpture from Saint-Guilhem-le-Désert form one of the four anchors of architectural sculpture at The Met Cloisters. The monastery from which it came was secularized during the French Revolution, when many of its abandoned treasures, including this beautifully rendered foliate capital, passed into private hands.

*around corner of case*

## **The Gift of The Cloisters**

While living in France, the American sculptor George Grey Barnard was struck by “the glorious triumph of lightness and spiritual glory” he perceived in medi-eval art. To inspire art students with what he called the “patient Gothic chisel,” in 1914 Barnard established a private museum called The Cloisters in upper Manhattan. When that collection was offered for sale, John D. Rockefeller Jr.—who spoke with conviction about the role of beauty in life—made its acquisition by The Met a reality, establishing and endowing The Met Cloisters, which opened in 1938 in Fort Tryon Park.

image caption:

Judy Black Garden at the Cuxa Cloister, The Met Cloisters, photographed in 2016

*around corner of case, bottom, left to right*

**Bracelet with lion-head finials**

Cypriot, 5th century B.C.

Gold, copper alloy

The Cesnola Collection, Purchased by subscription, 1874–76 (74.51.3559)

**Tiffany & Co.**

American, founded 1837

**Bracelet with lion-head finials**

Ca. 1878

Gold

Purchase, Martha J. Fleischman and Barbara G. Fleischman Gifts, in honor of Beth Carver Wees, 2018 (2018.383)

Among the antiquities from Cyprus the first director, Luigi Palma di Cesnola, sold to the Museum was a significant quantity of jewelry that he elaborately, and falsely, publicized as “the Kourion Treasure.” In 1877 he appointed Tiffany & Co. sole agents for the reproduction of works in The Met collection. This ancient Cypriot bracelet was one of the first objects selected, exhibited here alongside its replica. Undoubtedly status symbols, the beautifully wrought copies appealed to the well-heeled New Yorkers who were some of The Met’s earliest supporters.

*case in center of gallery, left to right*

### **Mary Elizabeth Adams Brown and the Musical Instruments Collection**

Mary Elizabeth Adams (Mrs. John Crosby) Brown almost single-handedly formed the Museum's holdings of musical instruments, a collection of exceptional quality and breadth. Brown's insatiable interest started as a project to decorate her music room, but became a lifelong passion. In 1889 she donated 276 instruments with the highly unusual caveat that she and her son could add or withdraw pieces over her lifetime as they saw fit. The collection expanded rapidly, and seven years later Brown recruited Frances Morris to help catalogue and arrange the instruments in the galleries. By the time Brown died in 1918, the holdings had grown to more than 3,600 examples. Morris, who was also the Museum's textile curator, worked tirelessly with the instruments as well until 1929.

image caption:

Musical instruments gallery, 1909

### ***Sesando***

Javanese, Nusa Tenggara, Timor Island (Indonesia), late 19th century

Bamboo, teak wood, palm (*Borassus flabellifera*), wire

The Crosby Brown Collection of Musical Instruments, 1889 (89.4.1489)

From early on, there were differing opinions about whether Brown's non-Western instruments were appropriate for an art museum. Some suggested that objects such as this Javanese *sesando*, a plucked string instrument, were more suitable for the American Museum of Natural History. But because of Brown's holistic approach and determination to preserve instruments from a wide variety of cultures, the Museum's holdings of musical instruments are extraordinarily comprehensive.

### **Raven rattle**

Native American, Tsimshian, Skidegate, British Columbia, Canada, 19th century

Cedar, pebbles, paint

The Crosby Brown Collection of Musical Instruments, 1889 (89.4.611)

In 1914 curator Frances Morris published *Catalogue of the Musical Instruments of Oceanica [sic] and America*, the only completed catalogue in what she hoped would be a four-volume set on the Museum's entire musical instrument collection. The subject of an in-depth entry in the book, this ceremonial raven rattle, carved with symbols referencing the transmission of power from the raven to humankind, was originally used in shamanic healing rituals. It is one of the first examples of Indigenous art from North America to enter The Met collection.

### ***Saùng-gauk***

Burmese (Myanmar), 19th century

Wood, deerskin, paint, cotton cord, metal, glass

The Crosby Brown Collection of Musical Instruments, 1889 (89.4.1465a, b)

Two-thirds of the musical instruments that Brown collected were non-Western. She never traveled to the locales from which many of the objects originated, relying instead on a network of missionaries, business associates of her husband, explorers, and dealers in order to acquire desired pieces. The elaborate decoration of this *saùng-gauk*, a type of harp, depicts scenes from the Indian epic *Ramayana*. The wife of a missionary living in Burma found the object for Brown.

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**Attributed to Alphonse (Antoine) Sax**

Belgian, 1822–1874

**Cornet-trompe in D**

Ca. 1862

Brass

The Crosby Brown Collection of Musical Instruments, 1889 (89.4.1105)

Realizing that her collection would not be complete without outstanding Western examples, Brown made four extended trips to Europe to fill gaps in her holdings. Her interests included not only older instruments but also new works that reflected innovations in technology, manufacturing, and design. The ergonomic design of this unusually wound hunting horn allowed it to be tucked snugly against the player's body for convenient carrying.

### 3. PRINCELY ASPIRATIONS

The news of retail magnate Benjamin Altman's bequest in 1913 prompted the observation that The Met had reached "the forefront of the world's treasure houses, with the Louvre and Madrid."

Altman and his contemporaries bought works comparable to those held by noble European families and left them to the Museum, both asserting their own status and demonstrating their belief that the public should have access to art of enduring value. The Met's Gilded Age benefactors embodied the contradictions of New York society. These millionaires, who had converted "pork into porcelain," dominated industries that often depended on labor conditions now regarded as intolerable.

Chief among these tycoons was the financier J. Pierpont Morgan, who collected on a staggering scale—some 7,000 of his possessions eventually came to this museum, while thousands of others were equally transformative for other institutions. A contemporary cartoonist depicted Morgan as a giant magnet for a mixed jumble of objects, but he was attracted above all to rare and precious artworks from illustrious collections.

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Succeeding donors, including Robert Lehman, Charles and Jayne Wrightsman, Iris and B. Gerald Cantor, and Marina Kellen French, have been drawn to similar areas of collecting and have enriched the depth and breadth of The Met's holdings immeasurably.

image caption:

Joseph Keppler Jr. (American). *The Magnet*, cartoon from *Puck* magazine, June 21, 1911

*to left*

**Antonio Rossellino**

Italian, 1427–ca. 1479

***Madonna and Child with Angels***

Ca. 1455–60

Marble with gilded details

Bequest of Benjamin Altman, 1913 (14.40.675)

The son of German Jewish immigrants, Benjamin Altman became a wealthy retail magnate and visionary philanthropist in the late nineteenth century. He always intended to bequeath his magnificent collection to The Met for the “enjoyment of the people of New York.” Rossellino’s *Madonna and Child* is known as the “Altman Madonna,” the popular title commemorating the man as much as the work of art, which was the jewel of his sculpture collection. It is considered the most beautiful Italian Renaissance relief in the United States.

*across gallery, left to right*

**The Hoentschel Collection**

J. Pierpont Morgan amassed large holdings of medieval art and seventeenth- and eighteenth-century French decorative art from the collection of interior decorator Georges Hoentschel.

Léopold Stevens’s painting of Hoentschel’s gallery, hanging nearby, gives an idea of its appearance and style of display. Grasping the collection’s importance to artists and designers, Morgan immediately donated many of the decorative works to the Museum. Even the financier may not have fully realized what an impact his gift would have—it led to the construction of a new wing, which opened in 1910; the creation of a decorative arts department, the first of its kind in an



American museum; and the appointment of an innovative curator, Wilhelm R. Valentiner, to lead the new division. Initially lent to the Museum, the medieval works were gifted by Morgan's son in 1917.

**Door from the *grand cabinet* of the Hôtel de Belle-Isle, Paris**

French, 18th century

Oak, carved, painted, and gilded

Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1906 (07.225.463b)

The original locations of some of the decorative paneling and woodwork from Georges Hoentschel's collection have been identified since J. Pierpont Morgan donated them to The Met. This door, with its exquisite neoclassical carved and gilded ornament, was part of the interior decoration of the Hôtel de Belle-Isle, the Parisian residence of the dukes of Choiseul-Praslin.

**Georges Jacob**

French, 1739–1814

**Gilded by Louis-François Chatard**

French, ca. 1749–1819

**Armchair (*fauteuil*)**

1788

Walnut, carved and gilded; gold brocaded silk (not original)

Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1906 (07.225.107)

Several chairs from Georges Hoentschel's collection have distinguished provenances, including this neoclassical armchair by Georges Jacob, one of the most important joiners of the late eighteenth century. The seat was made for the gaming room at the Château de Saint Cloud, a summer residence of the French royal family.

**Panel from the *cabinet intérieur* of the Château de Chanteloup, France**

French, 1771–75

Oak, carved, painted, and gilded

Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1906 (07.225.464e)

This panel is one of six acquired by Georges Hoentschel that were part of a decorative frieze belonging to the French ambassador to the Vatican from 1753 to 1757. Inspired by the civil servant's tenure in Rome, the frieze incorporated medallions of esteemed Italian artists; this one features the architect Andrea Palladio, which the French spelled "Palladiaux."

**Léopold Stevens**

French 1866–1935

***Interior View of the Hoentschel Collection at 58 Boulevard Flandrin, Paris***

Ca. 1903–6

Oil on canvas

Purchase, The James Parker Charitable Foundation Gift, 2019 (2019.55)

**Johannes Vermeer**

Dutch, 1632–1675

***Young Woman with a Lute***

Ca. 1662–63

Oil on canvas

Bequest of Collis P. Huntington, 1900 (25.110.24)

Vermeer's art had been recently rediscovered in 1909, when this painting appeared to public enthusiasm and acclaim in the *Hudson-Fulton Exhibition*. The grand installation celebrated, in part, the three hundredth anniversary of the exploration of the Hudson River and New York's early

Dutch history. Purchased by railroad tycoon Collis P. Huntington, the work was lent to the exhibition by his widow, the formidable Arabella Huntington, and it arrived permanently at the Museum following her death.

*This Audio guide stop has been deleted from the exhibition but will be available online: 505*

## **Rembrandt van Rijn**

Dutch, 1606–1669

### ***The Toilet of Bathsheba***

1643

Oil on wood

Bequest of Benjamin Altman, 1913 (14.40.651)

Benjamin Altman devoted the last years of his life to building an incomparable collection of old masters, especially works by Dutch artists. He was profoundly attracted to paintings by Rembrandt, including this poetic subject from the Hebrew Bible in which Bathsheba is secretly observed by King David, barely visible on a tower at the left. The work passed through numerous important European and British collectors before being sold to Altman just before he passed away in 1913. Recent scholarship about Black figures in European art has drawn attention to the attendant arranging Bathsheba's hair, who may be intended to represent a woman of African origin.

**Sir Thomas Lawrence**

British, 1769–1830

***Elizabeth Farren, Later Countess of Derby***

1790

Oil on canvas

Bequest of Edward S. Harkness, 1940 (50.135.5)

This vibrant portrait of a renowned British comic actress took pride of place in the library of J. Pierpont Morgan's London home, where King Edward VII commented on it during a visit in 1906. Morgan would have appreciated the bravura of the piece, the fame of its sitter, and its aristocratic history—it was owned by the man whom the subject later married, Edward Smith Stanley, twelfth earl of Derby. Although the painting did not come to The Met directly from Morgan, it exemplifies the interest in grand British portraiture in New York during the early twentieth century.

*on wall around corner*

**Panel with grotesques from a set of bed hangings**

Netherlandish, ca. 1550–60

Silk, wool, silver and silver-gilt metal-wrapped threads

Gift of George Blumenthal, 1941 (41.100.385)

By 1900 the American elite had embraced the potential of historic European tapestries to transform spaces into palatial surroundings. Florence Blumenthal and her husband, Met trustee and self-made millionaire financier George, amassed an extraordinary collection, planned for the Museum but displayed in their New York and Paris homes during their lifetimes. With its bold palette and fanciful, antique-inspired motifs, this tapestry was probably made for Philip II, king of Spain, to embellish a four-poster bed.

**Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres**

French, 1780–1867

*Joséphine-Éléonore-Marie-Pauline de Galard de Brassac de Béarn, Princesse de Broglie*

1851–53

Oil on canvas

Robert Lehman Collection, 1975 (1975.1.186)

Several more recent Museum benefactors have demonstrated a sensibility for French fine art and decorative objects, both pre- and post-Revolution, appreciating their beauty and elegance. These qualities are epitomized by Ingres's *Princesse de Broglie*, with the sitter's garments of shimmering blue silk and lace set off by her porcelain skin and accompanied by a luxurious tumble of gloves, shawl, and fan. The painting usually hangs in the Robert Lehman Wing, built during the period of the Museum's centennial to house the donor's collection.

**Simone Martini**

Italian, died 1344

*Saint Ansanus*

Ca. 1326

Tempera on wood, gold ground

Robert Lehman Collection, 1975 (1975.1.13)

**Simone Martini**

Italian, died 1344

***Madonna and Child***

Ca. 1326

Tempera on wood, gold ground

Robert Lehman Collection, 1975 (1975.1.12)

**Simone Martini**

Italian, died 1344

***Saint Andrew***

Ca. 1326

Tempera on wood, gold ground

Gift of George Blumenthal, 1941 (41.100.23)

These panels were likely part of a portable altarpiece commissioned by officials of Siena. They demonstrate the refined surfaces and delicate expressivity for which Simone, one of the most famous artists of his age, was known. Thanks to several New York collectors, The Met has one of the finest collections of early Sienese paintings. These panels arrived through the bequests of bankers George Blumenthal in 1941 and Robert Lehman in 1975 but came to New York much earlier in the century. Both men had traveled in search of early Italian paintings in the company of American advisors and inspired by the writings of art historian Bernard Berenson.

## **Anthony van Dyck**

Flemish, 1599–1641

### ***Queen Henrietta Maria***

1636

Oil on canvas

Bequest of Mrs. Charles Wrightsman, in honor of Annette de la Renta, 2019 (2019.141.10)

Gifts from Jayne Wrightsman and her husband, oil executive Charles Wrightsman, range from entire period rooms to great paintings, which are notable for the concentration of outstanding European portraits of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Van Dyck's likenesses of the English king Charles I and Henrietta Maria, his French wife, were renowned as exemplars of royal portraiture. This painting of the pregnant queen was commissioned as a gift for Cardinal Francesco Barberini in Rome, and it remained with the Barberini family for over two hundred years.

*on wall to right of gallery entrance*

## **Precious Objects**

Wealthy New Yorkers have long harbored a passion for rare, exquisite objects, a taste inspired by royal and noble European collections. From the beginning, The Met acquired exceptional works of art—from antiquities, armor, and Medici porcelain to Islamic and Asian vessels—through these benefactors. Gifts from J. Pierpont Morgan, including outstanding examples of medieval and Renaissance decorative art, enriched virtually every department. The Museum also purchased works once owned by distinguished collectors, such as Egyptian objects from the Earl of Carnarvon, famous for the discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb, and a Greek vase excavated by Lucien Bonaparte. This case also includes works given more recently by collectors equally passionate about great works of European sculpture and decorative arts.

image caption:

Loan exhibition of the Morgan Collection, February 1914

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*adjacent case, left to right*

**Mounted vase**

Chinese with French mounts, early 18th century (porcelain), ca. 1750 (mounts)

Hard-paste porcelain, gilded-bronze mounts

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Wrightsman, 1971 (1971.206.22)

*top*

**Swan-necked bottle (*ashkdan*)**

Iran, Qajar period (1785–1925), 19th century

Glass

Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917 (17.190.829)



*bottom*

**Auguste Rodin**

French, 1840–1917

***Head of Balzac***

Modeled ca. 1892–93, cast 1980

Bronze

Gift from B. Gerald Cantor Collection, 1985 (1985.111)

*in adjacent compartment*

**Vase with immortals offering the peaches of longevity**

Chinese, Qing dynasty (1644–1911), Kangxi period (1662–1722)

Porcelain, overglaze enamels

Bequest of Benjamin Altman, 1913 (14.40.331)

*top*

**Medici Porcelain Factory**

Italian, ca. 1575–ca. 1587

**Ewer (*brocca*)**

Ca. 1575–87

Soft-paste porcelain

Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917 (17.190.2045)

*in adjacent compartment*

**Cup with mounts**

Bohemian, ca. 1350–80

Jasper, silver-gilded mount and foot

Purchase, Mrs. Charles Wrightsman Gift, in honor of Annette de la Renta, 2000 (2000.504)

**Ewer**

German or Rhenish, ca. 1350–80 (ewer), ca. 1400 (mounts)

Jasper, silver-gilded mounts

Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917 (17.190.610)

*bottom*

**Martin Gizl**

Austrian, 1707–1786

**Ewer and stand (*présentoir*)**

1758

Alpine ibex horn, gold, gilded copper

Purchase, Anna-Maria and Stephen Kellen Foundation Gift, 2013 (2013.442.1, .2)

*top*

**Plate with the Battle of David and Goliath**

Byzantine, 629–30

Silver

Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917 (17.190.396)

*bottom*

**Etienne Bobillet**

Franco-Netherlandish, active 1453

**Paul Mosselman**

Franco-Netherlandish, active 1453

***Mourners***

Ca. 1453

Alabaster

Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917 (17.190.386, .389)

*in adjacent compartment, bottom*

**Book cover(?) with ivory figures**

Spanish, before 1085

Gilded silver with pseudo-filigree, glass and stone cabochons, cloisonné enamel, ivory with traces of gilding on pine support

Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917 (17.190.33)

*in adjacent compartment*

**Ritual wine container (*pou*)**

Chinese, Shang dynasty (ca. 1500–1046 B.C.), 13th century B.C.

Bronze

Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917 (17.190.524a, b)

*top*

**George Charles Williamson**

British, 1858–1942

**J. Pierpont Morgan**

American, 1837–1913

***Catalogue of the Collection of Jewels and Precious Works of Art, the Property of J. Pierpont Morgan***

1910

Watson Library, Presented by J. Pierpont Morgan (146.8 M821 Q)

*bottom, top to bottom and left to right*

**Belt buckle with paired felines attacking ibexes**

Xiongnu, ca. 3rd–2nd century B.C.

From Mongolia or southern Siberia

Gold

Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917 (17.190.1672)

**Belt adornment with an eagle and its prey**

Parthian or Kushan, ca. 1st–2nd century

From Central Asia

Gold, turquoise inlay

Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917 (17.190.2055)

**Statuette of a young woman**

Etruscan, late 6th century B.C.

Bronze

Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917 (17.190.2066)

**Ennion**

Roman, active first half 1st century

**Jug**

First half 1st century

Glass

Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917 (17.194.226)

*top*

**Peter Peck**

German, 1503–1596

**Ambrosius Gemlich**

German, active ca. 1520–50

**Double-barreled wheellock pistol made for Emperor Charles V**

Ca. 1540–45

Steel, gold, cherrywood, staghorn

Gift of William H. Riggs, 1913 (14.25.1425)

*bottom, left to right*

**Striding Thoth**

332–30 B.C.

From Egypt

Faience

Purchase, Edward S. Harkness Gift, 1926 (26.7.860)

**Amphora-shaped perfume bottle**

Ca. 1390–1336 B.C. From Egypt

Glass

Purchase, Edward S. Harkness Gift, 1926 (26.7.1177)

**Cosmetic box of Kemeni and mirror of Reniseneb**

Egyptian, ca. 1814–1805 B.C.

Excavated at Egypt, Thebes, Asasif

Box: cedar, ebony and ivory veneer, silver mounts; mirror: unalloyed copper, gold, ebony; jars: travertine (Egyptian alabaster)

Purchase, Edward S. Harkness Gift, 1926 (26.7.1438–.1442, .1351)

*in adjacent compartment*

Attributed to the **Euphiletos Painter**

**Panathenaic prize amphora**

Greek, Attic, ca. 530 B.C.

Terracotta

Rogers Fund, 1914 (14.130.12)

Audio guide 506 (*duplicated on both ends of this large cabinet display*)

*in through-wall case in The Street, to the right of the gallery exit*

**Filippo Negroli**

Italian, 1510–1579

**Burgonet**

Dated 1543

Steel, gold, textile

Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917 (17.190.1720)

Negroli brilliantly reinterpreted designs from classical antiquity, hammering steel into sublime wearable sculpture. This burgonet ranks among the artist's masterpieces and was the sole piece of armor owned by the omnivorous collector and transformative Met president J. Pierpont Morgan. Its extraordinary artistry and emergence from a French ducal collection appealed to the princely aspirations that Morgan and other Gilded Age benefactors introduced to the Museum in the early twentieth century

*video*

**An Edifice for Art: the Architecture of the Met**

1870 – 1950

Film by Squint/Opera

Part 1: 3 min., 24 sec.



### **Seated statue of Hatshepsut**

Ca. 1479–1458 B.C.

Excavated at Deir el-Bahri, Egypt, head, left forearm, throne fragments acquired through partage, 1927–28; body acquired through exchange, 1929

Indurated limestone, paint

Rogers Fund, 1929 (29.3.2)

In the 1920s the Museum's Egyptian Expedition began finding fragmentary statues that had decorated the funerary temple of the female pharaoh Hatshepsut, who ruled Egypt as king for more than twenty years. Most of this sculpture's body had been taken to Berlin by a German expedition in the nineteenth century, but pieces of the head and other fragments were uncovered during two of the Museum's excavation seasons at the temple. Because of the unusual type of stone, Herbert Winlock, director of the excavations, was able to link the material to the pieces in Germany. He then negotiated an exchange with Berlin's Egyptian Museum to acquire the statue's body for The Met.

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### **Conservation Story**

The statue of Hatshepsut arrived at The Met in numerous fragments, owing to its archaeological origins and also to Hatshepsut's coruler and successor, Thutmose III, who sought to destroy her statues after her death in order to obliterate her memory. The original restoration (1928–29) reassembled the fragments and filled losses with painted plaster, some of which were poorly executed, obscuring evidence of past damage and compromising the statue's beauty. The next treatment (1979) reflected a more restrained approach, using recessed, textured fills to expose the fragmentary nature of the object as well as modern interventions. The most recent treatment (1993)

combined the best of the previous two approaches in order to return the focus to the power and beauty of the statue.

To learn more, visit [metmuseum.org/Conservation150](http://metmuseum.org/Conservation150)

image captions:

Head of the statue of Hatshepsut in 1929

After 1930 restoration

After 1979 restoration

*on railing in front of window*

### **The Met in Central Park**

The Met's site in Central Park was proposed even before the Museum was founded. While the park's designers, Calvert Vaux and Frederick Law Olmsted, set aside a plot at Sixty-Fourth Street and Fifth Avenue, by 1869 the location was centered on Eighty-Second Street and Fifth Avenue. The Met opened here in 1880 in a building designed by Vaux and his assistant Jacob Wrey Mould. The Egyptian obelisk visible through the window, commonly known as "Cleopatra's Needle," was carved in about 1450 B.C. for Thutmose III, Hatshepsut's coruler and successor as pharaoh, who destroyed her statues. The painter and Museum trustee Frederic Edwin Church helped determine its placement behind The Met, where it was installed in 1881 with great fanfare as a gift from the Egyptian government to the City of New York.

#### 4. COLLECTING THROUGH EXCAVATION

Ancient art has always occupied a prominent place in the Museum, but at first the institution had to rely on gifts and the vagaries of the market to form its collections. That changed in 1906, when The Met launched its first excavation in Egypt, funded by J. Pierpont Morgan. An intensive archaeological program under directors Edward Robinson and Herbert Winlock expanded to other parts of the Middle East in the 1920s and 1930s and included medieval and Islamic sites. News of the fieldwork, illustrated by photographs, was shared with an eager public.

Objects ranging from monumental royal sculpture to fragments of architecture, armor, and domestic ware were brought to the Museum through a division of finds with host countries called “partage.” Excavation was an important means not only of building collections but also of gaining information about the historical and cultural context of objects.

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The Museum no longer acquires through partage but still participates in archaeological projects for research and preservation, in collaboration with scholars around the world. Modern technology has allowed us to examine even the most fragmentary material, adding significantly to our knowledge of ancient artists and societies.

image caption:

Progress of the work at Deir el-Bahri, with statues of Hatshepsut in the foreground, photographed by Harry Burton, February 1, 1928.

*back to gallery entrance, cases along wall adjacent to window, left to right*

### **An Exchange for Japanese Armor, 1905**

Among the earliest pieces in the Museum's exceptional collection of Japanese arms and armor are a helmet and sword from Japan's Kofun period (ca. 300–710). Bashford Dean, founding curator of the Department of Arms and Armor, realized that all Kofun armor and weapons were still in Japanese collections. In 1905 he traveled to Japan and negotiated an exchange with curators at the Imperial Museum, Tokyo. Dean chose the sword and other Kofun objects, and in return the Japanese curators asked for works of ancient Egyptian art. After leaving Japan, Dean purchased a group of Egyptian artifacts in Cairo, which he presented to the Museum as a gift, and the exchange was made. The helmet was purchased later from the auction of a private collection.

#### **Helmet**

Japanese, 5th century

Excavated at O<sup>tsuka</sup>-yama Kofun, Sakume-chu<sup>u</sup>, Matsuzaka City, Mie Prefecture, Japan

Iron, copper, gold

Fletcher Fund, 1928 (28.60.2)

#### **Blade for a double-edged sword (*ken*)**

Japanese, 5th century

Excavated at Kyūshū Island, Kumamoto Prefecture, Japan

Steel

Gift of Bashford Dean, by exchange, 1906 (06.310.8)

This *ken* was found in the Eda Funayama Kofun (burial mound) on Kyūshū Island, in southern Japan. Swords of this period are extremely rare and show the earliest stage in the development of the Japanese sword blade. Other pieces from this burial mound that remained in Japan have been

designated National Treasures by the government.

*in case*

### **Tomb of Wah, Western Thebes, Egypt, 1920**

Funerary practices reveal a great deal about a culture, and the excavation of tombs has provided important information about the ancient world. Wah's undecorated tomb was discovered by chance during the excavation of the ruined funerary complex of his employer, Meketre. It contained only a coffin and some food offerings and therefore the excavators thought the owner was a man of no great importance. Wah's tomb group came to the Museum in the division of finds. To everyone's surprise, when an X-ray of his mummy was taken in 1939, the films revealed a multitude of funerary and personal jewelry, some of it made of metal that turned out to be gold and silver. In 1940 the mummy was unwrapped to retrieve the jewelry displayed here, which is unlike any found before or since. Wah's mummy would not be unwrapped today; instead, the jewelry would be re-created using digital imagery.

image caption:

Wah's mummy, which was wrapped in approximately five hundred yards of linen

### **Broad Collar of Wah**

Ca. 1981–1975 B.C.

Excavated at Thebes, Egypt, acquired through partage, 1920

Faience, linen thread

Rogers Fund and Edward S. Harkness Gift, 1940 (40.3.2)

### **Funerary Mask of Wah**

Ca. 1981–1975 B.C.

Excavated at Thebes, Egypt, acquired through partage, 1920

Cartonnage, wood, paint, gold foil

Rogers Fund and Edward S. Harkness Gift, 1940 (40.3.54)

### **Scarab and Bead Bracelets of Wah**

Ca. 1981–1975 B.C.

Excavated at Thebes, Egypt, acquired through partage, 1920

Silver, electrum, glazed steatite, linen cord; lapis lazuli, carnelian, linen cord

Rogers Fund and Edward S. Harkness Gift, 1940 (40.3.12, .14)

The blue scarab is made of lapis lazuli, which was mined in far-off Afghanistan and traveled across trade routes through the ancient Middle East before reaching Egypt. Owning such a rare piece would have been a sign of high status in Wah's time. The silver scarab, inlaid with electrum hieroglyphs recording the names and titles of Wah and his employer, Meketre, was also an elite possession. Both pieces were placed over the wrists of Wah's mummy.

*in case, center of gallery, left to right*

### **Kharga and Thebes, Egypt, 1908–31**

The Museum's excavators wanted to learn about early Christianity, which Saint Mark brought to Egypt in the first century. Excavations of a cemetery and town site at Kharga Oasis revealed a vibrant Christian community that thrived at a time when ancient Egyptian, Ptolemaic Greek, and Roman influences blended in the local art and architecture. Related work at Thebes in a small

hermitage inhabited by the religious recluse Epiphanius uncovered hundreds of texts—copies of biblical passages and church documents—written on stone chips and broken pottery.

image caption:

Elite tombs in the Christian cemetery of al-Bagawat, Egypt. Photograph by Adela Oppenheim, 2000

### **Censer with a lioness hunting a boar**

Coptic, 6th–7th century

Excavated at the Hermitage of Epiphanius, Thebes, Egypt, acquired through partage and retained by J. Pierpont Morgan, funder of the excavations, 1912; purchased from Morgan's estate, 1944

Bronze

Rogers Fund, 1944 (44.20a, b)

This censer was found in a crevice above a courtyard in the hermitage of Epiphanius. Smoke from the burning incense would have emerged through the mouths and ears of the lioness and boar, adding a dynamic effect to their struggle. The object has no Christian iconography, and therefore its archaeological context is the only way of knowing its origins. As funder of the excavations, J. Pierpont Morgan kept this piece for his own collection.

### **Glass fragments**

Coptic, 4th–early 5th century

Excavated at Ain et Turba, Kharga Oasis, Egypt, acquired through partage, 1908

Glass

Rogers Fund, 1908 (08.268.15a–c)

**Bottle fragment**

Coptic, 4th century

Excavated at al-Bagawat, Kharga Oasis, Egypt, acquired through partage, 1931

Glass

Rogers Fund, 1931 (31.8.42.68)

**Ostrakon of an epistle of Severos, bishop of Antioch, written in Coptic, the latest form of ancient Egyptian**

Coptic, ca. 509–640

Excavated at the Hermitage of Epiphanius, Thebes, Egypt, acquired through partage, 1912

Limestone, ink

Rogers Fund, 1912 (12.180.62)

*on platform against wall*

**Catapult projectile**

Ca. 1250

Excavated at Montfort Castle, Palestine (near present-day 'Akko, Israel), acquired through partage, 1928

Limestone

Gift of Clarence H. Mackay, Archer M. Huntington, Stephen H. P. Pell, and Bashford Dean, 1928  
(28.99.42)



### **Keystone with carved plant motifs**

German, ca. 1220–30

Excavated at Montfort Castle, Palestine (near present-day ‘Akko, Israel), acquired through partage, 1928

Limestone

Gift of Clarence H. Mackay, Archer M. Huntington, Stephen H. P. Pell, and Bashford Dean, 1928  
(28.99.2)

*in case to left, left to right*

### **Montfort Castle, British Mandatory Palestine, 1926**

In the 1920s armor and weapons from Crusader times were unavailable on the art market and knowledge of them was minimal. Seeking to address these gaps, curator Bashford Dean proposed an excavation at Montfort, a Crusader castle in what was then Palestine under British Mandate. The monthlong excavation was judged a “dismal failure” from a collecting standpoint, producing only clumps of rusted mail, various arrow, spear, javelin, and bolt heads, and dozens of stone catapult projectiles. Much was learned, however, about the living conditions of the Crusaders in the Holy Land, whose lifestyle was similar to what it would have been in Europe. The castle, for example, was decorated with European-style stained glass and architectural reliefs made of local materials. Domestic furnishings included fine locally made glassware and ceramics.

image caption:

Catapult projectiles excavated at Montfort Castle, Palestine (near present-day ‘Akko, Israel), before 1271. Photograph 1926

**Lamp with Arabic inscription**

Syrian, before 1271

Excavated at Montfort Castle, Palestine (near present-day 'Akko, Israel), acquired through partage,  
1928

Earthenware

Gift of Clarence H. Mackay, Archer M. Huntington, Stephen H. P. Pell, and Bashford Dean, 1928  
(28.99.16)

**Lamp**

Crusader, 1220–71

Excavated at Montfort Castle, Palestine (near present-day 'Akko, Israel), acquired through partage,  
1928

Earthenware, glaze

Gift of Clarence H. Mackay, Archer M. Huntington, Stephen H. P. Pell, and Bashford Dean, 1928  
(28.99.15)

**Stone with matrices**

German, ca. 1220–30

Excavated at Montfort Castle, Palestine (near present-day 'Akko, Israel), acquired through partage,  
1928

Limestone

Gift of Clarence H. Mackay, Archer M. Huntington, Stephen H. P. Pell, and Bashford Dean, 1928  
(28.99.10)

### **Fragment of mail**

Probably European, before 1271

Excavated at Montfort Castle, Palestine (near present-day ‘Akko, Israel), acquired through partage, 1928

Steel

Gift of Clarence H. Mackay, Archer M. Huntington, Stephen H. P. Pell, and Bashford Dean, 1928 (28.99.37)

Montfort Castle appears to have supported numerous skilled craftspeople as well as the resident Teutonic knights and the servants who saw to their needs. This five-sided block of limestone is adorned with European-style patterns, including two elegant mullet fish, probably used to emboss decoration on objects made of hardened leather or on gesso.

### **Fragments of stained glass**

Crusader, ca. 13th century; ca. 1226–71; ca. 1220–71

Excavated at Montfort Castle, Palestine (near present-day ‘Akko, Israel), acquired through partage, 1928

Stained glass

Gift of Clarence H. Mackay, Archer M. Huntington, Stephen H. P. Pell, and Bashford Dean, 1928 (28.99.616, .672, .675)

The Montfort excavation unearthed large quantities of shattered window glass and tableware that most excavators would have discarded. Fortunately, glass was a special interest of curator Bashford Dean, who saw to it that hundreds of fragments from Montfort came to the Museum. Decades later Met conservators and research scientists, working with the Corning Museum of Glass, studied the fragments and determined that much of it was produced with local materials by craftspeople familiar with European techniques.

*in opposite case, left to right*

### **Nishapur, Iran, 1934**

Located on a network of caravan routes extending from China to the Mediterranean, Nishapur (in present-day Iran) was an important commercial hub that became a major cultural center of the Islamic world between the ninth and twelfth centuries. The Museum's excavations there uncovered a variety of glass, ceramics, and metalwork made locally by master craftspeople, as well as objects brought from distant cities. The walls of some of the buildings were decorated with carved and painted stucco panels that call to mind the molded stucco panels from Ctesiphon seen elsewhere in this gallery. Other walls were painted over and over again with a variety of fresco and secco techniques. Together these finds helped create a picture of the vibrant society that flourished at the site centuries ago.

*facing opposite*

### **Bowl with inscription: "He who talks a lot, spills a lot"**

10th century

Excavated at Tepe Madrasa, Nishapur, Iran, acquired through partage, 1940

Earthenware, white slip with incised black slip decoration under transparent glaze

Rogers Fund, 1940 (40.170.25)

### **Ewer with hunting scenes and benedictory inscriptions**

11th century

Excavated at Tepe Madrasa, Nishapur, Iran, acquired through partage, 1938

Bronze

Rogers Fund, 1938 (38.40.240)

Several hunting scenes are engraved on this fine bronze ewer, whose finial is in the shape of a pomegranate. One depicts a man and a saluki hunting dog chasing a hare; another shows a man fighting a lion. The Arabic inscriptions express wishes for happiness, blessings, prosperity, and peace.

### **Bowl with a figure holding a fluted vessel and birds**

10th century

Purchased at Nishapur, Iran, acquired through partage, 1938

Earthenware, polychrome decoration under transparent glaze (buff ware)

Rogers Fund, 1938 (38.40.290)

### **Mural fragment with a dog or a fox**

12th century

Excavated at Qanat Tepe, Nishapur, Iran, acquired through partage, 1948

Lime plaster, paint

Rogers Fund, 1948 (48.101.302)

Many fragmentary mural paintings from Nishapur were brought back to the Museum and remained in storage for decades. The successive layers of paint were recently studied by the curatorial, scientific, and conservation staff along with an Iranian scholar. Their research found that the earlier paintings used pigments that were probably imported, whereas those used in later decoration were

obtained locally or artificially made.

*on back wall, above platform, to right of text panel*

### **Ctesiphon, Iraq, 1931–32**

The ancient city of Ctesiphon, south of Baghdad, flourished as the cultural center of the Sasanian Empire for more than four hundred years (224–651). In 1928–29, a German expedition at Ctesiphon excavated molded stucco reliefs embellished with an extraordinary range of decorative motifs. These patterns, which had developed from earlier Middle Eastern and Hellenistic traditions, later inspired a wide range of decorative arts in many cultures, from the Islamic world to medieval Europe. Seeking to acquire examples of the Sasanian reliefs for the collection, in 1931 curator Maurice Dimand persuaded the Museum to join forces with the team from the Berlin state museums. As a share of the finds, The Met received a group of stucco panels.

### **Wall decorations with floral patterns in four panels**

Sasanian, ca. 6th century

Excavated at Ctesiphon, Iraq

Stucco

Rogers Fund, 1932 (32.150.5–8)

### **Architectural roundel with radiating palmettes**

Sasanian, ca. 6th century

Excavated at Ctesiphon, Iraq

Stucco

Rogers Fund, 1932 (32.150.1)

*in opposite case, left to right*

### **Nimrud and Nippur, Iraq, 1950s – 60s**

Beginning in 1951 the Museum supported British-led excavations at Nimrud (in present-day Iraq), an important center of the Assyrian Empire. The Met already owned spectacular reliefs unearthed there in the 1840s, but this new endeavor uncovered delicate ivory sculpture. The institution also partially supported an excavation at Nippur, where the Sumerian goddess Inanna was worshiped for more than four thousand years in successive temples built on the same site.

*This Audio guide stop has been deleted from the exhibition but will be available online: 508*

### **Figure of a man with an oryx, a monkey, and a leopard skin**

Ca. 8th century B.C.

Excavated at Nimrud, Iraq

Ivory

Rogers Fund, 1960 (60.145.11)

### **Female head**

Ca. 9th–8th century B.C.

Excavated at Nimrud, Iraq

Ivory, gold

Rogers Fund, 1954 (54.117.2)

*on opposite side of case, left to right*

**Eye inlay for a statue**

Sumerian, ca. 2600–2500 B.C.

Excavated at Nippur, Iraq

Lapis lazuli, shell

Rogers Fund, 1962 (62.70.84)

**Base and feet of a worshiper**

Sumerian, ca. 2500–2350 B.C.

Excavated at Nippur, Iraq

Gypsum alabaster

Rogers Fund, 1959 (59.41.12)

**Standing female worshiper**

Sumerian, ca. 2600–2500 B.C.

Excavated at Nippur, Iraq

Limestone, shell, lapis lazuli

Rogers Fund, 1962 (62.70.2)

Votive statues such as this one were never meant to leave the sacred precinct. Instead, they were buried in successive temple structures, either whole or in pieces. This complete example was found sealed into a mud-brick bench in the temple sanctuary.



*on opposite wall, next to gallery entrance*

### **Archaeology and Partage**

Many of the objects on view in this gallery came to the Museum through the system of partage (from the French *partager*, meaning “to share”), in which artifacts unearthed by foreign-led expeditions were divided between the excavators and the host or source country according to local antiquities laws. Host countries have enacted such laws at different times. Egypt, for example, first restricted the export of antiquities without a permit in 1835, while the Ottoman Empire’s earliest antiquities law dates to 1869. In the 1920s and 1930s, such laws were established by the British Mandates covering Palestine, Jordan, and Iraq, and by the French Mandate in Syria and Lebanon. By the 1970s and 1980s, changes in these laws had largely ended the practice of partage. Foreign excavations continued, but they focused on gathering knowledge rather than artifacts. The discourse around partage continues today. Some see it as fair and advantageous for all, while others consider it a system based on colonialism and exploitation. The Met does not pursue the partage of finds in any of its current excavations.

*on wall to left*

### **The Future of the Past**

Today The Met's engagement in the Middle East includes various efforts to preserve cultural heritage in areas affected by recent conflicts. In 2015, in partnership with Columbia University, Museum staff met with specialists from the region to gain a better understanding of the most effective ways to offer support. The participants overwhelmingly voiced concerns about the documentation of their collections, which were then under direct threat from militant groups. In response, the Museum developed a modular field kit to allow users to photograph objects in emergency situations. With funding from the Whiting Foundation, ten kits were created and shipped to Amman, Jordan, where Met staff trained Iraqi and Syrian museum professionals in their use. The outstanding quality of the resulting images (which were carefully linked to detailed records of each object) has allowed some of the participating museums to produce illustrated catalogues of their collections.

## 5. CREATING A NATIONAL NARRATIVE

The Met's identity as a museum for the United States—and for American art—traces back to its founding in the aftermath of the Civil War with guidance from eminent artists. Under Luigi Palma di Cesnola, the inaugural director, the Museum acquired this nation's art intermittently. But beginning in 1905, the next generation of leadership deliberately developed the collection to promote a unified vision of the country in response to the latest massive wave of European immigration.

American art assumed new prominence through landmark exhibitions and acquisitions. Curator Bryson Burroughs and trustee Daniel Chester French, both artists themselves, expanded the collections of contemporary painting and sculpture. Patrons Robert and Emily de Forest championed the decorative arts, culminating in 1924 with the opening of the American Wing and its signature period rooms.

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More recently, historical works by African American, Latin American, and Native North American artists, among those from other previously underrepresented communities, have been collected by the American Wing, reflecting a more expansive and inclusive curatorial approach.

image caption:

The American Wing with facade of the Second Branch Bank of the United States (1824), as it looked in 1924

*to right of panel*

**Thomas Eakins**

American, 1844–1916

***The Chess Players***

1876

Oil on wood

Gift of the artist, 1881 (81.14)

*The Chess Players* was the first gift from a living artist of their own work to The Met. While the realist painter Eakins enjoyed little critical or public favor during his lifetime, the Museum played a crucial role in establishing his reputation posthumously. Curator Bryson Burroughs made several purchases from the artist's widow and organized a memorial exhibition in 1917. The landmark show included this depiction of Eakins's father observing a chess game between two friends in the family's Philadelphia home.

*in case on wall*

**Elizabeth Van Horne Clarkson**

American, 1771–1852

**Honeycomb quilt**

New York, ca. 1830

Cotton

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. William A. Moore, 1923 (23.80.75)

Immaculately pieced, this American quilt was the first to enter The Met collection. It was the only textile in a large gift of historic objects from a couple who were descendants of some of New York's most prominent early families. They bestowed their heirlooms on the Museum in 1923, just

in time for a selection of them to be shown in the new wing dedicated to American decorative arts.

*on pedestal*

**Daniel Chester French**

American, 1850–1931

***Ralph Waldo Emerson***

1879, cast 1906–7

Bronze

Gift of the artist, 1907 (07.101)

French, an esteemed sculptor best known for his seated Abraham Lincoln in the president's Washington, D.C., memorial, became a Met trustee in 1903. He served as head of the committee on sculpture and the de facto curator of modern American and European sculpture for nearly three decades. This naturalistic portrait of philosopher and writer Ralph Waldo Emerson was one of the artist's signature works, and as such his fellow trustees asked him if they could purchase a cast. He responded by gifting it.

## **The de Forests and American Decorative Arts**

American decorative arts and architecture were not collected at the Museum during its first three decades, since no one was sure whether American furniture, woodwork, silver, ceramics, glass, and textiles actually qualified as “art.” This practice changed thanks to Robert W. de Forest, first secretary and then president of the institution, and his wife Emily Johnston de Forest, an inveterate collector with a sophisticated eye. Both loved Americana, for aesthetic as well as patriotic reasons, and believed it could be used to teach history and elevate the taste of viewers. The success of the 1909 *Hudson-Fulton Exhibition*, which showcased American decorative arts and paintings, proved to Robert de Forest that “American domestic art was worthy of a place in an art museum.” The couple funded the new American Wing, which opened its doors in 1924 with three floors devoted to period rooms and decorative arts.

image caption:

Paneling from a parlor in Newington, Connecticut, ca. 1750, at the *Hudson-Fulton Exhibition*, September–November 1909

## **Cabinet**

American (Salem, Massachusetts), 1679

Red oak, white pine, black walnut, red cedar, maple

Gift of Mrs. Russell Sage, 1909 (10.125.168)

This diminutive valuable cabinet was part of Boston-based collector H. Eugene Bolles’s outstanding holdings of American decorative arts, from which he lent generously to the *Hudson-Fulton Exhibition*. Robert de Forest later convinced his law client Margaret Olivia Slocum Sage to purchase all seven hundred objects in Bolles’s collection as the foundation for the American Wing.

**John Singleton Copley**

American, 1738–1815

***Mrs. Jerathmael Bowers***

Ca. 1763

Oil on canvas

Rogers Fund, 1915 (15.128)

The Met trustees and staff involved in forming the collection of early American decorative arts were interested in the objects' representation of traditional Anglo-American cultural ideals.

Copley's likenesses of the colonial-era elite resonated with these principles. This portrait of Mary Sherburne Bowers was the Museum's first oil painting by the artist, purchased from the subject's descendants. The timing of its accession coincided with the acceleration of the institution's collecting of eighteenth-century decorative arts and a national debate over immigration, race, and American identity.

**Robert Wellford**

American, 1775–1844

**Mantel**

Probably Pennsylvania, ca. 1800

Wood, composition ornament, paint

Gift of Mrs. Francis P. Garvan, 1966 (66.225)

## **Fireboard**

American, ca. 1800

Pine, paint

Rogers Fund, 1952 (52.15)

One of the innovations of the *Hudson-Fulton Exhibition* was the display of decorative arts in chronological room-like vignettes that incorporated historical architectural elements, anticipating the fifteen period rooms later installed in the American Wing. The mantel, with its relief busts of Benjamin Franklin and George Washington, was lent to the Museum in 1922 for installation in the wing, but not made a permanent part of the collection until 1966.

## **Caleb Gardner**

American, died 1761

## **Easy chair**

Newport, Rhode Island, 1758

Walnut, maple, wool, linen embroidered with wool and silk

Gift of Mrs. J. Insley Blair, 1950 (50.228.3)

With its vibrantly colored flame-stitched cover and landscape embroidery on the back, this easy chair is unique. It belonged to collector Natalie K. Blair, who installed fully furnished “museum rooms”—much like the period rooms in the American Wing—in the attic of her mansion in Tuxedo Park, New York. She gave her treasures to The Met over many years; this piece was lent starting in 1927 and gifted in 1950.

*on wall around corner*



**Sanford Robinson Gifford**

American, 1823–1880

***A Gorge in the Mountains (Kauterskill Clove)***

1862

Oil on canvas

Bequest of Maria DeWitt Jesup, from the collection of her husband, Morris K. Jesup, 1914

(15.30.62)

Gifford's interest in atmospheric effects is evident in this haze-burnished view from Kauterskill (Kaaterskill) Clove in the eastern Catskill Mountains. Morris K. Jesup lent the painting to the 1876 *Centennial Loan Exhibition of Paintings* organized by The Met and the National Academy of Design, New York. Following its bequest to the Museum by Jesup's widow, the work was included in a display of Hudson River School paintings, indicative of the popular association of American landscape with national character.

*on pedestal in center of gallery*

**Augustus Saint-Gaudens**

American, 1848–1907

***Victory***

1892–1903, cast 1914 or after (by 1916)

Bronze, gilded

Rogers Fund, 1917 (17.90.1)

Trustee Daniel Chester French was a tireless champion of fellow monumental sculptor and genial competitor Saint-Gaudens. French organized a memorial exhibition for Saint-Gaudens in the Great Hall in 1908 and acquired twenty-one of his sculptures. This allegorical figure of Victory as a

triumphant guiding force is adapted from the full-size figure on the equestrian monument to Civil War general William Tecumseh Sherman in Grand Army Plaza, Manhattan. The principal model for Victory was Hettie Anderson, a Black woman who posed for many artists in New York during the 1890s. Coincidentally, she later worked as a guard at The Met.

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*on wall to right of gallery entrance*

### **Winslow Homer**

American, 1836–1910

#### ***Northeaster***

1895, reworked by 1901

Oil on canvas

Gift of George A. Hearn, 1910 (10.64.5)

*Northeaster* is a virtuoso representation of churning waves, surf, and spray during a powerful Atlantic storm. It was one of six oils by Homer that came to The Met through the auspices of trustee George A. Hearn, who in 1906 established an endowment for the purchase of contemporary American paintings and steadily gifted such works in order to form “a national collection of lasting value.” Homer’s marines, painted at Prouts Neck, Maine, were particularly celebrated as vigorous expressions of American character.

*on wall to left of gallery entrance*

**John Singer Sargent**

American, 1856–1925

***Madame X (Madame Pierre Gautreau)***

1883–84

Oil on canvas

Arthur Hoppock Hearn Fund, 1916 (16.53)

The Met has one of the most comprehensive collections of Sargent’s work, in part due to his close relationships with trustees and staff. In 1916 he sold this iconic portrait of Madame Pierre Gautreau to the institution. The work had been widely known since its exhibition at the Paris Salon of 1884, where it was disparaged because of the sitter’s artfully risqué appearance and scandalous reputation. After choosing to place it at the Museum, Sargent commented, “I suppose it is the best thing I have done.”

To learn how conservators revealed Sargent’s changes to the composition, visit [metmuseum.org/Conservation150](https://www.metmuseum.org/Conservation/150)

*in through-wall case, right to left*

**Bessie Potter Vonnoh**

American, 1872–1955

***A Young Mother***

1896, cast ca. 1906

Bronze

Rogers Fund, 1906 (06.306)

The Rogers Fund bequest of \$5 million in 1903 enabled The Met to purchase, among other things,

works by contemporary painters and sculptors, until that point only acquired by gift. Trustee and artist Daniel Chester French used the fund to form a collection of modern American bronzes, some of which were cast especially for the Museum. Vonnoh's *Young Mother* is one example, and, as one of four statuettes by her acquired in 1906, reflects The Met's early commitment to collecting works by leading American women sculptors.

**Paul Revere Jr.**

American, 1734–1818

**Teapot**

Boston, 1796

Silver

Bequest of Alphonso T. Clearwater, 1933 (33.120.543)

Intent on highlighting the skill of early American silversmiths, Judge Alphonso T. Clearwater lent silver objects to the 1909 *Hudson-Fulton Exhibition* and eventually donated more than five hundred works. When the American Wing opened there was a gallery devoted to his collection. The silver was displayed chronologically and grouped by maker to encourage study of the medium's stylistic development.

**John Frederick Amelung**

German, active in America 1784–ca. 1791

**New Bremen Glass Manufactory**

New Bremen, Maryland, 1784–1795

**Covered goblet**

1788

Glass, blown and engraved

Rogers Fund, 1928 (28.52a, b)

Offered to the Museum shortly after the founding of the American Wing, this covered goblet elaborately engraved with the arms of Bremen, Germany, was mistakenly thought to be of German origin. In fact, the goblet was made in the United States, a testament to the entrepreneurial spirit and skilled craftsmanship of America's immigrant population following the Revolutionary War. At the time, European imports dominated the luxury goods market.

*around corner, in case*

**Master Potter A****Basin**

Puebla (Mexico), ca. 1650

Earthenware, tin-glazed

Gift of Mrs. Robert W. de Forest, 1912 (12.3.1)

Emily Johnston de Forest became intrigued by the antique ceramics of Puebla during a trip to Mexico in 1904. She later amassed a comprehensive collection and donated much of it with the suggestion that the ceramics anchor “a part of a collection representing the arts of Mexico, which I hope will at some time be represented in the Museum, as an American Museum.” One hundred

years passed before The Met took her inclusionary vision to heart.

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*on wall to the left of through-wall case*

**James McNeill Whistler**

American, 1834–1903

***Cremorne Gardens, No. 2***

Ca. 1870–80

Oil on canvas

John Stewart Kennedy Fund, 1912 (12.32)

Along with Winslow Homer and John Singer Sargent, Whistler was among the first modern American artists whose work The Met collected, exhibited, and published. Between 1906 and 1917 The Museum steadily acquired the progressive expatriate's paintings and works on paper, including this ethereal nocturne painted in London's Cremorne Gardens, a popular park for strolling and entertainment. The canvas reveals Whistler's "art for art's sake" philosophy, in which artistic style and evocative mood are prioritized over narrative content.

*in through-wall case in The Street, outside gallery exit*

**John Quincy Adams Ward**

American, 1830–1910

***George Washington***

1882, cast ca. 1911

Bronze

Rogers Fund, 1972 (1972.1a)

The Met's early self-identification as a museum for the nation long shaped its ambitions and its approach to collecting the art of the United States and the greater Americas. John Quincy Adams Ward was a founding trustee of the Museum who earned widespread respect for his civic monuments, among them the statue of George Washington on the steps of what is now Federal Hall in lower Manhattan, where Washington took his presidential oath of office in 1789. This statuette was cast after the final sketch model. Monuments are again at the forefront of national conversations, with many questioning the ideals they purport to embody.

*in The Street, opposite gallery exit*

**Excerpts from Behind The Scenes: The Working Side of the Museum**

1928

2 min., 50 sec.

*in through-wall case in The Street, outside gallery 6: Visions of Collecting*

**Louis C. Tiffany**

American, 1848–1933

**Tiffany Glass and Decorating Company**

American, 1892–1902

**Peacock vase**

1893–96

Favrile glass

Gift of H. O. Havemeyer, 1896 (96.17.10)

This vase, with its evocative form, coloring, and iridescent surface, is an icon of the early Tiffany-blown Favrile glass collected by H. O. Havemeyer. He gave it to the Museum in 1896 during the first years of its production; at the time it was considered modern art and an object of rare beauty. These qualities are reflected in the collecting visions presented in this gallery, which features transformative gifts from the Havemeyers through the Annenbergs.



## 6. VISIONS OF COLLECTING

In 1929 The Met received what Director Edward Robinson hailed as “one of the most magnificent gifts of works of art ever made to a museum by a single individual.” Louisine Havemeyer’s bequest bestowed nearly 2,000 objects on the Museum from the collection she and her late husband, Henry Osborne Havemeyer, had built since the 1870s. With guidance from artists Mary Cassatt and Louis C. Tiffany, the couple were tastemakers who brought energy and clarity of vision to new fields of collecting. They are best known as the first American collectors of Impressionism—their bequest instantly elevated The Met’s holdings to world-class status. They also added new dimensions to a variety of other areas, from Asian and Islamic art to old masters and Tiffany glass.

The Havemeyer fortune derived from control of the sugar refining industry, which was known for its harsh labor conditions. In her own right, Louisine was a prominent suffragist—a reminder of the complex profiles of donors to the Museum.

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The Havemeyers’ legacy of generosity extended through subsequent generations of the family.

Also featured here are other collectors, most notably Walter and Leonore Annenberg, whose significant contributions have further defined the collections of Impressionist and Post-Impressionist art at The Met.

image caption:

Works by Edgar Degas in *The H.O. Havemeyer Collection* at The Met, 1930

*to right of panel*

**El Greco (Domenikos Theotokopoulos)**

Greek, 1540/41–1614

***Cardinal Fernando Niño de Guevara***

Ca. 1600

Oil on canvas

H. O. Havemeyer Collection, Bequest of Mrs. H. O. Havemeyer, 1929 (29.100.5)

The Havemeyers were pioneering collectors of El Greco and helped inspire a new taste for Spanish art in America around the turn of the twentieth century. They discovered this commanding painting, one of only three full-length portraits by the artist, on an adventurous trip through Spain with Mary Cassatt in 1901, during which they tracked down paintings long held in noble collections. Louisine appreciated El Greco's art for "its intensity, its individuality, its freedom and its color," a sentiment shared by contemporary artists such as Cassatt, Degas, and Manet, whose Spanish-inspired *Dead Christ with Angels* is on view nearby.

*on freestanding wall facing gallery entrance*

**Edouard Manet**

French, 1832–1883

***The Dead Christ with Angels***

1864

Oil on canvas

H. O. Havemeyer Collection, Bequest of Mrs. H. O. Havemeyer, 1929 (29.100.51)

The realism of Manet's cadaverous *Dead Christ with Angels* shocked French audiences in the

1860s. Nearly fifty years later, Louisine Havemeyer found that when she tried to hang it in her home “it crushed everything beside it.” She recognized the painting as a “museum Manet,” better suited for public than private display, and subsequently offered the work as a long-term loan to The Met, where it was ultimately joined by eight other Manets from the Havemeyer collection.

*left to right*

### **The Havemeyers and the Sugar Industry**

H. O. Havemeyer was a third-generation American sugar refiner who ascended through the ranks to the helm of his family business by 1876. In 1887 he incorporated the American Sugar Refining Company as the second trust in the United States. While consolidation into a trust purportedly led to a cheaper, better product, monopoly practices were ultimately outlawed to protect competition and consumers.

The business became known as Domino Sugar, with a refinery located on the Brooklyn waterfront. Raw sugar cane was imported predominantly from the Caribbean islands—where it was harvested using enslaved labor until slavery was abolished by 1886—and sold to refiners to process into crystal sugar. Most of the workers at the factory were immigrants who labored under grueling and dangerous conditions.

In 2014 Kara Walker created an installation in the former Domino refinery. Anchored by a monumental sphinxlike figure coated in sugar, *A Subtlety* responded to the troubled history evoked by the site.

image caption:

Louisine and H. O. Havemeyer, Paris, 1889

*to left of panel, then clockwise around center of gallery*

**Claude Monet**

French, 1840–1926

***La Grenouillère***

1869

Oil on canvas

H. O. Havemeyer Collection, Bequest of Mrs. H. O. Havemeyer, 1929 (29.100.112)

Impressionism emerged as an avant-garde movement in Paris at the same time The Met was taking shape in New York. Less than a year before the Museum's founding, Monet painted this scene of bourgeois leisure *en plein air* (out of doors). *La Grenouillère* marked a turning point for the artist, who would be heralded as the quintessential Impressionist: his brushwork became broader and more vigorous and his palette more saturated and unified to give an overall sense of the bustling bathing spot. There was only one Monet in the collection before the Havemeyer bequest, which added eight.

*on freestanding wall*

**Claude Monet**

French, 1840–1926

***Camille Monet on a Garden Bench***

1873

Oil on canvas

The Walter H. and Leonore Annenberg Collection, Gift of Walter H. and Leonore Annenberg, 2002, Bequest of Walter H. Annenberg, 2002 (2002.62.1)

The Honorable Walter H. Annenberg announced in 1991 that he and his wife would leave their

sought-after collection of more than fifty Impressionist and Post-Impressionist pictures to The Met because he believed “in strength going to strength.” This iconic yet enigmatic painting of Monet’s wife from 1873 augmented the Museum’s strong holdings of Monet, especially his early works favored by Mary Cassatt and the Havemeyers. Both bequests extended to his celebrated late water lilies, on view in the nearby nineteenth-century paintings galleries.

*to right on freestanding wall*

### **Mary Cassatt**

American, 1844–1926

#### ***Lady at the Tea Table***

1883–85

Oil on canvas

Gift of the artist, 1923 (23.101)

This painting attracted attention in the provocative exhibition Louisine Havemeyer organized with Cassatt’s encouragement to benefit suffrage, a cause both women championed. Held at the New York gallery M. Knoedler & Co. in 1915, the presentation juxtaposed “masterpieces by old and modern painters,” from Rembrandt and Vermeer to Degas and Cassatt. *Mother and Child (The Oval Mirror)* and *Woman Having Her Hair Combed*, both on view nearby, were also displayed. Following the exhibition, Cassatt lent and ultimately gave *Lady at the Tea Table* to The Met, with Louisine serving as an intermediary in the arrangements.

*on wall next to panel, left to right*

## **Mary Cassatt**

American, 1844–1926

### ***Mother and Child (The Oval Mirror)***

Ca. 1899

Oil on canvas

H. O. Havemeyer Collection, Bequest of Mrs. H. O. Havemeyer, 1929 (29.100.47)

Cassatt was the Havemeyers' primary art advisor and they were among her most dedicated patrons; both relationships enhanced The Met collection. Edgar Degas declared this painting, a secular interpretation of the classical Madonna and Child subject, "the finest work...she ever did." The mirror cleverly stands in for the Christ Child's halo, and the maternal bond is expressed through the tender way the woman clasps her son's hands and presses her face to his cheek.

## **Edgar Degas**

French, 1834–1917

### ***Woman Having Her Hair Combed***

Ca. 1886–88

Pastel

H. O. Havemeyer Collection, Bequest of Mrs. H. O. Havemeyer, 1929 (29.100.35)

Mary Cassatt passed on her affinity for Degas's nudes to Louisine Havemeyer, who bequeathed six outstanding pastel bathers to The Met. Louisine admired each as "a revelation of his masterly handling of flesh, of interiors filled with brilliant stuffs, of the white lingerie of the dressing room, of the delicate harmonies and effect of light." Cassatt believed they were "for painters and connoisseurs," skeptical that the public could appreciate images deemed vulgar for defying

conventions of femininity.

To learn how conservators keep fragile pastels safe, visit [metmuseum.org/Conservation150](https://www.metmuseum.org/Conservation150)

## **Edgar Degas**

French, 1834–1917

### ***Dancers, Pink and Green***

Ca. 1890

Oil on canvas

H. O. Havemeyer Collection, Bequest of Mrs. H. O. Havemeyer, 1929 (29.100.42)

As of 1929, the year of the Havemeyer bequest, The Met collection of Impressionism lagged behind peer institutions. Of particular note, as curator Bryson Burroughs mentioned in the Museum's *Bulletin*, was the dearth of works by Degas, who was only represented by a selection of drawings and prints and one finished pastel. The Havemeyer gift proved transformative with 112 works by Degas in all media. The paintings span his early career from the 1860s to this expressive later work from around 1890, affording an unusual opportunity to study his range and development.

## **Edgar Degas**

French, 1834–1917

### ***Dancer Adjusting Her Slipper***

1873

Graphite heightened with black and white chalk

H. O. Havemeyer Collection, Bequest of Mrs. H. O. Havemeyer, 1929 (29.100.941)

Here, Degas captured an intimate moment of a ballerina tucking in the laces of her pointe shoe, emphasizing the effect of her arm nestled in the muslin skirt (as he noted on the sheet). The artist selected this and two other drawings for the Havemeyers on a visit to his studio with Cassatt.

Louisine recalled, “We realized we were the fortunate possessors, not only of his best drawings, but of those he wished us to have.”

*on freestanding wall to right, left to right*

## **Edgar Degas**

French, 1834–1917

### ***The Dance Class***

1874

Oil on canvas

Bequest of Mrs. Harry Payne Bingham, 1986 (1987.47.1)

The Havemeyer collection inspired many Americans to acquire Impressionist art during the couple’s lifetime and beyond. Their friend and neighbor Colonel Oliver Hazard Payne, a Civil War veteran turned investor, bought this exemplary ballet scene by Degas at their behest. They regretted not keeping the picture for themselves, but Payne’s descendants ensured that it would assume a permanent place alongside the Havemeyer works at the Museum in 1987, having been previously lent each summer for decades.



*to right, on freestanding wall*

**Paul Cézanne**

French, 1839–1906

***Still Life with a Ginger Jar and Eggplants***

1893–94

Oil on canvas

Bequest of Stephen C. Clark, 1960 (61.101.4)

Another great benefactor, Stephen C. Clark, of the Singer Sewing Company family, thoughtfully distributed works from his collection to The Met and other institutions. He selected paintings by Cézanne, Degas, El Greco, Renoir, and Seurat for his 1961 bequest, including this superb still life that the Havemeyers originally brought to America in 1906. It was consigned by their son, Horace, to the Knoedler gallery in 1948 and sold to Clark the same year.

*on front wall*

**Paul Cézanne**

French, 1839–1906

***Mont Sainte-Victoire and the Viaduct of the Arc River Valley***

1882–85

Oil on canvas

H. O. Havemeyer Collection, Bequest of Mrs. H. O. Havemeyer, 1929 (29.100.64)

Cézanne was the only Post-Impressionist represented in the Havemeyer collection. While the couple was among his original American patrons, Louisine uncharacteristically sold off several of his works on Mary Cassatt's advice to take advantage of rising prices. The Havemeyer bequest still

added five Cézannes to the one The Met famously acquired at the 1913 Armory Show. The painter's Mont Sainte-Victoire series exemplifies his quest to reveal the inner geometry of nature and to "make of Impressionism something solid and durable, like the art of museums."

*in case*

### **Louis C. Tiffany**

American, 1848–1933

#### **Hair ornament**

Ca. 1904

Gold, silver, platinum, black opals, boulder opals, demantoid garnets, rubies, enamel

Gift of Linden Havemeyer Wise, in memory of Louisine W. Havemeyer, 2002 (2002.620)

Tiffany decorated the Havemeyers' Fifth Avenue residence in the early 1890s with iridescent glass and exotic lighting. This exquisitely crafted sculptural work, made a little over a decade later, is a more personal expression of their patronage. Two bejeweled dragonflies with delicate filigree wings alight on a pair of dandelion seedballs, evoking nature in its most ephemeral state. The hair ornament remained in the family until 2002.

*in case, facing other side of case*

**Louis C. Tiffany**

American, 1848–1933

**Tiffany Glass and Decorating Company**

American, 1892–1902

**Four vases**

1893–96

Favrile glass

Gift of H. O. Havemeyer, 1896 (96.17.11, .21, .26, .36)

Louisine and H. O. Havemeyer were among the most ardent patrons of Tiffany, who began producing blown glass in 1893. Three years later, H. O. donated some fifty-five examples to the Museum, essentially curated by the artist himself. The vases here showcase the diverse effects that Tiffany achieved in this experimental medium and demonstrate his abiding interest in nature.

*This Audio guide stop has been deleted from the exhibition but will be available online: 511*

*platform in center of gallery*

## **Edgar Degas**

French, 1834–1917

### **Cast by A. A. Hébrard et Cie Foundry**

French, 1902–37

### ***The Little Fourteen-Year-Old Dancer***

Cast 1922, tutu 2018

Partially tinted bronze, cotton tarlatan, silk satin, wood

H. O. Havemeyer Collection, Bequest of Mrs. H. O. Havemeyer, 1929 (29.100.370)

The Havemeyer bequest introduced Degas's sculpture into The Met collection; it included sixty-nine bronzes, the most remarkable of which is *The Little Fourteen-Year-Old Dancer*. With Mary Cassatt's help, Louisine tried for many years to acquire the original wax version of the sculpture from Degas. She ultimately had to wait until his death, when she was given priority to secure the first cast of his entire three-dimensional oeuvre.

## **Conservation Story**

Spectators were baffled when the original wax version of this figure was presented in a tutu, ballet slippers, and wig of human hair at the 1881 Impressionist exhibition in Paris. The dancer's unidealized pose and real clothing made her uncomfortably lifelike, while the appearance of her warm flesh connected her with waxwork specimens in natural history museums.

image caption:

Edgar Degas. *Little Dancer Aged Fourteen*, 1878–81. Pigmented beeswax, clay, metal armature, rope, paintbrushes, human hair, silk and linen ribbon, cotton faille bodice, cotton and silk tutu, linen slippers, on wooden base. National Gallery of Art, Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon (1999.80.28)

## Conservation Story

Although Degas considered casting a copy of the wax *Little Dancer*, it was not until five years after his death that this first edition lost-wax cast was produced by the Hébrard et Cie Foundry in Paris. Details of the original sculpture's color and texture, including a crack in the left arm, were faithfully reproduced. Recent technical analysis including X-radiography has provided more information about how the bronze sculpture was cast.

To learn more, visit [metmuseum.org/Conservation150](http://metmuseum.org/Conservation150)

image caption:

X-ray imaging reveals only a few areas of internal porosity, not visible on the exterior, in the upper figure

## Conservation Story

The bronze dancer was originally dressed in a short tutu of fine mesh, emulating the fragmentary skirt that survives on the wax model. Some forty years later, this was replaced with a slightly longer skirt of dense cream-colored fabric. In 1998 a tutu modeled after an early example from another bronze cast was installed. The current garment was designed to suggest how Degas might have originally presented the wax sculpture.

image captions:

Original skirt made in 1922

Skirt made in 1968

Skirt in 1998

*on back wall, next to Degas's Dancer Adjusting Her Slipper*

**Kitagawa Utamaro**

Japanese, ca. 1754–1806

**Courtesan with a fan**

Edo period (1615–1868), ca. 1795–96

Polychrome woodblock print; ink and color on paper

H. O. Havemeyer Collection, Bequest of Mrs. H. O. Havemeyer, 1929 (JP1663)

**Katsushika Hokusai**

Japanese, 1760–1849

***Under the Wave off Kanagawa (Kanagawa oki nami ura), also known as “The Great Wave,”***  
**from the series *Thirty-Six Views of Mount Fuji (Fugaku sanjūrokkei)***

Edo period (1615–1868), ca. 1830–32

Polychrome woodblock print; ink and color on paper

H. O. Havemeyer Collection, Bequest of Mrs. H. O. Havemeyer, 1929 (JP1847)

*Ukiyo-e* prints (“pictures of the floating world”) were widely popular in Japan and became coveted by artists and collectors in the West in the late nineteenth century. The Met received more than three hundred examples in the Havemeyer bequest. Among the highlights are this marvelous impression of Hokusai’s “Great Wave” and Utamaro’s images of women that resonate with works by Edgar Degas and Mary Cassatt, who likely introduced the Havemeyers to the genre. The Impressionists appreciated Japanese prints for their flat surfaces, novel perspectives, and subject matter drawn from daily life.

## Conservation Story

By 1830, Japanese woodblock printing was the most advanced color reproduction technology in the world. Publishers and printers continuously improved materials and techniques in search of commercial success. In “The Great Wave”, an unknown master printer translated Hokusai’s vision into a mass-produced illustration, giving birth to a global icon. Prussian blue, a pigment newly arrived from Europe, gave the wave its striking color. Bright and saturated, cheap, and easy to use, this pigment revolutionized woodblock printing. Yet the creators of “The Great Wave” did not simply substitute Prussian blue for the more traditional (and duller) indigo: spectroscopic analysis shows that they mixed the two blues to expand the tonal range and layered the pigments to darken the color without reducing its saturation.

To learn more, visit [metmuseum.org/Conservation150](https://metmuseum.org/Conservation150)

## *Kshitigarbha*

Korean, Goryeo dynasty (918–1392), first half 14th century

Hanging scroll; ink, color, and gold on silk

H. O. Havemeyer Collection, Gift of Horace Havemeyer, 1929 (29.160.32)

Commissioned by members of the royal and aristocratic families of Korea and executed by highly skilled artists, Buddhist paintings from the Goryeo dynasty gained fame across East Asia for their splendor. This quality is especially apparent in the garment worn by the bodhisattva in this hanging scroll. The Havemeyers undoubtedly acquired the work as Japanese; it was not until several decades after their 1929 gift that it was reattributed to an unidentified Korean artist.

*in case around corner, left to right*

The Havemeyers collected Asian works of art in a wide variety of media. H. O. Havemeyer was likely introduced to the arts of Japan and China by American artists Samuel Colman and Louis C. Tiffany, and as such the couple's taste aligned with sophisticated artistic preferences of the period. These interests included Japanese sword fittings, admired for their highly decorative designs in different colored metals; Japanese lacquerware; and the understated glazed ceramic tea wares related to the tea ceremony, which H. O. bought in large quantities and whose subtle charms he introduced to his wife.

### **School of Ogawa Haritsu (Ritsuō)**

Japanese, 1663–1747

#### **Writing box (*suzuribako*) with mice and fan**

Edo period (1615–1868), 18th century

Lacquered wood with gold, silver, green *hiramaki-e*, gold and silver foil application, ceramic, ivory, and pewter inlays

H. O. Havemeyer Collection, Bequest of Mrs. H. O. Havemeyer, 1929 (29.100.703)

The Havemeyers held a deep appreciation for Japanese lacquerware, especially for the innovative work of Ritsuō, who was admired by artistic communities in New York and Paris. This example depicts mice chewing on a fan inscribed with a haiku. The appearance of the wooden surface and the missing characters of the haiku represent the natural process of decay. One mouse is shown with its head emerging from the top as if it had just gnawed through it. When opened, the underside reveals the rest of the mouse's body.



**Inscribed by Shōami Denbei**

Japanese, active late 17th–early 18th century

**Sword guard (*tsuba*)**

Late 17th–early 18th century

Iron, copper

H. O. Havemeyer Collection, Bequest of Mrs. H. O. Havemeyer, 1929 (29.100.1043)

**Inscribed by Bairyūken Kiyotatsu**

Japanese, active late 18th century

**Sword guard (*tsuba*)**

Late 18th century

Iron, gold-copper alloy (*shakudō*)

H. O. Havemeyer Collection, Bequest of Mrs. H. O. Havemeyer, 1929 (29.100.1045)

**Tea caddy (*chaire*)**

Japanese, Edo period (1615–1868), 17th century

Stoneware, natural ash glaze (Bizen ware)

H. O. Havemeyer Collection, Bequest of Mrs. H. O. Havemeyer, 1929 (29.100.664)

**Tea bowl with leaf decoration**

Chinese, Southern Song dynasty (1127–1279)

Stoneware, black and brown glaze, pigment (Jizhou ware)

H. O. Havemeyer Collection, Bequest of Mrs. H. O. Havemeyer, 1929 (29.100.220)

*in case on wall, across entrance to next gallery*

**Pair of tiles with Qur'anic inscriptions from Sura 36 (*Ya-Sin*): 9 and 15**

Iran (probably Kashan), Ilkhanid period (1258–1353), second half 13th century

Stonepaste, molded and luster-painted on opaque white glaze under transparent glaze

H. O. Havemeyer Collection, Gift of Horace Havemeyer, 1940 (40.181.14, .15)

This pair of tiles was likely part of a frieze or decorative treatment within a tomb or religious structure. The bold calligraphic inscriptions are from the same chapter of the Qur'an. The way the finely painted scrolls in the background are drawn is typical for Kashan luster-painted wares, a type of ceramics favored by the Havemeyers.

*in case, bottom*

**Bowl with benedictory inscriptions**

Syria (probably Raqqa), 12th century

Stonepaste, underglaze-painted, glazed (transparent colorless), luster-painted

H. O. Havemeyer Collection, Gift of Horace Havemeyer, 1948 (48.113.6)

This bowl of copper-colored painted luster and blue bands is characteristic of ceramics produced in Greater Syria. Its elaborate decoration features eight panels radiating from the center, four that give the *baraka kamila* (consummate blessing) alternating with four filled with a pattern of small crosses. The benedictory inscription *al-'izz* (glory) is repeated four times in the center. The Havemeyers and their son, Horace, had a particular fondness for Islamic ceramics, especially those made in Raqqa, Syria, and Kashan, Iran.

*around corner, on wall*

**Panel composed of cross- and star-shaped tiles**

Iran (probably Kashan), Ilkhanid period (1258–1353), ca. 1260–70

Stonepaste, luster-painted on opaque white glaze under transparent glaze

H. O. Havemeyer Collection, Gift of Horace Havemeyer, 1941 (41.165.22)

The Havemeyers' collecting vision extended to works from the Islamic world, an interest shared with their friends the designer Louis C. Tiffany, the painter Samuel Colman, and the silversmith Edward C. Moore, and passed on to their son, Horace. These star tiles with luster decoration are among the many ceramic works from the region that the family gave to The Met; they are inscribed with Qur'anic verses and were probably meant for a tomb or place of worship.

*on freestanding wall*

**Gustave Courbet**

French, 1819–1877

***Woman with a Parrot***

1866

Oil on canvas

H. O. Havemeyer Collection, Bequest of Mrs. H. O. Havemeyer, 1929 (29.100.57)

The Havemeyers were devoted collectors of Courbet's realist paintings. Their penchant for his female nudes and figure paintings distinguished their holdings from the predominant taste for landscapes at the time. They agreed not to display nudes at home in the interest of propriety, but Louisine convinced her husband to buy this work so American artists could study Courbet's naturalistic rendering of the naked body, a radical approach in its day. She lent it anonymously to

the Museum beginning in 1909 and eventually bequeathed it along with twenty other works by the artist.

Audio guide 512

*on wall next to window, through gallery exit*

### **The Met and Black Artists in the Early Twentieth Century**

Among the important modern-art movements The Met neglected in the early twentieth century was the Harlem Renaissance, an outpouring of creative talent and energy in literature, music, and visual arts throughout the 1920s and 1930s. The Museum's lack of engagement with key Harlem Renaissance artists, such as Aaron Douglas, Charles Alston, and Laura Wheeler Waring, is especially surprising and regrettable given its close physical proximity to the neighborhood of Harlem, the foundational nexus of this international movement. However, the Museum did recognize early on the stature of Jacob Lawrence, who emerged as one of the leading Black artists of the twentieth century. It acquired Lawrence's *Pool Parlor* in 1942 out of the wartime exhibition *Artists for Victory*. The work is on view in Gallery 903 in the Lila Acheson Wallace Wing in conjunction with the exhibition *Jacob Lawrence: The American Struggle*, which runs until November 1, 2020.

image caption:

Jacob Lawrence (American). *Pool Parlor*, 1942. Watercolor and gouache on paper. Arthur Hoppock Hearn Fund, 1942 (42.167)

*beneath window*

### **The Former Facade and the Petrie Court**

This window offers a view of The Met's 1888 facade designed by Theodore Weston, the Museum's second architect, who blended classicizing elements with the Gothic style of the original Fifth Avenue building (visible in the Robert Lehman Wing). The Carroll and Milton Petrie European Sculpture Court below opened in 1990, filling out the building's footprint in Central Park.

*on wall to right of window, left to right*

### **Alfred Stieglitz and Modern Art at The Met**

Alfred Stieglitz was not only a master photographer but also a tireless advocate for modern art. In the first decades of the twentieth century, he introduced many cutting-edge ideas to the American public through his luxuriously printed journal *Camera Work* and his gallery known as 291. These included avant-garde art from Europe and the promotion of photography as a fine art. Stieglitz supported the artists he admired by purchasing their work and, as a result, built an impressive collection of early twentieth-century European and American art. His efforts to convince The Met to collect and display photographs trace back to 1902, when he was rebuffed by Director Luigi Palma di Cesnola as a “fanatic.” Finally, working with curator William Ivins Jr., he “opened [the] sacred halls” of the Museum to photography through gifts in 1928 and 1933. After his death in 1946, the artist Georgia O’Keeffe, his widow, gave many of his modern paintings, sculptures, and works on paper to The Met.

image caption:

Alfred Stieglitz with works from his gallery, 291, photographed by Edward Steichen, 1915

**Edward J. Steichen**

American, born Luxembourg, 1879–1973

***The Flatiron***

1904

Gum bichromate over platinum print

***The Flatiron***

1904

Gum bichromate over platinum print, 1909

***The Flatiron***

1904, printed 1905

Gum bichromate over platinum print, 1905

Alfred Stieglitz Collection, 1933 (33.43.39, .43, .44)

The imposing height and dynamic shape of the Flatiron building, completed in 1902, made it a symbol of modernity and a favorite subject for contemporary photographers. No one rendered it as masterfully as Steichen, whose large prints command the wall with a scale and impact that successfully challenged painting. Although he used only one negative to create all three prints seen here, Steichen added pigments to create significantly different images, suggesting the chromatic progression of twilight.

*on opposite wall, to the right of the scrim*

**Pablo Picasso**

Spanish, 1881–1973

***Gertrude Stein***

1905–6

Oil on canvas

Bequest of Gertrude Stein, 1946 (47.106)

When the celebrated American author and art patron Gertrude Stein bequeathed Picasso's storied portrait of her in 1946, it became the first painting by the artist to enter the collection. Before long, The Met offered the work to the Museum of Modern Art, as part of a short-lived agreement that The Met would exhibit exclusively historical, not contemporary art. News of this transfer so displeased Alice B. Toklas, Stein's life partner, that she wrote to the Museum to argue it violated Stein's wish for her portrait be seen at The Met. The painting returned soon after.

## Conservation Story

Gertrude Stein sat through eighty sittings for her iconic portrait. Struggling to capture her face, Picasso painted out her head in frustration, adding the mask-like visage we see today from memory months later. Over the years, curators, conservators, and scientists have attempted to find the various faces of Stein underneath her portrait. Recent technology that maps the distribution of elements in pigments has captured the artist's painting process and frenetic editing. The resulting image reveals how Stein's face and the left side of the composition have been erased, scraped, and reworked as compared to her coat and the right side of the sofa, which remained unchanged. An early outline along the sitter's right profile eerily appears from below the surface.

To learn more, visit [metmuseum.org/Conservation150](https://metmuseum.org/Conservation150)

image caption:

Detail of the brown-ochre pigment distribution map, with red arrow indicating the outline of an earlier profile



*through gallery entrance, to left*

## **7. RECKONING WITH MODERNISM**

Throughout the early twentieth century, The Met engaged with modern art warily and unevenly. With some notable exceptions, the Museum remained reluctant to embrace painting and sculpture that challenged conventional definitions of beauty and quality, such as Cubism and Surrealism. Moreover, The Met declined the offer of Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney's collection in 1929, laying the groundwork for the creation of the Whitney Museum of American Art. The opening of the Museum of Modern Art (also in 1929) reinforced The Met's reputation as a repository of so-called classic art. A short-lived coalition between the three museums, which included plans for a Whitney Wing at The Met, was abandoned in 1948.

The Museum made significant strides in two areas: photography and design. It opened its doors to the former as a result of the persistent efforts of photographer and gallerist Alfred Stieglitz, which culminated in a 1933 gift of over 400 photographs. Between the world wars, the institution promoted American design and collected European modern decorative arts.

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Recently, the Museum has endeavored to tell a more complete narrative of modern art, with transformative gifts such as Cubist art from Leonard A. Lauder and industrial objects and modernist photographs from John C. Waddell.

image caption:

Diagram showing the proposed Whitney Wing at The Met, 1946

*on wall, to right of text panel*

**Pablo Picasso**

Spanish, 1881–1973

***Woman in a Chemise in an Armchair***

Late 1913–early 1914

Oil on canvas

Leonard A. Lauder Cubist Collection, Gift of Leonard A. Lauder, in celebration of the Museum's 150th Anniversary, 2019

In 2013 The Met announced the promised gift of Leonard A. Lauder's remarkable collection of Cubism, which fills a major gap in the Museum's holdings. *Woman in a Chemise*—a renowned example of Synthetic Cubism—incorporates forms the artist likely appropriated from Fang and Baule sculpture from Gabon and the Ivory Coast. Like many of Picasso's paintings of women, it portrays female anatomy as erotic but also potentially dangerous. Along with his gift of art, Lauder provided significant support for the creation of the Leonard A. Lauder Research Center for Modern Art at The Met, a scholarly resource that promotes intensive intellectual engagement with twentieth-century art.

*on wall around corner, left to right*

**Gertrude Käsebier**

American, 1852–1934

***Blessed Art Thou Among Women***

1899

Platinum print

Alfred Stieglitz Collection, 1933 (33.43.132)

Stieglitz often stated that he was building his prized photography collection with The Met in mind, but it took thirty years for the Museum to accept it. By that time, the gauzy Pictorialist style the artist had championed in the 1900s was no longer in vogue, yet the collection has many first-rate works whose reputations have since been restored, such as this iconic image by Käsebier.

*Clockwise from top left*

**Alfred Stieglitz**

American, 1864–1946

***Georgia O’Keeffe—Torso***

1918

Gelatin silver print

Gift of Mrs. Alma Wertheim, 1928 (28.130.2)

***Georgia O’Keeffe***

1918

Platinum-palladium print

Gift of David A. Schulte, 1928 (28.127.1)

***Georgia O’Keeffe—Hand and Breasts***

1919

Palladium print

Gift of Mrs. Alma Wertheim, 1928 (28.130.1)

***Georgia O’Keeffe—Hands and Thimble***

1919

Palladium print

Gift of Mrs. Rebecca S. Strand, 1928 (28.129)

After an absence during World War I, Stieglitz burst back on the scene in winter 1921 with a mammoth exhibition at the Anderson Galleries in New York. A disproportionate number of the prints on view were intimate portraits of a single sitter, identified only as “A Woman.” The art public knew her to be the painter Georgia O’Keeffe, who became the photographer’s second wife in 1924. Four years later Stieglitz arranged for a selection of these pictures to be given to The Met from supporters, including two important women collectors, Rebecca Strand and Alma Morgenthau Wertheim.

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## **Paul Strand**

American, 1890–1976

### ***Blind Woman, New York***

1916

Platinum print

Alfred Stieglitz Collection, 1933 (33.43.334)

In 1916 Strand made a series of candid street portraits using a handheld camera fitted with a false lens, allowing him to point the camera in one direction while taking the photograph in another.

This street scene immediately became an icon of the new American photography, which integrated the humanism of social documentary with the simplified forms of modernism.

## **Charles Sheeler**

American, 1883–1965

### ***Doylestown House—The Stove***

1917

Gelatin silver print

Alfred Stieglitz Collection, 1933 (33.43.259)

Sheeler restored and whitewashed the interior of the Pennsylvania farmhouse pictured here to create an austere environment akin to Alfred Stieglitz's gallery, 291. He photographed the structure at night, coaxing its eighteenth-century surfaces into spare geometric compositions using light and shadow. Stieglitz viewed the resulting series of interiors as exemplars of the new "straight photography," as formally rigorous as the Cubist collages of Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque.

## **Charles Demuth**

American, 1883–1935

### ***I Saw the Figure 5 in Gold***

1928

Oil, graphite, ink, and gold leaf on paperboard (Upson board)

Alfred Stieglitz Collection, 1949 (49.59.1)

*I Saw the Figure 5 in Gold* is a reinterpretation of a poem about the raucous energy and echoing clang of a fire engine careening down a New York street as well as a homage to its author, William Carlos Williams. The retiring and sickly Demuth remained on the margins of the circle of artists around Alfred Stieglitz, but he and Georgia O’Keeffe nevertheless enjoyed a strong friendship. Upon his death, Demuth left her many of his paintings, including this one, which she added to Stieglitz’s collection and subsequently to The Met bequest.

## **Man Ray**

American, 1890–1976

### ***Compass***

1920

Gelatin silver print

## **El Lissitzky**

Russian, 1890–1941

### ***Runner in the City***

Ca. 1926

Gelatin silver print

**László Moholy-Nagy**

American, born Hungary, 1895–1946

***Fotogramm***

1926

Gelatin silver print

Ford Motor Company Collection, Gift of Ford Motor Company and John C. Waddell, 1987

(1987.1100.40, .47, .158)

Perhaps due to the strength of the modern photography holdings at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, The Met did not seriously collect photography from between the two world wars until the late 1980s. It was then that curator Maria Morris Hambourg worked with Arrow Electronics chairman John C. Waddell to acquire some five hundred masterworks of European and American interwar photography. The collection came to the Museum as a gift of Waddell and the Ford Motor Company—it was the second great pillar of the Department of Photographs, along with Stieglitz's gifts.

*around corner*

**Georgia O’Keeffe**

American, 1887–1986

***Cow’s Skull: Red, White, and Blue***

1931

Oil on canvas

Alfred Stieglitz Collection, 1952 (52.203)

O’Keeffe catalogued and distributed Alfred Stieglitz’s collection to museums, including The Met, following his death in 1946. Three years later, she relocated permanently to New Mexico, where she lived and worked for the rest of her life. Her first trip to the Southwest desert in 1929 may have inspired *Cow’s Skull: Red, White, and Blue*, one of her most recognizable and reproduced compositions, although she likely painted it in the rural retreat she shared with Stieglitz in Lake George, New York. Extending the legacy of the couple’s gifts, O’Keeffe transferred full ownership of the painting to The Met in 1952.



*around corner, on freestanding wall*

**Vasily Kandinsky**

French, born Russia, 1866–1944

***Improvisation 27 (Garden of Love II)***

1912

Oil on canvas

Alfred Stieglitz Collection, 1949 (49.70.1)

This spiritually infused and utopian abstract painting by Kandinsky—one of about thirty-five the painter and theorist executed around the concept and title *Improvisation*—is a cornerstone of the Museum’s modern holdings. It arrived in 1949 as part of the Alfred Stieglitz bequest and was the first major oil by this critical figure to enter The Met collection. Stieglitz acquired the painting in 1913 from the controversial and legendary Armory Show, which exposed unprecedented numbers of U.S. visitors to recent developments in European and American modernism.

*on pedestal in center of gallery*

**Constantin Brancusi**

French, born Romania, 1876–1957

***Sleeping Muse***

1910

Bronze

Alfred Stieglitz Collection, 1949 (49.70.225)

This early iteration of Brancusi’s signature ovoid heads came to The Met collection through Alfred

Stieglitz. The photographer's interest in the work of the pioneering modern sculptor was piqued in the 1910s by Edward Steichen, whose haunting photographic views of the Flatiron Building are on view nearby. Stieglitz subsequently featured *Sleeping Muse* in Brancusi's first solo show, held in the spring of 1914.

*on wall to the left of the scrim, to the right of the gallery exit to The Street*

## **Fernand Léger**

French, 1881–1955

Oil on canvas

Leonard A. Lauder Cubist Collection, Purchase, Leonard A. Lauder Gift, 2013 (2013.271)

Since 2013, Leonard A. Lauder has supported The Met's efforts to strengthen its modern collection, especially in Cubism, which the institution had been reluctant to accept throughout the early twentieth century. Filled with beveled and fractured forms that appear to pile up rather than recede into space, *The Village* exemplifies Léger's distinctive approach to Cubism, particularly his unmixed and unmodulated color.

*opposite case, left to right*

## **Dagobert Peche**

Austrian, 1887–1923

### **Wiener Werkstätte**

Austrian

#### **Bird-shaped box**

1920

Silver, coral

Purchase, Edward C. Moore Jr. Gift, 1922 (22.188ab)

This box in the shape of a fantastical bird is an example of the work produced by the Wiener Werkstätte, or Vienna Workshops. The Werkstätte represented one pole of modern design that favored expensive materials and exquisite craftsmanship; the Bauhaus, focused on functionalism, represented the other.

## **Edward Hald**

Swedish, 1883–1980

### **Orrefors Glasbruk**

Swedish

#### **“Cactus Exhibition” (*Kaktusutställningen*) vase**

1926

Glass

Purchase, Edward C. Moore Jr. Gift, 1927 (27.96.3ab)

An exhibition of Swedish contemporary decorative art held at the Museum in 1927 included this vase, whose glass design recalls the Crystal Palace that housed the first world’s fair in London in 1851. Hald clarified its modern origins, however, with the geometric grid and the images of fashionably dressed young women.

**Jean E. Puiforcat**

French, 1897–1945

**Coffee service**

Ca. 1922

Silver, lapis lazuli, ivory, gold

Purchase, Edward C. Moore Jr. Gift, 1923 (23.177.1ab–3)

This coffee service, an example of Puiforcat's early efforts to design modern silver pieces, was purchased by Museum curator Joseph Breck in Paris with funds provided by Edward C. Moore Jr. The set was included in The Met's 1923 exhibition of modern decorative arts.

*adjacent platform against freestanding wall*

**Joseph Breck and Modern Decorative Arts**

In 1922 Edward C. Moore Jr., son of the Tiffany & Co. designer and early Met benefactor, made a multiyear pledge to help the Museum purchase “the finest modern decorative arts of America and Europe.” Curator Joseph Breck quickly acquired furniture and objects in the new style. The Museum held its first exhibition of modern decorative arts in 1923, followed by a 1926 show of objects from the seminal Paris Exposition, held the previous year.

The handcrafted pieces on display here reflect Breck's belief that a new style “must attach itself to the main stem of tradition,” meaning the styles of earlier periods. One example is the “Etat” cabinet by Emile-Jacques Ruhlmann, commissioned by Breck when he visited the Paris Exposition. While the cabinet features traditional floral elements, the absence of applied ornament and the bold stylization of the flowers situate it within twentieth-century aesthetics.

image caption: The Met's exhibition of objects from the 1925 Paris Exposition, 1926

**Paul Poiret**

French, 1879–1944

**La Maison Martine**

French

**Textile**

Ca. 1920

Printed linen

Purchase, Edward C. Moore Jr. Gift, 1923 (23.14.9)

La Maison Martine was the interior design business owned by noted Parisian couturier Paul Poiret.

As inspiration for his upholstery textiles, Poiret used sketches of flowers made by students at the

Ecole Martine, a school he founded for working-class girls.

**Emile-Jacques Ruhlmann**

French, 1879–1933

***“Etat”* cabinet**

Designed 1922, manufactured 1925–26

Macassar ebony, amaranth, ivory, oak, lumber-core plywood, poplar, chestnut, mahogany, silvered brass

Purchase, Edward C. Moore Jr. Gift, 1925 (25.231.1)

*opposite platform, left to right*

## **Richard Bach and American Design**

In 1918 the Museum took a leadership role in encouraging good design in America, hiring Richard Bach to make The Met collection available to designers, artisans, and manufacturers and to exhibit their work. Initially, the exhibited objects were required to have been inspired by the Museum's holdings. By 1924 that requirement was eliminated, and for the 1926 exhibition, objects had to “represent the original thought and conception of their designers.”

For a presentation of industrial art in 1934, Bach specifically sought designs that were affordable to a broad public.

While The Met did collect modern decorative arts during the 1920s and 1930s, only later did industrial products enter the collection, most notably through a major gift by collector John C. Waddell in the late 1990s.

image caption:

“A Room for a Lady,” by Eliel Saarinen, from the *Thirteenth Annual Exhibition of Contemporary American Industrial Art*, 1934

## **Clayton Knight**

American, 1891–1969

### **Stehli Silks Corporation**

American

#### **“Manhattan” textile**

1925

Printed silk

Gift of Stehli Silks Corporation, 1927 (27.150.3)

Meant to be made into chic flapper dresses, this textile was part of a series that evoked various aspects of modern life, all designed by major artists for the Stehli Silks Corporation. The pieces were displayed at a 1927 exposition in Macy’s department store, held to encourage good modern design. The Museum’s president Robert de Forest chaired the advisory committee for the show, and the company gifted the textiles to the Museum after it closed.

### **Eliel Saarinen**

American, born Finland, 1873–1950

#### **Chair**

1929

Black walnut, leather (not original)

Gift of Lenore Ann Cisney, 1982 (1982.197)

This chair was part of Saarinen’s dining room shown at the Museum’s 1929 industrial arts exhibition. Like the nearby lamp by Donald Deskey, the piece is an example of zigzag Art Moderne, an iteration of art deco that was influenced by the ziggurat architecture of Egypt and ancient Mexico, prevalent at the 1925 Paris Exposition.

*This Audio guide stop has been deleted from the exhibition but will be available online: 514*

*in adjacent through-wall case, around case*

**Ilonka Karasz**

American, born Hungary, 1896–1981

**Paye & Baker Mfg. Co.**

American

**Bowl**

Ca. 1928

Electroplated nickel silver

Purchase, Theodore R. Gamble Jr. Gift, in honor of his mother, Mrs. Theodore Robert Gamble,  
1983 (1983.228.2)

**Ilonka Karasz**

American, born Hungary, 1896–1981

**Paye & Baker Mfg. Co.**

American

**Bowl**

Ca. 1928

Electroplated nickel silver

John C. Waddell Collection, Gift of John C. Waddell, 2000 (2000.600.11)

**Ilonka Karasz**

American, born Hungary, 1896–1981

**Paye & Baker Mfg. Co.**

American

**Bowl**



Ca. 1928

Electroplated nickel silver

Purchase, Theodore R. Gamble Jr. Gift, in honor of his mother, Mrs. Theodore Robert Gamble,  
1983 (1983.228.1)

Women were not well represented in the Museum's early industrial arts exhibitions, but Karasz, like a number of other female designers of the 1920s and 1930s, was a member of the American Designers Gallery (ADG) and the American Union of Decorative Artists and Craftsmen (AUDAC). A version of these bowls was shown at a 1929 ADG exhibition. More recently, The Met has acquired numerous works by Karasz and other early women modernists.

*facing next side of case*

**Donald Deskey**

American, 1894–1989

**Deskey-Vollmer Inc.**

American

**Lamp**

1927

Chrome-plated metal, glass

John C. Waddell Collection, Gift of John C. Waddell, 2014 (2014.744)

A pioneer in American modern design, Deskey married European styles with modern materials.

This lamp is an example of zigzag Art Moderne, a style influenced by ziggurat architecture that the designer would have seen at the 1925 Paris Exposition. As with much of the Museum's collection of modern industrial design, this example came to the collection relatively recently, in this instance as part of the John C. Waddell gift.

*facing next side of case*

**Walter von Nessen**

American, born Germany, 1899–1943

**Chase Brass & Copper Company, Inc.**

American

**“Continental Coffee-Making Service”**

1934

Chrome-plated copper, composition

John C. Waddell Collection, Gift of John C. Waddell, 2002 (2002.585.4a–d–.6)

Von Nessen was one of many émigrés who introduced the aesthetics and methodologies of European modern design to America. This chrome-plated pot makes drip coffee and also functions as a serving piece. Chrome became popular in the 1930s because it shone like silver but was much less expensive and did not tarnish. The service was displayed in a 1934 exhibition at The Met but not acquired until John C. Waddell’s important gift of decorative art.

*in through-wall case in The Street, to right outside gallery*

**Eliel Saarinen**

American, born Finland, 1873–1950

**International Silver Co., Wilcox Silver Plate Co. Division**

American

**Tea service**

Ca. 1932–35

Electroplated nickel silver, brass, Bakelite

Purchase, Mr. and Mrs. Ronald Saarinen Swanson and John C. Waddell Gifts, and Gift of Susan

Dwight Bliss, by exchange, 1999 (1999.27.1a–c–5)

While The Met was reluctant to accept modern painting and sculpture into its collections, it was a leader in collecting photography and exhibiting new forms of design and decorative arts, especially between the world wars. A version of this tea service was included in Saarinen's "Room for a Lady" in the Museum's 1934 exhibition of contemporary American industrial art. The urn's reliance on geometric forms for decorative effect exemplifies modern design.

*video*

**An Edifice for Art: the Architecture of the Met**

1950–2020

Film by Squint/Opera

Part 2: 3 min., 12 sec.

**Possibly Master Pertoldus (Berthold Schauer?)**

Austrian, active late 15th century

**Triptych with scenes from the Passion of Christ**

1494

Silver, gilded silver, mother-of-pearl, bone, cold enamel

Gift of Ruth and Leopold Blumka, 1969 (69.226)

World War II had an enduring impact on the collection and staff of The Met. This exceptional triptych belonged to the Jewish sugar manufacturer Oscar Bondy until Nazi officials seized his possessions. After the war, it was restituted to his widow, who sold it to Leopold Blumka, a Jewish art dealer who had fled Vienna for New York. Leopold and Ruth Blumka presented it to the Museum on the occasion of its one hundredth anniversary as a symbol of their gratefulness to the United States for “the chance to live in liberty and equality.”

## 8. FRAGMENTED HISTORIES

World War II had a greater impact on The Met than any other conflict in the twentieth century. The Museum evacuated works of art, organized programming to bolster morale, and helped design military equipment. In Europe, Met staff, including Directors Francis Henry Taylor and James Rorimer, contributed to the Allied response to mass looting and the destruction of monuments.

This group became known as the monuments men, and their experiences had a lasting influence on the Museum and its collections after the war ended in 1945.

A more complex story from this period is the purchase of impressive architectural reliefs from the ancient site of Tell Halaf in present-day Syria. The United States government seized several of them from their excavator, German national Baron Max von Oppenheim, while many more were destroyed by Allied bombings in Berlin. These stories call into question where art is safest during wartime and highlight some of the entanglements of museums in modern politics.

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A recent project to document threatened cultural artifacts is explored in the fourth gallery,

Collecting through Excavation, and the Museum's role in moments of political upheaval will be the subject of a blog series related to this exhibition.

image caption:

Preparing paintings for transportation in Europe, with Edith Standen, monuments officer and later Met curator, at back center, ca. 1946

*on wall to right of panel*

**Jean Siméon Chardin**

French, 1699–1779

***Soap Bubbles***

Ca. 1733–34

Oil on canvas

Wentworth Fund, 1949 (49.24)

Owned by German Jewish banker Fritz Mannheimer, *Soap Bubbles* was seized for Adolf Hitler's proposed museum in Austria. The work still bore the labels of the German organization that looted it when curator Theodore Rousseau Jr. purchased the painting for The Met in 1949, just a year after its restitution. Rousseau's experience interrogating Nazis, including Hermann Göring, gave him a detailed perspective on the complexities of wartime confiscations. He received numerous medals for his service and then spent thirty years at The Met, serving as chairman of European Paintings, vice director, and chief curator.

*in case, around corner*

### **Leonard Heinrich**

American, born Germany, 1900–1966

### **The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Armor Workshop**

American, founded ca. 1909

### **Model T-21 E2 helmet prototype**

1945

Aluminum

Museum Accession, 2016 (2016.628)

As they had during the previous world war, the U.S. military reached out to Met specialists for advice on developing helmets and body armor for American soldiers in World War II. Stephen V. Grancsay, curator, and Leonard Heinrich, armorer, created several prototypes in response. This rare example, designed to reduce the size of helmets for ground troops, was made by hand from aluminum because it is a soft metal and relatively easy to shape, but the finished helmets would have been mass-produced in steel. This prototype was never manufactured, but others by Heinrich eventually became the classic M1 helmet used by American forces during the war.

*on adjacent platform, left to right around corner*

### **Tell Halaf**

The journey of the stone sculptures of Tell Halaf reveals the difficulties of keeping art safe during war. In the early twentieth century, German national Max von Oppenheim excavated the reliefs in northeastern Syria and displayed many of them in his Tell Halaf Museum in Berlin. He brought others to the United States to sell in 1931, including those on display here, but they failed to find buyers. The pieces remained in storage in New York until 1943, when they were appropriated by



the U.S. government as German property through the Office of Alien Property Custodian and sold at auction, where The Met acquired four. The same year, an Allied bomb destroyed the Tell Halaf Museum and shattered its contents. In 2001 Berlin museum staff began to piece together the broken objects from around 27,000 fragments, taking eight years to restore more than one hundred sculptures, architectural elements, and stone implements.

image caption:

Small orthostats in situ, Palace of Kapara, Tell Halaf, ca. 1912

### **Orthostat relief of a lion-hunt scene**

Ca. 10th–9th century B.C.

Excavated at Tell Halaf, Syria

Basalt

Rogers Fund, 1943 (43.135.2)

### **Orthostat relief of a seated figure holding a lotus flower**

Ca. 10th–9th century B.C.

Excavated at Tell Halaf, Syria

Basalt

Rogers Fund, 1943 (43.135.1)

*on wall to right of entrance to next gallery*

### **Monuments Men and The Met**

Met director Francis Henry Taylor was a founding member of the commission that established the Monuments, Fine Arts, and Archives Division (MFAA), a joint operation between the United States and Great Britain, commonly known as the monuments men. The heroic contributions made by three Met staff members associated with this mission had the most lasting impact on the institution and its collections. James Rorimer tirelessly preserved damaged monuments and stolen works of art from public and private collections across Europe, while Edith Standen worked at a special repository created to house artworks prior to their return to the rightful owners. Theodore Rousseau Jr. was tasked with interviewing Nazi officials to locate hidden art troves. The knowledge they gained influenced their scholarship, affected their pursuit of acquisitions in the postwar period, and solidified The Met's commitment to responsible collecting practices and preservation of cultural heritage.

image caption:

First Lieutenant James J. Rorimer examines recovered objects from the Rothschild Collection at Neuschwanstein Castle, Germany, May 1945

*around corner*

### **James J. Rorimer**

James Rorimer was director of The Cloisters and later of The Met. As a monuments officer, he safe-guarded cultural heritage in France, uncovered tens of thousands of looted artworks in Germany, and in the aftermath of the war established the central collecting points in Munich and Wiesbaden for displaced objects. With first-hand knowledge of restituted collections and their importance, Rorimer later purchased restituted works of art for The Met, and especially for The

Met Cloisters, through the endowment established by John D. Rockefeller Jr. Several of the finest are on view in this gallery.

*in case on wall*

### **Notebook belonging to James J. Rorimer**

During the war, Rorimer documented monuments and repositories he encountered while traveling with the U.S. Seventh Army in his personal notebooks. Seen here is the entry for May 4, 1945, the day he arrived at Neuschwanstein Castle in Bavaria. There, he discovered thousands of works looted from French collections, including the nearby *Hours of Jeanne d'Evreux, Queen of France*.

James J. Rorimer Records, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives

### **Military identification tags, insignia, and medals belonging to James J. Rorimer**

These military accoutrements of James Rorimer include the Belgian Croix de Guerre, the French Legion of Honor, the Bronze Star Medal ribbon, the Army Good Conduct Medal, the American Campaign Medal, the European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal, the World War II Victory Medal, the Army of Occupation Medal, and the U.S. Seventh Army Combat Service Badge.

Lent by Louis Rorimer and Anne Rorimer

*in case*

**Jean Pucelle**

French, active 1319–34

***The Hours of Jeanne d'Evreux, Queen of France***

Ca. 1324–28

Grisaille, tempera, and ink on vellum

The Cloisters Collection, 1954 (54.1.2)

Rorimer found this celebrated prayer book—which still bears a Nazi inventory number—at Neuschwanstein Castle in Bavaria, where it was reportedly concealed in a wastepaper basket by fleeing German troops. Six years following the restitution to its former owner, Parisian financier Maurice de Rothschild, Rorimer convinced the Museum's administration and its great patron John D. Rockefeller Jr. to acquire it, along with the *Belles Heures of Jean of France, duc de Berry* from the same collection.

*This Audio guide stop has been deleted from the exhibition but will be available online: 516*

*in through-wall case, left to right*

**Attributed to Jean de Touyl**

French, Paris, died 1349/50

**Reliquary shrine**

Ca. 1325–50

Gilded silver, translucent enamel, paint

The Cloisters Collection, 1962 (62.96)

The wartime ownership of this sumptuous reliquary shrine has only recently become known, thanks to detailed research relating to the central collecting point in Munich. It belonged to the

estate of Edmond de Rothschild, whose Parisian residence was taken over by Reichsmarschall Göring's staff during the Nazi occupation. The work's early history traces it to a convent established by Queen Elizabeth of Hungary in 1334.

### **Hans Greiff**

German, active ca. 1470–1516

#### **Covered beaker**

Ca. 1470

Silver, gilded silver, enamel, glass

The Cloisters Collection, 1950 (50.7.1a, b)

The Nazis confiscated this beaker, made for the municipal treasury of Ingolstadt, Germany, from Baron Maximilian von Goldschmidt-Rothschild in 1938, and the postwar government did not release it to his heirs until 1949. After the war, James Rorimer sought out works made of precious materials for display in a treasury gallery at the Cloisters, many from restituted collections he had encountered as a monuments man. This vessel arrived in New York with four other objects from the same collection and was acquired by The Met in 1950.

### **Marc-Etienne Janety**

French, 1739–1820

#### **Sugar bowl**

1786

Platinum, blue glass

Purchase, Gift of Dr. and Mrs. A.L. Garbat, Manya Garbat Starr and Julian A. Garbat, by exchange, and Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1974 (1974.164a–c)

Created by a French royal goldsmith renowned for his work in platinum, this exquisite sugar bowl belonged to David David-Weill, a banker who assembled one of the finest art collections in France. It has only recently been discovered that the Nazis sent this work, along with David-Weill's entire holdings of silver, to Neuschwanstein Castle on October 16, 1941. It was restituted in 1946—the only other extant work in platinum by Janety, a coffee pot last exhibited in 1933, vanished during the war.

*in case, center of gallery*

### **Virgin and Child with the Young Saint John the Baptist**

Northern French, ca. 1525–50

Marble, partially gilded

Purchase, Joseph Pulitzer Bequest, 1959 (59.12)

This sculpture is one of two works in The Met collection that belonged to Reichsmarschall Hermann Göring, one of the most feared and powerful figures of the Nazi Party, who once stated his intention to “plunder and to do it thoroughly.” Göring's art dealer, Walter Bornheim, acquired it in Paris and apparently presented it to him as a gift. Without an owner to claim it after the war, it was returned to the Paris art market until The Met acquired it in 1959.

*in case, center of gallery*

### **Edith A. Standen**

The daughter of a British army officer, Edith Standen joined the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps in 1943, just one year after becoming an American citizen. She served as a monuments officer, sorting, cataloguing, and restituting thousands of stolen artworks. The only woman in this division awarded the Bronze Star, Standen described the two years she spent in Germany as the most interesting of her life, and her experiences influenced her nearly fifty-year career as curator of tapestries at The Met.

### **Edith Standen's uniform**

American, 1945

Wool, metal

Gift of Edith A. Standen, 1988 (1988.78.2a-l)

The two lapel pins of Pallas Athene on Standen's uniform represent the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps, the patch with a flaming sword signifies the U.S. Army Europe, the pair of silver bars indicate her rank of captain, and the five ribbons represent medals she received for her service: the Women's Army Corps Service Medal, the Army of Occupation Medal, the American Campaign Medal, the European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal, and the World War II Victory Medal.

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*on wall across from gallery exit, past case with mannequins*

## **9. THE CENTENNIAL ERA**

The Met's 100th anniversary was celebrated in 1970 with great fanfare and was marked by reflection on the past, present, and future of the institution. Among the milestones lauded on this occasion were the monumental gifts of the Temple of Dendur from Egypt, the Michael C. Rockefeller Memorial Collection of Primitive Art (as it was regrettably called then), and Robert Lehman's extensive holdings of western European art. Museum leaders believed that the collection was reaching the goals of the founders to illustrate 5,000 years of civilization. A new master plan, initiated by Director Thomas Hoving and completed under Philippe de Montebello, laid the groundwork for expansion and reflected the rise after World War II of a more international, less Eurocentric perspective on the history of art.

This was a booming period at the Museum, with crowds drawn to blockbuster exhibitions and headline-grabbing acquisitions. New collaborations with contemporary artists and expanded educational programming on Fifth Avenue and throughout the five boroughs signaled an aspiration to be more inclusive and reach a broader audience. However, The Met's efforts during these years of social change in New York produced mixed results, eliciting criticism, especially among communities of color.

image caption:

Reassembly of the Temple of Dendur at The Met, 1978



*to left of panel*

**Garry Winogrand**

American, 1928–1984

***Centennial Ball, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York***

1970

Gelatin silver print

Gift of William Berley, 1978 (1978.660.12)

*to left, then counterclockwise around this section of gallery*

## **Transforming Islamic Art**

It was a historic moment in 1975 when The Met unveiled a powerful and substantially enlarged set of galleries dedicated to Islamic Art, organized by scholar Richard Ettinghausen and his team. This landmark display captivated the public's imagination and cemented the Museum's endorsement of a burgeoning field of art history. It also conveyed an authentic voice of a region defined through its own cultural values. In order to bring coherence to diverse objects loosely linked by religion and culture, the field of Islamic art and consequently the galleries emphasized the unities of artistic production across a large territory. As the objects here attest, calligraphy was presented as the preeminent art form, and geometric ornament and vegetal arabesques were seen as a harmonizing decorative language. While the field of Islamic art today encompasses a wider geography and places a greater emphasis on diversity, the impact of the 1975 installation, both conceptually and stylistically, is still felt in institutions around the world.

image caption:

Late Medieval gallery, 1976

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### **End of a balustrade**

Iran, Ilkhanid period (1258–1353), A.H. 703 / A.D. 1303–4

Limestone

Fletcher Fund, 1932 (32.15.2)

These balustrade ends demonstrate a continuity in the architectural decorative tradition of Iran.

Vegetal motifs and elaborate scrolls are intertwined with geometrical patterns and inscriptions and flanked by animated scenes. This carved stone was probably a section of a staircase in a private building. The owner's name—Haji Hasan ibn Ibrahim ibn Muh'ammad—is prominently carved in relief and followed by the date.

*above*

### **Official signature (*tughra*) of Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent**

Turkey (Istanbul), Ottoman period (ca. 1299–1923), ca. 1555

Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper

Rogers Fund, 1938 (38.149.1)

Raised to a high art form within the Ottoman chancery, the *tughra* served as the official seal of the sultan. Affixed to every royal edict, this stylized signature is an intricate calligraphic composition comprising the name of the reigning sultan, his father's name, his title, and the phrase “the eternally victorious.” Its bold, gestural line contrasts with the delicate swirling vine scroll illumination used to ornament the seal.

*below, left to right*

Attributed to **Qasim ibn ‘Ali**

***Kai Khusrau Rides Bihzad for the First Time, folio from the Shahnama (Book of Kings) of Shah Tahmasp***

Iran (Tabriz), Safavid period (1501–1722), ca. 1525–30

Opaque watercolor, ink, silver, and gold on paper

Gift of Arthur A. Houghton Jr., 1970 (1970.301.33)

The *Shahnama* epic, composed around 1010 by the poet Firdausi, narrates the history of the ancient kings of Iran. In the Islamic period, it was de rigueur for a king to commission an illustrated *Shahnama*, the most lavish being that of Shah Tahmasp. In honor of the Museum’s centennial, Arthur Houghton donated seventy-six luminous folios from that volume. Here, Giv and Kai Khusrau find the horse Bihzad, who has been running wild since his master’s death.

Attributed to **Qasim ibn ‘Ali and Sultan Muhammad**

***The Feast of Sada, folio from the Shahnama (Book of Kings) of Shah Tahmasp***

Iran (Tabriz), Safavid period (1501–1722), ca. 1525–30

Opaque watercolor, ink, silver, and gold on paper

Gift of Arthur A. Houghton Jr., 1970 (1970.301.2)

This folio, which opens the narrative of the *Shahnama*, was part of Arthur Houghton’s centennial gift. According to the tale, in the reign of Hushang, the world came to understand minerals and the arts of smithery, agriculture, and irrigation. One day Hushang hurled a stone at a dragon, which missed the monster and hit a rock, causing sparks to fly. Realizing the significance of this phenomenon, the ruler built a large fire and held a celebratory feast.

*around the corner, above platform*

**Tile panel in the shape of a prayer niche (*mihrab*)**

Iran (Kashan), Ilkhanid period (1258–1353), early 14th century

Stonepaste, luster-painted

Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917 (17.190.2040a, b)

J. Pierpont Morgan's gifts of Islamic art laid important foundations within the Museum for the future of the field. These two large tiles form a prayer niche (*mihrab*), which would have been set in the *qibla* wall of a mosque to indicate the direction of Mecca. The prayer niche is composed of slender columns and a trilobed pointed arch. The inscriptions that occupy virtually the entire surface are from the Qur'an.

**"Star Ushak" carpet**

Turkey (Ushak), Ottoman period (ca. 1299–1923), late 15th–early 16th century

Wool (warp, weft, and pile), symmetrically knotted pile

Gift of Joseph V. McMullan, 1958 (58.63)

This fresh-colored carpet is one of the earliest, largest, and best-preserved examples of its type. Woven in the Ushak region of western Turkey, "Star Ushak" carpets were made both for regional consumption and for export throughout Europe. The Met's holdings of carpets were greatly enhanced by Joseph McMullan's gift in 1958, which added previously unrepresented styles to the collection.

*This Audio guide stop has been deleted from the exhibition but will be available online: 517*

**Carved screen (*jali*)**

India (probably Gujarat), ca. 1700

Marble

Edward Pearce Casey Fund, 1985 (1985.240.2)

*around corner; top*

Attributed to **Basavana, Shravana, and Tara**

***Assad ibn Kariba Launches a Night Attack on the Camp of Malik Iraj, folio from the Hamzanama (Adventures of Hamza)***

India, Mughal period (1526–1858), ca. 1564–69

Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on cloth

Rogers Fund, 1918 (18.44.1)

The Met is custodian of five illustrated folios from the *Hamzanama (Adventures of Hamza)*, a foundational manuscript in Mughal painting. In this scene, Assad ibn Kariba, a supporter of Hamza (shown dressed in orange), attacks a group of “unbelievers,” who then kill one another in the ensuing chaos. The drama-filled text was a favorite of the Mughal emperor Akbar, who commissioned this magnificent manuscript in 1562.

*bottom, left to right*

Attributed to **Balchand**

***Jahangir and his Father, Akbar, folio from the Shah Jahan Album***

India, Mughal period (1526–1858), ca. 1630

Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper

Purchase, Rogers Fund and The Kevorkian Foundation Gift, 1955 (55.121.10.19)

The Met's Shah Jahan Album, of which this and the nearby folio are part, is among the most prestigious albums of Mughal painting and calligraphy. Its ownership history spans three generations of Mughal royalty. Here, the artist Balchand visualizes Emperor Jahangir with hands raised in a supplication (*du'a*) for his father Akbar, who is shown holding a falcon.

***Rosette Bearing the Names and Titles of Shah Jahan, folio from the Shah Jahan Album***

India, Mughal period (1526–1858), ca. 1630–40

Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper

Purchase, Rogers Fund and The Kevorkian Foundation Gift, 1955 (55.121.10.39)

A *shamsa* (literally, “sun”) traditionally opened imperial Mughal albums. Worked in bright colors and several tones of gold, the meticulously designed and painted arabesques on this example are enriched by fantastic flowers, birds, and animals. The inscription in the center, written in the “hand-sign” (*tughra*) style, reads: “His Majesty Shihabuddin Muhammad Shah Jahan, the King, Warrior of the Faith, may God perpetuate his kingdom and sovereignty.”

## **End of a balustrade**

Iran, Ilkhanid period (1258–1353), A.H. 703 / A.D. 1303–4

Limestone

Fletcher Fund, 1932 (32.15.1)

These balustrade ends demonstrate a continuity in the architectural decorative tradition of Iran.

Vegetal motifs and elaborate scrolls are intertwined with geometrical patterns and inscriptions and flanked by animated scenes. This carved stone was probably a section of a staircase in a private building. The owner's name—Haji Hasan ibn Ibrahim ibn Muh'ammad—is prominently carved in relief and followed by the date.

*case in center, counterclockwise*

## **Qur'an manuscript**

Syria or Iraq, Abbasid period (750–1258), late 9th–early 10th century

Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on parchment; tooled leather binding

Gift of Philip Hofer, 1937 (37.142)

This Qur'an came to The Met in 1937 as part of Philip Hofer's gift of exceptionally fine manuscripts and calligraphic compositions. It is the second volume of a thirty-part Qur'an meant to be read over the course of a month. The manuscript includes some embellishments not found in earlier, more austere copies, such as red vowel marks, rosettes every ten verses, and double-page illuminations at the beginning and end of the book.



### **Inkwell with floral and animal imagery**

Iran, Safavid period (1501–1722), 16th century

Brass; lid cast, body worked, engraved, and chased, inlaid with silver

Rogers Fund, 1941 (41.120a, b)

This cylindrical inkwell (*dawat*) with a domed lid once fit into a metal penbox, where it was secured by a line of soldering along its seam. Silver inlaid floral vines and animals as well as engraved and chased floral patterns occupy the background. Inkwells were part of the prestigious arts related to calligraphy and were also given as courtly gifts of recognition.

### **Hanging ornament for a mosque**

Turkey (Kutahya), 19th century

Stonepaste, polychrome painted under transparent glaze

Bequest of Benjamin Altman, 1913 (14.40.726)

Benjamin Altman's generous bequest to The Met included magnificent carpets and exceptional ceramics, such as this work. Likely made at the regional center of Kutahya, the ornament was probably meant to hang in conjunction with a mosque lamp of similar decoration.

### **‘Ali ibn Muhammad al-Barmaki**

#### **Mosque lamp made for Amir Qawsun**

Egypt, Mamluk period (1250–1517), ca. 1329–35

Glass, blown, enameled, and gilded

Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917 (17.190.991)

J. Pierpont Morgan's gifts of Mamluk glass made The Met one of the most significant holders of this important art. Large glass lamps of this type were commissioned by sultans and members of

their court for mosques, Qur'anic schools (*madrasa's*), tombs, hospices, and other public buildings in fourteenth-century Cairo. This example bears the name of its patron, Amir Qawsun.

*in case in center of gallery*

### **Diana Vreeland and the Costume Institute**

The Costume Institute, previously the Museum of Costume Art, was fully integrated into The Met in 1946. In 1972 legendary fashion editor Diana Vreeland was appointed as special consultant for the collection. Her immersive 1973 exhibition *The World of Balenciaga* presented fashion objects as autonomous artworks, highlighting the architectural and sculptural designs of the Basque designer, as exemplified by this barrel coat. In 1983 Yves Saint Laurent became the first living designer to receive a monographic exhibition at the Museum, curated by Vreeland. The designer's fusion of high and low, art and fashion, is encapsulated in his iconic shift dress, often called the "Mondrian dress." As a testimony to his enduring vision, this is the fifth Met exhibition to include the garment since its acquisition in 1969.

*side closer to text panel*

**Cristobal Balenciaga**

Spanish, 1895–1972

**House of Balenciaga**

French, founded 1937

**Coat**

Spring/summer 1968

Wool

Gift of Countess Edward Bismarck, 1981 (1981.249.3)

**Yves Saint Laurent**

French, born Algeria, 1936–2008

**Yves Saint Laurent, Paris**

French, founded 1961

**Dress**

Fall/winter 1965–66

Wool

Gift of Mrs. William Rand, 1969 (C.I.69.23)

*on opposite wall, left to right*

### **Engaging with Artists**

Although living artists have made vital contributions to The Met since its founding, the centennial era, under the direction of Thomas Hoving, marked a turning point motivated by community and educational outreach.

The Met initiated a program to integrate American art into school curriculums and commissioned works in honor of the anniversary. Frank Stella designed a logo; Robert Rauschenberg created a print (on view nearby); Twyla Tharp's company performed the first experimental dance at the Museum; and well-known composers such as Leonard Bernstein and Aaron Copland created fanfares for exhibition openings.

Yet Hoving's progressive campaigns were not without missteps. One of the most significant controversies surrounded the 1969 exhibition *Harlem on My Mind: The Cultural Capital of Black America, 1900–1968*. In spite of feedback from a community advisory committee, the show included no paintings, drawings, or sculptures by Black artists, relying on photographic reproductions, documents, and a soundscape of street noises to illustrate the social history of Harlem. Artist-organized protests of the exhibition brought attention to the need for greater diversity and inclusion in museums, both on display and behind the scenes, an effort that is still underway.

## **Robert Rauschenberg**

American, 1925–2008

Universal Limited Art Editions

### **Centennial Certificate MMA**

1969

Color lithograph

Florence and Joseph Singer Collection, 1972 (69.630)

Rauschenberg was invited to make a limited edition print to commemorate The Met's centennial anniversary. He created a collage of works from the collection—ranging from paintings by Vermeer, Rembrandt, Veronese, Ingres, and Picasso to medieval, Egyptian, Chinese, and ancient Near Eastern objects—juxtaposed with an image of the facade, signatures of Museum officials, and a statement on the significance of the institution.

*on opposite wall, to right of panel, left to right*

## **A Rededication to Asian Art**

Although the Great Hall Balcony has included a display of Asian art since 1902, the presence of these works in the galleries declined over the ensuing decades. As the Vietnam War heightened awareness of cultures to the east, The Met recognized that it could not ignore the region. In order to address this lacuna, Douglas Dillon, president of the board of trustees, and Director Thomas Hoving recruited Princeton professor Wen C. Fong to lead the rededication to Asian art. Bolstered by Dillon's support, Fong acquired important Chinese paintings, Japanese artworks, and Indian and Southeast Asian sculptures, to name just a few, and opened impressive new galleries and evocative spaces like the Astor Chinese Garden Court. Thanks to the efforts of Fong and later curators and donors, the Museum now has over fifty galleries devoted to Asian art, embracing the full spectrum

of traditional and contemporary forms of expression.

image caption:

Astor Court, early 1980s

**Kano Sansetsu**

Japanese, 1589–1651

***Old Plum***

Edo period (1615–1868), 1646

Four sliding-door panels (*fusuma*); ink, color, gold, and gold leaf on paper

The Harry G. C. Packard Collection of Asian Art, Gift of Harry G. C. Packard, and Purchase, Fletcher, Rogers, Harris Brisbane Dick, and Louis V. Bell Funds, Joseph Pulitzer Bequest, and The Annenberg Fund Inc. Gift, 1975 (1975.268.48a–d)

The massive black trunk of an ancient plum tree with bending, twisting branches spans four sliding panels. The reptilian old tree sprouts blossoms, which convey the atmosphere of a cold early spring morning and symbolize birth and renewal. Originally this quartet of panels belonged to a suite of more than one hundred adorning the abbot's quarters of a Zen temple in Kyoto. The painting entered The Met in 1975, as part of the acquisition of Harry Packard's collection of over four hundred masterworks of Japanese art.

*in case*

**Buddha offering protection**

Indian (probably Bihar), late 6th–7th century

Copper alloy

Purchase, Florance Waterbury Bequest, 1969 (69.222)

This Buddha sculpture embodies the highest qualities of inner radiant calm and stillness, the products of supreme wisdom. Few of these metal works survived the collapse of Indian monastic Buddhism in the late twelfth century, and most that did were preserved in Tibet, where they had been taken for safety. In the 1950s this object was brought to the West in the wake of the destruction of the monastic system in Tibet.

*on wall*

**First Generation after Nainsukh, likely the painter Nikka**

Indian

***Rama, Sita, and Lakshmana at the Hermitage of Bharadvaja, folio from a dispersed Ramayana series***

Ca. 1780

Opaque watercolor and ink on paper

Seymour and Rogers Funds, 1976 (1976.15)

This work belongs to a famous series narrating the Indian epic the *Ramayana*. The hero, Rama, accompanied by his consort, Sita, and half-brother, Lakshmana, have embarked on a fourteen-year exile. The identity of the master who imagined the tale's wondrous landscape settings and journey has only recently been established. The Met assembled one of the most important collections of Indian painting in the West, particularly in the years after the Museum's centennial.

*scroll case in center of gallery, right to left, then opposite side*

## **Han Gan**

Chinese, active ca. 742–756

### ***Night-Shining White***

Tang dynasty (618–907), ca. 750

Handscroll; ink on paper

Purchase, The Dillon Fund Gift, 1977 (1977.78)

Douglas Dillon was a driving force behind The Met's recommitment to Asian art. Though not a collector of Chinese paintings himself, Dillon purchased works including this handscroll for the Museum. A striking portrait of Night-Shining White, a favorite horse of the Tang emperor Xuanzong, this is one of the earliest and most important Chinese paintings in the United States. Its many seals and inscriptions document a prestigious provenance dating back to the tenth century.

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## **Zhao Mengfu**

Chinese, 1254–1322

### ***Twin Pines, Level Distance***

Yuan dynasty (1271–1368), ca. 1310

Handscroll; ink on paper

Ex coll.: C. C. Wang Family, Gift of The Dillon Fund, 1973 (1973.120.5)

When curator Wen Fong took the reins of the Asian art department in 1971, the collection of Chinese painting and calligraphy was small in number and wanting in quality. In 1973 Fong secured his first major acquisition: twenty-five early paintings from the painter and collector C. C.



Wang. This sublime landscape by Zhao Mengfu was among this group, which established The Met's leadership in the field.

*opposite side of scroll case*

## **Mi Fu**

Chinese, 1051–1107

### ***Poem Written in a Boat on the Wu River***

Northern Song dynasty (960–1127), ca. 1095

Handscroll; ink on paper

Gift of John M. Crawford Jr., in honor of Professor Wen Fong, 1984 (1984.174)

John Crawford began as a collector of Western rare books, but during the 1950s he became increasingly devoted to Chinese art, calligraphy in particular, and built one of the greatest collections ever formed. His gift transformed the Museum's ability to tell the story of art from China. This magisterial handscroll by Mi Fu, a pivotal figure in the history of calligraphy, is one of The Met's treasures.

### **Recovering the Missing Chapters: The Arts of Africa, Oceania, and the Americas**

For most of its first century, the cultural traditions of a vast portion of the world were largely unrecognized by The Met. In an era defined by both the civil rights movement and the liberation of nations from European colonialism, the Museum began to confront what it means to present the art of all people and cultures. Ancient American art, which had had a flickering presence at the Museum since the nineteenth century, started to be acquired in earnest in the 1960s. Nelson Rockefeller, who had founded the Museum of Primitive Art (MPA) in 1954, an institution dedicated to three major world artistic traditions neglected by The Met, secured the transfer of the MPA's holdings to the Museum, along with his personal collection. Both were housed in a newly created wing, which opened in 1982 and was named in honor of his son Michael, an idealistic young anthropologist who lost his life on a collecting expedition in New Guinea.

image caption:

Michael C. Rockefeller Wing, 1982

*in case adjacent to above panel, left to right*

**Female figure with mortar and pestle**

Mali, Dogon peoples, 16th–early 20th century

Wood, iron

Gift of Lester Wunderman, 1979 (1979.541.12)

This strong yet elegant woman is depicted pounding millet, a staple food in Dogon society.

Sculptural creations such as this served as familial altars and tributes to important ancestors and embodied a prayer for sustenance. The complex Dogon worldview they make manifest became a subject of keen interest during the second half of the twentieth century, a period that also coincided with a shift toward Islam in Dogon communities. Among the exceptional gifts to The Met following the announcement of the construction of the Michael C. Rockefeller Wing were those from Lester Wunderman, who described his travel to central Mali as a life-altering experience.

**Standing male and female figures**

Democratic Republic of the Congo, Lake Tanganyika region, Tabwa peoples, 18th–19th century

Wood, beads

The Michael C. Rockefeller Memorial Collection, Purchase, Nelson A. Rockefeller Gift, 1969 (1978.412.591, .592)

A Tabwa leader commissioned this stately couple to pay tribute to his ancestral lineage and to give expression to the source of his authority. The aristocratic man and woman closely mirror one another as equals, standing with arms held to their sides as they gaze directly at the viewer. The symmetry and delicacy of their physical perfection is enhanced with refined, elaborate facial and bodily markings that visually articulate cosmological precepts and social ideals of enlightenment.

### **Seated female figure from a reliquary ensemble**

Gabon or Equatorial Guinea, Fang peoples, Okak group, 19th–early 20th century

Wood, metal

The Michael C. Rockefeller Memorial Collection, Gift of Nelson A. Rockefeller, 1965

(1978.412.441)

This formidable female figure evokes the distant founder of a Fang extended family. Depicted at the prime of life, she was originally positioned as the guardian of precious ancestral relics housed in a portable altar made of bark. Eventually acquired by the French painter André Derain, the figure was present in his studio as early as 1913. In that context, her formal dynamism and the articulation of her physiognomy as a series of pure volumes made her a muse to a new generation of European artists and a catalyst for a revolution in representing the figure.

*on wall to left of case*

### **“Primitive Art” in New York**

The Met created a department in 1969 with the foundational gift of Nelson Rockefeller’s collection. In the preceding decades, leading universities in New York actively promoted the expansion of art history to new areas, initiating programs in “primitive art” that grouped together African, Oceanic, and Native American traditions, and later those of the Ancient Americas. Scholars in those departments published foundational survey texts with titles that featured “primitive,” now considered retrograde nomenclature. Rockefeller had adopted that term for his Museum of Primitive Art (MPA), rejecting an earlier idea to use “Indigenous.” Importantly, in a departure from previous museological approaches, at the MPA these varied traditions were presented in their own cultural contexts, independent of Western modernism.

*cases in center of gallery, clockwise*

## **Horn player**

Nigeria, Court of Benin, Edo peoples, 1550–1680

Brass

The Michael C. Rockefeller Memorial Collection, Gift of Nelson A. Rockefeller, 1972

(1978.412.310)

This court trumpeter clad in a leopard hide was once positioned on an altar commemorating a king. In 1897 it was among the thousands of works dispersed internationally after British soldiers brutally razed the palace in Benin City, plundered its contents, and exiled its sovereign, Oba Ovonramwen. In 1957 Rockefeller's advisor, Robert Goldwater, urged him to acquire it as a masterpiece equal to contemporaneous European bronzes for its naturalism and command of the lost-wax casting technique. Today it is impossible to isolate such admiration from the violent circumstances that marked its removal.

## **Conservation Story**

When sculptures such as this one were removed from their original context, basic knowledge about their creation was lost. Collectors in Europe mistakenly assumed the red-brown surfaces was local soil. Difficult to remove, it was covered up with waxes and oils typical of the patinas applied to European bronzes, resulting in a darkened, more uniform surface. Met conservators have found that this feature was likely applied intentionally for aesthetic reasons: a thin layer of fine iron-rich clay applied to the wax model before casting and only partially eliminated from the cast metal during the finishing process. Working to reverse earlier interventions and to identify the materials that lie beneath them, conservators have been able to not only analyze their metallurgical

composition but also shed light on the distinctive qualities of the surfaces of the Benin sculptures, traditionally referred to as bronze but in actuality brass.

To learn more, visit [metmuseum.org/Conservation](https://www.metmuseum.org/Conservation)150

*in case*

### **Body mask**

New Guinea, Papua Province, Asmat people, mid-20th century

Fiber, sago palm leaves, wood, bamboo, feathers, seeds, paint

The Michael C. Rockefeller Memorial Collection; Gift of Nelson A. Rockefeller and Mrs. Mary C. Rockefeller, 1965 (1978.412.1274)

Michael Rockefeller acquired this spectacular body mask during a visit to the Asmat region of New Guinea in 1961. He negotiated his purchases with local leaders and diligently recorded the names of the people who made, wore, and used the art. When his collection of over six hundred contemporary Pacific works came to The Met, it dramatically transformed the global range and scope of stories the Museum could tell.

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### **Treasury of Ancient American Art**

Some objects were grouped by medium in the new Rockefeller Wing, notably in the “treasury” showcasing ancient American art in precious metals. This installation was expanded in the 1990s after The Met received Jan Mitchell’s gift of gold. These pairs of composite creatures, part of the regalia worn by community leaders in ancient Panama, were cast using the lost-wax technique and incorporate quartz, greenstone, and shell—materials considered of great value to Indigenous populations.

#### **Double-bat-head figure pendant**

Panama, Coclé (Parita), 12th–14th century

Gold, greenstone

Gift and Bequest of Alice K. Bache, 1966, 1977 (66.196.32)

#### **Double crocodile pendant**

Panama, Coclé (Macaracas), 8th–12th century

Gold, shell

Jan Mitchell and Sons Collection, Gift of Jan Mitchell, 1991 (1991.419.17)

#### **Double crocodile pendant**

Panama, Coclé (Macaracas), 8th–10th century

Gold, quartz

The Michael C. Rockefeller Memorial Collection, Bequest of Nelson A. Rockefeller, 1979  
(1979.206.733)

*in case*

**Mirror-bearer**

Guatemala or Mexico, Maya, 6th century

Wood, red hematite

The Michael C. Rockefeller Memorial Collection, Bequest of Nelson A. Rockefeller, 1979  
(1979.206.1063)

In the inaugural installation of the Michael C. Rockefeller Wing, works were organized by geography and to a lesser extent chronology—a reflection of the nascent knowledge of the art history of these regions—and emphasis was placed on aesthetic merit. This rare figure is the best-preserved example of a Maya sculpture in wood. Notches in the skirt and under the arms suggest that it would have held a mosaic mirror of pyrite or obsidian.

*on back wall, clockwise around this section of gallery*

**Max Beckmann**

German, 1884–1950

***The Beginning***

1946–49

Oil on canvas

Bequest of Miss Adelaide Milton de Groot (1876–1967), 1967 (67.187.53a–c)

Adelaide Milton de Groot's 1967 bequest of over two hundred works of art brought The Met its first five paintings by Beckmann. However, in 1971 the Museum deaccessioned several of her gifts, including two Beckmanns, to finance acquisitions by old master painters and modern artists such as David Smith and Richard Diebenkorn. *The Beginning* was spared from sale after public outcry was reported in the *New York Times*. The controversy led The Met to amend its



deaccessioning policy. In the work, the artist looks back to his childhood with fondness and humor. Completed when he was sixty-five years old, the triptych incorporates memories of his youth in Germany, accompanied by fantastical imagery on the flanking wings.

### **A Seat at the Table: Modern and Contemporary Art**

In 1964 curator Henry Geldzahler delivered a memo to Director James Rorimer, urging him to develop a policy to redress the “isolation of modern art at the other New York museums.” He believed that The Met was uniquely positioned to contextualize and historicize twentieth-century art. Three years later, the Department of Contemporary Arts was established. Geldzahler expanded the collection and organized ambitious shows, notably his blockbuster survey *New York Painting and Sculpture: 1940–1970*, one of The Met’s centennial exhibitions. That said, he almost exclusively collected and exhibited White male artists. It was not until after a series of protests by activist groups such as the Black Emergency Cultural Coalition that he began to rectify these oversights. More significant change arrived with Lowery Stokes Sims, the Museum’s first African American curator, who championed the work of artists of color, women artists, and Indigenous artists between 1975 and 1999.

image caption:

Visitors to the exhibition *New York Painting and Sculpture: 1940–1970*, photographed by Bruce Davidson, 1969

## **Ellsworth Kelly**

American, 1923–2015

### ***Blue Green Red***

1963

Oil on canvas

Arthur Hoppock Hearn Fund, 1963 (63.73)

*Blue Green Red* was the first work by Kelly to enter The Met collection. Curators Robert Beverly Hale and Henry Geldzahler purchased it directly from the artist's studio, when Kelly was still considered a relative newcomer. Its acquisition represented something of a risk for the institution, which had been reluctant to embrace abstract works. It is one of a few examples of contemporary art acquired before the Department of Contemporary Arts was established in 1967.

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*around corner*

## **Andy Warhol**

American, 1928–1987

### ***Mona Lisa***

1963

Acrylic and silkscreen on canvas

Gift of Henry Geldzahler, 1965 (65.273)

Warhol created this work after Leonardo's famous portrait was exhibited at The Met in 1963, attracting more than a million visitors. The artist repeated the *Mona Lisa* four times, reducing its delicate, tonal palette to a monochrome and removing evidence of the Renaissance artist's distinctive brushwork. In so doing, he drained the original of its unique aura. Donated to The Met

by curator Henry Geldzahler, a close friend of Warhol, this was the first work by the artist to enter the collection.

## **Romare Bearden**

American, 1911–1988

### ***The Woodshed***

1969

Cut and pasted printed and colored papers, photostats, cloth, graphite, and sprayed ink on Masonite  
George A. Hearn Fund, 1970 (1970.19)

Inspired by African art, modernism, old master painting, and jazz and blues music, Bearden's vibrant mixed-media collages often depict scenes of African American life in both the urban North and the rural South. Here, a family of four gathers for a meal and music. United by everyday rituals, they are also brought together by Bearden's carefully structured format of rectangles and squares. Henry Geldzahler acquired *The Woodshed* in 1970, just one year after The Met's controversial exhibition *Harlem on My Mind* and Geldzahler's own *New York Painting and Sculpture: 1940–1970*, neither of which included any work by Black artists. Bearden himself had joined the chorus of artists who voiced their objections to *Harlem on My Mind*.

## 10. BROADENING PERSPECTIVES

While in the centennial era the Museum claimed it had reached its goal of representing the art of all cultures, the past few decades have proved there will always be more fields to traverse. By the 125th anniversary in 1994, the Fifth Avenue building had met the limits of its footprint in Central Park, and focus shifted to evolving spaces and collections from within. The Met has since broached the digital frontier under Thomas P. Campbell, and current director Max Hollein has encouraged a more nuanced approach to representing global visual culture as a web of intersecting narratives told through multiple voices.

To this end, the institution has acquired outstanding works from previously underrepresented regions and cultures, from Southeast Asia to the reaches of the Byzantine Empire. Curators have simultaneously worked to present a more holistic view of the art of the Americas, including objects created by Black, Indigenous, and Latin American artists. Some of these gaps reflected long-held prejudices based on race, ethnicity, and gender. The growing collection of global contemporary art embraces diversity in all its forms and introduces new media, all situated in the rich context provided by the Museum.

This anniversary offers an opportunity to reflect on The Met's history since 1870, up to the extraordinary developments that have marked the year 2020, in order to position ourselves for a more open and inclusive future.

image caption:

Wangechi Mutu (Kenyan), *The Seated I*, The Met Fifth Avenue Facade, 2019–20

*in case to the right of the panel, left to right*

**John Monteleone**

American, born 1947

***Autumn***

2005

Big-leaf maple, Tyrolean spruce, koa, Macassar ebony, curly red maple, stainless steel, spiny oyster coral stone, mother-of-pearl, diamond, gold plating, golden-brown nitro-cellulose lacquer finish

***Winter***

2002

Tyrolean maple, Tyrolean spruce, curly red maple, Macassar ebony, sterling silver, mother-of-pearl, diamond, nickel plating, natural blonde nitro-cellulose lacquer finish

***Spring***

2006

Red-tiger maple, Tyrolean spruce, Macassar ebony, curly red maple, mother-of-pearl, red abalone shell, turquoise, diamond, gold plating, blue nitro-cellulose lacquer finish

***Summer***

2004

Big-leaf maple, Tyrolean spruce, African red padauk, Macassar ebony, red coral stones, mother-of-pearl, ruby, diamond, gold plating, red nitro-cellulose lacquer finish

**from *The Four Seasons***

(serial numbers 203, 200, 201, 202) Purchase, Abraham J. & Phyllis Katz Foundation Gift, in memory of Michael Allan Katz, 2017 (2017.179.1–.4)

It is rare for a master luthier to build a complete set of instruments to be played together.

The Four Seasons quartet of guitars was conceived as a new ensemble—each instrument functions beautifully as a solo guitar and as part of the group. The unique voice of each guitar is defined by the type of wood, the style of carving, the shape of the body, and the configuration and placement of the sound holes. The individual guitars are decorated to reflect the distinctive mood of each season. The Four Seasons represents a new aspect of collecting musical instruments for The Met, meant to inspire composers and musicians to create music for this innovative ensemble.

*around corner, left to right*

**Faith Ringgold**

American, born 1930

***Street Story Quilt***

1985

Cotton canvas, with acrylic paint, ink marker, dyed and printed cotton, and sequins, sewn to cotton flannel backing

Arthur Hoppock Hearn Fund and funds from various donors, 1990 (1990.237a–c)

Ringgold's *Street Story Quilt* narrates a tale of survival and redemption in Harlem and explores the politics of gender, race, and class. It also leverages the association of quilting with domesticity, collaborative creativity, and women's work, specifically the work of Black women. Lowery Stokes Sims spearheaded the acquisition of Ringgold's quilt not long after it was made, reflecting the curator's longstanding commitment to collecting contemporary art and the work of women artists and artists of color.

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**Carmen Herrera**

Cuban American, born 1915

***Iberic***

1949

Acrylic on canvas on board

Gift of Tony Bechara, in celebration of the Museum's 150th Anniversary, 2019 (2019.13)

In recent years The Met has sought to represent a more comprehensive narrative of modernism, including the artistic traditions of Latin America. Herrera has been a groundbreaking figure in geometric abstract painting since the 1940s, yet her current acclaim belies decades of neglect. She created *Iberic* while in Paris, where she encountered various styles of abstraction from Suprematism to the Bauhaus. The painting intertwines European hard-edge abstraction with Cuban-inspired organic shapes in a lyrical composition and sensual palette. The artist was among the first in Europe to work in acrylic; this is an early example of her use of the medium.

**Mrinalini Mukherjee**

Indian, 1949–2015

***Palmscape IX***

2015

Bronze

Purchase, Lila Acheson Wallace Gift, 2019 (2019.429)

Mukherjee cast the sculptures in the Palmscape series from plant fragments that she gathered around New Delhi and reconfigured to create invented species. This work is the last she completed before her death. It entered the collection following the artist's first retrospective in the United States, *Phenomenal Nature: Mrinalini Mukherjee*, held at The Met Breuer in 2019. The exhibition and acquisition are part of the institution's focus on global contemporary art.

*around corner*

**El Anatsui**

Ghanaian, born 1944

***Dusasa II***

2007

Found aluminum, copper wire, plastic disks

Purchase, The Raymond and Beverly Sackler 21st Century Art Fund; Stephen and Nan Swid and Roy R. and Marie S. Neuberger Foundation Inc. Gifts; and Arthur Lejwa Fund, in honor of Jean Arp, 2008 (2008.121)

This epic work by El Anatsui, one of the foremost contemporary artists, was the centerpiece of the 52nd Venice Biennale in 2007 and acquired by The Met immediately afterward. Its shimmering, woven netlike structure, composed of thousands of aluminum caps and seals from liquor bottles, poetically references luminous Ghanaian textiles, Byzantine mosaics, and chain mail as well as the damaging effects of consumerism and colonialism in Africa. Commenting on the display of another of his works amid historical African art in the Michael C. Rockefeller Wing, Anatsui noted, “the past is facing the present, and it shows that art creation didn’t ever come to a stop in Africa.”

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*in through-wall case, left to right*

### **Hebrew Bible**

Spanish, 1300–1366

Ink, tempera, and gold on parchment; leather binding

The Cloisters Collection, 2018 (2018.59)

Jewish artistic heritage has only become a focus of collecting at The Met in the past decade. This Hebrew Bible not only bears witness to the highest artistic aspirations of the “People of the Book” but also exemplifies the extraordinary cross-cultural exchange that characterizes the artistic and literary production of medieval Spain. It is lavishly embellished with Islamic and Christian Gothic decorative elements blended to sumptuous effect.

### **Andrea Zambelli “L’Honnesta”**

Italian, active 1732–72

#### **Pair of Torah finials (*rimonim*)**

Ca. 1740–50

Silver, parcel gilded

Walter and Leonore Annenberg Acquisitions Endowment Fund, 2016 (2016.416, .417)

These are the first significant pieces of early modern Judaica—works of art for Jewish ritual—to enter The Met collection. They adorned a sacred Torah scroll, which contains the Hebrew Bible wrapped around two staves with handles at the top. This grand set is a rare surviving example of eighteenth-century Italian silver. The maker was a prominent silversmith in Venice, an important center of the craft.

**Andrea Zambelli “L’Honnesta”**

Italian, active 1732–72

**Torah crown (*keter*)**

Ca. 1740–50

Silver, parcel gilded

Director’s Fund, 2013 (2013.443)

*in cases, counterclockwise around gallery*

**Four Gospels**

Armenian, 1434/35

Tempera and gold on paper; stamped leather binding

Purchase, Fletcher Fund, Hagop Kevorkian Fund Gift, in memory of Hagop Kevorkian,

Tianaderrah Foundation, B.H. Breslauer Foundation, Aso O. Tavitian, Karen Bedrosian

Richardson, Elizabeth Mugar Eveillard and Arax Simsarian Gifts and funds from various donors,

2010 (2010.108)

The acquisition of this Armenian gospel book from the Monastery of Saint George testifies to a more global approach to presenting the art of the Middle Ages. Armenians converted to Christianity at the beginning of the fourth century, making them the first Christian nation. The manuscript’s dramatic images draw from their early conversion and at the same time reflect design motifs popular in the Mongol-dominated world in which the work was produced.

### **Processional cross**

Ethiopia, Amhara or Tigrinya peoples, 13th–14th century

Bronze

Purchase, 2005 Benefit Fund, 2011 (2011.159)

In 1895 The Met acquired its first works from Ethiopia: a prayer book and a healing scroll. At the time, they were classified as archival manuscripts and housed in the library. In 1998 the Museum transferred these pieces to a curatorial department, a move that acknowledged their significance as part of the distinctive artistic legacy that developed with the fourth-century adoption of Christianity by the Axumite empire. The Met also began to expand its representation of this rich tradition through acquisitions such as this processional cross. In the Ethiopian Orthodox tradition, the cross is conceived of as the Tree of Life, the source of endless creative inspiration.

### **Headdresses for a Bugis aristocrat**

Attributed to Indonesia, Sulawesi, 19th–early 20th century

Fiber, gold

Purchase, Friends of Islamic Art Gifts and Lewis and Gemma Hall Gift, 2006 (2006.187, .196)

These fine woven headdresses—one black, to be worn before a pilgrimage to Mecca, and one white, for after—were made for a Bugis patron. Their style reflects the influence of the Turkish fez, which traveled to Indonesia across the Indian Ocean, and the black velvet hat *peci* that became an established headwear for men in Indonesia. Works that highlight exchanges between Southeast Asia, India, the Middle East, and eastern Africa have recently enhanced the collection, offering a broader understanding of Islamic art and culture.

## **Saddle plates**

Tibetan or Chinese, ca. 1400

Iron, gold, lapis lazuli, turquoise

Purchase, Gift of William H. Riggs, by exchange, and Kenneth and Vivian Lam Gift, 1999

(1999.118a–g)

The Met collection of armor and weapons from Tibet began with a small group of objects donated in 1935 and grew through purchases and gifts in the 1990s and 2000s to become the most varied and comprehensive of its kind in the world. Among the Museum's many outstanding pieces is this set of saddle plates, one of the most intricate and artistically accomplished examples of pierced ironwork from Asia.

## ***Buddha Shakyamuni***

Tibetan, 12th century

Brass with colored pigments

Zimmerman Family Collection, Purchase, Lila Acheson Wallace, Oscar L. Tang, Anthony W. and

Lulu C. Wang and Annette de la Renta Gifts, 2012 (2012.458)

This sublime Buddha belongs to a small corpus of surviving metal images from the beginnings of Tibetan Buddhist art. Seated in a yogic meditation posture, the historical Buddha gestures with his right hand to the Earth Goddess to witness his unwavering resistance to all manner of desires. This iconic masterpiece was secured from the Zimmerman family, who in the past fifty years formed the leading American collection of Himalayan art, a category previously underrepresented in The Met collection of Asian art.

**Iris van Herpen**

Dutch, born 1984

***Dress***

Fall/winter 2011–12

Polyamide, leather, acrylic

Purchase, Friends of The Costume Institute Gifts, 2012 (2012.560a, b)

Van Herpen's lacelike dress, worn as an exoskeleton on the body, is the first 3D-printed garment to enter the Costume Institute's collection. The designer blurs traditional distinctions between ready-to-wear and haute couture by fusing the machine made and handmade, thereby opening up previously unseen possibilities for the future of fashion.

**Conservation story**

Iris van Herpen made this dress through selective laser sintering (SLS), a 3D-printing process that uses a laser to fuse nylon powder into a computer-generated shape. Unfortunately, nylon deteriorates during SLS, as the material endures high temperatures for long periods of time. This condition is acceptable for manufacturers who employ the technique to create disposable prototypes, but it presents practical and theoretical problems for museum conservators tasked with ensuring the preservation of objects, even those that were intended to be temporary. All SLS-printed works also turn yellow and become brittle, and it is still unknown how long they will ultimately last. Met conservators and scientists collaborate on research into emerging materials and technologies like SLS that challenge standard preservation approaches.

To learn more, visit [metmuseum.org/Conservation150](http://metmuseum.org/Conservation150)

*on opposite wall*

**Ann Hamilton**

American, born 1956

***abc***

1994

Video, black-and-white, silent, 13 min.

Gift of Peter Norton Family Foundation, 2001 (2001.270)

This video is the first moving image work acquired by The Met, which now has nearly 250 examples in film, video, and new media. For *abc*, Hamilton wet her fingertip and slowly erased the letters of the alphabet, seen reversed through a sheet of glass. The footage was then run backward so that the amoeba-like form of her fingertip appears to write the sequence from z to a.

*on wall around corner, right to left*

***Calvary***

Guatemalan, ca. 1790

Wood, paint, gilded silver, glass, hair

Purchase, Harris Brisbane Dick and Gallagher Funds, Nancy Dunn Revocable Trust Gift, and The Edward Joseph Gallagher III Memorial Collection, Edward J. Gallagher Jr. Bequest, 2019 (2019.43a–g)

This sculpture group, made in Guatemala, was once the centerpiece of an altar in an Italian-born merchant's home in the Spanish port city of Cádiz. Its artistry and material richness signaled its owner's piety, his engagement in transatlantic trade, and his access to the wealth of the Americas. This recent acquisition celebrates a distinctive local artistic tradition, placing it in the wider context of the Spanish world.



## **Joshua Johnson**

American, ca. 1763–ca. 1824

### ***Emma Van Name***

Ca. 1805

Oil on canvas

Purchase, Nancy Dunn Revocable Trust Gift, 2016 (2016.116)

This compelling portrait of a Baltimore toddler picking berries from a surreally scaled goblet is an icon of American vernacular painting. Johnson, who was self-taught, is the earliest-known African American painter to make his living from his art. *Emma Van Name* is his most ambitious and engaging portrait of an individual child. Revealing the hallmarks of Johnson's characteristic style in its naturalist precision and imaginative flair, the painting is distinguished by a bravura demonstration of his talents in its nuanced palette, compositional complexity, and deft handling of details, especially in the child's dress and demeanor.

*in opposite case*

## **Central Pomo artist**

### **Carrying Basket**

Yokayo, Mendocino County, California, ca. 1890–1910

Sedge root, redbud shoots, willow shoots, oak or wild grape vine

Gift of Charles and Valerie Diker, 2016 (2016.738.1)

This basket from an Indigenous community in Northern California is likely the work of a woman. Its form, materials, and ornament convey the collaborative and sacred practice of the Pomo's annual harvest. While baskets were used for both utilitarian and ceremonial purposes, the scale of

this example suggests it was produced for the market or privately commissioned to provide a livelihood for community members. The work has been displayed in the American Wing since 2016 as part of a broader dialogue between Native and Euro-American art.

*in through-wall case in The Street*

***Crown of the Virgin of the Immaculate Conception, known as the Crown of the Andes***

Popayán (Colombia), ca. 1660 (diadem), ca. 1770 (arches)

Gold, repoussé and chased; emeralds

Purchase, Lila Acheson Wallace Gift, Acquisitions Fund and Mary Trumbull Adams Fund, 2015 (2015.437)

Widely considered one of the most important surviving examples of precious metalwork from colonial Spanish America, this crown was made to adorn a sacred image of the Virgin Mary venerated in Popayán. It is encircled by scrolls of acanthus leaves set with emeralds in blossom-shaped clusters, symbolizing the Virgin's purity. This masterwork is a spectacular example of The Met's recent efforts to broaden perspectives by expanding previously underrepresented areas in the collection.

To learn how conservators saved this crown from collapsing, visit

[metmuseum.org/Conservation150](https://metmuseum.org/Conservation150)