

The Metropolitan Museum of Art

In and Out

Doors and Doorways at the Met

Why do doors exist ?

To close a room, open a garage, shut a closet. Doors keep out the cold, provide privacy, protect the home, and define spaces.

There are different types of doors and doorways: swinging doors, revolving doors, Dutch doors, sliding doors, folding doors, screen doors, French doors.

Can you think of some others?

What do you call an opening in a fence?

 **Clue: it rhymes with a number between 1 and 10**

Some entrances have no doors but are marked by a decorated doorway, an archway, a tunnel, or columns.

Doors and doorways can be made out of many different materials.

Can you name three?

Let's take a walk around the Museum's first floor. We will find doors and doorways that will take us through many centuries and to different parts of the world.





Doorway (details, above and below), about 1755. English. Gift of Irwin Untermyer, 1964 (64.101.1212)

Facing the “monkey door,” turn right and retrace your steps through the gallery with tapestries and clocks and into the Wrightsman Galleries. Turn immediately to your left and walk through a narrow corridor.

When you leave this corridor and enter the next gallery, you will see a large stone fireplace on your left. Turn right, walk straight ahead, and pass through the Museum’s 1888 carriage entrance. Cross the Carroll and Milton Petrie European Sculpture Court and into a gallery with a terracotta balloon in the center. Turn left into a gallery with furniture, and turn around to find two sets of double doors in which you can see yourself.

Although these beautiful doors look as though they are made of solid gold, the carved decorations are actually wood covered with a thin layer of gold leaf.

What other material do you “see” here? How do the doors open? Do they lock? Are the two halves of the doors similar? How would you describe the images?

On each set of doors can you find two sphinxes, two dragons, two faces of an old man with grapes in his hair, and two birds with branches in their beaks? What other pairs do you see?



Double doors (detail), about 1743–44. Italian, Genoa. Rogers Fund, 1991 (1991.307 a,b)



On your left you will pass an eighteenth-century shopfront from the Île Saint-Louis in Paris, France.

How did someone enter the shop? Can you find a knocker? Describe the entrance. How many doors are there? Of what are the doors made? The windows are decorated with carved garlands. How many can you find? Where did you see garlands before this? What is this shop “selling”?

Shopfront (detail), 18th Century. French. Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1920 (20.154)



Begin in the Great Hall. Facing the Grand Staircase, turn right and walk through the columns into the Lila Acheson Wallace Galleries of Egyptian Art.



Tomb of Perneb (detail), Dynasty 5, about 238–2323 B.C. Egypt, Saqqara. Gift of Edward S. Harkness, 1913 (13183.3)

Straight ahead is an Egyptian mastaba, or tomb, which dates to Dynasty 5 (2381–2323 B.C.). This tomb was the resting place for a court official named Perneb. Enter and follow the small corridor to the decorated chamber. On the walls you will find images of Perneb at the offering table. On the narrow wall at the far end of the chamber is a false door through which the spirit of Perneb would pass to receive food offerings placed on the altar stone.

Think of the door to a room in your home. What is different about that door? Does it move? What is it made of? Could you go through it? How would you compare it to the entrance of the tomb?

How many images of Perneb can you find in the chamber?

 **Clue: He's shown sitting and standing.**

Leave the Lila Acheson Wallace Galleries of Egyptian Art and return to the Great Hall. Turn right and walk along either corridor flanking the Grand Staircase, through a gallery with examples of stained glass, and into the Medieval Sculpture Hall.

Straight ahead of you and dominating this hall is a huge screen.

What do you see at the very top of the screen? It should give you a clue about the building for which this screen was made.

This choir screen is from the cathedral of Valladolid, a city in Spain, and was made in 1763. Its purpose was to separate the congregation (worshippers) from the clergy (the priests).

Walk through the screen's opening. Describe it. Is it really a door? What is the screen made of? Is the base of a different material? How would you lock this door?

Can you find two ovals and one circle?

 **Clue: Look up!**

Choir Screen from the Cathedral of Valladolid (detail), 1763. Gift of The William Randolph Hearst Foundation, 1956 (56.234.1)



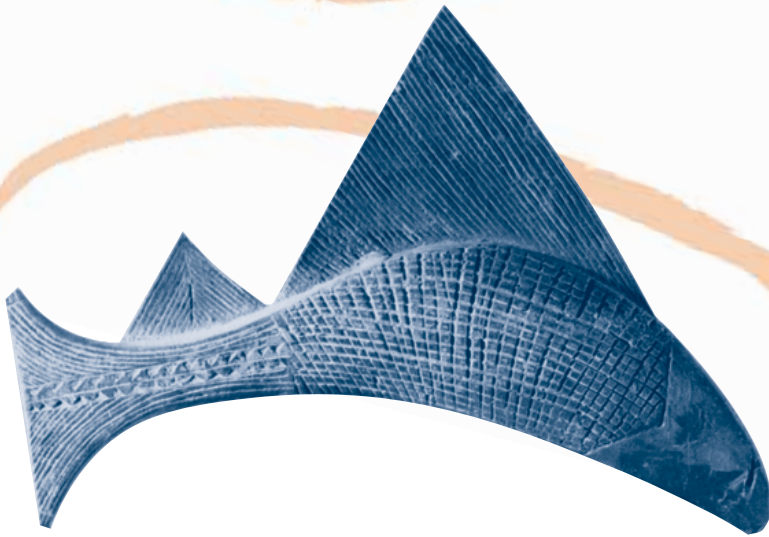
Continue walking toward a pair of glass doors into a gallery with tapestries on the wall and a selection of gold clocks. Turn right into the Annie Laurie Aitken Galleries and continue to the last gallery. Stand with your back to the fireplace.

Scan the room to find two monkeys. Of what are they made? Do they look realistic? Are they on the door or on the doorway? What are they holding?

This door is one of a pair and was made for the duke of Norfolk's London house in 1755. Because of expanding trade with such countries as China and Japan, interest in exotic animals and plants began to grow. Monkeys and camels, strange fruits like pomegranates, and other foreign goods began to appear on many decorative arts made at this time. The door is a later mahogany replacement.

Door with Fish Design
(detail), 19th–20th century.
Baule peoples; Côte d’Ivoire.
The Michael C. Rockefeller
Memorial Collection, Bequest
of Nelson A. Rockefeller,
1979 (1979.206.120)

Finally, exit through the door in front of you, and turn left. Walk past the elevators on the right and a small sales desk on the left. Turn left into the galleries of the Arts of Africa, Oceania, and the Americas. Continue past the arts of Mesoamerica and enter the Arts of Africa galleries. Find a large glass case in which there are two large wooden snakes among other masks. Walk around this case to the other side.



This wooden door was made by the Baule peoples of the Côte d’Ivoire. Doors of this type were made as entrances to courtyards and rest houses within family compounds. Although it’s small, find two clues that tell you it was used as a door.

How would you describe the two fish? Are they the same size? The same kind?

 **Clue: Look at the patterned markings.**

Congratulations — you’ve finished the guide!

At-Home Activity

At home, design a special door and doorway for your room.
Of what material would you make them? Include some animals and patterns.



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