

# Report from the Director and the President

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For the first time in its history, The Metropolitan Museum of Art has a suitably spectacular space in which to present its superlative collection of Greek, Cypriot, Etruscan, and Roman art. An unprecedented fifteen-year redesign and reinstallation project came to culmination this past spring with the opening of the New Greek and Roman Galleries, including the magnificent, light-filled Leon Levy and Shelby White Court. The new galleries bring out of storage thousands of works that had not been on view for decades, if at all. A centerpiece of the “21st-Century Met” construction initiative, the New Greek and Roman Galleries will stand for generations to come as a testament to the vision, devotion, and generosity of all who contributed their time, expertise, and support to this once-in-a-lifetime achievement.

The New Greek and Roman Galleries drew some 300,000 visitors in their first three months, attracting more than a third of the Metropolitan’s attendance during that time. But the grand opening of this “museum-within-the-Museum” was one of many milestones that we were fortunate to celebrate this year. The first phase of an ongoing project to reconfigure the entire American Wing was completed, and the second phase began. An impressive slate of special exhibitions transported visitors to Paris and Berlin, Barcelona and Venice. In a year marked by landmark achievements for the Metropolitan, we were pleased to receive acknowledgment as well for the countless everyday achievements of our remarkable staff and volunteers: the National Television Academy presented the Metropolitan with a 2006 Public and Community Service Emmy Award, recognizing the Museum as “a national treasure and a vital force in the art education and enlightenment of visitors from across the nation and around the world.”

## Acquisitions

This year, the Metropolitan was able to acquire, through purchase at auction, a remarkable sculpture that was prominently featured in 2003’s “Art of the First Cities: The Third Millennium B.C. from the Mediterranean to the Indus,” an exhibition that commemorated an extraordinary moment in human history: the cultural flowering encouraged by the initial emergence of cities and states. The sculpture, a *Striding Figure with Ibx Horns* in copper, ca. 3000 B.C., has features relating it both to Mesopotamia and Iran. One of a pair of nearly identical sculptures of nude superhuman heroes from Mesopotamian mythology, the 6½-inch tall figure was one of about two hundred antiquities and other works deaccessioned this year by the Albright-Knox Art Gallery in Buffalo, New York, which had owned the work since 1950. The Metropolitan’s purchase, with funds from the Lila Acheson Wallace gift, of this outstanding example of ancient Near Eastern art ensures that it will remain on public view, enabling visitors to contemplate the earliest beginnings of one of humankind’s most enduring artistic traditions—the realistic yet idealized depiction of the human form.

Another remarkable acquisition enabled the Museum to complete an ensemble of medieval enameled plaques that had been missing its centerpiece: *The Crucifixion*, ca. 1100, a jewel-like medallion of gilded copper, delicate gold cloisons, and champlevé enamel. The reconstituted ensemble—the medallion together with four plaques with symbols of the Evangelists that the Metropolitan acquired from the Morgan collection in 1917—can be securely attributed to the celebrated abbey of Conques, France’s richest surviving repository of medieval goldsmiths’ work. The medallion was purchased with funds from a gift by Michel David-Weill and the 2006 Benefit Fund.

The Museum’s Drawings and Prints collection was greatly enriched by the acquisition of a recently discovered study by Agnolo Bronzino, one of only about fifty extant drawings that can be securely attributed to the virtuosic Florentine draftsman and painter. The *Study of a Left Leg and Drapery*, ca. 1545–50, is characterized by such delicate precision that an early collector mistook it for a work by Michelangelo. It has come to the Metropolitan thanks in part to the generosity of Honorary Trustee David M. Tobey, who has made a promised gift of a half-interest in the work, with the remaining interest purchased with funds from the Chairman’s Council Gifts and the Joseph Pulitzer Bequest.

The purchase of an exceptionally beautiful example of the work of Pierre Hubert Subleyras, a major figure in French eighteenth-century painting, was made possible by the Wrightsman Fund. The 1746 oil-on-canvas *modello* for the artist’s most important commission—a mosaic altarpiece for Saint Peter’s Basilica in Rome—depicts a rare subject, *The Mass of Saint Basil*. Thanks to the Walter and Leonore Annenberg Acquisitions Endowment Fund, the Museum also acquired an amber, gold foil, and gilded brass casket dating to about 1680 and attributed to the skilled German carver Michel Redlin; it is one of the most important and best-preserved examples of seventeenth-century amber work to have survived. These and other acquisitions of the past year are described in further detail in the fall 2007 *Bulletin*.

## Exhibitions

Last fall’s memorable exhibition season was anchored by two major loan exhibitions celebrating the creative milieu of belle époque Paris. “Cézanne to Picasso: Ambroise Vollard, Patron of the Avant-Garde” re-created the excitement that surrounded the legendary art dealer, bringing together, among other highlights, a never-before reassembled triptych from his 1896–97 Van Gogh retrospective. “Cézanne to Picasso” was the first major exhibition to examine Vollard’s significant role in some of modern art’s most celebrated careers. “Americans in Paris, 1860–1900” showcased masterpieces by James McNeill Whistler, John Singer Sargent, and Mary Cassatt, demonstrating how the landscapes and culture of the City of Light inspired new directions in American art.

Recalling a darker moment in European history, last winter’s “Glitter and Doom: German Portraits from the 1920s” was one of three 2006 exhibitions in the country named “outstanding” by the Association of Art Museum Curators. This sobering exhibition of a hundred paintings and drawings of the post-World War I demimonde—prostitutes and profiteers, veterans and poets—offered visitors a gripping panorama of the turbulent, short-lived Weimar Republic. “Set in Stone: The Face in Medieval Sculpture” featured sculpted heads from the third century A.D. through the early 1500s, many of which had been violently broken from their bodies in centuries past. Accompanied by an online feature available both on computers within the gallery and on the Museum’s website that allowed visitors to explore objects from several perspectives, this particularly rich exhibition brought together science and connoisseurship, history and archaeology.

The Museum continued to present a strong program of modern and contemporary art. One year after Hurricane Katrina, “New Orleans after the Flood: Photographs by Robert Polidori” presented a series of large-scale photographs of flooded and abandoned homes and neighborhoods. The artist visited the city four times between September 2005 and April 2006 to document the widespread destruc-

tion, and his quietly expressive images of decay and decline, saturated with color, have made him one of our most compelling witnesses to the personal and collective loss suffered by the citizens of New Orleans. A pair of exhibitions—“Frank Stella: Painting into Architecture” and “Frank Stella on the Roof,” this summer’s installation on the Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Roof Garden—demonstrated how Mr. Stella, over fifty years into his remarkable career, continues to expand disciplinary boundaries. “Sean Scully: Wall of Light” united recent work from that artist’s distinctive series of paintings and watercolors exploring the interplay of light and shadow. Neo Rauch, a native of Leipzig and one of the most widely acclaimed painters of his generation, was invited to create new work specifically for display at the Metropolitan; the resulting exhibition, “Neo Rauch at the Met: para,” was a series of distinctive, acid-colored large-scale works characterized by ambiguity and confusion, nostalgia and fantasy.

“Coaxing the Spirits to Dance: Art of the Papuan Gulf,” the first in-depth exploration of its subject in some forty-five years, juxtaposed traditional sculptures—including masks, figures, and spirit boards—with historical photographs allowing the viewer to see the objects in their original contexts. “Louis Comfort Tiffany and Laurelton Hall—An Artist’s Country Estate” and “Poiret: King of Fashion” illuminated the life and work of two artists whose innovative designs set new standards in their own time and continue to inspire today. The spring exhibition schedule had a particularly international flavor: “Barcelona and Modernity: Gaudí to Dalí,” the first comprehensive exhibition to focus on the “Catalan Renaissance” of 1888 to 1939, brought together paintings, furniture, photographs, and prints to explore the full range of this uniquely vital period in modern Spanish art; while “Venice and the Islamic World, 828–1797” examined the flow of objects and ideas across the Mediterranean, tracing for the first time in a major exhibition the fascinating story of the Islamic contribution to the arts of Venice.

Also this spring, an unprecedented traveling exhibition sent 135 of the Metropolitan’s finest examples of French painting to the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston and the Neue Nationalgalerie in Berlin. Almost 600,000 visitors attended the exhibition in Houston during its three-month run; in Berlin, where the exhibition opened in June, it attracted some 5,000 to 6,000 visitors a day. Tracing the entire range of development of nineteenth-century French art, the show featured multiple works by Ingres, Monet, Cézanne, Renoir, Van Gogh, Matisse, Picasso, and others, temporarily removed from view here at the Metropolitan because of ongoing renovations in the Nineteenth-Century Paintings and Sculpture Galleries and unlikely, once the new galleries are complete, ever to be lent in such numbers again.

### *Capital Projects*

In January the Museum celebrated the opening of a suite of galleries devoted to American art created between 1810 and 1840, completing the first phase in the ongoing renovation of the American Wing by 2010. The new galleries feature works in all media that reflect the early-nineteenth-century fascination with classical antiquity. This spring marked the start of the project’s second phase: the renovation of The Charles Engelhard Court and the continuing renovation of the colonial period rooms. When this multiyear project is complete, the expanded and renovated American Wing will display American paintings, sculpture, and decorative arts according to the most up-to-date scholarly perspectives, and the galleries will be more easily accessible to visitors.

This year also saw major progress in the renovation and complete reconfiguration of the Ruth and Harold D. Uris Center for Education, which will reopen in October 2007. The new Uris Center will welcome students, teachers, and families to the Museum, beginning with the majestic Diane W. Burke Hall. Its state-of-the-art facilities—including the Nolen Library, the Bonnie J. Sacerdote Lecture Hall, the Carroll Classroom, a Teacher Resource Center, and an art study room—all equipped with the latest media technology, promise to transform visitors’ experience of the Museum and its programs.

The Wrightsman Galleries, the Museum’s spectacular French eighteenth-century period rooms, were closed for much of this year for extensive renovations and reinstallation and will also reopen in fall 2007. Work proceeded apace in the renovation and expansion of the New Galleries for 19th- and Early-20th-Century European Paintings and Sculpture. Scheduled to open in late autumn, the newly refurbished galleries—including the Henry J. Heinz II Galleries, an additional 8,000 square feet of exhibition space—will feature a more thorough display of the Museum’s beloved nineteenth-century collection, augmented with seminal works from the early modern era. Also reopening this fall will be the New Gallery for the Art of Native North America and the completely redesigned and reinstalled Galleries for Oceanic Art, and the Joyce and Robert Menschel Hall for Modern Photography, establishing for the first time a gallery dedicated exclusively to photography created since 1960.

With the opening of the New Greek and Roman Galleries and continued progress in the American Wing, the Uris Center for Education, and the other public spaces mentioned here, the “21st-Century Met” building-from-within initiative reached major milestones this year. Behind the scenes, the Museum is also working to ensure that its staff and volunteers have the facilities they need to maintain the institution’s standard of excellence. This April several departments moved into brand-new, state-of-the-art office spaces located above the New Greek and Roman Galleries. The Human Resources Department is now conveniently located on one floor, with offices and meeting rooms designed for maximum privacy. New offices for the Education and Website departments, featuring open workspaces and plentiful natural light, take advantage of the loft-like space and communicate the Museum’s philosophy that education is a collaborative endeavor.

With very generous support from the City of New York—an allocation of more than \$13 million—the Metropolitan was also able to begin work on the first phase of its plan to upgrade and replace the Museum’s infrastructure. For this crucial funding, we are grateful to Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg, Deputy Mayor Patricia Harris, Commissioner Kate Levin, City Council Speaker Christine Quinn, Manhattan Borough President Scott Stringer, and City Council members Dan Garodnick, Melissa Mark Viverito, and Domenic Recchia for their support.

### *Visitorship*

For the second year in a row, the Museum enjoyed near-record attendance during the week between Christmas and New Year’s, with over 159,000 visitors for the week. Other than 2005, this was the highest-attended holiday week since 1997. Two exhibitions in particular were strong draws: “Cézanne to Picasso: Ambroise Vollard, Patron of the Avant-Garde,” which averaged over 7,000 visitors a day that week, and “Americans in Paris, 1860–1900,” which averaged over 5,000 visitors a day. An economic impact survey conducted by the Museum found that those two exhibitions directly benefited New York City as well, generating \$377 million in tourist spending and \$37.7 million in tax revenues. Total attendance for both the main building and The Cloisters in fiscal year 2007 reached 4.6 million, an increase of 100,000 over 2006 and the highest figure in the past three years.

The New Greek and Roman Galleries provided a boost to attendance in the spring. Even before the galleries opened, anticipation was palpable: the week before the ribbon cutting, average daily calls to the Museum’s information line surged from 200 to 500. Over 30,000 visitors toured the galleries in their first week alone, including over 5,000 guests at special events ranging from a gala dinner and reception for donors, members, collectors, and other friends to a party for New York college students and a reception for government officials and their families. As noted above, by the end of the fiscal year, in just three months, total attendance in the new galleries was over 300,000.

The Museum’s website continued to attract record numbers of visitors and to serve as an increasingly important vehicle for the Museum to promote the collection and its programs. More than 22 million

people visited the website in fiscal year 2007, an increase of 14 percent over the previous year, and found many new features and enhancements related to special exhibitions, the New Greek and Roman Galleries, the Met Podcast program, and more. The Museum also launched an entirely new Concerts and Lectures section with online ticketing capabilities. The website generated \$9.5 million in revenue, and compared to the previous fiscal year, income from the website for Development, Merchandising, and Membership increased substantially. (For a full discussion of the Museum's finances, see the "Report of the Chief Financial Officer" on pages 59–62.)

### *The Fund for the Met*

The Metropolitan's capital campaign in fiscal year 2007 raised nearly \$107 million in new gifts and pledges—a record total and a 62 percent increase over the previous fiscal year—with strong increases all around for gallery and building enhancements and the endowment. The Museum also raised more than \$4.5 million in planned gifts. Since inception, the campaign's gifts and pledges now total over \$864 million and planned gifts total over \$86 million.

Leadership commitments were exceptionally strong, totaling over \$97 million. Noteworthy gifts included those from The Annenberg Foundation for infrastructure, from The Metzger Foundation to name a European Paintings gallery, and from the Sherman Fairchild Foundation to support renovations to the Sherman Fairchild Paintings Conservation Center. From Bruce Ratner, the Museum also received a significant gift for general campaign needs.

Support for capital projects was especially strong with over \$69 million raised, a 96 percent increase over fiscal year 2006. Commitments for the New Greek and Roman Galleries, mentioned above, included gifts from Carole and John Moran and from Tarsi and John Georgas. Generous donors to other projects were Richard Chilton, who added to his American Wing pledge, and Oscar Tang, who is funding the renovation of the Asian Art storeroom. In planned gifts, a sizable distribution from the Raymond Horowitz estate supported the American Wing, and Kenneth Jay Lane made a commitment to name a gallery in the New Galleries for 19th- and Early-20th-Century European Paintings and Sculpture.

The Museum's endowment was bolstered with gifts of over \$33 million in fiscal year 2007, a 16 percent increase over the previous year. Jayne Wrightsman gave a generous endowment gift to name the European Sculpture and Decorative Arts special exhibitions gallery. Several curatorships were endowed this year: the Mary and Michael Jaharis Curatorship of Byzantine Art in the Department of Medieval Art and The Cloisters, currently held by Helen Evans; the Andráll E. Pearson Curatorship in the Arts of Africa, Oceania, and the Americas, now held by Julie Jones; the Ruth Bigelow Wriston Curatorship for American Decorative Arts, currently held by Peter M. Kenny; and the Marica F. Vilcek Curatorship in American Decorative Arts, now held by Amelia Peck. Additionally, the Robert Lehman Foundation made a gift to endow operating support of the Lehman Wing.

Gifts for acquisitions amounted to over \$7 million in fiscal year 2007. Though these gifts are no longer counted in campaign dollars raised, seeking support for acquisitions continues to be an important mission of the campaign.

We thank the City of New York for its continued generous support of both operations and capital projects in the main building and at The Cloisters, and are grateful to the Mayor and the City Council for an additional allocation this year of \$13.5 million, as noted above under "Capital Projects." At the state level, we thank the New York State Council on the Arts for continuing to provide operating support of over \$200,000 annually.

### *Trustees, Staff, and Volunteers*

Robert D. Joffe was elected to the board, as was Wellington Z. Chen, representing the Borough of Queens; Mrs. Irene Aitken, Jean Bonna,

and Lila Shickman were elected honorary trustees. The board appointed Ann Tenenbaum as the Museum's representative to the New York City Arts Commission, and thanked and commended Joyce Menschel for serving in that position for over ten years.

We were saddened this year by the deaths of four honorary trustees who were longtime benefactors and dear friends of the Metropolitan. Patti Cadby Birch, who along with her husband had been a generous supporter of the Museum since the early 1970s, was an active participant in committees that provided advice and support to several curatorial areas, including the Friends of Islamic Art, which she chaired since its founding in 1994. Patricia Taylor Buckley chaired the annual Costume Institute benefit for almost twenty years—from 1978 to 1995—and was Chair of The Costume Institute's Visiting Committee. Her indomitable spirit left an indelible mark not only on this institution but on the world of fashion as well. Kitty Carlisle Hart, a celebrated champion of the arts in New York, shared generously of her elegance, vivacity, and wit in so many ways: as performer, lecturer, co-chair of the Musical Instruments Visiting Committee, advisor, and audience member. Heinz Berggruen, who in 1984 donated his superb collection of ninety paintings and drawings by Paul Klee, illustrating the artist's entire career, demonstrated an astounding level of connoisseurship and passion for art over a long and active career that spanned six decades. His most generous donation—an example of his seemingly infallible eye for quality—will reside at the Met in perpetuity. The board also mourned the death of honorary trustee Craig Hugh Smyth, who also admirably served the institution.

Steven G. Berstler, the Museum's esteemed Chief Investment Officer and Treasurer, also died this year, after a long and valiant struggle with cancer. His integrity, calm demeanor, and quiet competence were the hallmarks of an impressive man, and he will be greatly missed. Steve has been succeeded as Chief Investment Officer by Suzanne E. Brenner, an eight-year veteran of the Museum who served under Steve as Deputy Chief Investment Officer and Associate Treasurer. Suzanne has a strong background in finance as well as a wide range of experience in the arts, and we look forward to working with her in her new role.

There were a number of promotions in departments throughout the Museum. Andrea Bayer in the Department of European Paintings, Jeffrey H. Munger in the Department of European Sculpture and Decorative Arts, Jeff L. Rosenheim in the Department of Photographs, Beth Carver Wees in the Department of American Decorative Arts, and Linda Wolk-Simon in the Department of Drawings and Prints were all promoted to the position of Curator. Edie Watts, a member of the Museum community for over forty years, was promoted to Museum Educator. Additional promotions include Silvia A. Centeno as Research Scientist, Department of Scientific Research; Mindell Dubansky as Museum Librarian, the Thomas J. Watson Library; Lucretia Kargere as Conservator, The Cloisters; and Wendy Walker as Conservator, Sherman Fairchild Center for Objects Conservation.

The Museum is fortunate to rely upon the skillful assistance and generous support of an outstanding group of volunteers, who are involved in almost every aspect of the institution's work, from leading tours of the collection to assisting with curatorial research. This spring we celebrated the fortieth anniversary of the Volunteer Organization, certainly among the largest and most effective such groups in the world and chaired again this year by Carol Grossman with the assistance of Amalia Tellez Payn. As we celebrate, in 2007, some of the most momentous achievements in the Museum's history, it is our distinct pleasure to thank all of our volunteers, trustees, staff, members, and friends, who make the Metropolitan not only an extraordinary museum, but an extraordinary community. Without their unflagging commitment to the Museum's mission, this historic year would have never been possible.

Philippe de Montebello  
Director

Emily K. Rafferty  
President