

Report from the Director and the President

In January of this year, the Metropolitan's long-serving Director, Philippe de Montebello, announced his intention to retire at the end of 2008. In September, after an eight-month global search, and after the conclusion of the twelve months covered by this Annual Report, the Board of Trustees announced that it had unanimously elected Thomas P. Campbell, currently Curator in the Museum's Department of European Sculpture and Decorative Arts as well as Supervising Curator of the Antonio Ratti Textile Center, to succeed Mr. de Montebello as Director and Chief Executive Officer on January 1, 2009. In a message to the Museum's staff, Chairman James R. Houghton wrote, "The retirement of Philippe de Montebello will mark the end of an era of spectacular, unprecedented achievement for our institution." The Metropolitan, he continued, will be left "vibrant and strong, with a committed staff. That constitutes the greatest gift he could bestow on his successor and all of us. As we welcome Tom as our ninth director, we salute our eighth, Philippe, with affection and gratitude."

With the completion of not just one but several phases in its ongoing "21st-Century Met" building-from-within construction plan, The Metropolitan Museum of Art enjoyed a year of achievement and celebration. Reaching from as far north as The Cloisters and as far south as the Michael D. Rockefeller Wing in the main building, from gallery spaces to studios for art making, our completion of a number of capital projects has changed the way visitors experience the Metropolitan.

With this year's exhibitions, several remarkable collaborative efforts—both within the Museum and between the Museum and the outside world—also came to fruition, demonstrating that collegiality, a long-held value within the Metropolitan community, can benefit the public as well. Making tremendous strides in the online world, too, with a growing website audience and top-ranking podcast series, the Museum also proved that a long tradition of scholarship, professionalism, and dedication is also the ideal foundation for all that is exhilarating and new.

Acquisitions

One of the greatest manuscripts from the height of the Byzantine Empire, the *Jaharis Byzantine Lectionary*, was acquired by the Metropolitan this year through purchase. Written in Greek in a style known as "perlschrift," the lectionary was last on display in 1958 at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France and contains 313 folios that include the gospel readings, the Easter liturgy, the church calendar, and a menologion (lives of the saints). The delicately detailed portraits are framed by elaborate borders reminiscent of cloisonné enamel, and exquisitely detailed initials include images of Christ and John the Baptist.

Through purchase, the Metropolitan acquired the monumental Central African masterpiece *Power Figure: Nkisi N'Kondi*, an outstanding example of a key sculptural genre in the African art canon.

Attributed to the atelier of a master active along the coast of Congo and Angola at the end of the nineteenth century, the piece was conceived to house a specific mystical force—that of jurisprudence, known as Mangaaka—and is an electrifying creation of immense stature that transcends its tradition and universally inspires awe.

The Metropolitan's acquisition this year of the early sixteenth-century drawing *The Archangel Gabriel Announcing the Birth of Christ* by the Netherlandish master Lucas van Leyden, crowns the Museum's efforts to make the Metropolitan the most comprehensive repository of Netherlandish drawings in America. This extraordinary work—the only drawing by the artist in the United States—was originally intended as a stained-glass window design. In it, Lucas brings together the monumental figures he admired in contemporary Italian art and a drawing style that is thoroughly Northern—a rich and subtle pattern of lines, hatchings, and cross-hatchings. The work entered the Museum's collection through the combination of a promised gift by Leon D. and Debra R. Black and purchase by the Museum.

The Museum also acquired through purchase a small cabinet picture painted in 1603 by the twenty-two-year-old Domenichino, an esteemed exponent of the early Baroque classical style, which strengthened the European Paintings department this year. Executed on a copper plate, the paint surface almost perfectly preserved, *The Lamentation* is a reprise of one of Annibale Carracci's altarpieces for the church of San Francesco a Ripa, Rome.

The Metropolitan became the center for scholarship on one of the greatest practitioners in the field of photography, and greatly enriched its Department of Photographs, with the acquisition last December of the complete archive of Diane Arbus. The Estate of Diane Arbus selected the Metropolitan to be the permanent repository of the artist's negatives, papers, correspondence, and library. Many of the original materials in the Diane Arbus Archive are familiar to the Museum, since they were featured in "Diane Arbus Revelations," the traveling exhibition that was presented at the Metropolitan in spring 2005. Complementing the archive are twenty of Arbus's most iconic photographs, including *Russian midget friends in a living room on 100th Street, N.Y.C.*, 1963, and *Woman with a veil on Fifth Avenue, N.Y.C.*, 1968, which were purchased by the Museum.

Many other objects of distinction were acquired this year, and highlights of these recent acquisitions, including descriptions and illustrations, can be found in the fall 2008 *Bulletin*.

Exhibitions

For the first time in the history of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, all 228 of the Museum's Dutch paintings—often considered the greatest collection of Dutch art outside of Europe—went on view last fall in the breakthrough exhibition "The Age of Rembrandt: Dutch Paintings in The Metropolitan Museum of Art." More than half a million people visited the exhibition, which commemorated the 400th anniversary year of Rembrandt van Rijn's birth and was momentous in that only about one hundred of these important works are on view at any given time. Spanning more than ten galleries, the exhibition built unstoppable momentum by presenting

Rembrandt's paintings in exciting, unexpected groupings that reflected new views of the artist, his peers, his successors, and the Museum's collection.

"Poussin and Nature: Arcadian Visions" and "Gustave Courbet" focused on two very different French artists—one known for his poetic, traditional methods and the other for his provocative ways. Poussin (1594–1665), founder of the classical tradition in French painting, had never before been the focus of an exhibition at the Metropolitan. But this exhibition, on view last winter and spring, was a revelation, bringing together forty paintings and an equal number of drawings that left no mistake about the artist's ability to reconfigure and ennoble nature rather than simply transcribe it. Gustave Courbet (1819–1877), one of the richest and most famous artists in Paris—recognized as much for his talent as for his well-publicized rebellion against the authority of the art establishment and the state—had not been the subject of a full retrospective in thirty years, so it was with great pleasure that last spring the Metropolitan presented "Gustave Courbet," featuring some 130 works and a selection of photographs that related to the artist's work. The Metropolitan's exhibition was especially noteworthy in that it demonstrated just how innovative the artist was as a painter of both portraits and landscapes.

Modern and contemporary art were also strongly represented this year. "Abstract Expressionism and Other Modern Works: The Muriel Kallis Steinberg Newman Collection in The Metropolitan Museum of Art," presented the late Muriel Newman's personal collection of more than sixty paintings, sculptures, and works on paper by fifty artists—the only existing collection of Abstract Expressionist works gathered at the time of their creation. Known for her intelligence and enthusiasm, Muriel Newman combined her background as a painter, her love of New York, and her eye for modern art to become one of the most prominent collectors of Abstract Expressionism. The first exhibition to focus on the color gray in the works of American artist Jasper Johns, "Jasper Johns: Gray" traced the evolution of the color throughout the artist's work. As early as 1955, Johns was experimenting with gray and finding an astonishing range of the color within a narrow color spectrum. "Jeff Koons on the Roof," this summer's installation on the Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Roof Garden, brought on view three electrifying sculptures never before on public display. Characterized by Koons's work over the past decade, the sculptures portrayed childhood themes blown up to fantastic proportion; in the case of *Balloon Dog (Yellow)*, over ten feet tall.

Last fall's "Eternal Ancestors: The Art of the Central African Reliquary" brought together more than 130 artifacts, including two of the most renowned Fang creations, *Female Figure* and *Seated Female (Black Venus)*, giving visitors a rare glimpse at the mystery behind the spiritual and social imperatives of African reliquaries. Last spring's "Anatomy of a Masterpiece: How to Read Chinese Paintings," the first exhibition at The Metropolitan Museum of Art to display works of art along with enlarged photographic details, spanned one thousand years of Chinese art history, from the eighth to the seventeenth century. The juxtaposition of traditional Chinese art form and modern-day digital technology brought a fresh perspective that also deepened the viewer's understanding of what makes a work a masterpiece.

For the first and only time since their creation more than five hundred years ago, the seminal Italian Renaissance gilded-bronze doors created by Lorenzo Ghiberti over a twenty-seven-year period went on display last fall in "Gates of Paradise: Lorenzo Ghiberti's Renaissance Masterpiece." After more than twenty-five years of conservation, the seventeen-foot-high doors, decorated with evocative

scenes from the Old Testament, began their four-city United States tour at the Met in the Vélez Blanco Patio. After the tour's culmination, the works returned to Florence, where they are being reassembled into their original bronze framework, never to travel again. Last fall's "Tapestry in the Baroque: Threads of Splendor," a visual feast for the eyes and the enchanting sequel to the 2002 special exhibition "Tapestry in the Renaissance: Art and Magnificence," offered the first comprehensive survey of seventeenth-century European tapestry at the Museum. Tapestry was the principal medium of figurative decoration and propaganda for most of the wealthy patrons during that time period, and the Metropolitan's grand-scale exhibition was an exquisite and a comprehensive demonstration of the art form's importance.

Extensive renovations at the Victoria and Albert Museum provided a rare opportunity for the London institution to lend some of its precious medieval and Renaissance works—ones highly prized for their beauty and elegance—to the Metropolitan. "Medieval and Renaissance Treasures from the Victoria and Albert Museum" put on display some of the finest European decorative arts, including the Carolingian ivory cover of the Lorsch Gospels, one of Leonardo da Vinci's notebooks, and an ivory statuette of the crucified Christ by Giovanni Pisano, among others. Many of the works had never before been on view in New York.

Capital Projects

Fiscal year 2008 saw the completion of several significant and impressive capital projects. The new Ruth and Harold D. Uris Center for Education, which had been closed for a three-year renovation and complete reconfiguration, opened to the press, the public, and government officials in a magnificent daylong celebration in October 2007. Education has been fundamental to the mission since the Metropolitan's founding in 1870, and the new Center reaffirms the Museum's pledge to serve the widest range of visitors—from advanced art scholars to novice museumgoers, from families with small children to teenagers and college students—in a space that reflects both a tradition of excellence and a vision of the future.

Occupying more than 25,000 square feet of public space, the Center significantly enhances the Museum's efforts to serve New York City schoolchildren in particular, and we are grateful to Lewis and Dorothy Cullman for their leadership support in this endeavor. A welcoming environment for students and visitors of all ages, the Center—which includes the Diane W. Burke Hall, the Nolen Library, the Carson Family Hall, the Bonnie J. Sacerdote Lecture Hall, the Carroll Classroom, and the Teacher Resource Center—not only inspires Museum visitors; it again distinguishes the Metropolitan as a place in which visitors can experience art and, more important, discover and explore. With its state-of-the-art facilities, multipurpose art studio, and art study room, the new Uris Center for Education allows the Museum to reach students, teachers, families, and communities in the most advanced ways, providing them with valuable keys to a deeper understanding and appreciation of works of art.

A testament to the Museum's commitment to collecting contemporary photographs, the Joyce and Robert Menschel Hall for Modern Photography—the first of its kind to focus exclusively on photography created since 1960—also opened last fall. With pristine details, high ceilings, and more than 2,000 square feet of exhibition space, the hall is ideally suited for large-scale photography.

The newly restored Wrightsman Galleries, the Metropolitan's French eighteenth-century period rooms, reopened last fall as well, presenting the Museum's renowned collection of French furniture and decorative arts as never before. The new galleries—made possible

by Jayne Wrightsman—allow the Museum to display many important works that have not been on view before and to feature new lighting that greatly enhances the presentation of the collection. The Galleries for Oceanic Art also reopened last fall with more than 17,000 square feet of exhibition space for the Metropolitan’s distinguished Oceanic masterpieces. November also saw the opening of the renovated Gallery for the Art of Native North America, with approximately ninety works on display.

December 2007 saw the much anticipated reopening of the renovated and expanded Galleries for 19th- and Early 20th-Century European Paintings and Sculpture, which now occupy nearly 35,000 square feet, including 8,000 square feet of new exhibition space named the Henry J. Heinz II Galleries in recognition of a leadership gift by his widow, the longtime Metropolitan Museum trustee Drue Heinz. Showcasing European paintings from the Museum’s world-renowned collection, dating from 1800 through the early twentieth century, this grand new space allows the Metropolitan to present a more thorough display of its nineteenth-century collection, augmented with seminal works from the early modern era. One notable new addition to the galleries includes the full installation of *The Wisteria Dining Room*, an Art Nouveau dining room designed by Lucien Lévy-Dhurmer shortly before World War I.

The year also saw progress in the American Wing construction project. What began in fall 2007 as an enormous excavation underneath The Charles Engelhard Court to capture an extra 10,000 square feet of space became in February 2008 the beginning of a dramatic new courtyard for American sculpture. This past spring, work began on a mezzanine level on the west side of the courtyard for the display of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century ceramics and stained glass. The Court, period rooms, and The Erving and Joyce Wolf Gallery are scheduled to reopen in May 2009.

Portions of the Medieval Galleries also underwent extensive renovation this past year in preparation for their reopening in fall 2008, thanks to the generosity of Mary and Michael Jaharis. The newly installed Medieval Europe Gallery will be devoted to works of art in all media from 1050 to 1300. The apse will become part of the Mary and Michael Jaharis Galleries for Byzantine Art.

A two-phase project to repair and restore the Museum’s main steps—a municipal icon and perennially popular gathering place for visitors and New Yorkers alike—began this past year and is expected to be completed in April 2009. The project has been funded by the federal, state, and city governments.

With very generous support from the City of New York—an allocation of \$30 million—the Metropolitan was able to continue work on its multiyear 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

With more than 4.45 million visitors to the main building alone—over 100,000 more than last year—fiscal year 2008 proved to be an exhilarating one. The week between Christmas and New Year’s set an attendance record for holiday weeks at the Metropolitan, with a total of 224,000 visitors, an average of close to 25,000 a day for nine days, with three of those days drawing over 30,000 people each. Contributing to these high numbers was “The Age of Rembrandt: Dutch Paintings in The Metropolitan Museum of Art,” which finished its four-month run on January 6 with a total attendance of

over half a million visitors, as noted above. Another attendance high point was reached during the annual Museum Mile Festival, which brought in more than 8,000 visitors after hours on June 3—more than any other year in the festival’s thirty-year history. The Cloisters also had a strong year, with 216,000 total visitors.

The New Greek and Roman Galleries, which opened in April 2007, continued to draw enormous crowds, including their one millionth visitor in February. An economic impact survey conducted by the Museum found that, since their opening, the New Greek and Roman Galleries have generated \$567 million in tourist spending and nearly \$57 million in tax revenues for the City of New York. A full discussion of the Museum’s finances, including the impact of admissions on operating revenue, appears in the “Report of the Chief Financial Officer” on pages 52–55.

The Museum’s website also continued to attract visitors at an impressive rate. Twenty-six million people—15 percent more than in fiscal year 2007—visited the website, which generated \$11.1 million in revenue, with Membership alone bringing in \$2.3 million in sales. The Museum’s podcast series, recently named the world’s number one museum podcast series by a leading industry watcher, is an important way for local, national, and foreign visitors to stay connected with the Metropolitan’s collections and exhibitions. The website’s podcast component saw more than 347,000 downloads this fiscal year.

The Multicultural Audience Development Initiative (MADI) marked its tenth anniversary last winter with its first-ever gala, “An Evening of Many Cultures,” which was attended by more than four hundred guests. The College Group at the Met—a branch of MADI now in its fifth year and dedicated to reaching college-age audiences in the greater New York area—hosted “A Masked Ball in Honor of the New Galleries for Oceanic Art and the Art of Native North America,” attended by more than 3,500 college students, as well as a range of more intimate events, including film screenings and a series of special tours devoted to Egyptian art.

The Fund for the Met

The Metropolitan’s capital campaign reached a milestone this year with over \$1 billion raised during the campaign, which began in 1994. Over \$90 million in new gifts and pledges and more than \$9 million in planned gifts during fiscal year 2008 brought the campaign across this threshold: gifts and pledges totaled over \$954 million and planned gifts over \$89 million. For the Planned Giving program in particular, this fiscal year was exceptional, both in bequests and in annuities.

Leadership gifts continued to account for a substantial portion of funds raised, bringing in over \$83 million. Mary and Michael Jaharis, building on their earlier gift for a Byzantine art curatorship, made significant gifts to create a Byzantine apse, to renovate the Medieval Europe Gallery, and for an exceptional acquisition (see above). Also on this capital front, donors continued in fiscal year 2008 to dedicate funds to improve Museum spaces with more than \$68 million raised for various capital projects. Judith and Russell Carson demonstrated their commitment to education with a generous gift toward the new Uris Center, as did Bonnie and Peter Sacerdote and Jane and Robert Carroll with additional leadership gifts. The Florence Gould Foundation gave a gift to name a 19th- and Early 20th-Century European Paintings gallery. Lastly, the American Wing renovation continued apace with an additional gift from Jan and Warren Adelson and a new gift from Jane and Maurice Cunniffe.

Gifts of \$20 million were added to the Metropolitan’s endowment—the foundation of the Museum’s financial security—in fiscal year

2008. Of particular note was a challenge grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to strengthen the Museum's fellowships and a pledged bequest from Lee Thaw to create an endowment to support staff development. Also of note was a gift to endow the Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History from the New Tamarind Foundation and Zodiac Fund—a joint commitment from the daughters of the founding donors of the Timeline, Harriet and Robert Heilbrunn.

Raising additional funds to build the Museum's permanent collection continues to remain a priority for The Fund for the Met. Fiscal year 2008 saw well over \$15 million raised for the purchase of works of art.

The City of New York continued its generous support of both operations and capital projects in the main building and at The Cloisters. We are particularly grateful to the Mayor, City Council, and the Manhattan Borough President for an additional allocation this year of \$30 million, as noted 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

Jeffrey M. Peek, Mark Fisch, and Bonnie J. Sacerdote were elected to the Board of Trustees, as was Gayle Perkins Atkins, representing the borough of Manhattan. Max N. Berry, Kenneth Jay Lane, and John A. Moran were elected honorary trustees. In August 2007 Lowery S. Sims resigned as an elective trustee.

We were greatly saddened this year by the deaths of two beloved trustees whose contributions to the Metropolitan are beyond measure. Brooke Russell Astor, a generous donor to The Metropolitan Museum of Art for more than forty years—both personally and through the Vincent Astor Foundation—was undoubtedly one of the most generous benefactors in the Museum's history. Not only was Mrs. Astor the guiding force behind the creation of the Astor Court, the spiritual heart of the Museum's Asian galleries that continues to identify the Metropolitan as a major center for Asian art, but she also supported the annual holiday party for all staff and volunteers since 1991 and into perpetuity. Klaus Perls, who in 1991,

together with his wife, donated more than 150 African royal objects from the Kingdom of Benin to the Museum, was extremely fond of the School of Paris, and in 1996 donated thirteen exceptional works by artists such as Pablo Picasso and Chaim Soutine to the Museum. His contributions will forever enrich the collection at the Metropolitan.

Brad Kelleher, former Vice President and Publisher who opened the Met's first art and book shop as a young sales manager in 1950, also died this year. Mr. Kelleher was a stalwart, inventive, inspirational, and brilliant member of the Museum's staff, pioneering and then cultivating to its broad level of success the field of museum merchandising.

There were four promotions within the Conservation and Education departments. Drew Anderson and Marijn Manuels of the Sherman Fairchild Center for Objects Conservation were promoted to the position of Conservator, and Rachel Mustalish was promoted to Conservator in the Department of Paper Conservation. Rebecca McGinnis was promoted to Museum Educator.

The search for a new Vice President and General Manager of Merchandise and Retail concluded in June with the appointment of Brad Kauffman, who comes to the Museum after a distinguished career at the retailer L.L. Bean.

Year after year, the Metropolitan is extremely fortunate to be able to rely on the generous support and assistance of its volunteers, whose work and devotion is felt throughout the Museum. This year, we thank Carol Grossman and Amalia Payn for their two years of exceptional service at the head of the Volunteer Organization, and welcome its new leader Freia Mitarai, assisted by Pamela Summey. On behalf of the Museum's staff, we thank all of our volunteers, members, and friends, as well as our trustees and staff. Their many contributions and their efforts, which always exceed expectations, are what allow The Metropolitan Museum of Art to succeed in its mission and attain a level of excellence that is without question and without peer.

Philippe de Montebello
Director

Emily K. Rafferty
President