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# ZOOM

in on america

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## Art Museums and Galleries



*National Gallery in Washington, D.C. Photo Bozena Pilat*

**In this issue: Art Museums and Galleries in the U.S.**

**Zoom in on America**

## The Metropolitan Museum of Art in NYC



the Met presents over 5,000 years of art from around the world. A neo-Gothic building that was to become the Museum's quarters was erected in the area of Central Park and opened for the public in 1880.

Financial support came from the board's funds, donations, and annuities. Jacob S. Rogers, owner of Rogers Locomotive and Machine Works Company, gave an unexpected and generous donation. He was a frequent guest of the museum and possessed a ten-dollar annual membership card. In his home-state New Jersey he was considered as a miser and misanthrope, but he became one of the most generous Met benefactors, bequeathing the majority of his fortune, amounting to \$8 million to the museum. Thanks to Mr. Rogers, the Met became the richest museum in the world.

The museum includes three sites in New York City—The Met Fifth Avenue, The Met Breuer, and The Met Cloisters. It also offers opportunities for online visiting.

With 26,000 ancient Egyptian objects, the Met has the largest collection of Egyptian art outside of Cairo. The unofficial mascot of the Museum is ancient Egyptian hippopotamus statuette, "William" (see the photo on p. 8,) which entered the collection in 1917.

Museum website: <https://www.metmuseum.org/>



So here we are at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City, commonly referred to simply as the Met. In a city of sky-scrapers and high-rise buildings, the Met is broader rather than higher, but its facade is definitely impressive, with columns and stairs leading to the entrance door.

The highlights of this most famous and biggest art museum in the U.S. include *The Musicians* by Caravaggio, *The Fortune-Teller* by Georges de La Tour, *The Harvesters* by Pieter Breugel the Elder, *Northeaster* by Winslow Homer, Marble Column from the Temple of Artemus at Sardis from about 300 B.C., The Temple of Dendur from 10 B.C., *Tables for Ladies* and *The Lighthouse at Two Lights* by Edward Hopper, *The Annunciation* by Botticelli, *Perseus with the Head of Medusa* by Antonio Canova, *The Cup of Tea* by Mary Cassatt, *The Judgment of Paris* by Lucas Cranach the Elder, works by Pablo Picasso, Johannes Vermeer, Roy Lichtenstein, Paul Cezanne, Paul Gauguin, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, Auguste Renoir, Edgar Degas, Elisabeth Louise Vigée Le Brun. In 1910, the Met was the first public institution in the world to acquire a work of art by Henri Matisse.

The idea of founding an art museum in New York City was conceived and first discussed in Paris. It was July 4th, 1866 and a group of Americans who celebrated their country's Independence Day in the capital of France decided that America needed a museum that features world art. Today



*The Metropolitan Museum of Art in NYC, Photos Bozena Pilat*

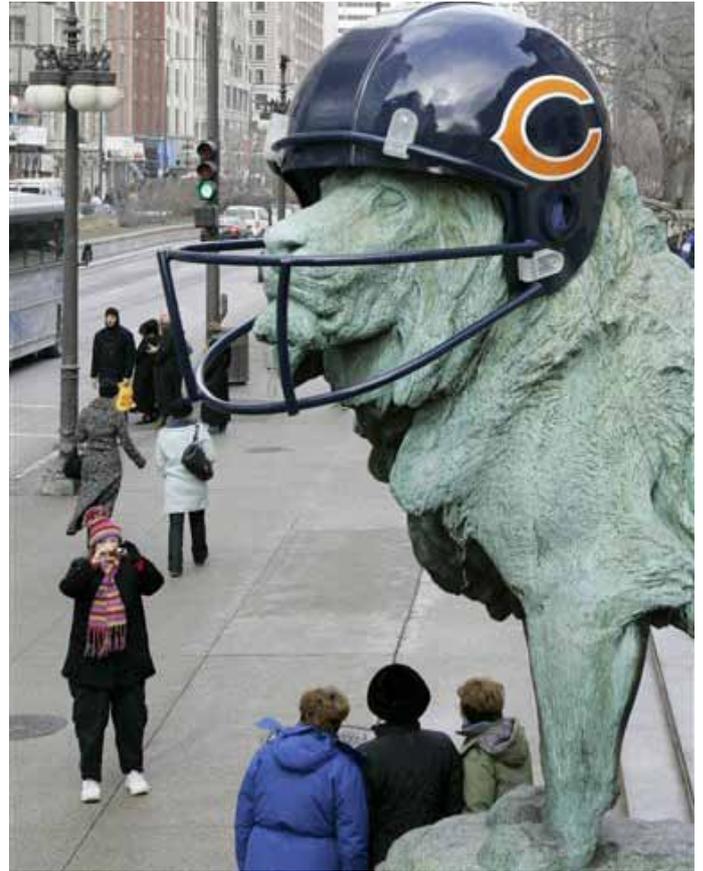
## Art Institute of Chicago



Founded as the Chicago Academy of Fine Arts in 1879, it changed its name to the Art Institute of Chicago in 1882. Its first president was banker and philanthropist Charles L. Hutchinson. Throughout its history the institution saw additions to the buildings as well as extensions to collections. Today, it is the second-largest art museum in the United States, after the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Its permanent collection includes nearly 300,000 works of art. There are such iconic works as Georges Seurat's *A Sunday on La Grande Jatte*, Pablo Picasso's *The Old Guitarist*, Edward Hopper's *Nighthawks*, or Grant Wood's *American Gothic*.

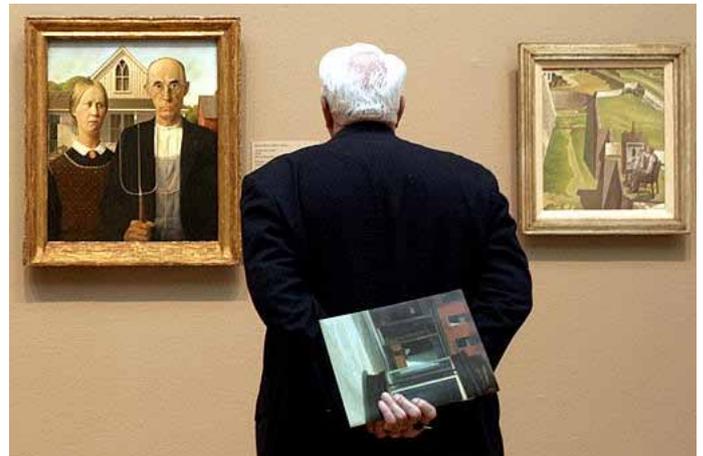
As a research institution, the Art Institute also has a conservation science department, five conservation laboratories, and one of the largest art history and architecture libraries in the country—the Ryerson and Burnham Libraries.



Major exhibitions of works by Paul Gauguin, Claude Monet and Vincent van Gogh were organized in the last decades of the 20th century.

In 2015, the museum received a fabulous gift of postwar pop art donated by collectors Stefan Edlis and Gael Nee-son. The donation includes works by Andy Warhol, Jasper Johns, Cy Twombly, Jeff Koons, Charles Ray, Richard Prince, Cindy Sherman, Roy Lichtenstein and Gerhard Richter.

The museum holds works of art from early Japanese prints to the art of the Byzantine Empire to contemporary American art. It is most famous for its collections of Impressionist and Post-Impressionist paintings, widely regarded as one of the finest collections outside of France. Museum website: <https://www.artic.edu/>



## National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.



van Gogh's *Self-Portrait*, *The Skater* by Gilbert Stuart, *The Farm* by Joan Miró, *The Boating Party* by Mary Cassatt, paintings by Picasso, Monet, and Gauguin, photographs by William Henry Fox Talbot, Gordon Parks, Margaret Bourke-White, sculptures by Auguste Rodin and Edgar Degas, and many others.

Now that the NGA is temporarily closed due to the coronavirus, visitors are still welcome, only virtually. You can choose between online programs such as *Editions* - talks by renowned art historians about the collection, *Images* - which allows searching, browsing, sharing, and downloading images, *Exhibitions* - tours of different rooms offering dynamic 3-D excursions across the museum or visiting the latest exhibits.

The National Gallery of Art (NGA) in Washington, D.C. was privately established in 1937 for the American people by a joint resolution of the United States Congress. Andrew W. Mellon donated a substantial art collection and funds for construction of the Gallery buildings and premises. Admission at this great museum of art is always free.

NGA website: <https://www.nga.gov/>

Over 150,000 paintings, drawings, prints, photographs, sculptures and decorative arts comprise the collection today. The treasures of the gallery include such works as the only painting by Leonardo da Vinci in the Americas, *Ginevra de' Benci*, Raphael's *Madonna*, Jan van Eyck's *Annunciation*, *Girl with the Red Hat* by Johannes Vermeer, *Haskell's House* by Edward Hopper, Vincent



Photos Bozena Pilat

## Museum of Fine Arts, Boston



metalwork, and other art forms from Japan, China, Korea, South and Southeast Asia, and the Islamic world.

*The Art of Africa and Oceania* collection includes masterpieces from the 16th to 20th centuries such as altarpieces, palace pillars, historic men's masks, as well as art traditions from Indonesia to New Zealand and Hawaii.

*The Art of the Ancient World* collection boasts one of the finest Greek, Roman, and Byzantine art in the world. These works range in date from about 6500 BC to AD 600 and include diverse sculptures, jewelry, coffins, mummies, coins, weapons, architecture, vases, carved gems, musical instruments, and mosaics.

*The Contemporary Art* collection displays renowned modern artists including: El Anatsui, Lynda Benglis, Kathy Butterly, John Cederquist, Tara Donovan, Mona Hatoum, Jenny Holzer, Alex Katz, Anish Kapoor, Ellsworth Kelly, Glenn Ligon, Josiah McElheny, Ken Price, Martin Puryear, Doris Salcedo, Kara Walker, Andy Warhol, Rachel Whiteread, and Fred Wilson, among many others.

Other collections include: Photography, Prints and Drawings, Musical Instruments, the David and Roberta Logie Department of Textile and Fashion Arts, Jewelry, and Judaica.

Museum's website: <https://www.mfa.org/>

*Top left: Pamela Hatchfield, a conservator at the Boston's Museum of Fine Arts, holds a time capsule she removed from the cornerstone of the Statehouse in Boston, December 11, 2014. Inside the capsule there was a collection of coins in various denominations dating from the 1650s to the 1850s, newspapers, a copper medal of George Washington, a Seal of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and a silver plaque inscribed by Paul Revere and Samuel Adams, top right: the art installation called "Breathing Flower" by artist Choi Jeong Hwa, of Seoul, South Korea, outside the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston on the Museum's 150th anniversary on February 4, 2020, left: from an exhibit in 2005: a 1954 Ferrari 375 Plus racing car at the Museum of Fine Arts, in Boston.*

*All Photos AP Images*

With more than 450,000 works of art, the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston (MFA) has one of the biggest collections in the Americas. Founded in 1870 in Copley Square, the museum moved to its current Fenway location in 1909. Below are some of the Museum collections:

*The Art of the Americas* collection features the ancient Americas and Native American art, as well as early colonial New England decorative arts and paintings.

*The Art of Europe* collection includes more than 21,000 artworks from the Middle Ages through the mid-20th century. Featured artists include Rubens, Van Gogh, Velázquez, Francisco de Zurbarán, El Greco, Renoir and Monet.

*The Art of Asia* collection is comprised of more than 100,000 objects and includes paintings, prints, sculpture, ceramics,



## Philadelphia Museum of Art



The history of the Philadelphia Museum of Art goes back to the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia in 1876, which celebrated the 100th anniversary of the *Declaration of Independence*. The art gallery set for the occasion was intended to outlast the Exposition and house a permanent museum. The new museum was to focus on applied art and science, and provide a school to train craftsmen in drawing, painting, modeling, and designing. Thus, in 1877 Pennsylvania Museum and School of Industrial Art opened. Later the school became independent of the museum and is now part of the University of the Arts.

The museum possesses over 240,000 objects in its collection. Alongside paintings, drawings, prints, sculpture and photographs the Philadelphia Museum has a collection of



costume and textile pieces, lace, ceramics, glasswork, antique furniture, enamels, jewelry, metalwork, glass, ceramics, and books.

Among the masterpieces in the possession of the Philadelphia Museum of Arts we find: *After the Bath* by Edgar Degas, Vincent van Gogh's *Sunflowers*, Pablo Picasso's *Three Musicians* and *Old Woman*, *Fifty Days at Iliam* by Cy Twombly, Peter Paul Rubens' *Prometheus Bound*, *At the Moulin Rouge* by Henri Toulouse-Lautrec, Winslow Homer's *The Life Line*, Claude Monet's *Japanese Bridge* and *Water Lilies* and many others.

Museum website: <https://philamuseum.org/>



Top left: The bronze statue of Sylvester Stallone portraying the boxer from the film "Rocky III" (September 2006), top right: The Philadelphia Eagles ceremony after a Super Bowl victory parade (February 2018), middle: Cameras are set to broadcast Vincent van Gogh's *Sunflowers* in a virtual exhibition (August 2017), bottom left: Pieces of cake are given to exhibit visitors in celebration of artist Vincent van Gogh's 159th birthday (March 2012), bottom right: a piece of furniture by Virgil Marti titled *Sigmund*, 2010, surrounded by art work inspired by Pablo Picasso (February 2010) All photos AP Images

# ACTIVITY PAGE

## ACTIVITY 1: READING

Museums, art galleries are cultural landmarks of their cities, but they also function as community hubs which combine art with important events for their communities such as sporting events or holidays, organize interactive games for kids and celebrate the birthdays of legendary art masters.

Read the articles on pp. 2-6, look at the pictures and decide how different museums engage their communities. Which museums of the ones presented in this issue engage in initiatives listed below?

Sculpted lions in front of museums are works of art made by renowned sculptors, but occasionally, especially during big sporting events such as the Super Bowl, the sculptures are dressed with funny props, like oversized helmets, to support local sports teams. Sports fans and tourists appreciate the humor of such initiatives.

Organizing birthday parties for painters and sculptors whose works are in the museum's collections. It is going to be a memorable visit at a museum if it coincides with the birthday of an artist. You may be treated to a piece of delicious birthday cake.

Celebrating museum's birthday or other anniversary with a special outdoor or indoor installation, exhibit or event.

Installing statues of film or book characters in the vicinity of a museum, which becomes a recognizable spot, one that is popular for group photos or selfies.

Now make your own list of activities a museum might organize to enhance its presence and attractiveness for the local community.

## ACTIVITY 2: WRITING:

Which museums you have visited have made a lasting impression on you? Why?

Write a long paragraph describing your visit to this museum, including the following:

How did you learn about this museum/exhibit?

Did you read any materials about the museum/works of art in advance?

How was the exhibit space arranged?

Did the visit meet your expectations?

Why was this particular visit so memorable?

Extra activity: If you have a picture from this memorable museum visit, share it on Zoom in on America Facebook page :)

## ACTIVITY 3: SPEAKING:

Look at the photograph on the right and decide which of the museums presented on pp. 2-6 is shown.

What helped you guess?

If you haven't been to that museum yet, would you like to visit it?



MAY-JUNE 2020

TRIVIA QUESTION

GIVE THE FULL NAME OF THE MET

Send the answer (with your home address) to:  
KrakowAIRC@state.gov

The 4th, the 7th and the 14th sender of the correct answer will be awarded with a book prize.

Deadline June 30, 2020

March-April  
Answer:

Lake Superior

The winners are:

Klaudia from Gdańsk, Maks from Bezrzecze and Natalia from Trzyciąż

CONGRATULATIONS!!!

The prizes will be sent to you by mail.



Zoom is online at  
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31-043 Krakow  
KrakowAIRC@state.gov



*The Met: Hippopotamus ("William") ca. 1961–1878 B.C.*