Metropolitan Museum of Art Encyclopedia Article

Metropolitan Museum of Art

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Metropolitan Museum of Art

Among the largest, richest, most famous and most comprehensive art museums in the world, the New York City's Metropolitan Museum of Art boasts collections spanning virtually all periods and cultures. The millions who pass through its handsome and expertly arranged galleries each year—paying a voluntary sum for admission—to view both the permanent collection and the special exhibitions are testament to the museum's democratic founding ideal that art exists not just for the cultured few but the benefit of the many. Chartered in 1870, opened in 1872, and moved in 1880 to its present handsome building in New York City's Central Park, the Metropolitan had burgeoned, by the 1990s, into a complex of over 17 acres; its medieval branch, The Cloisters, opened in Fort Tryon Park in 1938. Besides paintings and sculptures, outstanding treasures include collections of arms and armor, costumes, musical instruments, Tiffany glass, baseball cards, and an entire Egyptian temple.

Further Reading:

Hoving, Thomas. *Making the Mummies Dance: Inside the Metropolitan Museum of Art.* New York, Simon & Schuster, 1993.

Tomkins, Calvin. *Merchants and Masterpieces: The Story of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.* New York, E. P. Dutton, 1970.