

Topic Page: [Metropolitan Museum of Art](#)

Definition: **Metropolitan Museum of Art** from *Collins English Dictionary*

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1 the principal museum in New York City: founded in 1870 and housed in its present premises in Central Park since 1880

Summary Article: **Metropolitan Museum of Art**

From *The Columbia Encyclopedia*

New York City, founded in 1870. The Metropolitan Museum is the foremost repository of art in the United States and one of the world's great museums. It opened in 1880 on its present site on Central Park facing Fifth Ave. The original Gothic Revival-style building was designed by Calvert Vaux and J. W. Mould and expanded by Richard Morris Hunt and by McKim, Mead, and White during the early 1900s. The present facade and entrance structure was completed in 1926. The museum is owned by the city, which contributes to its upkeep, but otherwise it is supported by private endowment and income from memberships and admissions.

The museum's most outstanding collections include European paintings and sculpture of the Renaissance, baroque, and modern periods; pastels; watercolors; miniatures; a vast number of drawings and graphic art works; and armor. Much of the museum's remarkable medieval art collection is housed in the Cloisters, a separate building in northern Manhattan erected from various medieval components in 1938. The American Wing houses one of the finest and most comprehensive collections of the nation's art. The print collection includes woodcuts and engravings, dating from the 15th cent., as well as etchings, lithographs, and graphic works in other media.

The museum's hundreds of examples of Greek pottery and its Greek and Roman sculptures are among the finest such collections in the world. The extensive Egyptian collection has objects dating from 30,000 B.C. to A.D. 641 and architectural monuments including the mastaba of Perneb (erected c.2460 B.C.) and the Temple of Dendur (c.15 B.C.). There also are fine collections of Middle Eastern and Asian art, the Michael C. Rockefeller collection of primitive art, a wing devoted to 20th-century art, and an important exhibition of antique and primitive musical instruments. The Costume Institute provides a source of inspiration and reference for designers through its collection of authentic costumes and accessories, international in scope and covering four centuries. In 2016 the Met Breuer, dedicated to modern and contemporary, opened in the leased former home of the Whitney Museum of American Art.

See Tomkins, C. , *Merchants and Masterpieces* (1970, rev. ed. 1989);

two guidebooks, *The Cloisters*, (3d ed. 1963) and.

Metropolitan Museum of Art Guide (ed. by de Montebello, P. , rev. ed. 2000);

Danziger, D. , *Museum: Behind the Scenes at the Metropolitan Museum of Art* (2007).

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