

# Education and Concerts & Lectures

---

## Overview

In fiscal year 2015 Education and Concerts & Lectures continued to position the Metropolitan Museum as a creative catalyst and cultural collaborator that fosters the dynamic exchange of ideas. Through inventive, intellectually rigorous, and socially dynamic experiences inspired by our collection and exhibitions, the department created a broad range of meaningful encounters for our visitors. We built on our existing priorities to strengthen our public relevance and role as a civic leader, serve as a catalyst for community initiatives and a hub for cultural organizations and allied groups, be a creative nexus for practicing artists, and provide a training ground for thought leaders. Our work would not be possible without continued close collaboration with partners both within and outside the Museum. Events and programs featuring experts and well-known artists continued to draw new audiences, who were delighted by the variety, depth, and rigor of our programming. Opportunities for social engagement attracted new and particularly younger visitors.

A total of 28,422 Education and Concerts & Lectures events drew 794,179 participants, the latter figure representing an increase of thirteen percent over last year. Programs designed for our youngest audiences continued to grow noticeably, indicating an increased demand for shared, informal, and multimodal experiences with art and cultural traditions. We saw a nine percent rise in family programs attendance over fiscal year 2014. A renewed focus on serving teen audiences resulted in attracting 7,463 youth to the Met this year, markedly raising our profile as a resource and a social destination for these participants. The Museum also remains a highly valued resource for K–12 students and teachers: 237,343 participated in 6,259 guided and self-guided school group visits this year, while 3,777 educators attended programs focused on integrating art into classroom teaching. Ticket sales for live-arts programs, especially through Concerts & Lectures, rose by twenty percent over last year, with a fifty percent increase—similar to fiscal year 2014—by first-time attendees. Once again, the number of visitors of all ages participating in art-making experiences rose over last year, with a sixty-one percent increase for Drop-in Drawing alone, attesting to the demand for such hands-on creative outlets.

In fiscal year 2015 we continued to employ a variety of audience research and evaluation methods to better understand our visitors and their motivations and interests. Our aim was to improve visitor experience and customer service, often collaborating with the departments of Design, Digital Media, Marketing, Membership, and Communications on user research and testing and program branding. The diversity and breadth of our innovative programs—from intellectual explorations and inventive performances to social encounters and creative discoveries in the art-making process—attracted visitors of all ages and abilities to experience the Met in their own way.

### THE MET AS CONVENER

Throughout the year we brought together organizations and individuals around common goals, strengthening our connections with local, national, and international communities across various sectors.

Two new offerings—Career Labs and Teens Take the Met!—increased participation in teen programs this year. A significant number of students—497 aged fifteen to eighteen—flocked to Career Labs over the course of the year to explore professions in the creative sector. To launch Teens Take the Met!, we convened over seventy City cultural and community organizations alongside various Museum departments to create an unprecedented biannual, large-scale event, which included tours, art making, theater workshops, 3D printing demonstrations, and a teen dance party. Responding to a governmental call for organizations to provide increased safe, creative spaces and activities for teens, we introduced this group to the multiple and varied resources available at the Met and at other cultural and community-based organizations across

New York City. The two Teens Take the Met! events attracted approximately five thousand students from across the five boroughs, thirty percent of whom had never before visited the Met.

The convening, training, and cultivation of high school, undergraduate, and graduate students remained a priority. Throughout the year, we hosted seventy-five high school interns who learned from professionals across the Museum, led a workshop for other teens, and participated in public-speaking and writing seminars. Forty-eight interns participated in the MuSe Internship Program for College and Graduate Students, which, through seminars and departmental placements, served as a bridge between formal education and practical work experience by engaging them in intensive on-the-job professional training. Through her internship, blind artist Emilie Gossiaux trained to become a museum educator and helped us develop strategies to engage blind visitors through programs such as Seeing Through Drawing. She also user-tested the new MetApp for visitors with visual impairments in a collaboration with the Digital Media Department.

Forty-six international fellows joined the Met's unique community of emerging and established scholars and gathered for intellectual exchange throughout the year. Sixty-six percent of the 2014–15 cohort indicated that making such professional connections was invaluable to their work and that, in the words of one fellow, the opportunity was “one of the most positive, constructive, enlightened, inspiring things the Met does.”

New approaches to engaging higher education communities encouraged the use of the Met as a multidisciplinary teaching resource. More than 530 professors from over fifty local colleges and universities gathered with Museum staff at the first-ever interdisciplinary faculty reception, resulting in a greater number of class visits and tailored sessions at the Met. Working with this year's Museum Education and Public Practice Fellow, we also created a pilot faculty-dialogue program that encouraged instructors to connect their disciplines with the collection and reflect on their teaching practice. Eighty percent of those who attended felt the program sparked ideas for future teaching and research.

Deepened engagement with primary and secondary schools was a hallmark of educator programs this year. We began a significant, multi-year initiative, supported by the Brooke Astor Fund for New York City Education in The New York Community Trust, to extensively meet and work with K–12 educators from New York City Title I public schools. Starting with fifteen middle school educators, this cohort spent a year collaborating with our team of Museum educators to identify best teaching practices that support students' critical thinking and creative problem-solving skills. Participants created lessons plans, brought their students to the Museum on multiple visits during the year to test and refine these lessons, and then shared their results for peer and staff feedback. These educators participated in a total of forty-six hours of deep learning and knowledge implementation.

Programs for adults at all levels catalyzed intellectual exchange and built community around shared interests. For example, all exhibition tours of “Assyria to Iberia at the Dawn of the Classical Age,” as well as related interdisciplinary gallery talks were filled to capacity, including one between a Met curator and a graphic novel artist on the subject of monsters. A two-day symposium assembled international experts, including renowned scholar of Ancient Greece Sir John Boardman, to share new research in the field; the proceedings will be published next year. In collaboration with the Department of Modern and Contemporary Art, we presented In Our Time: a three-part architecture and design series that brought together some of the best thinkers, makers, and builders of today, including architects Bjarke Ingels, Mauricio Pezo and Sofia von Ellrichshausen, and Kazuyo Sejima. Raising awareness of the Met's new curatorial and public programming foray into the subject, these lectures offered ways to think locally and globally about architecture and design.

The Sunday at the Met and SPARK series connected large adult audiences with topics of public interest and experts from a host of backgrounds.

A conversation among designer Vivienne Tam, playwright David Henry Hwang, journalist Elizabeth L. Peng, and the Met's Douglas Dillon Chairman of Asian Art Maxwell K. Hearn examined cultural exchange and appropriation in response to The Costume Institute exhibition "China: Through the Looking Glass." The pairing of *New York Times* art critic Holland Cotter and Vishakha Desai, President Emerita of the Asia Society, facilitated a timely discussion of the origins and implications of art and globalism in the twenty-first century. Concerts & Lectures presented Mali Now, a five-event series as part of our three-year Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art-supported programming related to contemporary Islamic culture. Henry Louis Gates, Jr., Alphonse Fletcher University Professor and Director of the Hutchins Center for African and African American Research at Harvard University, moderated talks with scholars, politicians, and thought leaders as they examined preservation of cultural heritage, the importance of music in Malian culture and conflict, and women's roles in Mali of the future. Concerts featured singular performances by Malian virtuosos Salif Keita and Bassekou Kouyate. The audience, over half of which was new to our programming, included large numbers of Malian nationals and immigrants.

#### THE MET AS COLLABORATOR

Collaborations internally and externally resulted in rewarding and innovative events and projects that supported increased outreach efforts.

For example, a two-day international symposium related to the exhibition "Grand Design: Pieter Coecke van Aelst and the Renaissance" offered a unique opportunity for us to forge relationships with Parsons The New School for Design students and faculty. One day was presented at Parsons The New School, allowing us to reach new audiences and strengthen relations with academic partners.

Education, Concerts & Lectures, Digital Media, three curatorial departments, Editorial, Marketing, Visitor Services, and The Photograph Studio developed Viewpoints, a new thematic approach to the interpretation of our collection. The pilot project helped visitors explore the collection through the theme of body language, investigating how the sculpted body communicates using a range of platforms—gallery object labels, a multimedia tour available in the galleries and online, social media, and live programs. Modeling for visitors the many ways to look at art, each stop on the multimedia tour features two to four perspectives, including those of dancers Kyle Abraham, Francesca Harper, and Bill T. Jones, musician Joan Jeanrenaud, neuroscientists Dr. Eric Kandel and Dr. Edward Vessel, theater actors and directors Quincy Tyler Bernstine, Jennifer Morris, and Sam Pinkleton, and Met curators and educators, such as Emmanuel von Schack, who shares his perspective as an American Sign Language user.

With the Filomen M. D'Agostino Greenberg Music School of Lighthouse Guild, we presented the annual Lighthouse Guild at the Met Concert: Rhapsody in Color, which continued and deepened our long-standing creative partnership that provides access to people who are visually impaired. During the concert, which also featured visually impaired performers, interpretation of music and poems was paired with images and verbal imaging descriptions of works of art in the collection that, along with special scents created by fragrance and flavor company Givaudan, provided a truly multisensory experience. The event drew 756 attendees in The Grace Rainey Rogers Auditorium, and helped us diversify participation as well as challenge expectations of achievement by people with disabilities.

Since 1999 we have partnered with the New York City-based organization Cool Culture to offer unlimited free admission to low-income families with young children. This year we collaborated to launch Adopt-a-Museum, a program that builds relationships with nine early-childhood centers in Harlem, provides resources, parent workshops, and family programs to support their Met visits, and facilitates participation in cultural festivals and other celebrations in their communities. As a result, we saw high levels of participation by this group at our Lunar New Year and Senses of Springtime: Celebrate India! festivals: twenty-three percent of those attending were Cool Culture families.

Our work with the New York City Department of Education continues to be extensive, including two multisession after-school programs for

seventh-grade students launched this year. We participated in Teen Thursdays, a major Department of Education initiative that exposes middle-school students to the rich learning opportunities available at premier cultural institutions throughout the City. Partnering with P.S. 7, a public school in East Harlem, students investigated American history through American art, gallery conversations, writing, and art making during a number of sessions at the Met. Thanks to the support of the City Council and Department of Cultural Affairs, students from P.S./I.S. 78 in Long Island City explored collection-inspired portraiture through after-school workshops and Museum visits. Led by Metropolitan Museum educators and teaching artists, these intensive programs generated deep connections, while helping students develop their own creative voices and skills.

#### THE MET AS CATALYST

Continued engagement with practicing artists and the exploration of the creative process remained a priority this year. Building on similar and substantial work over the past two years, we encouraged working artists and other cultural producers to use our collection as a resource and incorporate it into their lives and work.

The Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts—the City's largest arts residency organization—and the Met gathered thirty-five artists at the Museum to build a creative community and introduce these participants to ways that the collection's varied works can inspire artistic practice. Concerts & Lectures also engaged in a profound, yearlong collaboration with The Civilians, the Met's 2014–15 artist-in-residence ensemble. Responding to the question "What does it mean to be an American?," the group partnered with The American Wing and was inspired by its art collection to develop the new theater work *The Way They Live*. In January we began to research and plan an additional fifteen-month residency—made possible by the Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art—with visual artist Peter Hristoff. Born into a Bulgarian family of artists living in Istanbul and strongly influenced by Turkish art, Hristoff draws from his own research of the Met's collection to develop programs that incorporate many curatorial departments across the Museum. The Museum's goal in granting this residency was to promote greater understanding of the diversity of contemporary Muslim culture through the practice of a working artist.

Artist participation ignites in visitors of all ages a sense of curiosity and deepening understanding of visual art, artists, and art making. Inspired by The Costume Institute exhibition "Charles James: Beyond Fashion," 805 participants joined fashion designers and educators at Creating Fashion to explore the world of the fashion studio. Guest specialists Jeffrey Wirsing, Joyce Fung, Lexi Tsien, and Ethan Hon modeled design, drafting, and construction techniques that visitors then emulated in art-making activities. Further collaborating with The Costume Institute, teaching artists led Drop-in Drawing sessions, during which more than six hundred participants drew from works of art in the Greek and Roman galleries and from a live model wearing a version of Charles James's "Clover Leaf" dress.

Artist engagement was also central to Sunday at the Met and Friday Focus lectures. In conjunction with the exhibition "The Plains Indians: Artists of the Earth and Sky," a panel discussion featuring artists Edgar Heap of Birds and Dana Claxton explored the ways in which their work incorporates and recontextualizes Plains Indians' artistic traditions. In a Friday Focus program, Art, Poetry, and Democracy: A Conversation, Museum artist Siah Armajani discussed his art-making practice and inspiration as well as his experiences in Iran before immigrating to the United States.

This year we introduced seasonal performances through which families with children could meet and interact with artists, explore their creative practice, and enjoy a range of participatory live-arts experiences. As part of our free programs, Third Coast Percussion performed *WAVES*, exploring the intersections between art, music, and science, and engaging 105 kids and their families. Through our Bring the Kids program some ticketed performances cost as little as one dollar for children, and, with the new ability to purchase online, sales doubled compared to last year.

Fiscal year 2015 featured programs that could only have been produced at the Met, as galleries were transformed into generative spaces for participation, creation, and inspiration. Programs connected existing, broader, and new audiences with our collection and exhibitions and delighted visitors of all ages.

MetFridays: New York's Night Out, a Museum-wide programming and marketing initiative to galvanize social engagement among diverse adult audiences, especially New York City-area residents, was launched in January 2015. This unprecedented multidisciplinary event featured Jazz & Colors—jazz and experimental music ensembles performing simultaneously in fifteen galleries, all interpreting an identical set list. The night also included Drop-in Drawing and tours by contemporary artists. The inaugural evening doubled the average daily attendance, with an overwhelming ninety-one percent of those surveyed coming specifically for the event and nearly eighty percent of all attendees from the New York City area. The audience was younger than average, with twenty-seven percent between the ages of twenty-five and thirty-four years. Fifty-two percent came with friends, attesting to the attractive social aspect of the evening. In its first six months, MetFridays produced an eighteen percent increase in Friday-evening attendance over fiscal year 2014.

One of the highlights of the year was ERRATICA's commissioned re-creation of the 1499 Spanish literary masterpiece *La Celestina* as a site-specific, free-with-admission, nine-day video opera presented in the Met's sixteenth-century Vélez Blanco Patio. Transforming the space for an immersive dramatico-musical experience, the performance received enthusiastic audience and critical response, including from the *Wall Street Journal*, which called the production "ingenious."

Festivals, such as Lunar New Year and ¡Fiesta!, again drew large audiences who experienced unique events designed for visitors of all ages. At the yearly Museum Mile festival in June, for example, 10,201 visitors—over 2,300 more than last year—kicked off summer at the Met, enjoying free admission to the Museum and its sister institutions on Fifth Avenue. Visitors got a sneak peek at #MetKids, a soon-to-launch digital feature; made digital animations in the galleries of African Art; drew from sculptures in the Leon Levy and Shelby White Court of Greek and Roman art using digital sketching; and discovered how the peoples of the ancient Americas made clay objects. Martha Graham Dance Company mesmerized hundreds of visitors during interactive performances in The Temple of Dendur, including a piece the Met commissioned from Graham when the temple first opened to the public in 1979.

## Conclusion

In fiscal year 2015 we further strengthened and positioned the Museum as an agent for partnerships and collaborations, bringing together local, national, and international communities, and organizations and colleagues sharing common goals. This past year we produced unique and inventive programs with varied and multimodal approaches that connected visitors with our collection, our exhibitions, and each other. We look forward to further implementing the goals and objectives of the Museum's Five-Year Strategic Plan, especially in its prioritization of forging and fortifying partnerships that help us engage broader and more diverse audiences with the collection and exhibitions. This work is especially crucial as we prepare for the much-anticipated opening of The Met Breuer.