

# Education, Concerts & Lectures, and Audience Development

## Overview

In fiscal year 2016, the Education and Concerts & Lectures Department expanded to include Audience Development. This transition fostered greater collaboration and continued efforts to implement the goals and objectives of The Met's Five-Year Strategy. We also embarked on a process to rethink our departmental structure that would allow us to work more effectively and execute the Museum's operational and programmatic priorities. In addition, we examined our priorities, improved workflow, and developed an educational philosophy and values to maximize creative programming and audience engagement.

This past year was exceptional for its innovative programs and varied approaches that connected increasingly diverse visitors with our collection, our exhibitions, and each other. We presented 31,824 events that drew a total of 847,429 participants, a seven percent increase over last year. This growth reflects the inclusion of Audience Development programs and those presented at the newly opened Met Breuer as well as an overall increase in volunteer-led tours and adult group visits. Demand for shared, informal experiences with art and art making designed for our youngest audiences remained strong, as we served 47,974 visitors. We continued to see significant growth in attendance for Storytime and Start with Art programs as well as multigenerational festivals. For more than a century our popular Children's Classes have been available exclusively to members. This year we made them available to the public along with scholarships to improve participation by economically diverse groups. Our efforts to serve more teens resulted in attracting 10,791 young people to The Met—forty-five percent more than last year—and raising awareness of the Museum as a resource as well as a social and creative destination for them. Our work to also socially engage undergraduate students attending New York City colleges and universities has led to a rise in participation over the last two years to 5,575, with a thirteen percent increase this year. The Museum remains an invaluable resource for K–12 students and teachers, with attendance for this audience holding relatively constant this past year—220,796 on 6,325 guided and self-guided school group visits—while 3,812 educators attended programs focused on integrating art into the classroom. The number of visitors who took advantage of free-with-admission live-arts programs in the galleries and the auditorium increased by sixty-eight percent as knowledge of these events grew. Indeed, intensive use of a variety of social-media platforms, numerous blogs, and strategic partnerships have generated increased awareness of the many ways we engage with the various audiences we serve.

Much activity this year coalesced around preparations for the eagerly anticipated March opening of The Met Breuer. Together with the Design and Digital Departments we conceived and produced a new suite of ten program publications, along with completely rebranded program-supporting ephemera, and collaborated to launch a refreshed and restructured website so that visitors can benefit from greater clarity and consistency in all our materials, communications, and online.

## THE MET AS CONVENER

The Museum is a place where cultures intersect, disciplines converge, and individuals and organizations convene to share research and scholarship and engage in learning. We continued to build our profile, foster new partnerships, and broaden our audience in alignment with the Five-Year Strategy.

As always, we actively engaged our local academic community. Close to 360 faculty and instructors in sixty-five different disciplines from seventy colleges and universities attended our second faculty welcome reception and learned about a full range of Museum resources available

to them. We again presented twice-annual Meet the Curator events, including a workshop for thirty-five university faculty, who engaged in discussion with a team of curators about spring exhibitions and their teaching relevance. The new format will serve as a model for future sessions. As one instructor noted, "I never even knew about The Met Breuer and several exhibitions look ideal. The breakout groups were valuable and a great way to think about what I'm trying to do." Such outreach positions us as a multidisciplinary incubator connecting The Met to a range of fields beyond art history.

Convening, supporting, and training high school, undergraduate, and graduate students, as well as international scholars, remained paramount to our mission to help cultivate diverse professionals and share expertise related to the museum field and beyond. Over the course of the year we hosted seventy-four high school interns, who learned from staff, participated in skill-building seminars, and led workshops for other teens. The second year of teen Career Labs saw a fourteen percent growth in participation, attracting over 600 students who explored professions in the creative sector. Forty-two interns participated in the MuSe Internship Program for university students, engaging them in interactive professional training. Fifty-five international pre- and post-doctoral fellows joined The Met's community of emerging and established scholars, and came together for intellectual exchange throughout the year, including a colloquium series now open to the public.

Building on the unprecedented success of Teens Take The Met! introduced last year, we convened over fifty cultural, community, and inter-departmental partners for two more large-scale events. Approximately 8,000 young people from all five boroughs were in attendance, thirty percent of whom had never visited before. The program engaged youth in art making, music performances by teens, dance workshops, and a dance party. The fall event included a powerful spoken-word poetry performance by teens produced in collaboration with noted artist Fred Wilson and Lincoln Center Education poet José Olivarez. The evening culminated with a poetry reading examining the depiction of people of color in art-historical narratives by exploring the European Paintings collection and the exhibition "Kongo: Power and Majesty."

This year we also increased involvement by tristate undergraduate and graduate students through college group events, such as the Night on the Nile evening, which drew 3,300 to see the exhibition "Ancient Egypt Transformed: The Middle Kingdom."

Programs for adults with varied academic and social interests catalyzed intellectual exchange and scholarship, enabling the Museum to build community around shared interests. For example, several important symposia convened leading experts in specific fields to share scholarship: one inspired by "Pergamon and the Hellenistic Kingdoms of the Ancient World" deepened study of the outstanding artistry and technical achievements of works produced across three centuries, while another focusing on "Court and Cosmos: The Great Age of the Seljuqs" examined cross-cultural exchange and the sciences in an empire that stretched from Central Asia to the eastern Mediterranean. As always, Sunday at The Met connected large adult audiences with topics of public interest and specialists from a variety of backgrounds. This year marked the conclusion of three years of programming celebrating the diversity of Islamic culture funded by the Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art. In conjunction with the "Court and Cosmos" exhibition, one such program focused on the scientific advances of the Seljuqs, such as tiling techniques and our understanding of the universe. MetFridays: New York's Night Out, a Museum-wide programming and marketing initiative to stimulate social engagement among diverse adult audiences, was the catalyst for a number of entertaining evenings. Notable was ¡Noche en el Met! Celebrate Latin America, which brought together almost 2,000 visitors—about fifty percent of whom were aged eighteen

to thirty-four—who experienced traditional and contemporary music and dance performances and interdisciplinary chats on the collection and topics such as the history of chocolate. The fiscal year culminated with an LGBTQ Pride celebration that drew over 3,000 people and included conversations about gender and identity, a silent dance party, and a performance by New York City Gay Men’s Chorus.

In support of the Five-Year Strategy, we fortified the Museum’s civic and audience engagement by further developing strategic community relationships. For example, by participating in such events as the National Arab American Summit with the Permanent Observer Mission of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation to the United Nations, we fostered our partnerships with the Arab American community and encouraged it to use our collection, exhibitions, and programs as a resource. We also augmented our involvement with the New York City Veterans Community, working with the Commissioner for Veterans Affairs and the president of the United War Veterans Council Veteran Centers. Created especially this year for their audience was Resident Artist Vijay Iyer’s  *Holding it Down: The Veteran’s Dream Project*, a compelling multimedia work mined from the words of minority veterans of the post-9/11 wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Such outreach and stewardship of relationships positions The Met as an effective convener for the benefit of the community at large.

#### THE MET AS COLLABORATOR

The Met has not only been a leader but also an active partner working with local, national, and global organizations and institutions to achieve shared goals. This year numerous external as well as internal collaborations were instrumental in presenting large-scale events that strengthened our outreach efforts, such as Teens Take The Met! and our multigenerational festivals. Over 1,800 people celebrated Diwali, the annual Indian festival of lights, enjoying a dance workshop, lantern-making activities, and a performance of the Ramayana dance drama. As in fiscal year 2015, an expanded Lunar New Year festival drew over 5,000 visitors. Successful collaborations with performing arts and other cultural organizations, such as Lotus Music and Dance and the China Institute, provided authentic and compelling experiences for audiences and helped us foster these mutually beneficial partnerships. We also worked closely with the Department of Asian Art to develop a participatory artwork with Beijing-based artist Wu Jian’an and over 800 visitors. Once again, nineteen percent of the total visitors attending the festival did so through our longstanding partnership with the New York City–based organization Cool Culture, which, as part of our collaboration, is able to offer unlimited free admission to The Met for low-income families with young children. We were also engaged in the second year of Cool Culture’s three-year Adopt-a-Museum program, through which we served twenty-five (compared to last year’s nine) early-childhood centers in Manhattan, providing members much-needed activities, resources, and professional development.

Our continued commitment to primary and secondary schools was firmly manifested in our educator programs in fiscal year 2016. Larger-scale educator events—organized around a central topic or theme—offered a range of new perspectives and entry points for teaching. We were gratified to be able to broaden this audience, as sixty percent of teachers attending indicated they had never taken part but would. This was the second implementation year of a three-year Astor Educators grant supporting K–12 teachers and students in low-income communities (Title I), special education schools (District 75), and alternative schools (District 79). This year we provided increased contact hours for fifteen participating high school teachers and their students, developed a tool to aid in fostering students’ critical thinking, and recruited an evaluator to assist in better gauging impact.

In fiscal year 2016 we also piloted a school partnership program, establishing four initiatives in schools throughout New York City: all third grade students from Brooklyn’s P.S. 261 examined the relationship between Arabic language and Islamic arts in The Met collection; middle school teachers from Juan Morel Campos school in Brooklyn worked with us to practice inquiry-based teaching methods; middle school students from M.S. 343 in the Bronx participated in the City’s Department of Education’s Teen Thursdays program; and, for the second year, we

took part in Cultural After School Adventures, a program supported by the City Council and the Department of Cultural Affairs with I.S. 78 in Queens. In collaboration with the Department of Education, The Met supported twenty-three programs for groups of teachers and school leaders. These included two pilot collaborations: Tickets for Two, an interdisciplinary professional-learning program fostering cooperation between social studies and visual arts teachers, and a professional-learning series supporting teachers in all five boroughs.

Other collaborations reach beyond New York City, such as international scholarly exchanges that support The Met’s Five-Year Strategy to enhance curatorial and conservation exchanges, programs, and fellowships to ensure that our faculty are connecting and collaborating with colleagues outside the Museum. For example, among a number of such exchanges this year, curator Maryan Ainsworth traveled to the Bode Museum in Berlin to visit its “Holbein in Berlin” exhibition and, working together with a former Met fellow there, study the early Netherlandish and German paintings in that collection to advance her research and share findings.

#### THE MET AS CATALYST

We are deeply committed to positioning The Met as a leader in educational innovation to stimulate and encourage audiences to explore and connect with art and ideas. By working with living artists from various disciplines, The Met serves as an incubator for new ideas, demonstrates the vital role of artists in our culture, and explores creative interaction with works of art across time and cultures. In fiscal year 2016 we sustained collaboration with numerous highly creative practitioners to generate original programs for kids, teens, adults, and visitors of all ages with disabilities.

To maximize this kind of artistic engagement, we embarked on two artist residencies. The goal of a fifteen-month residency with Peter Hristoff—made possible by the Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art—was to promote greater understanding of the diversity of contemporary Muslim culture through the practice of a working artist. Hristoff worked with staff to develop programs related to the “Court and Cosmos” exhibition, including a two-part drawing marathon in the galleries and a collaboration between high school interns at The Met and weavers in Turkey to create rugs displayed in an exhibition in the Ruth and Harold D. Uris Center for Education. *Relation: A Performance Residency by Vijay Iyer* captured the very essence of an artistic residency at The Met, using our iconic spaces and the collection as inspiration for ambitious new work. Iyer’s series of marathon performances to inaugurate The Met Breuer in March—solo and with fifty-seven other musicians and artists—ran continuously for more than three weeks and drew a diverse audience of nearly 12,000 visitors. He also premiered *A Cosmic Rhythm with Each Stroke*, a commissioned work inspired by the inaugural exhibition “Nasreen Mohamedi.”

Lee Mingwei’s *Sonic Blossom* (2015) activated The Met’s galleries in an entirely different way, transcending language and culture. Singers approached visitors at random asking if they could give them a song. With affirmative replies, the vocalists performed a Schubert lied for them. Over the course of three weeks, they performed 485 songs for more than 18,000 people, many of whom had emotional responses.

Monthly Artists on Artworks gallery talks continued to entrance visitors as practicing artists stimulated audiences to ponder works of art from different perspectives. For example, photo-conceptualist artist Hank Willis Thomas led participants through galleries of African art as well as those with modern and contemporary art, raising questions about the notion of museum display and pushing them to consider how their responses to art are affected by different spaces. Awareness of this program has grown steadily, indicated by a fifty-five percent increase in attendance during fiscal year 2016. Interdisciplinary Talks—pairing Met educators with experts from disciplines other than art history—also drew visitors to experience the collection in new ways. Guest speakers this year included a doctor who reflected on the relationship between art observation and medical diagnosis in the Modern and Contemporary Art galleries, and a former New York City police officer and detective who introduced crime-scene analysis through an examination of European paintings.

The Met is committed to connecting people with disabilities with art, creativity, and ideas and is a leader in advocating expanded awareness of accessibility for all visitors. In July we marked the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) with forty scheduled and by-request programs for approximately 860 visitors with and without disabilities. Highlights included Dog Days of Summer tours for guide dogs and their humans, pop-up sensory experiments in the galleries, and audio-described screenings of an award-winning documentary film focusing on visually impaired teens, *Do You Dream in Color?* A six-month mentorship and training period concluded for two visually impaired artists, whom we have now engaged as educators. We continue to support accessibility in institutions, providing training for more than 350 staff, volunteers, and interns across the Museum, and modeling best practices for colleagues from a host of museums, universities, and other institutions both in the United States and abroad.

#### ONLY AT THE MET

With our extensive partner network, world-class galleries and expansive collection, and respected position in the global cultural landscape, The Met is uniquely positioned to produce events and projects that would not be able to be presented anywhere else. Moreover, the landmark inauguration of The Met Breuer in March galvanized programming befitting a significant milestone. The first program, TEDxMet, took place at the new location in a transitional state: no longer the Whitney Museum and not yet open to the public as part of The Met. A host of compelling and high-profile presenters addressed the theme of “the in-between,” among them a transgender author and activist; a performance group; visual artists and designers examining the creative process; and curators with art-historical specialties in the contemporary and ancient worlds.

To celebrate the opening of The Met Breuer and the concurrent relaunch of the Museum’s three locations as one institution, we presented a full weekend of extensive interactive and thought-provoking programs for all ages. A three-day series of nine-minute talks at all three buildings brought together a diverse group of thirty-seven New York City–based artists, museum professionals, writers, performers, and creative thinkers responding to the theme of one of the inaugural exhibitions, “Unfinished: Thoughts Left Visible.” Over 3,600 visitors came to hear such speakers

as filmmaker Jem Cohen, writer Patricia Park, artist Miguel Luciano, and choreographer Arthur Mitchell personally and memorably engage with The Met. We also launched programming for families with children at The Met Breuer with a full day of activities and a new family guide for gallery exploration. In addition, this was the ideal occasion to present Karlheinz Stockhausen’s fiercely original *KLANG*, an acoustic and electronic work so massive that it required all day and all three buildings to stage, and drew over 5,000 visitors.

While the opening of The Met Breuer was a highlight, other significant activities at The Met Fifth Avenue underscored our ability to present distinctive events and projects. In the fall we celebrated the launch of *#MetKids*, a new digital feature made for, with, and by kids, with an activity-filled family day party for over 660 tristate-area visitors. With a focus on The Met’s unparalleled conservation expertise, Reid Farrington’s *The Return* combined animation technology and continuous live performance over twenty-three days to investigate the twelve-year restoration of Tullio Lombardo’s shattered sculptural masterpiece, *Adam*. Not surprisingly, 34,000 visitors came to learn about this remarkable feat of conservation. Finally, our position as a leader in the area of cultural heritage and preservation enabled us to organize the symposium “Palmyra: Mirage in the Desert” on the art, archaeology, history, and religion of a Syrian oasis city. Nearly 500 participants convened to hear nine preeminent international scholars address cultural contestation, among other timely topics.

## Conclusion

In fiscal year 2016 we relaunched The Met as a single institution with three locations, a new unified visual identity, and the same caliber of in-depth and inventive programming our visitors have come to expect. Although a reduction in programming in the coming year will affect the actual number of programs we can offer, it will enable us to refocus our priorities to produce events of sustained quality. As we look forward to rolling out an improved departmental structure to achieve organizational efficiency, we continue our work to cultivate new partnerships and fruitful collaborations, and to create programs that bring the ever-compelling story of 5,000 years of art to new and returning audiences.