

# Harvard Art Museums Join Google Cultural Institute

Digital initiative allows increased accessibility to audiences worldwide

Cambridge, MA June 30, 2015

The Harvard Art Museums—comprising the Fogg, Busch-Reisinger, and Arthur M. Sackler Museums—announced today that they are now part of the <u>Google Cultural Institute</u>, joining more than 800 collections from art museums, heritage sites, archives, and other cultural institutions around the world. The Harvard Art Museums have contributed 1,061 high-resolution images of works of art to the Institute following the <u>opening</u> of the museums' renovated and expanded new facility in November 2014. This contribution allows users to explore examples of the paintings, sculpture, drawings, prints, photographs, coins, decorative arts, and other objects in the Harvard Art Museums collections.

The 1,061 objects contributed to the Cultural Institute's <u>Art Project</u> represent many areas from the museums' comprehensive collections, including works from around the 2nd millennium BCE to the 20th century, from the Americas, Europe, North Africa, the Mediterranean, and Asia.

While the museums have made their collections available for over 10 years on their own <u>website</u>, including images and in-depth information about objects, the contribution to Google's platform allows for interlinking with other institution's collections, enabling greater global access and discovery. In addition, Google's custom-built smooth-zoom viewer supports higher-resolution images that can be seen in great detail, making the tool a powerful means of close looking similar to what is encouraged by the museums' own online collections database.

"As an institution deeply invested in advancing knowledge about, and appreciation of, art, the Harvard Art Museums are pleased to join Google, allowing increased accessibility to our collections and supporting teaching and learning in diverse fields of inquiry across all disciplines," said Deborah Kao, chief curator at the Harvard Art Museums. "This new collaboration greatly extends our digital footprint."

Visitors to the Google Cultural Institute can search for objects in multiple ways, such as by institution, artist's name, title of work, medium, geographic location, or date of creation. Google+ and video hangouts are integrated on the site, giving viewers the opportunity to invite friends to view and discuss their favorite works in a video chat or follow a guided tour from an expert to gain an appreciation of a particular topic or art collection.

The My Galleries feature allows users to save specific views of any item and build their own personalized gallery. Comments can be added to each painting, and the whole gallery can then be shared with friends and family. It's an ideal tool for students or groups to work on collaborative projects or collections. In addition, a feature called "Compare" allows users to examine two works, or two portions of a single work, side-by-side to consider how an artist's style evolved over time, connect trends across cultures, or delve deeply into two parts of the same work.

"I am excited that the Google Cultural Institute opens another doorway to the Harvard Art Museums and our collections, creating interesting connections with other institutions," said Jeff Steward, the museums' director of digital infrastructure and emerging technology. "The platform's range complements the museums' educational mission and, ultimately, helps to powerfully increase access to digital information about original works of art both through plan and through serendipity."

To date, more than 170,000 artworks from over 800 partners and 60 countries are now available on Google Cultural Institute. The Harvard Art Museums join 34 other institutions for the launch on June 30, adding more than 90,000 new digital assets to the platform.

Founded in 2011, the Google Cultural Institute is dedicated to creating technology that helps the cultural community to bring their art, archives, heritage sites, and other material online. The aim is to increase the range and volume of material from the cultural world that is available for people to explore online and in doing so, democratize access to it and preserve it for future generations.

### **About the Harvard Art Museums**

The Harvard Art Museums, among the world's leading art institutions, comprise three museums (the Fogg, Busch-Reisinger, and Arthur M. Sackler Museums) and four research centers (the Straus Center for Conservation and Technical Studies, the Center for the Technical Study of Modern Art, the Harvard Art Museums Archives, and the Archaeological Exploration of Sardis). The Fogg Museum includes Western art from the Middle Ages to the present; the Busch-Reisinger Museum, unique among North American museums, is dedicated to the study of all modes and periods of art from central and northern

Europe, with an emphasis on German-speaking countries; and the Arthur M. Sackler Museum is focused on Asian, ancient, and Islamic and later Indian art. Together, the collections include approximately 250,000 objects in all media. The Harvard Art Museums are distinguished by the range and depth of their collections, their groundbreaking exhibitions, and the original research of their staff. Integral to Harvard University and the wider community, the museums and research centers serve as resources for students, scholars, and the public. For more than a century they have been the nation's premier training ground for museum professionals and are renowned for their seminal role in developing the discipline of art history in the United States.

The Harvard Art Museums' recent renovation and expansion builds on the legacies of the three museums and unites their remarkable collections under one roof for the first time. Renzo Piano Building Workshop's responsive design preserved the Fogg Museum's landmark 1927 facility, while transforming the space to accommodate 21st-century needs. Following a six-year building project, the museums now feature 40 percent more gallery space, an expanded Art Study Center, conservation labs, and classrooms, and a striking new glass roof that bridges the facility's historic and contemporary architecture. The new Harvard Art Museums' building is more functional, accessible, spacious, and above all, more transparent. The three constituent museums retain their distinct identities in this new facility, yet their close proximity provides exciting opportunities to experience works of art in a broader context. harvardartmuseums.org

### **Hours and Admission**

Daily, 10am–5pm. Closed major holidays. Admission: \$15 adults, \$13 seniors (65+), \$10 non-Harvard students (18+). Free for members; youth under 18; Cambridge residents; and Harvard students, faculty, and staff (plus one guest). On Saturdays, from 10am–noon, Massachusetts residents receive free admission. Visit our website for information about other discounts and policies. harvardartmuseums.org/plan-your-visit

### **Exhibitions, Events, and News**

Our Special Exhibitions Gallery presents important new research on artists and artistic practice, and our University Galleries are programmed in consultation with Harvard faculty to support coursework. harvardartmuseums.org/visit/exhibitions

Lectures, workshops, films, performances, special events, and other programs are held throughout the year at the museums. harvardartmuseums.org/visit/calendar

Check out *Index*, our multimedia magazine, to keep up with what's happening at the Harvard Art Museums. magazine.harvardartmuseums.org

#### **Members and Fellows**

With access to exclusive perks and programs, Harvard Art Museums members enjoy special moments to celebrate and explore the museums' world-class collections and special exhibitions. harvardartmuseums.org/support/members

The Fellows are a dynamic group of art enthusiasts and supporters who enjoy the most exclusive opportunities that the museums have to offer. <a href="https://example.com/harvardartmuseums.org/support/fellows">https://example.com/harvardartmuseums.org/support/fellows</a>.

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## For more information, please contact:

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