
Thomas J. Watson Library

Research Guide

Finding Information on Objects in The Met's Permanent Collection

Thomas J. Watson Library
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New York, NY 10028

212-650-2225

For current Library hours visit us at metmuseum.org/art/libraries-and-research-centers/thomas-j-watson-library

The Met Collection (Online)

[The Met Collection](#) is a database with records of all The Met's accessioned objects. To search the Collection, [click here](#). Alternately, from the homepage of The Met's website, click on *Art* in the top banner menu and select *The Met Collection* from the dropdown.

We recommend searching *The Met Collection* by the object accession number. Accession numbers are found on object labels or captions in the galleries. If you do not have the accession number, search by the artist's last name and/or a keyword from the title of the work (e.g., Bruegel harvesters), or by a keyword or phrase (in quotation marks) that describes the work (e.g., "art deco"). Use the following filters to refine results: Object Type/Material, Geographic Location, Date/Era, and Department.

The object record will contain basic information about the work as well as an image, a catalog entry, signature information, provenance, exhibition history, references, and links to relevant content in the [Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History](#) and [MetPublications](#) (see below).

Search [Watsonline](#) or another library catalog to locate the citations listed in the *References* section of the object record.

Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History

The [Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History](#) is a geographical, historical, and thematic exploration of global art history, as illustrated by The Met's collection. Access the Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History by [clicking here](#). Alternately, from the homepage of The Met's website, click on *Learn with Us* in the top banner and select *Timeline of Art History* from the dropdown.

This resource includes essays written by Met experts, chronologies, and a selection of relevant artworks in The Met Collection. It is also a great source for citations, useful keywords, and contextual information to guide further research. Search by time period, artist, culture, form, style or medium [e.g., Ming Dynasty (1368-1644)].

MetPublications

[MetPublications](#) is a portal to The Met's publishing program with over 1,700 titles, including books, online publications, bulletins and journals. Publications date from 1911 to the present.

MetPublications includes a description and table of contents for most titles, as well as information about the authors, reviews, awards, and links to related Met titles by author and theme. Current book titles that are still in print may be previewed and fully searched online. The full contents of most other books, as well as of *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* and *Metropolitan Museum Journal*, are available in full text to read online, search, or download as PDFs. [Watsonline](#) and [WorldCat](#) links are provided to locate print versions of each title in Watson and other area libraries.

To find books and periodicals that discuss particular artworks in The Met's collection, search for an accession number as a keyword.

JSTOR

Search *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* and *Metropolitan Museum Journal* in [JSTOR](#)—a multi-disciplinary database of electronic scholarly journals and books that includes primary sources, images, and more. Though the *Bulletin* and the *Journal* publications are available via MetPublications, the JSTOR interface can be a more effective means to search within these texts.

Visiting researchers must be onsite at The Met to access JSTOR through Watson Library. Museum staff with a Met network account may authenticate from offsite. To search within the *Bulletin* or the *Journal*, select *Search* from the banner menu near the top of the JSTOR homepage and click on *Advanced Search*. Enter the artist's last name and the exact title of the work, or keywords from the title or description of the work in the search box. Then, under the section of the page titled *Narrow Results*, find the field labeled *Journal or Book Title*. Enter "The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin" or "Metropolitan Museum Journal" and run the search. Alternatively, in the basic search field on the JSTOR homepage, enter **pt:("The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin")** or **pt:("Metropolitan Museum Journal")** followed by your search terms (e.g., **pt:("The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin") Picasso Guernica**)

Recent Acquisitions Bulletin

The full text of the *Recent Acquisitions Bulletin* from as far back as 1988-89 is available [here](#). For earlier issues, [click here](#).

Exhibition Catalogs

If you know that the object was in an exhibition, search for that exhibition's catalog in [Watsonline](#) or [MetPublications](#). Not every exhibition has a catalog, but most do. The Met also publishes catalogs that describe its permanent collections.

For a list of all special exhibitions held at The Met since its founding, click [here](#).

Central Catalog

Contact a librarian at central.catalog@metmuseum.org to determine whether the object is documented in Watson's physical card catalog; you will receive an email response with available information.

Have a question?

Reach a reference librarian at watson.library@metmuseum.org or use our virtual chat service, Ask a Librarian, Monday-Friday, 10am-4pm, from the [Watsonline](#) homepage.

Last updated 01/2023