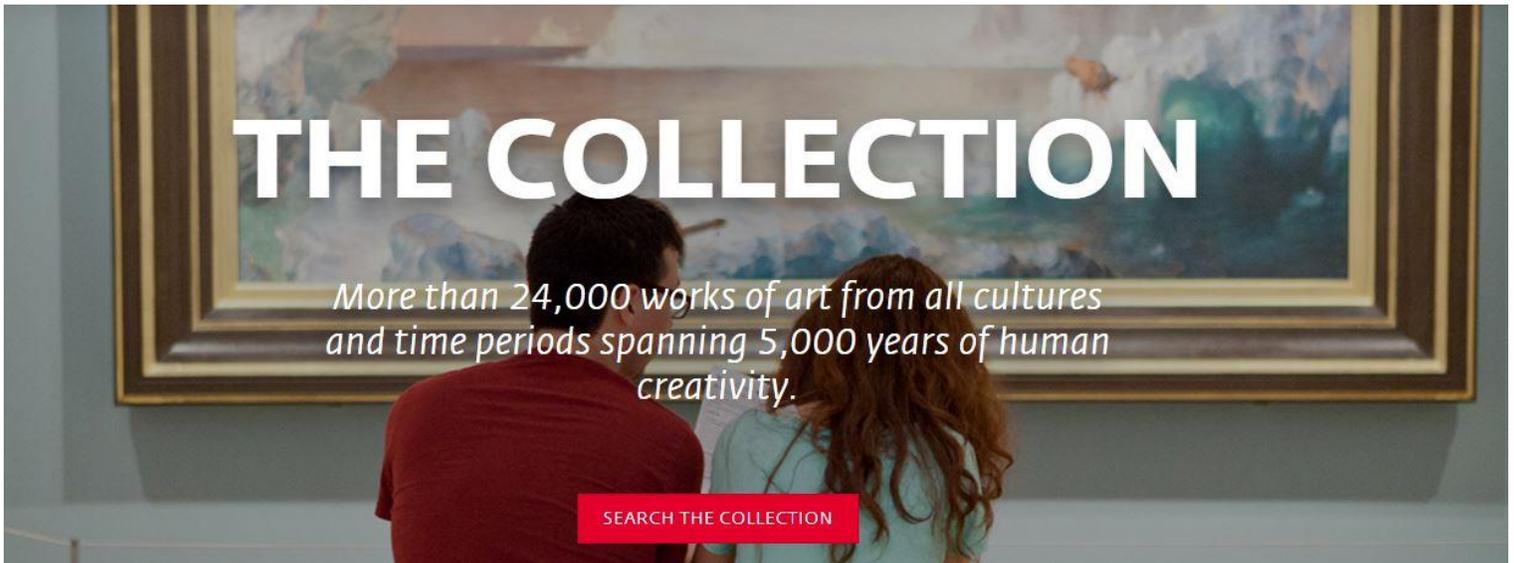


Dallas Museum of Art Launches Enhanced Online Collection on DMA.org Providing Enriched Access to the DMA's Entire Collection and Extensive Supplementary Content

The Encyclopedic Collection Reaches a New High of 24,000 Works of Art



Dallas, TX—August 11, 2017—The Dallas Museum of Art today announced the unveiling of a new way to access its online collection of encyclopedic art at DMA.org. The development of the enhanced site is part of the Museum's ongoing digitization initiative to expand access to its encyclopedic collection. The DMA simultaneously announced that its global collection has reached more than 24,000, with the collection growing 10% in recent years.

The expanded online collection portal features an updated design that enables access to a larger quantity and variety of information now providing a multitude of entry points and pathways to the Museum's robust online resource. The enrichment of the Museum's online content is supported by a grant from the O'Donnell Foundation, bestowed to the DMA in November 2013, to offer the entire collection online. Part of this initiative included photographing the entire permanent collection, a task completed this past spring. By digitizing the DMA collection, the Museum created one of the world's most sophisticated online art collections, leading the field in the quality and depth of content available to all.

"The DMA welcomes everyone to explore art and learn about the cultures represented in the Museum's collection. Today we take an exciting next step in bringing works of art from all cultures and periods to audiences of all ages and backgrounds from around the world," said the DMA's Eugene McDermott Director Agustín Arteaga. "Our commitment to developing our content online is to provide audiences both in Dallas and across the world with new ways to become inspired, to discover and to learn even

more about our extraordinary collection of more than 24,000 works. We are deeply grateful to Edith and Peter O'Donnell and the O'Donnell Foundation for their continued generosity toward the DMA Digitization Project, and their enthusiasm for its success.”

New additions to the online collection include an expanded screen layout that allows web visitors to explore catalogue essays, summaries of historical periods, artist biographies, and descriptions of techniques and their importance in certain regions or cultures. Previously, no contextual information, apart from the object’s general description, was available online. The fresh design also features teaching ideas produced by the Education Department alongside art historical essays.

With an increasing number of visitors bringing Wi-Fi-enabled devices to the Museum, the new online collection provides on-demand, rich content about works of art on view and in storage, allowing a broader reach for exploration of the collection. While the option to search the collection is still prominently displayed, the remainder of the landing page contains broad topics broken into multiple object and content groupings for optimum investigation. For those unsure of where to begin, the optional entry points include user-friendly categories, from materials, depicted motifs and narratives, to prominent colors or visual characteristics represented across the collection.

Highlights from the collection that illustrate some of these new features include:

- Frederic Edwin Church, [The Icebergs](#), 1861
This painting is a visitor favorite and the new features available through the online collection allow a more in-depth experience with this work, including supplemental photos and fun facts; for example, the work was labeled as “household items” to discourage would-be-thieves when it was first shipped to the Museum in the late 1970s.



In his catalogue for *The Icebergs*' debut at the Dallas Museum of Art, Gerald L. Carr proposes that contemporary operas may be “a less obvious but compelling parallel” to Church’s landscape paintings of the late 1850s and early 1860s. In particular, Carr notes that the production of Richard Wagner’s *Der Ring des Nibelungen* (1869) “contains a journey to disparate environments, religious symbolism, and immortal episodes with the goddess Venus in her enchanted grove.” In addition to compelling thematic and dramatic similarities, the opera premiered to American audiences in New York City, April 4, 1859—just before Church departed for his Arctic adventure.

Exhibited first when viewed by New Yorkers and Bostonians, the North did not include a British model, and that Church made this addition before presenting the painting as *The Icebergs* in London, comes from journalist’s observations. A critic in New York commented *The Icebergs* had “... no trace whatever of human association, not a living creature of any description, no ship, no boat, not even the semblance of a wreck, no connecting link of any sort between themselves and the canvas. One broken boulder of rock, insipid on the ice, alone hints that the great floating glacier was once in contact with earth.

Transporting *The Icebergs* to Dallas after its purchase in 1979 proved to be a challenge—not only because of its size and weight, but also its head-increasing value. The shipper wrote “no valuable items” on the rate to deter theft. Unfortunately, contents “the play was far more visible, the rate was tampered with, it needed light, and set in its container on the airport tarmac for a day before finally reaching Dallas safely.

- [Black-and-white checkerboard tunic](#), Perú, Inca (Inka) culture, 1400–1540
In addition to its accompanying fun facts and rich educational content, the tunic, a highlight of the Museum’s pre-Columbian collection, provides insight into the McDermott Art Fund, allowing viewers to easily explore other works acquired with these funds.

DMA INSIGHTS

MCDERMOTT ART FUND

The Dallas Museum of Art entered its maturity as a cultural institution beginning in the 1960s. It was certainly no coincidence that the first year of that decade witnessed the foundation of the McDermott Art Fund, created by and named for Margaret and Eugene McDermott, whose philanthropy in Dallas is nearly without parallel. Their generosity has benefited an impressive array of cultural, educational and healthcare organizations in Texas and elsewhere. The Dallas Museum of Art is among the fortunate institutions.

The objects that have entered the collections of the Dallas Museum of Art with the help of the McDermott Art Fund are of the highest quality and represent numerous cultures and historical time periods.

Characteristically, Margaret McDermott's use of the fund seems to be guided by her deep personal interest for and engagement with the individuals who work for the Museum. She has consistently encouraged the curators of the Dallas Museum of Art by enabling them, through the support of the fund, to build their various collections, and in many cases she has used the McDermott Art Fund gifts to honor lifetime contributors to the Museum by curators, directors, and other partners.

Excerpt from
Cari Weisbur, "The Eugene and Margaret McDermott Art Fund," in Dallas Museum of Art, 100 Years, ed. Dorothy M. Kromek (Dallas, TX: Dallas Museum of Art, 2003), Pamphlet number 13.

RELATED MULTIMEDIA

Interview with Carol Sawyer for DMA History program, 2011.

- [Kneeling female figure with bowl \(olumeye\)](#), Olowe of Ise, c. 1910–1938
This impressive work from the Museum’s acclaimed African art collection features an extended artist biography and an essay on African art, as well as multiple audio recordings and other content, all available from one page.

ARTISTS & DESIGNERS

OWOLE OF ISE

The artist who sculpted the kneeling female figure with bowl (2004.16.86.09) in the DMA collection was named Olowe. He was commonly known as Olowe of Ise. Ise is the town in which he lived most of his life. He was born around 1876, before visual statistics were routinely recorded in Nigeria and before interviewing artists became customary. He left no diaries or bits of text of his work; he probably could not write in either English or Yoruba. In the absence of conventional sources and information, where does one begin to search for information with which to reconstruct a tradition-based African artist's biography? The sources include written, sometimes published, accounts by Europeans who met the artist and documented his art; an ethnography of his sculptures; the indigenous record, in the form of oral, praise song, and itinerant artists' testimonials.

Olowe of Ise was born in Ise, Oluselu, a royal town in Nigeria that was an important center for Yoruba visual art in the 19th century. As a young age, he must have, when he viewed the Ananke, or king, as a royal messenger. He remained in his home town throughout his life, until he was about 65 years old. When and where Olowe learned to carve is unknown. According to his descendants, he was self-taught. It is more likely that once his talent had been discovered, he was apprenticed to a master sculptor to gain command of the Yoruba canon and hone his carving skills. Eventually Olowe became the master of his own atelier, or workshop. As a young man, he worked for some time as an itinerant sculptor, traveling with his clan in the wooded areas. His chief patron was the monarch of Ise, who loaned him to other Yoruba kings and prominent families to beautify their residences with sculpted veranda eaves and doors. His patrons, who also included religious specialists, commissioned him to carve masks, figures, decorative basins, and dramatic religious worship activities. He also carved children's toys and game boards. Olowe's most illustrious patron was the king of Ise, some sixty miles south of Ise. Olowe of Ise was active from around the turn of the 20th century until his death in approximately 1938.

In 1928 Olowe of Ise's work, if not his name, reached England. A five-panel panel door and four ornate wall figures carved in cross-hatched high relief from the Olowe's (King's) palace were selected for display at the British Empire Exhibition at Wembley, London. It was installed at the entrance to the Empire Pavilion in the Nigerian Pavilion. The door sculpture, whose imagery commemorated the first British-Yoruba coronation's visit to a Yoruba king in 1829, impressed British Museum officials enough for them to acquire the sculpture for the permanent collection.

For who interviewed him on his art, ethnography, and other topics, and also attended Olowe's sculptures from his photographs, published reports, and unpublished personal diaries. These materials can be examined in memoranda boxes that were deposited at the Weston Library at Oxford University, and in journals pertaining to African studies. Philip Albon, a British forester who regularly visited the Ananke in the 1930s and admired Olowe's art, is credited with identifying the artist by name.

Adapted from
Rudyn Walker, PhD, "Olowe of Ise: The Yoruba Sculptor," in *Olowe of Ise*, (Ibadan, Nigeria: 2006).

“This most recent iteration of the online collection is both a quantitative and qualitative update to the DMA’s web presence. In addition to the expansion of digital content available online— audio and video files, teaching resources, scholarly essays and the like—we’ve also made significant upgrades to the design and functionality of the site, with new full-screen image zoom, social sharing and improved search,” said Shyam Oberoi, Director of Technology and Digital Media at the DMA.

All images available via DMA.org continue to be freely available for non-commercial and educational use. High-resolution images of all works in the public domain will be released for public use. Access to high-quality images and accurate data about each object will significantly enhance research and learning about the DMA’s collection in a way that has not been possible until now.

About the Dallas Museum of Art

Established in 1903, the Dallas Museum of Art (DMA) is among the 10 largest art museums in the country and is distinguished by its commitment to research, innovation and public engagement. At the heart of the Museum and its programs is its global collection, which encompasses more than 24,000 works and spans 5,000 years of history, representing a full range of world cultures. Located in the nation’s largest arts district, the Museum acts as a catalyst for community creativity, engaging people of all ages and backgrounds with a diverse spectrum of programming, from exhibitions and lectures to concerts, literary events, and dramatic and dance presentations. Since the Museum’s return to free general admission in 2013, the DMA has welcomed more than 3.2 million visitors. For more information, visit DMA.org. The Dallas Museum of Art is supported, in part, by the generosity of DMA Members and donors, the citizens of Dallas through the City of Dallas Office of Cultural Affairs, and the Texas Commission on the Arts.

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