Department of Textile ConservationNewsletter

Fall 2023 Volume 7

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Introduction

Dear Friends, Colleagues, and Supporters,

As highlighted in our previous Newsletter, 2023 marks the 50th anniversary of the Department of Textile Conservation as an independent conservation entity. Established in 1973 by Nobuko Kajitani who served as the first department head, the facility occupied only a small space. In 1995, funds from Antonio Ratti and the David Koch Charitable Foundation enabled the building of the Antonio Ratti Center comprised of a spacious conservation lab and a centralized storage and study facility.

Since its foundation, Textile Conservation has been responsible for the care of textiles in twelve curatorial departments, sharing with colleagues the stewardship of a renowned collection and responsible IPM, documentation, treatment, research, and display methodologies.

The department has hosted textile conservators from many parts of the world. Through sharing expertise and by providing training, our object-centered approach has helped develop textile conservation into a professional discipline. We are proud of our history and achievements, which have been possible not only through our diligent work but also thanks to our great benefactors, whose generosity in supporting our research, travel and the purchase of state-of-the-art equipment has allowed us to develop professionally and put us at the forefront of the discipline.

We are grateful to our friends and colleagues in The Met's family who collaborate with us in different aspects of our daily work and make our lives and activities engaging, fascinating, and rewarding.

We welcome you to celebrate with us; join us at the Symposium commemorating our Golden Anniversary on November 30th or stop by the department for a delicious coffee and see how our workspace has been transformed with a new conference room and additional workstations to accommodate fellows and interns.



Introduction

You can also support us (The Met) by purchasing a gorgeous scarf made in India, especially for this momentous occasion. Designed and produced by our wonderful colleagues in Retail, the scarf has floral motifs inspired by textiles from several curatorial departments— a beautiful presentation that is cross-cultural and timeless. You can enjoy the taste of a custom-baked celebratory cookies advertising the anniversary with an image of golden thread and needle—one of the essential tools that embeds our conservation work in the textile-making art tradition.

This issue will provide you with a glimpse into some recent activities of our department. For the broad scope of our conservation and research projects, we invite you to watch the celebratory video produced by our talented colleagues in Digital Media (https://youtu.be/d_A_PWEKAUo?si=folsUySCkNOp2Miv).

Share our joy in the collegiality and collaboration that connects us in our goal to keep the preservation of cultural heritage vibrant and meaningful.

Janina Poskrobko

Celebrating the Golden Anniversary







50th Anniversary Highlights

Celebrating 50 Years in Style

With a golden anniversary comes much to celebrate. We enjoyed collaborating with the Met's Merchandising team to create a custom scarf that would reflect the many beautiful textiles that come through the lab. A floral motif was chosen and there are patterns from textiles from nine curatorial departments depicted. The story of our TC Scarf was featured on The Met Store's blog which can be found at:

 $\underline{https://store.metmuseum.org/blog/celebrating-50-years-of-the-mets-textile-conservation-department}\\$

This scarf is currently available for order in The Met gift shop online.

Antonia Capasso



Women's History Month



Textile Conservation at
The Met

Each March is dedicated to women and their achievements throughout history. This March the department's 50th Anniversary tribute video was selected to be featured on The Met's Perspectives page. This video was created with the help of the Digital team and showcases the incredible work that the department has done over the years and where the future will bring us. What better way to celebrate the achievements of the women of this department than being featured during Women's History Month?

Many thanks to everyone who participated in making this happen!

https://www.metmuseum.org/perspectives/videos/2023/2/textile-conservation

Antonia Capasso

Exhibitions

Anxiety and Hope in Japanese Art

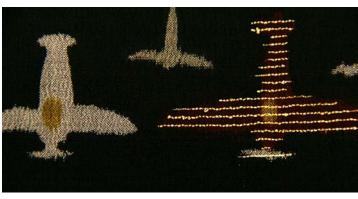
The current installation of Japanese art focusing on the duality of situation—anxiety and hope—is a marked contrast from the previous exhibition, *Kimono Style: The John C. Weber Collection* showcasing Japanese beauty and design through costume. Equally beautiful in design and content, *Anxiety and Hope in Japanese Art* draws from human stories expressed through various media: from medieval Buddhist illustrations of paradise and hell, Zen practices on life and death to depictions of pilgrimage and war. Curated by Aaron Rio, Associate Curator in the Department of Asian Art, there are a number of interesting textiles to be seen.

Propaganda kimono, popular during WWII, now known as *omoshirogara* meaning "interesting or novelty" designs, were used to decorate women's *nagajuban* (under kimono) and children's kimono to promote nationalism. Motifs such as airplanes, flags of Japan and its allies during the war, bullets, soldiers, nationalistic mottos and more were depicted in a cute and pleasant, non-disturbing design. Colorful, and lively, both traditional techniques and materials such as kasuri (ikat) and modern techniques including screen printing with synthetic dyes on silk and/or rayon fabrics were popular.





Boy's Kimono with Lucky Thread Balls (Temari) and Bullets MMA 2014.232 Detail



Woman's Kimono with Warplanes and Flags of Japan MMA 2014.233 Detail











Yoshino Pilgrim's Jacket (Ohenro-gi) with Text of the Heart Sutra and Yoshino Pilgrimage Stamps MMA 2018.564

Above Details of various temples' cinnabar ink stamps.

A larger-than-life-size guardian, Bishamonten (Guardian of the North) awaits you as you enter the galleries. This warrior, from the Heian period (794-1184) dated 1124, appears fierce and powerful at first glance, and is one of the protectors from evil spirits—The Four Heavenly Guardians of the cardinal directions, which are usually positioned at the entrance of temples and shrines. Bishamonten's presence provides one with the best mindset of protection while viewing the powerful imagery in the exhibition.

The exhibition is made possible by The Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Foundation Fund.

Kristine Kamiya

https://www.metmuseum.org/exhibitions/anxiety-hope-in-japanese-art

https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/812451?&exhibitionId=0&oid=812451&pkgids=835

Reopening of The Northern Renaissance Gallery

Layered Narratives: The Northern Renaissance Gallery is the first exhibition in the newly opened Gallery 520. This exhibition features four textiles: Mercury Changes Aglauros to Stone, from the Story of Mercury and Herse, MMA 41.190.134, Aglauros's Vision of the Bridal Chamber of Herse (Image 1), from the Story of Mercury and Herse MMA 41.190.135, an embroidered coffin shield MMA 1983.364 (Image 2) and an Embroidered Triptych MMA 64.101.1380a-c (Image 3).







Department of Textile Conservation

Image 3

Exhibitions

Katonah Museum of Art, Stories of Syria's Textiles: Art and Heritage across Two Millenia

Julia Carlson, Martina Ferrari, and Kristine Kamiya have been working on the documentation, analysis, and treatment of nine Syrian textiles for an upcoming exhibition at the Katonah Museum of Art, Stories of Syria's Textiles: Art and Heritage across Two Millenia. The exhibition will highlight the variety of Syria's textile traditions from ancient weavings to twenteth-century garments in the collection of the Department of Islamic Art. Careful study revealed that many of the garments were constructed using full loom widths - an economical use of fabric. Many of the textiles are made of silk, with metal-wrapped thread and metal strips used throughout, emphasizing the richness of the textile industry in Syria. Major treatment was carried out on three garments in order to prepare them for loan. Many of the garments have not previously been on display. A catalogue accompanies the exhibition with essays by Janina Poskrobko, Martina Ferrari, and Julia Carlson as well as by curators and art historians. Conservators will be able to share a closer study of the objects on display in a series of lectures, Syrian Textiles Up Close, scheduled for November 2023 and January 2024.



Julia Carlson Julia Carlson preparing Evening Cape MMA 1994.302.2 for photography

https://www.katonahmuseum.org/exhibitions/exhibition/stories-of-syrias-textiles-art-and-heritage-across-twomillennia https://www.katonahmuseum.org/events/?eid=242%22%20\t%20%22_blank



Abayah dressing with Kristine Kamiya and Java Misra MMA C.I.56.6.8

Head Cord (Igal) MMA 44.86.4

Below Fragmentary Band with Scenes from the Infancy of Christ MMA 90.5.11a-e





Exhibitions, The Met Around the Globe







Visible Cultural Heritages: Traditional Costumes of Romania and Japan

Co-curated by two retired colleagues of the Department of Textile Conservation—Florica Zaharia, Conservator-in-Charge Emerita and Midori Sato, Conservator Emerita—this exhibition presents traditional costumes in the context of two very different cultures, Romanian and Japanese. The focus is on the complexity of textile materials and related technologies pertaining to each culture. After working together in the Department for over twenty-five years, Florica and Midori shared various aspects of their cultures culminating in this unique exhibition. Reflected in the costumes is the influence of geo-climactic conditions, natural resources, symbolistic and aesthetic trends as well as practical necessity and social stratification.

The exhibition is on display at the Muzeul Textilelor in Băia, Hunedoara County, România July 8 - November 1, 2023. Museum founders are Florica, Romulus and Ana Zaharia.

Kristine Kamiya



Display of wedding costumes of Japan and Romania; Midori Sato & Florica Zaharia. Muzeul Textilelor, July 2023.



Recent Acquisitions

Asian Art Japanese Scroll, Welcoming Descent of Amida Buddha with Bodhisattva Kannon and Seishi

This Japanese scroll, commissioned by family members to help facilitate the deceased's spiritual well-being and safe journey to Amida's [Buddha] Western Paradise, is a rare embroidery. Embroidered with silk and, traditionally, locks from the deceased (a young woman in this depiction), the hair can be most readily seen depicted in Amida's curly hair (central figure). The hair "thread," used in pairs, is stitched into small rosettes. This acquisition required the expertise of a team of Met staff—from the Department of Asian Art. curator Monika Bincsik along with conservators Jennifer Perry and Masanobu Yamazaki, who specialize in Japanese cultural art, and Kristine Kamiya from Textile Conservation.



Welcoming Descent of Amida Buddha with Bodhisattva Kannon and Seishi MMA 2023.327



Kristine Kamiya



Battle Surcoat (Jinbaori) MMA 2023.286.1



Asian Art Battle Surcoat (Jinbaori)

Jinbaori, a Japanese samurai ceremonial battle surcoat, is constructed in the shape of a sleeveless vest worn over the warrior's armor. Highly decorated and typically made from imported luxury textiles from China, India, the Netherlands and elsewhere. This jinboari is made from black bear fur/hide! Jinbaori are patterned with bold and colorful symbols representing strength, ferocity and bravery. They always have a large family crest (mon)at center back. The pictured example, with an oak leaf motif, is the Makino family crest.

Kristine Kamiya

Recent Acquisitions

Asian Art Kimono

A gift of ten kimono from Dr. John C. Weber at the close of the Kimono Style: The John C. Weber Collection exhibition in February 2023 was received into The Met's collection. The wonderful variety of modern kimono is represented by the fashionable designs of the colorful and bold meisen, a pret-à-porter kimono, which was popular from 1910-1950. Meisen mimics the results of the time-consuming kasuri (ikat) technique of tie resist-dyeing. In meisen production, the warps
Summer Kimono (Hito e) with Waves and Waterdrops or wefts or both are pre-printed on the loom with temporary wefts loosely woven for printing the pattern. Then the temporary wefts are removed and rewoven to complete the woven textile. This is a less time-consuming method.

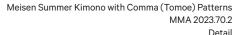


MMA 2023 70 3





Kristine Kamiya





Asian Art Battle Surcoat (Jinbaori) with Mount Fuji and Waves



This jinbaori boldly depicts Mount Fuji with triple peaks, a nationalistic symbol for the people of Japan since ancient times, representing faith and admiration. Wool with a napped or brushed surface was a luxury item that was imported from Europe. The family crest is that of the Horita clan appliquéd in bright red rasha wool.

Kristine Kamiya



Battle Surcoat (Jinbaori) with Mount Fuji and Waves MMA 2023.286.2

Special Projects

A Visit from Helena Loermans





Above Helena and the Ratti team during a "community loom weaving" session

Left Helena shows the final product of this excercise In July we had the pleasure of a visit from Helena Loermans who stopped by the department on her way to Marshfield School of Weaving in Vermont where she was to be the keynote speaker for the 2023 Textile History Forum.

While in New York she organized several sessions of her "community loom weaving," using multicolored ribbons for warps which are lifted and lowered by many hands to create sheds through which a ribbon weft can be inserted. With Helena calling out instructions a woven structure resulted with some confusion and much laughter. This is an exercise Helena uses to demonstrate the basic nature of weaving to an audience unfamiliar with the nature of textiles.

Helena was recently featured on the podcast *Haptic&Hue* and the interview is featured on her LabO website.

Cristina Balloffet Carr

The Departmental Glossary: A Visual Resource for Cataloging and Sharing Textiles in The Met's Collection

The Department is compiling a glossary drawing from the analysis and documentation of materials and techniques of textiles belonging to different Curatorial Departments and time periods. The glossary will function as a data management tool for cataloguing textiles, useful for reference here at The Met as well as for outside specialists and the public. The glossary will be illustrated with high resolution photomicrographs, providing an intimate view of materials and techniques, including a broad range of fibers from natural to synthetic, sparkling metal threads, iridescent feathers, multicolored prints, mixed materials and many more. Textiles will be grouped according to weave structure and accompanied by detailed descriptions. Non-English terms will be included, often useful for placing a textile into a cultural context. Selected compound weaves are rendered with digital diagramming, providing an additional interpretation of complex structures such as lampas and warp/weft faced compound weaves. The glossary is an ongoing, ever-expanding project. The primary goals are to facilitate comparison of technical features of textiles, and identify characteristics unique to specific cultures, regions, and time periods.



Martina Ferrari

Conservation Projects

Julius Caesar under conservation treatment

The second phase of a multiyear conservation campaign of the renowned Heroes Tapestries of The Met Cloisters collection has begun!

Julius Caesar (47.101.3) tapestry is currently in the Department of Textile Conservation following the successful completion of conservation treatment and return to exhibition of the King Arthur (32.130.3a; 47.101.4) tapestry in Spring 2022. Comprehensive research, documentation, examination, and conservation work continues in close collaboration with the Department of Medieval Art and The Cloisters and many colleagues across the museum.

The complex history and the condition of the tapestry, after many decades of display in the gallery, pose many challenges that we are determined to work with for the next two years.

We would like to thank Sir Paul Ruddock for his generous support and keen interest in our work with the *Julius Caesar* tapestry. Some of the conservation work and research on the tapestry have been actively shared through social media and scholarly platforms on the Museum's website.

Kisook Suh







Top
De-installation in
The Met Cloisters gallery

The first step of stabilizing the structure by reinforcing damaged warps

Wet cleaning in Textile Conservation

Department of Textile Conservation

2023 Visiting Committee Event

Joint Event with Islamic Art – Syria's Fame of Silk

On June 1st, 2023, the Department of Textile Conservation held a joint event with the Islamic Art Department. Titled Syria's Fame of Silk, the event was an opportunity for Friends of Islamic Art and Textile Conservation Visiting Committee members to participate in an evening studying textiles and accessories in the Islamic collection. Presentations highlighted Syrian garments and accessories. A wedding ensemble from Pakistan, Turkish textiles, Entari and Bindali were featured in the two galleries. For the first part of the evening, Janina Poskrobko presented on the weave structures in early Christian fragments. Julia Carlson spoke about three Syrian outer garments included in the exhibition Stories of Syria's Textiles: Art and Heritage across Two Millenia at the Katonah Museum of Art along with several ancient fragments. Deniz Beyazit led the joint event and presented on Syrian dress in the late Ottoman and French mandate periods. Jaya Misra, Mellon Fellow in the Department of Textile Conservation, showcased her research on intangible cultural heritage in a Chola from the Sindh region of Pakistan. Julia Carlson, Kristine Kamiya, Martina Ferrari, and Jaya Misra worked tirelessly to dress and install twenty textiles and accessories in the Kevorkian Gallery and Gallery 454 for the occasion. Approximately fifty people attended this special event.



Janina Poskrobko presenting about weave structure

Julia Carlson



Kristine Kamiya dressing 2008.274.7 on a t-bar



Kevorkian Gallery view Photo credit: Julia Carlson

New Analytical Equipment

Investing in New Technology



department was able to acquire a new piece of analytical equipment. The XRF Tracer 5 is a non-invasive analytical tool that permits extensive spot sampling on a textile with either woven or embroidered metal threads. The equipment enables us to integrate basic elemental analysis with examination and documentation.

Thanks to the generosity of Tricia Nguyen and Sarah Albury the

We are grateful to those who continue to support and foster the growth of our department.

XKF Hacer 5

Cristina Balloffet Carr

Fundraising for FY24 Equipment

Applications of evolving technologies and new advanced equipment have increasingly become standard in conservation labs. Extensive research was done on two new pieces of equipment, the Micro Fading Tester (MFT) and the newest model of Spectrophotometer. This research was presented at this year's Visiting Committee meeting as possible fundraising opportunities.

The Micro Fading Tester is used to determine an object's light sensitivity. Its data provides additional support for recommendations for the duration of display for textiles and appropriate light levels made by Textile Conservators.

Spectrophotometers have been used in the textile conservation department to monitor and collect precise measurements of the colors of textiles before and after being displayed in exhibits since 1997. The newest version, a wireless model, allows for use in the galleries and offers an average degree of accuracy ten times higher than that of the previous model. These tools provide complementary data that assists with preventative conservation.

With the generous donation of \$65,000 by our Visiting Committee member, Janine Luke the department can acquire both analytical instruments before the end of this fiscal year.



Micro Fading Tester



Spectrophotometer

Antonia Capasso

Conferences

CIETA Congress 2023, Krakow, Poland

This year's CIETA congress took place in Krakow, Poland and we were fortunate that Janina Poskrobko, Kristine Kamiya and Cristina Balloffet Carr were able to attend. The focus of the presentations was "Renaissance and Revivals".

Cristina has been working with Helena Loermans in the analysis of several fragments in the Met's collection and they presented their most recent collaborations at the CIETA congress in Krakow, Poland. These included photomicrographs and X-ray images Helena used to determine the weave draft, which will enable her to recreate the patterned textile used by Titian in his paintings, Isabella d'Este (Kunsthistorisches Museum) and Venus and Adonis (Metropolitan Museum of Art).

Xray images of paintings can reveal enough information about the textile which supports the many layers of paint in a finished work. The linear pattern can be roughly picked out on the digital image and can then be matched with an extant fragment of a linen of the same period. When examined under magnification the weave structure of even a small fragment can be analyzed, the weave draft determined, and the textile reconstructed.



Helena Loermans presenting at CIETA



Cristina and Helena reviewing Xray images



Eva Labson and Cristina Balloffet Carr presenting at CIETA

Our colleague Eva Labson, General Manager and Head of the Ratti Textile Study and Storage Center, was also at the Congress, and Cristina and Eva were invited to present on both existing and evolving applications of technology in museum practices. Cristina presented the many existing platforms in use by the Department of Textile Conservation while Eva discussed the evolving databases and forums for exchange, connecting collections and people. Their presentation was followed by a lively discussion.

Cristina Balloffet Carr

Travel Grant

Examining Metal Thread in Venice, Vienna and Conventry

This past spring Cristina Balloffet Carr received a museum travel grant to research metal thread production. The grant enabled her to travel with metal thread specialists, Mary Brooks and Tricia Wilson Ngyuen, visiting workshops in Venice, Italy, Vienna, Austria and Coventry, England. Mary, Tricia and Cristina have been collaborating on a series of case studies of metal thread embroidery.





To the left you see Sabrina Berta separating and cutting to a uniform size a stack of gold leaf.

The Berta-Battiloro workshop is a family owned manufacturer of gold-leaf, produced by beating gold with a hammer.

Marino Menegazzo and Sabrina Berta work together with their daughters Eleonora and Sara to produce very thin leaves of 24-carat gold, silver and other metals.

Marino Menegazzo, master goldsmith, and his daughter Eleonora discussing their craft with Mary and Tricia.



M.Maurer was founded in 1863 in Vienna. Albert Alexander Maurer is the 6th generation of the Maurer family to direct the company. The company produces a wide variety of metal threads including metal strip wrapped around a fiber core. The strip is produced by passing the metal through rollers under enormous pressure.

Benton and Johnson, is a division of Toye, Kenning & Spencer of Toye located in Coventry, England. Neil Halford, Production Manager, seen on the right is winding a bobbin with metal thread.

Although highly mechanized, production requires constant attention.





Virtual Events

A Discussion with Dr. Courtney Wilder

Earlier this year we hosted our second informal webinar. This time Cristina Balloffet Carr spoke with Dr. Courtney Wilder, a Jane and Morgan Whitney Fellow in the Department of European Sculpture and Decorative Arts at The Metropolitan Museum from 2020-2022.

The presentation focused on nineteenth-century European and American sample books, mostly comprised of textile swatches of dress fabrics. There are 150 or more sample books that are part of The Met collection and are a lesser-known part of the collection.



French Textile Sample Book, ca. 1860 MMA 67180.35

Courtney discussed what an important role these sample books have in that they can reveal connections between "various kinds of visual and material culture"

The sample books are often in a very fragile state due to much handling over the years showcasing available fabrics. This year Ratti began a campaign to digitize these sample books allowing for increased accessibility and preservation of the collection.

Antonia Capasso

Staff News

Developments in the Department

With 2023 wrapping up quite quickly we reflect on the changes that our department has undergone. We bid farewell to Yael Rosenfield, former Conservator and volunteer, and Gemma Rossi, volunteer of over seventeen years, both of whom are enjoying life in Florida. It is with pleasure that we welcomed two new volunteers to the department, Ellen Cash and Marlene Kwee, who have both fit seamlessly into the team.

In addition to the updates to our team of TC volunteers we commemorate the retirement of two of our colleagues. Emilia Cortes, Conservator liaison for the Department of Egyptian Art retired in April of this year and Anna Szalecki, Associate Conservator for the Heroes tapestries, in September. We wish them well on all their endeavors.

In other exciting news from September Martina Ferrari, former Associate Conservation Preparator, accepted the role of Associate Conservator liaison for Ancient Near Eastern and Egyptian Art.

Though some changes have been bittersweet others have brought new perspectives and a fresh look to the future. We look forward to an upcoming year of growth and new opportunities.

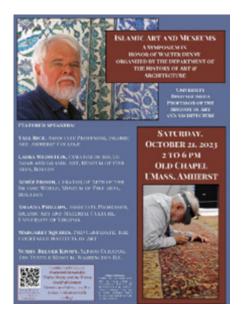
Andrew W. Mellon Fellow

We are pleased to welcome Alejandra Flores Paredes, 2023-24 Andrew W. Mellon Fellow, to the department. Alejandra received her bachelor's degree in Restoration and Conservation at the Escuela Nacional de Conservación. Her fellowship project will begin with the study and research of a group of ESDA textiles from the Philippines.



Celebrations

50 Years of Excellence



Congratulations to Dr. Walter Denny on his retirement from University of Massachusetts Amherst where he was professor of History of Art and Architecture for over 50 years. In celebration of his long tenure a symposium was organized by the Department of the History of Art & Architecture, accompanied by an exhibition Treasured Knowledge: Walter Denny and the Woven World of Carpet at The Louis and Hilda Greenbaum Gallery, Commonwealth College, Amherst.

Walter Denny is a founding member and currently Chair of the Department of Textile Conservation's Visiting Committee.

To learn more about Walter's illustrious career listen to this interview where Dr. Denny discusses his career in an interview by Chelsea Staub: https://www.youtube.com/watch?si=FSsgmriTcpXnnAL2&v=c_v6osCgNHU&feature=youtu.be

Celebrations

This September Ally Barlow and her husband Arnold Wu welcomed their daughter Lyra Ling Guang Wu to their family. Lyra was born on September 6th weighing 7lbs and 7 oz.

We all look forward to meeting the newest member of our Textile Conservation family.



Things to Come...

January 2023 began with the replacement of the floors in our department giving a new look and feel to the TC lab. We end the year in a similar manner with the renovation of our library, creating two new spaces: a more private conference room that will be equipped with a Teams screen and hybrid meeting capabilities and a second room that will house our library and several new workstations.

We look forward to showing you around the new space in the new year.



Support the Department of Textile Conservation

With steadfast support from our friends, The Met's Department of Textile Conservation can continue to thrive and be a critical resource for the preservation of works of art as well as a vibrant center for research.

To learn more about how you can become involved and support this important work at The Met, please contact: Jennifer Brown, Deputy Chief Development Officer of Individual Giving at 212-650-2366 or email to Jennifer.Brown@metmuseum.org

You may also contribute online at:

https://secure.metmuseum.org/secure/donation/donate Click on 'Provide additional information about your gift' and note 'For Department of Textile Conservation'.

www.pinterest.com/mettextileconservation www.instagram.com/mettextileconservation



The Metropolitan Museum of Art

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