

# George Walter Vincent Smith Museum

## 08.XII.2012



The Permanent Installation:  
Learning from Experience;  
Meeting Expectations;  
Facilitating the Mission



# The traditional skylit gallery: Louvre













# Oil paintings and light reflections: a perennial problem





# Traditional tiered hanging: Alte Pinakothek





# Traditional tiered hanging: MFA Boston











Problems of big pictures



# Munich



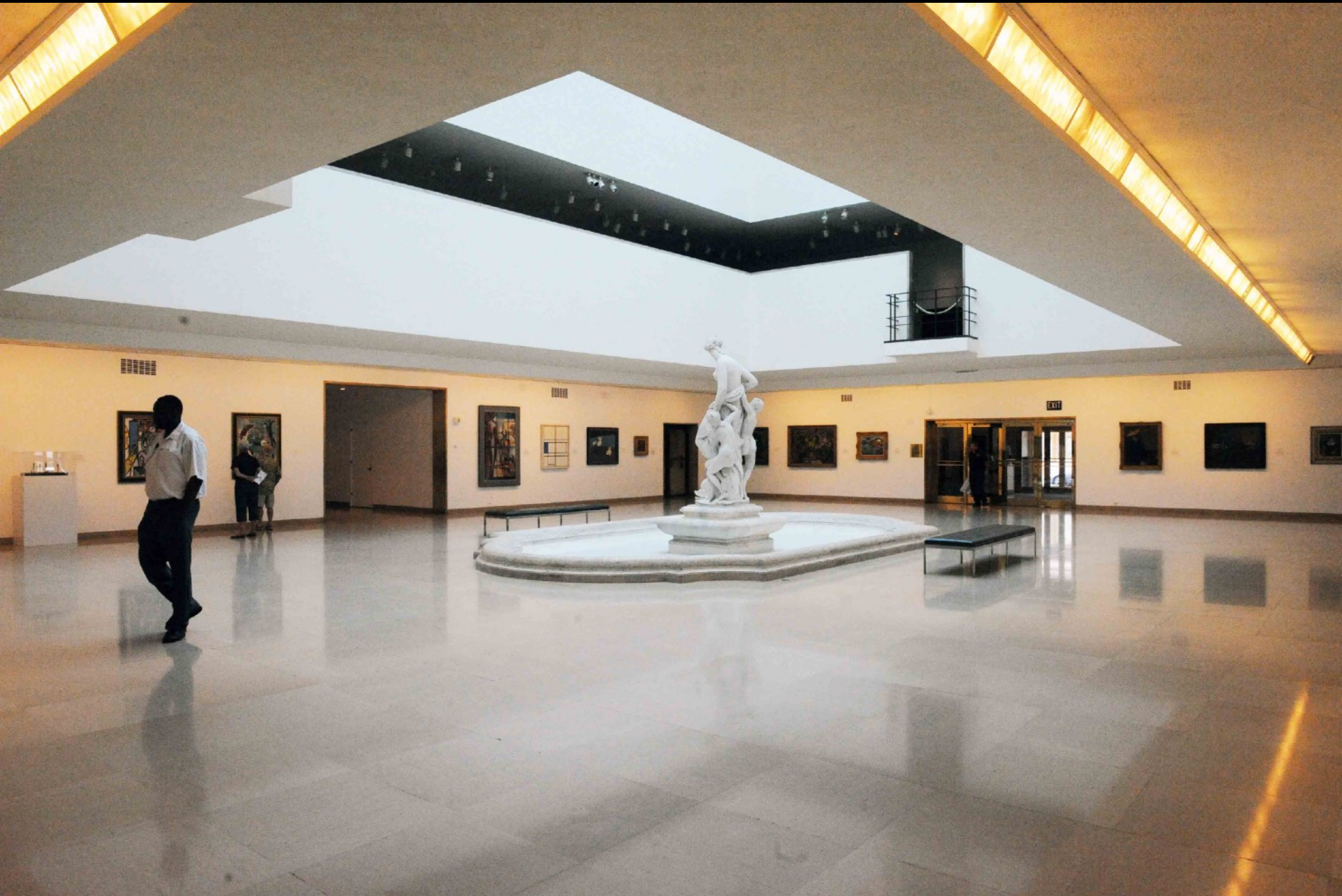


## Combined lighting: Houston MFA

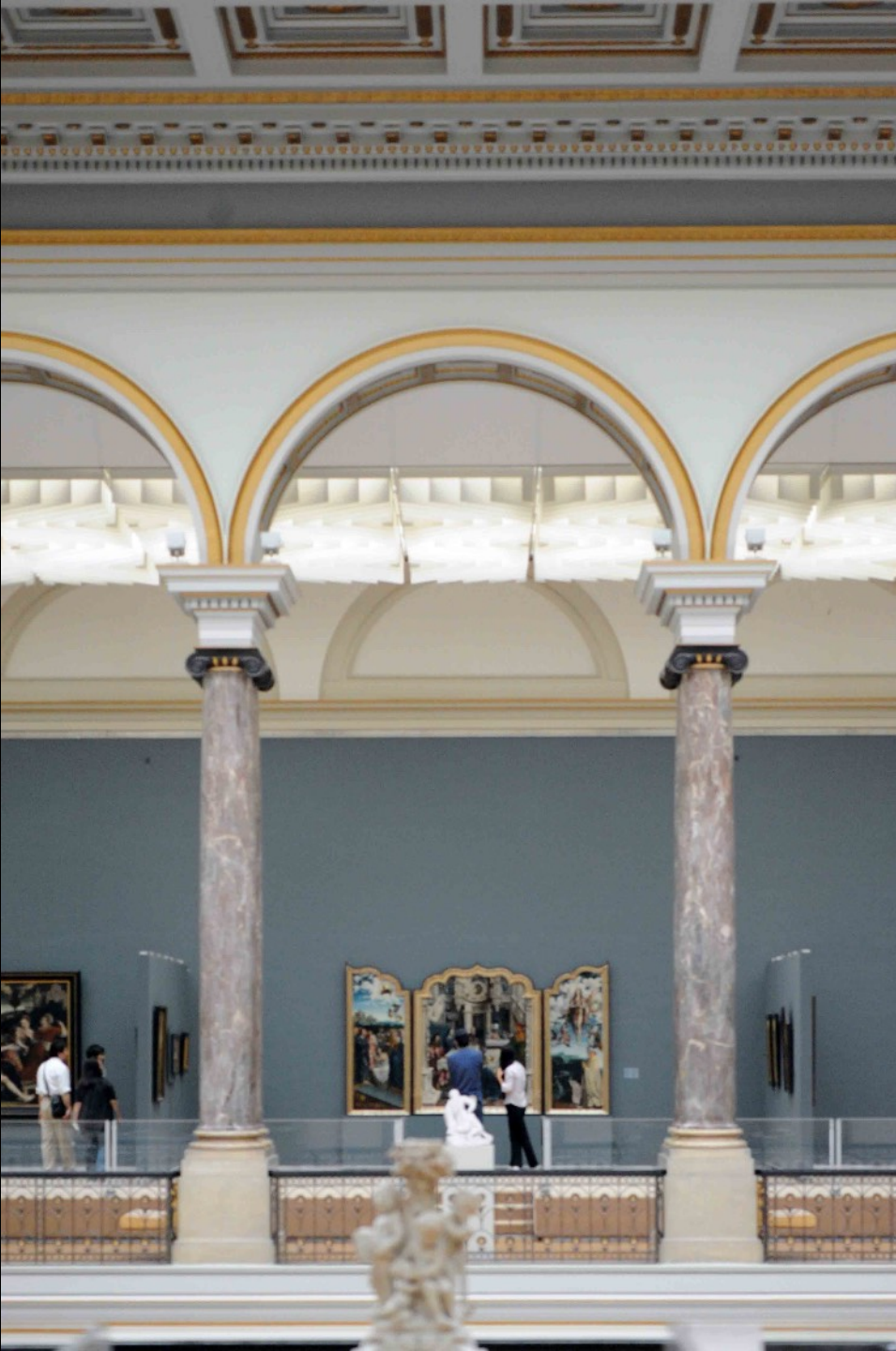




## Combined lighting: Wadsworth Atheneum







The Loggia:

MRAH  
Brussels



## Track lights and the angle of illumination: NGA Washington





# SFCAI Williamstown





# At home with Duncan Phillips





# At home with the DIA





# At home with the BMFA





A stage-set or one-wall period room: BMFA







Success with  
combined lighting

MMA







Skylights plus a reflective vaulted ceiling: Louvre





## Advantages of flexible space: adaptive reuse in San Antonio





## In-case lighting, San Antonio





## In-case lighting, Metropolitan Museum of Art

SOCIETY OF AMERICA

allery have been generously loaned  
s, located in Upper Manhattan on  
h Streets. Founded in 1904 as a first  
M. Harrington, the Hispanic Society  
at rich artistic and cultural traditions  
ing the period of Muslim rule in the



Informational text panels at the bottom of the display case, providing details about the artifacts.





Out-  
of-  
case  
lighting

MMA



## Making 5 foot-candles work for paper and textiles: MMA











Is low-reflective  
glass worth the  
expense?



Cases and platforms: show off the objects or define the space? De Young









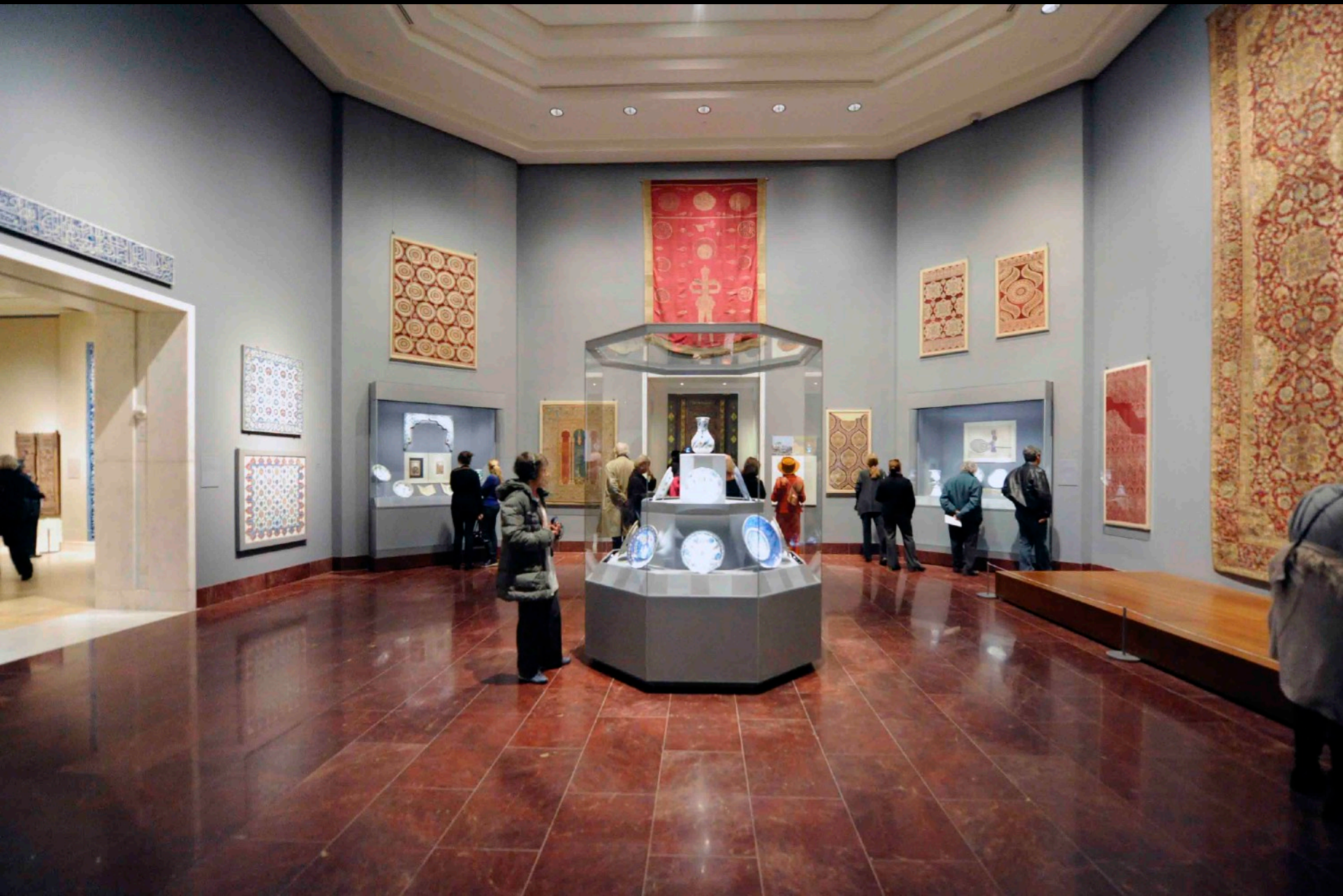
## Wall colors, floor colors: MMA





















# The Textile Museum, Washington “The Sultan’s Garden”









*Noli mi tangere*: the subliminal “plowed strip” MMA





## Platform: MMA







Platform and  
fence: MMA



## Rope and stanchion











Finding the right  
combination:

platform, kick-out,  
rope & stanchion















# Dry moat





## Labels, Wall Texts, and Didactic Panels

Gerrit van HONTHORST

Utrecht, 1590 - Utrecht, 1656

Le Concert, 1624

Décor du manteau supérieur d'une cheminée,  
d'où la présentation des figures (en costume de  
théâtre à l'ancienne) dans une sorte de balcon.  
Un des premiers travaux de peinture de  
Honthorst, dans un genre néo-italien et  
illusionniste appelé à rencontrer un grand  
succès.

Peint en 1624 pour Frédéric-Henri, prince d'Orange,  
stadhouder des Provinces-Unies : en 1632 dans son palais de la Nordeinde  
ou Vieux-Palais, à La Haye. Cabinet de Guillaume V d'Orange, La Haye ;  
transféré à la suite de la guerre entre la France et les Provinces-Unies, 1795.  
Non repris par les Pays-Bas en 1815.

INV. 1364



# Jerome B. Thompson

(1814–1886)

## The Belated Party on Mansfield Mountain

1858

Oil on canvas

Rogers Fund, 1969  
69.182

Thompson earned a reputation for combining the breadth of Hudson River School landscape painting with the anecdotal appeal of contemporary genre painting. This work is one of several in which he used Mount Mansfield, Vermont's highest peak, as a foil for domestic recreation. As half the party of day trippers admire the summit and the vista toward Lake Champlain, another young man holds his watch aloft, warning of the lateness of the hour and the need to descend. But, as people their age are wont to do, the three youths watching the sunset ignore him, enraptured by the beauty of nature.



# Boston MFA





DIA









# De Young





## Uniform slot molding for angled labels: MMA New American Paintings Galleries









# Necessary texts; juxtapositions: DIA



In the self portrait to the far left, Otto Dix deliberately evoked traditional German portrait painting. Notice how Dix's pose echoes that of the young man in Michael Wöhlgemut's fifteenth-century painting to the immediate left.

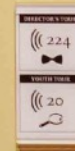
Dix departed from tradition in the way his assertive stare confronts the viewer, suggesting an intense emotional state. The carnation, a traditional symbol of betrothal or marriage, was used only to reference Renaissance art; for Dix was neither engaged nor married.

**Self Portrait, 1912**  
Oil on paper, mounted  
on panel

**Otto Dix**  
German, 1891-1969

**A Young Man, 1456**  
Oil on panel

**Michael Wöhlgemut**  
German, 1420-1470





### Compare This Pair of Paintings for Approach and Technique

In the second painting of right, Jesus and his mother Mary appear as a holy vision to two saints. Matteo used gold leaf to enhance the otherworldly effect. To the (translucent) right, Massey brings them down to earth; the realistic setting emphasizes the tender bond between mother and child.

Matteo's egg tempera consists of ground pigments mixed with yolk. The resulting dry, chalky colors smooth and flatten the image. Massey used the newer oil paint technique, mixing pigments with linseed oil. Varich added over dried paint creates a jewel-like intensity, bringing out realistic details.

**Madonna and Child**  
Altoft, 1520-25  
Oil on oak panel

**Quentin Massey**  
Pittsburgh, 1490-1520  
Oil on panel

**Madonna and Child with  
Saint Catherine of Siena,  
Saint Anthony of Padua,  
and Angels**, about 1480  
Tempera on panel

**Matteo di Giovanni  
& Bartolo**  
Florence, about 1480-85  
Egg tempera on panel





# How to display optional texts? DIA

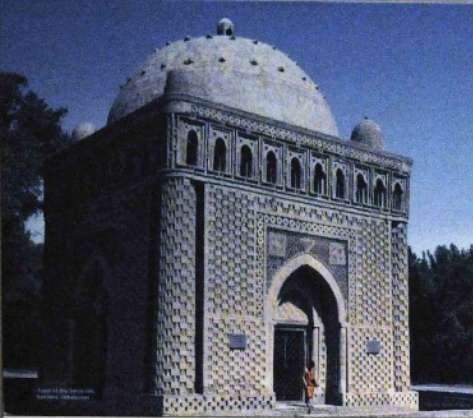




The easel label and text-seating combination: DIA







## Iran and Central Asia, 800–1050

By the mid-ninth century, the political strength of the Sunni Abbasid caliphs had waned and their provincial governors had become increasingly independent. Among the most powerful were the Samanids (ca. 819–1005) in Central Asia, who took control of Samarkand and Bukhara and the important Iranian trade city of Nishapur. In the 960s, a Samanid amir established another autonomous dynasty with Ghazni (in present-day Afghanistan) as his capital. His successors, the Ghaznavids (977–1186), conquered large parts of Central Asia and raided northern India. The Buyids (945–1055), a Shi'i dynasty from the region south of the Caspian Sea, seized control of western Iran and Iraq, taking Baghdad in 945. In 1055, the Seljuqs, a Turkic dynasty, captured Baghdad and became the new protectors of the Abbasid caliphate and Sunni Islam.

Cultural life blossomed during this period. The works of astronomer and historian al-Biruni (973–1048) and scientist and philosopher Ibn Sina (Avicenna, 980–1037) were translated into Latin and profoundly influenced the development of philosophy and science in Europe. The rulers of this period were also interested in Iran's history, reviving traditions associated with the Sasanian kings, exemplified by the *Shahname* (Book of Kings), the epic poem about the legendary and pre-Islamic kings of Iran, completed in 1010 by the poet Firdausi.



## The Ottoman Empire, ca. 1299–1923

From their beginnings as a small principality in northwestern Anatolia, the Ottomans created a powerful empire, eventually controlling most of the Mediterranean coastline. At its high point, the Ottoman empire comprised not only Anatolia, the Balkans, and the Caucasus, but also Syria, Iraq and Arabia, Egypt, and much of North Africa.

The Ottomans established capitals in Bursa and Edirne, before Mehmed II (r. 1444–46, 1451–80), known as Mehmed the Conqueror, seized the Byzantine capital Constantinople in 1453. The city, known today as Istanbul, became the center of their ever-expanding empire. An impressive transformation of the city took place during the reign of Sultan Suleiman “the Magnificent” (r. 1520–66), ushering in the golden age of Ottoman art and culture. Suleiman undertook a massive building campaign, headed by the architect Sinan, constructing great mosques, with domes that rivaled the Byzantine Hagia Sophia, and renovating the Topkapı royal palace.

Under Suleiman the Magnificent, the Ottomans centralized artistic production in a variety of imperial workshops. The designs produced in these ateliers were applied to works in many media—textiles, carpets, ceramics, and metalwork—creating an identifiable imperial style. Many of the objects on display here are the work of Suleiman's court artists, as well as later generations of imperial craftsmen.

The traditional text panel



# Topical texts: DIA

**AMERICAN**

## Changing Attitudes about Nature

Today we think of nature as beautiful and babies as adorable. It was not always so. We've chosen two types of paintings—landscapes and children's portraits—to illustrate a radical change in American attitude concerning nature, including human nature. The shift began about 1750.

### Landscape paintings

Earlier opinion held that the earth's features—such as mountains—were deformities that appeared after the biblical Adam and Eve were expelled from paradise. As Americans began to appreciate nature as beautiful, the landscape became an important subject for painters. In this room, earlier paintings show landscapes as a backdrop for people; in later paintings, the sky, trees, and streams play starring roles.

### Children's portraits

For centuries the view that people were born spiritually corrupt—in a "state of sin"—prevailed; this attitude gradually shifted to emphasize children as innocents. In this room, portraits that reflect earlier attitudes show children in controlled, stiff poses. In other portraits, children appear more relaxed and natural.

**Play EYE SPY!**

It's in this room.  
It's in a work of art.  
It's small.

Can you spy it?

Use the clues below and start your search!

**Clue #1**  
I'm tied up in a show  
On the wrist of a young woman  
With a delicate fan in her hands

**Clue #2**

### Mixing Wine: Every Shape Has Its Purpose

Two common Greek vessels for the storage or serving of wine are shown here. The kylix, bowl-shaped, was used for drinking wine and water. The pithos, shaped like a tall, bulbous jar, was used for storing wine. The kylix was used for drinking wine and water. The pithos was used for storing wine.



**1. Kylix (Shallow Bowl)**  
c. 450 B.C.  
This shallow bowl was used for drinking wine and water. It was often decorated with black-figure or red-figure designs.

**2. Pithos (Large Storage Jar)**  
c. 450 B.C.  
This large jar was used for storing wine. It was often decorated with black-figure or red-figure designs.

**3. Hydria (Water Jar)**  
c. 450 B.C.  
This jar was used for carrying water. It was often decorated with black-figure or red-figure designs.



## Kandinsky's Search for the Spiritual

Kandinsky struggled to develop a style in which lines, colors, and shapes alone could convey a sense of the spiritual. In this painting, he combined a few recognizable images with the lines, colors, and shapes that he believed possessed spiritual properties.

The "White Form" of the title symbolized Kandinsky's goal: a spiritual center, a complete release from the material world.

Kandinsky felt that this blue—often associated with the sky or heavens—filled people with a yearning for spiritual redemption.

The brilliant yellow suggests the earthly world, above which floats the white form of the spiritual.

This area can be seen as hills and buildings, the last vestige of a recognizable, physical world.

Arched lines suggest a leaping horse and rider. Kandinsky used this motif to symbolize joy and uplifting human endeavor.



*Study for Painting with White Form*, 1913, Wassily Kandinsky



# Where Is It From?

The Dutch imported goods and raw materials from all over the world. Guess where these came from, then lift the doors to check your answers.



PORCELAIN PLATE



TORTOISESHELL SURFACE ON CHEST



PEARLS IN JEWELRY



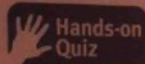
IVORY ON DESK



HANDWRITTEN BOOK



SPICES



The Dutch Trading Empire, about 1650

- Major Dutch Trading Routes
- Dutch Territories
- Major Trading Points





### Parade Wear or Battle Gear: What Do You Think?

Some armor was made to protect warriors in battle; some to show off to public.  
And some served both purposes. Ask yourself these questions, then guess how each  
helmet was used:

- How thick or thin is the metal?
- Is the metal known for its beauty or its durability?
- How elaborate is its shape and decoration?



For battle, parade, or both?

Corinthian Helmet, 520s B.C.E.

Material:

Artist name unknown

Gift



For battle, parade, or both?

Attic helmet, 480s B.C.E.

Material:

Artist name unknown

Gift



For battle, parade, or both?

Attic helmet, 480s B.C.E.

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Gift



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Material:

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Gift



For battle, parade, or both?

Attic helmet, 480s B.C.E.

Material:

Artist name unknown

Gift







A dark blue sign with white text and a magnifying glass graphic. The sign reads: "Play EYE SPY!", "It's in this room. It's in a work of art. It's small.", "Can you spy it?", "Use the clues below and start your search!". Below the sign is a small white card with a blue border, containing the text: "Clue #1: With my flaring nostrils And pointed horns I stand surrounded by vibrant colors". At the bottom of the card is a small graphic of a hand with the text "Please Lift" and "for Clue #2".

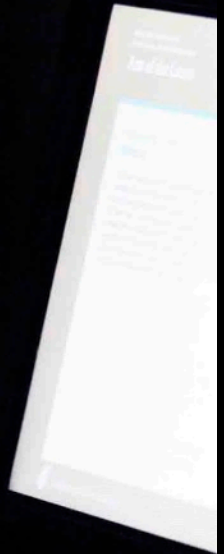


# MMA Video and Interactive Technology DIA





MMA





DIA





















## Gallery Amenities: San Francisco





## Renaissance Comfort: MMA





## Luxury Seating: National Gallery of Art









# Some DIA Innovations





## Seating for Contemplation vs Seating for Hanging Out





# The Inevitable Staircase: De Young





# LBJ Library Austin



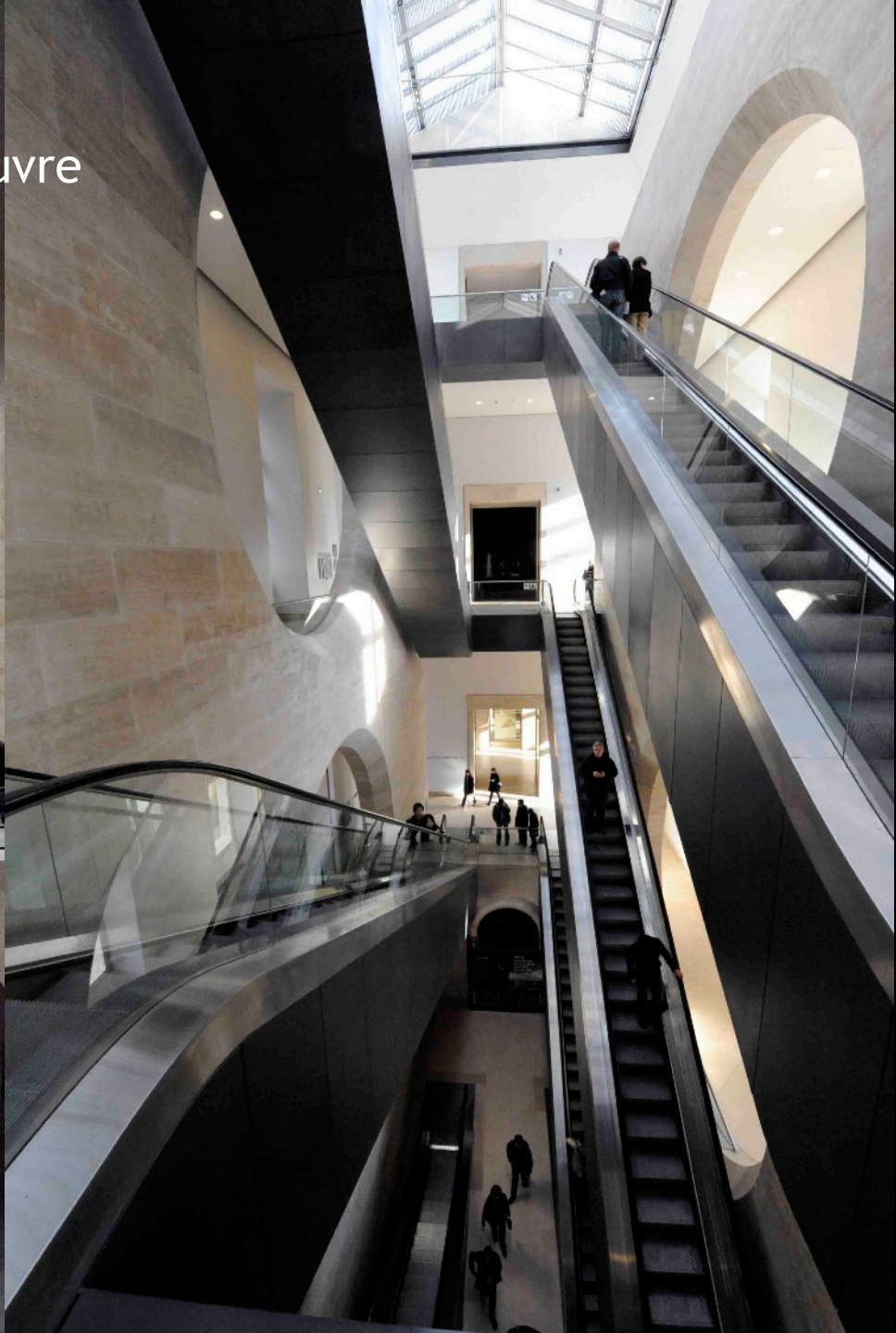
Never  
A Day  
Will N

Quotations from A White House





Louvre





Houston MFA

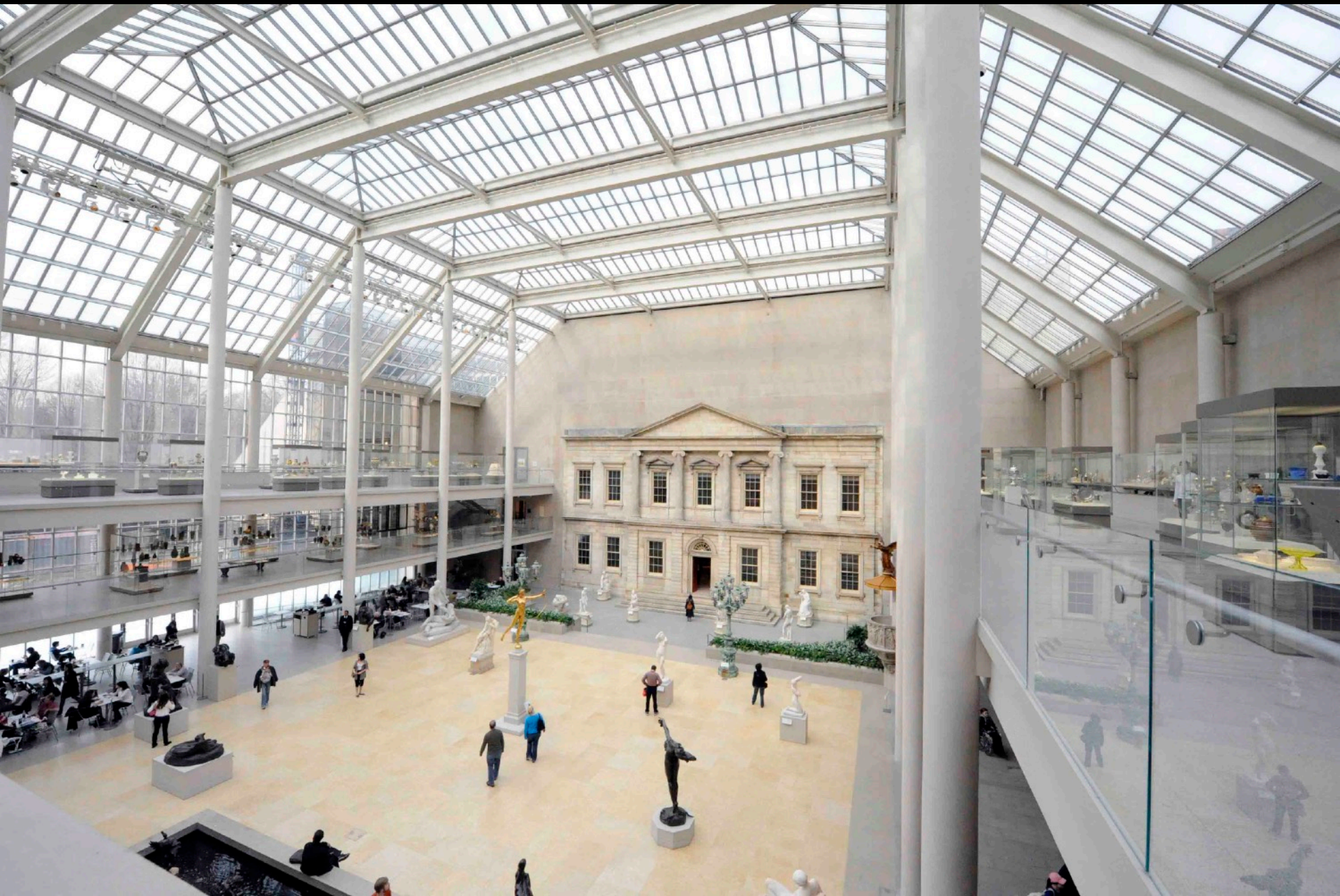


Smith College Museum of Art





# The Climatized Courtyard: Outdoors Indoors, MMA





# Louvre





# Washington, NGA East Building







Peabody-Essex  
Museum



# The Three Rs: Restaurant, Retail, Restroom Boston MFA





# Toledo's Neo-Classicism





# NGA Washington: The Passageway













# The Museum Restroom as a Work of Art: Sandy Skogland at Smith College









Conveying information vs. encouraging conversation:  
accommodating *pairs* or *groups* of visitors versus single individuals







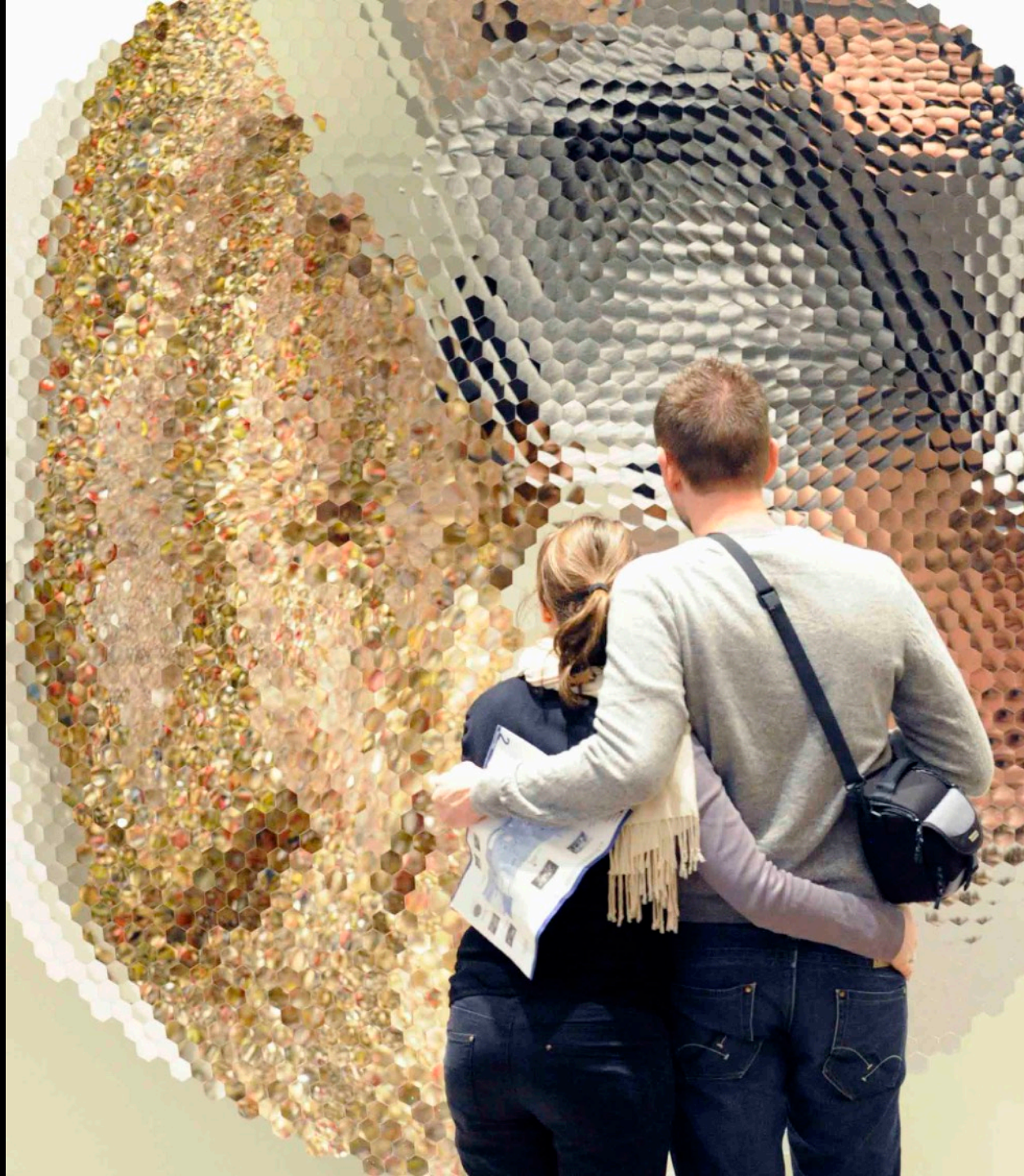
















**Petrus Christus**  
Netherlandish, active by 1466,  
died 1475/76  
*Portrait of a Carthusian*  
oil on panel  
100 x 140 cm (39 3/8 x 55 1/8 in.)  
The painting is a portrait of a Carthusian monk, likely a member of the Order of the Most Holy Trinity, as indicated by the inscription on the panel. The painting is a portrait of a Carthusian monk, likely a member of the Order of the Most Holy Trinity, as indicated by the inscription on the panel.

5098





The  
end... of  
the slides  
and the  
beginning of  
another  
conversation  
about who we are  
and  
what we do.