

The Metropolitan Museum of Art to Explore the Importance of Cultural Landmarks in Africa through Evening of On-Stage Discussions on November 29

“What Makes a Cultural Landmark? Perspectives from Ethiopia, South Africa, and Uganda” will feature leading experts, artists, and architects, and highlight The Met’s long-standing engagement with African art and cultural heritage

New York, November 20, 2023—**The Metropolitan Museum of Art**, in partnership with **World Monuments Fund**, will host a program on November 29, 2023, from 6 to 7:15 p.m., exploring topics related to significant cultural heritage sites in Africa. [“What Makes a Cultural Landmark? Perspectives from Ethiopia, South Africa, and Uganda”](#) will feature discussions between leading experts, artists, and architects on the care of significant cultural heritage sites including Lalibela and Tigray in Ethiopia and the Wamala and Kasubi Tombs of the Kingdom of Buganda in Uganda. The program is part of The Met and World Monuments Fund’s (WMF) ongoing collaborative effort to create new digital and in-gallery video content that will reframe the Museum’s African art galleries and provide a rich visual understanding of Africa’s diverse cultural landscapes in the redesigned Michael C. Rockefeller Wing, opening in spring 2025.

“For decades, The Met has been engaging with the art and artists of the African continent through exhibitions, partnerships, and exchanges of loans and scholarly expertise. We’re thrilled to present this exciting program which provides us with an important opportunity to discuss Africa’s living landmarks and traditions, and how these critical elements will be incorporated into The Met’s new galleries,” said **Max Hollein**, The Met’s Marina Kellen French Director and CEO. “Foregrounding innovative scholarship and highlighting the Museum’s active engagement with cultural sites in Africa is integral to the reenvisioning of the galleries for African art in the Michael C. Rockefeller Wing, and this program is reflective of this important ongoing connection, and of the rich series of upcoming events and initiatives we’ll be presenting in advance of the reopening.”

The event will start with welcome remarks and an overview of The Met’s engagement with Africa from Met Director and CEO **Max Hollein**, and an introduction to the curatorial approach for the Museum’s galleries for African art from **Alisa LaGamma**, The Met’s Ceil and Michael E. Pulitzer Curator in Charge, Michael C. Rockefeller Wing. The panel will be moderated by **Bénédicte de Montlaur**, President and CEO of the World Monuments Fund, and will feature **Takele Merid**, Director of the Institute of Ethiopian Studies, Addis Ababa University; **Albino Jopela**, Head of Programmes and Acting Director, African World Heritage Fund, South Africa; and **Jonathan Nsubuga**, architect, JE Nsubuga and Associates, Kampala, Uganda (joining virtually). They will be joined by **Sosena Solomon**, artist, filmmaker, and Research Associate at The Met. Ms. Solomon [joined The Met’s curatorial and digital teams](#) in December 2022 to create video content—featuring interviews and archival photos—relating to major cultural landmarks. Over the past year she has traveled to historic sites in Africa where WMF has project partnerships to produce original and comprehensive video content for the new galleries and The Met’s website.

The event will introduce this initiative and share a preview of Ms. Solomon’s work filmed in situ. Filming has taken place in Great Zimbabwe; Providence Island, Monrovia, Liberia; The Rock-Hewn Churches of Lalibela, Ethiopia; Asante Traditional Buildings, Ghana; Ambohimanga, Madagascar; Kilwa Kisiwani, Tanzania; Wamala and Kasubi Royal Tombs, Uganda; Debre Tsion, Tigray, Ethiopia; Osun-Osogbo Sacred

Grove, Nigeria; and Benin City Earthworks, Nigeria; with several more locations and films in development.

“Documentation has been crucial to World Monuments Fund since the organization's inception in 1965. The cultural heritage sites we work to protect are not always easy to reach, so it's part of our mission to help bring them to new contexts via photos and video, a medium in which Sosena Solomon excels. We're proud to support her efforts, and to have partnered with The Met on the ambitious reorganization of their galleries dedicated to the art of Africa, a continent that is a major priority for WMF as well,” said **Bénédicte de Montlaur**.

“**What Makes a Cultural Landmark? Perspectives from Ethiopia, South Africa, and Uganda**” is the first in a series of programs about cultural heritage sites in the regions represented in the Michael C. Rockefeller collection—which encompasses Africa, Oceania, and the Americas—that will be presented in advance of the opening of The Met’s reenvisioned Michael C. Rockefeller Wing in 2025. Upcoming events will center on innovative initiatives that foreground the richness and diversity of cultural landmarks along with the critical work being done to preserve these unique sites.

About the Michael C. Rockefeller Wing

The Met’s Michael C. Rockefeller Wing is undergoing a major [renovation project](#) that will reenvision its collections for a new generation of visitors. The galleries—40,000 square feet on the Museum’s south side—are being overhauled and reimagined to reintroduce the department’s three distinct collections of African art, ancient American art, and Oceanic art, displaying them as discrete elements in an overarching wing that is in dialogue with the Museum’s collection as a whole. The Michael C. Rockefeller Wing is scheduled to reopen in 2025.

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