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For Immediate Release

The Metropolitan Museum of Art and World Monuments Fund Announce Their Collaboration on a Digital Resource for the Michael C. Rockefeller Wing

The in-gallery digital resource will feature African cultural landmarks and monuments directly within the Museum's new African Art Galleries through video, interviews, archival photos, and enhanced online content

The collaboration will be highlighted during the 2022 Paul Mellon Lecture with Kwame Anthony Appiah on May 23

(New York, May 20, 2022)— The Metropolitan Museum of Art and the World Monuments Fund (WMF) announced today a collaboration to create digital resources that will be featured throughout the African Art Galleries in The Met's new [Michael C. Rockefeller Wing](#), which will reopen in 2024 after a complete renovation. The resources aim to provide gallery visitors and online audiences alike with a more expansive view of the richness of artistic and architectural expression on the continent and to provide deep context to the Museum's collection of sub-Saharan African art. The collaboration will be highlighted by Max Hollein, Marina Kellen French Director at The Met, and Bénédicte de Montlaur, WMF's President and CEO, at the annual Paul Mellon Lecture on Monday, May 23 at 6:30 p.m., [Culture Heritage and Identities in Africa: Examples from the Kushite Kingdom of Sudan to the House of W.E.B. Du Bois in Ghana](#) with Kwame Anthony Appiah, philosopher and Professor of Philosophy and Law at New York University.

The reenvisioning of The Met’s African Art Galleries seeks to anchor the completely new physical design to relevant regional aesthetics. In reintroducing material artifacts in the collection, this digital resource will provide a more expansive understanding of Africa’s diverse cultural landscapes and creative traditions. Together, The Met and WMF will jointly select 12 to 15 historic sites from sub-Saharan Africa—some of which are currently inaccessible to most visitors to these sites—to include in the project, spotlighting local communities and their unique relationships to their heritage and its preservation. It will afford a geographic survey of sites selected for their cultural and historical significance that span antiquity to the 20th century and also reflect different stages in WMF’s involvement, from those that are currently on the World Monuments Watch to projects that reflect decades of active engagement.

“This important collaboration with the World Monuments Fund will provide The Met’s audiences with opportunities to engage with some of the most sublime landmarks on earth through innovative digital resources presented within the Museum’s African Art Galleries,” said Max Hollein, Marina Kellen French Director of The Metropolitan Museum of Art. “The significant initiative allows us to foreground the knowledge of those who are actively engaged with these living sites while offering a fuller context for the magnificent works of art that will be displayed when the Michael C. Rockefeller Wing reopens in 2024.”

Highlighted at regular intervals throughout the galleries, these digital features will aim to provide individual perspectives on the importance of conservation efforts and the challenges they pose, as well as interactive visuals. The editorial approach and content will be reviewed by an advisory committee composed of experts on the continent, including Kwame Anthony Appiah, Professor of Philosophy and Law at New York University, and Mamadou Diouf, Leitner Family Professor of African Studies and Director of the Institute for African Studies at Columbia University, among others.

Since its founding in 1965, WMF has been involved at more than 70 cultural sites in Africa, combating threats to their survival through advocacy, conservation efforts, capacity building programs, and documentation.

“World Monuments Fund is thrilled to embark on this pilot project with The Metropolitan Museum of Art that will provide an array of individual, local perspectives on the importance of cultural heritage and conservation at some of the many sites across the continent where WMF has worked on the ground with local communities for years,” said WMF President and CEO de Montlaur. “By highlighting and preserving heritage that truly reflects the diversity of creative voices of humanity, cultural heritage can play a transformative role in building a more inclusive society.”

During the event on May 23, [*Cultural Heritage and Identities in Africa: Examples from the Kushite Kingdom of Sudan to the House of W. E. B. Du Bois in Ghana*](#), Appiah, who serves on the board of trustees at WMF and on the Visiting Committee for the Michael C. Rockefeller Wing, will discuss WMF's preservation partnerships across Africa at historical sites in Sudan, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Benin, and Togo and reflect on the cultural heritage of Africa, from the Nubian pyramids of Sudan to the Koutammakou Cultural Landscape in Benin and Togo, and the redesign of the W. E. B. Du Bois Museum Complex in Ghana. Appiah will also address the complex and varied interactions between cultural heritage and questions of identity, memory, and community in various African nations and consider how new spaces like the Du Bois Museum highlight the relationship between place, memorialization, and time. This event will be held at The Met Fifth Avenue and is free with registration required.

In the summer of 2021, the Michael C. Rockefeller Wing at The Met closed to the public to begin implementation of 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—will be 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 at the end of 2024.

About The Metropolitan Museum of Art

The Met presents art from around the world and across time for everyone to experience and enjoy. The Museum lives in two iconic sites in New York City—The Met Fifth Avenue and The Met Cloisters. Millions of people also take part in The Met experience online. Since it was founded in 1870, The Met has always aspired to be more than a treasury of rare and beautiful objects. Every day, art comes alive in the Museum's galleries and through its exhibitions and events, revealing both new ideas and unexpected connections across time and across cultures.

About World Monuments Fund

World Monuments Fund is the leading independent organization devoted to safeguarding the world's most treasured places to enrich lives and build mutual understanding. For more than 55 years, working at more than 700 sites in 112 countries, its highly skilled experts have applied proven and effective techniques to the preservation of important architectural and cultural heritage sites around the globe. Through the World Monuments Watch—a biennial, nomination-based program—WMF uses cultural heritage conservation to empower communities and improve well-being. In partnership with local communities, funders, and governments, WMF seeks to inspire an enduring commitment to stewardship for

future generations. Headquartered in New York City, the organization has offices and affiliates worldwide. wmf.org

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