# News Release

**Communications**

T 212 570 3951
communications@metmuseum.org

Contact
Julie Niemi
Ann Bailis

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The Met Fifth Avenue

www.metmuseum.org

**For Immediate Release**

## A Major New Commission by Acclaimed Contemporary Artist David Hartt to Be Presented in The Met's American Wing

**Hartt's site-specific installation responds to John Vanderlyn's historic *Panoramic View of the Palace and Gardens of Versailles* (1818–19) through a contemporary lens**

(New York**, [DATE],** 2026)—The Metropolitan Museum of Art will present David Hartt: *Peripheries*, a site-specific installation by the internationally acclaimed artist David Hartt, on view in the American Wing from September 25, 2026, through February 7, 2027. Transforming one of The Met's most distinctive historic spaces into a contemporary meditation on vision, power, and perspective, *Peripheries* will be installed within the gallery housing John Vanderlyn's *Panoramic View of the Palace and Gardens of Versailles* (1818–19). Hartt's site-responsive project invites visitors to reconsider the panorama—and the act of viewing itself—while exploring questions of landscape, memory, and the cultural narratives embedded within built environments.

The exhibition is made possible by Jan and Warren Adelson in honor of Eugénie Prendergast, and The Modern Circle.

"David Hartt's work offers a powerful example of how contemporary artists can illuminate and reframe historical collections in unexpected and meaningful ways," said Max Hollein, The Met's Marina Kellen French Director and Chief Executive Officer. "*Peripheries* creates a fresh encounter with one of The Met's most celebrated large-scale works while opening new pathways for understanding the histories and ideas it contains. As The Met prepares for the opening of the Tang Wing for Modern and Contemporary Art, the installation exemplifies our commitment to creating new connections across time, geography, and cultural traditions."

"One of the most exciting possibilities afforded by a museum such as The Met is the opportunity to place contemporary artistic practice in direct conversation with historical works," said Jane Panetta, The Met's Aaron I. Fleischman Curator in the Department of Modern and Contemporary Art. "Hartt's installation activates Vanderlyn's panorama not simply as an

artifact of the 19th century but as a living environment through which visitors can think about place, representation, and cultural memory."

"Throughout my work, I have been interested in the ways architecture and landscape embody social values while revealing the forces that shape them," said David Hartt. "The title *Peripheries* suggests a shift away from established centers of attention toward the margins, where alternative perspectives and histories often reside."

*Peripheries* engages John Vanderlyn's *Panoramic View of the Palace and Gardens of Versailles* as both an architectural environment and an early immersive medium connected to the history of photography and cinema. The commission draws on the panorama's fastidious documentation of Versailles, the former royal residence of the French monarchy, alongside Hartt's engagement with the language of French New Wave Cinema and early photographic documentation of a rapidly changing Paris by important practitioners like Eugene Atget. Additionally, Justinien Tribillon's *The Zone: An Alternative History of Paris* (2024) served as a formative text and point of departure for the commission.

The installation itself comprises two large-scale Direct View LED screens that reshape the visitors' experience of the circular gallery. Grounded in the space, the transparent screens complete and occasionally disrupt the imagery of the painted panorama, reconfiguring movement and sightlines through the space. The work is an original, site-responsive audio-video installation, filmed in Paris, at locations from Versailles to the Boulevard Périphérique and then on through the center of a city that constantly reinvents itself. It focuses on ruptures in the landscape, where signs of the dynamic political shifts of the last 200 years can be found, and features an original score by the composer and musician Jeff Parker. The result is an environment that transforms The Met's historic rotunda into an active site of exploration, heightening visitors' awareness of their own position within the act of looking.

Among the largest surviving panoramic paintings in the United States, Vanderlyn's *Panoramic View of the Palace and Gardens of Versailles* emerged from a 19th-century phenomenon that transformed the way people experienced images. Displayed in specially constructed rotundas, panoramas enveloped viewers within sweeping 360-degree scenes, offering an unprecedented sense of immersion. Long before photography, cinema, or virtual reality, these monumental works employed a powerful visual technology, transporting audiences to distant places and shaping public perceptions of landscapes, cities, and cultures beyond their immediate experience.

The installation builds upon Hartt's longstanding investigations into architecture, landscape, and social history. His work examines how built environments embody cultural aspirations while revealing the political, economic, and social forces that shape them. By bringing these concerns into dialogue with Vanderlyn's panorama, *Peripheries* transforms a celebrated 19th-century spectacle into a contemporary meditation on vision, authority, and the ways environments shape collective memory.

Although the Palace of Versailles lies beyond the geographic focus of the American Wing, Vanderlyn's panorama reflects the international outlook of early American artists. After spending several years in Paris, where he encountered the popular panorama format firsthand, Vanderlyn returned to the United States convinced that Versailles—with its extraordinary scale, beauty, and grandeur—was an unparalleled subject for this immersive medium. By placing a contemporary commission within one of the American Wing's most celebrated galleries, *Peripheries* invites new

interpretations of this historic work while creating dialogues across artworks, departments, time periods, and cultures. This cross-disciplinary approach also points toward the future of The Met's Tang Wing for Modern and Contemporary Art.

David Hartt: *Peripheries* is organized by Jane Panetta, Curator, and Destinee Filmore, Assistant Curator, both in The Met's Department of Modern and Contemporary Art, in collaboration with The American Wing.

**ABOUT THE AMERICAN WING**

In more than 75 galleries on three floors, visitors to the American Wing will experience varied art, design, and culture from the mid-17th to the mid-20th century, with some contemporary expressions, by a diverse array of artists from across North America. Since its founding in 1924, this curatorial department has evolved its collecting to include some 20,000 artworks in many mediums by African American, Asian American, Euro-American, Latin American, and Native American makers, affirming ever more inclusive definitions of American art and identity. These dynamic holdings include painting, sculpture, drawing, furniture, textiles, regalia, ceramics, basketry, glass, silver, metalwork, and jewelry, as well as historic interiors and architectural fragments, produced by highly trained and self-taught artists, both identified and unrecorded. Monumental sculpture, stained glass, and architectural elements are installed in the Charles Engelhard Court; silver, gold, glass, and ceramics on the courtyard balconies. Narratives of American domestic architecture and furnishings are explored in 20 historical interiors, or period rooms. Changing rotations of painting, sculpture, works on paper, and textiles appear throughout the wing.

Since its establishment in 1870, The Met has acquired significant examples of American art. A separate American wing to display Euro-American domestic arts of the 17th to early 19th century opened in 1924; painting and sculpture galleries and a skylit courtyard were added in 1980. A major renovation and reinstallation of the wing's space and collection occurred between 2002 and 2012, and, in 2024, the department marked its 100th anniversary with a new reinstallation highlighting its history and ongoing evolution.

**ABOUT MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY ART**

The Met's Department of Modern and Contemporary Art studies, collects, and exhibits art from 1890 to the present. The collection encompasses modernist movements and contemporary practices from across the globe. Featuring important holdings of European modernism, American art and modern design, and contemporary art, the department continues to expand its collection through strategic acquisitions, with a focus on artists and works from Latin America, Asia, the Middle East, North Africa, Turkey, and African diasporas. With strengths in painting, sculpture, and works on paper, the collection also includes international decorative arts, design, installation art, and time-based media. In addition to its gallery displays, the department engages in mission-driven activities such as special exhibitions, site-specific commissions by contemporary artists, and collaborations within and beyond the Museum. It also prioritizes collections care through maintenance, cataloging, research, and the support of fellows and interns.

The Met has been acquiring the art of its time since its founding in the 19th century, even though a dedicated Department of Contemporary Arts was only established in 1967. The department's early years were shaped by curators like Henry Geldzahler and later, Lowery Stokes Sims, who joined the Museum in 1972. The department's holdings have grown significantly through acquisitions, generous gifts, and bequests. Notable collections include the Leonard A. Lauder Cubist Collection,

featuring nearly 90 Cubist masterpieces; the Alfred Stieglitz Collection; works from the Souls Grown Deep Foundation; a monumental promised gift of major works by Philip Guston; and the Azari collection of contemporary Iranian art.

The department found a permanent home in the Lila Acheson Wallace Wing in 1987 and later also mounted exhibitions at The Met Breuer (201620). Looking ahead, the department's collections will find a new home in the Tang Wing for Modern and Contemporary Art, slated to open in 2030.